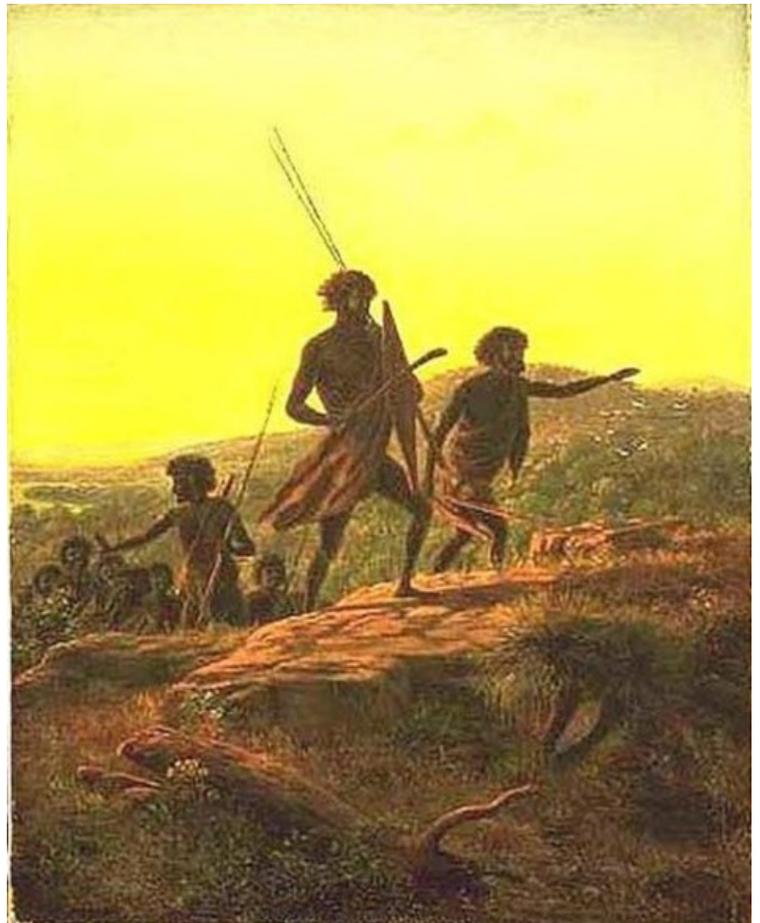


# Aboriginal Perspectives from the Victorian Goldfields

The Eureka Stockade of 1854 celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, took place on *Wathaurung Country* in the Ballarat District.

Aboriginal people played an important role in the daily life of the Victorian goldfields - heavily involved in trade, as labourers, occasional miners and according to oral history carers of non-Koorie children.



*Aborigines met on the road to the diggings by Eugene von Guerard (1854) - NLA ref 1874055 used with permission of the National Library, Australia*

Research the largely unacknowledged involvement of Koories on the Victorian goldfields. The State Library of Victoria site [Ergo](#) is a good starting point.

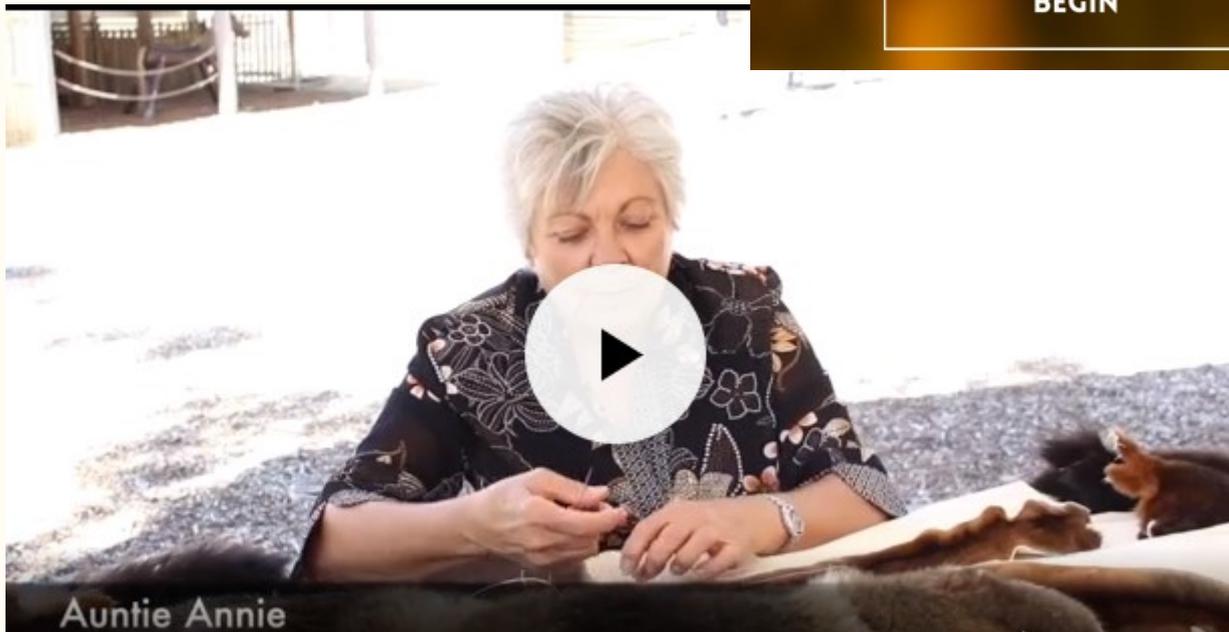
"On Saturday morning", says the *Maryborough Advertiser*, "a party of aborigines commenced a search for gold on the pipeclay at the White Hills, near Mark Drewin's store, and in a very short time they discovered pieces which they sold for 12 shillings, 15 shillings, and 10 pounds odd. They say the same party were successful some time since in the neighbourhood of Amherst and Talbot. They say, "white fellow dig for gold, and black fellow pick it up." Their eyes seem more serviceable than many men's pick and shovels."

Melbourne Argus, October 3rd 1866

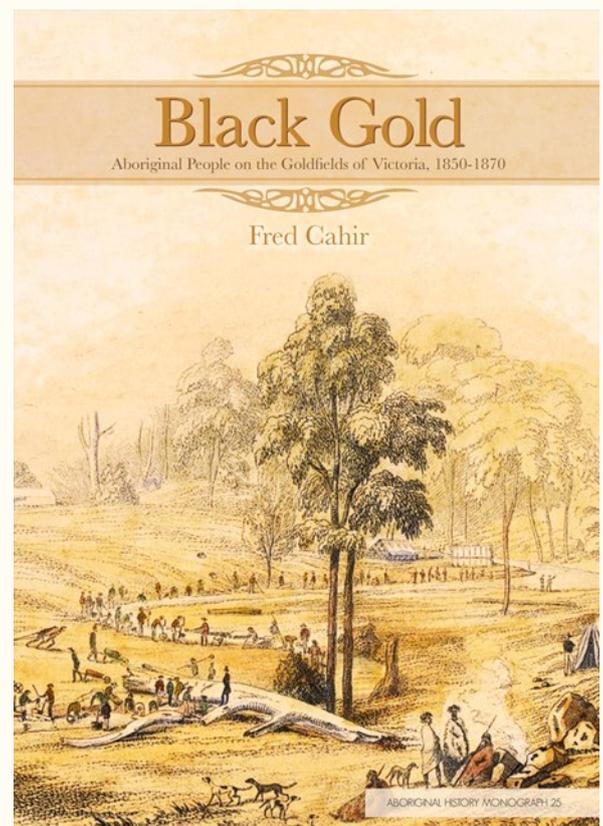


***Hidden Histories: The Wadawurrung People*** is a digital tour about gold rush Ballarat, which brings to life the perspectives and participation of Victorian Koories. It is the ideal site to investigate Wadawurrung people, history and culture, impacts of the goldrush, and involvement of the Native Police in the early gold rush period.

The dedicated site contains a large [collection](#) of audio files, historical images and links to other resources, blogs and articles.



***In his book Black Gold: Aboriginal People on the Goldfields of Victoria, 1850-1870*** Fred Cahir offers a **comprehensive account**. Fred Cahir tells the story about the magnitude of Aboriginal involvement on the Victorian goldfields in the middle of the nineteenth century. The first history of Aboriginal-white interaction on the Victorian goldfields, *Black Gold* offers new insights on one of the great epochs in Australian and world history--the gold story. In vivid detail it describes how Aboriginal people often figured significantly in the search for gold and documents the devastating social impact of gold mining on Victorian Aboriginal communities. It reveals the complexity of their involvement from passive presence, to active discovery, to shunning the goldfields. This detailed examination of Aboriginal people on the goldfields of Victoria provides striking evidence which demonstrates that Aboriginal people participated in gold mining and interacted with non-Aboriginal people in a range of hitherto neglected ways. Running through this book are themes of Aboriginal empowerment, identity, integration, resistance, social disruption and communication. Downloadable [online](#).





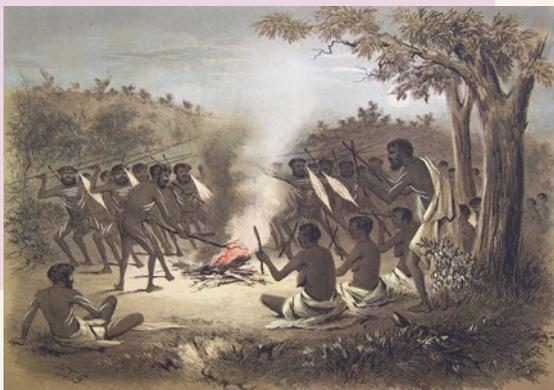
See the [Culture Victoria](#) site for more online images from the **Sun Pictures of Victoria** collection.

Aboriginal Australian man ornamented for a corroboree; Sun Pictures of Victoria: the Fauchery-Daintree collection, 1858

This mesmerising photograph used in the St. George's Rd Koorie mural in Melbourne [inset], was taken by Antoine Fauchery and Richard Daintree between late 1857 and early 1859 for inclusion in their Photographic Series **Sun Pictures of Victoria**. The album consists of fifty albumen silver prints, twelve of which are photographs of Aboriginal Victorians.

*Some of the photos from this collection were among the first to be sold to the public. Learn more about photographer Richard Daintree after whom QLD's Daintree Rainforest is named, and his glass plates online exhibition, at the [NMA site](#).*

S. T. Gill, Corroboree, c.1864



This photograph from the **Sun Pictures of Victoria: the Fauchery-Daintree collection**, (1858) taken during the goldrush period, shows an unnamed man dressed for ceremony. Newspapers of the time record that corroborees were

performed on the goldfields in exchange for money and goods. While traditionally many ceremonial dances are sacred and people from outside a community are not permitted to watch them, it is thought that Aboriginal dancers invented much of these performances at the time to protect their genuine cultural practice from Europeans. Explore this photograph further on the [Ergo](#) site.

# Were Aboriginal people involved in the Eureka Rebellion?

Historian Ian Clark explores the question of Aboriginal involvement in the Eureka Rebellion in his [paper](#) *Another Side of Eureka - the Aboriginal presence on the Ballarat goldfields in 1854 - Were Aboriginal people involved in the Eureka rebellion?*

In 2004, the ABC commissioned acclaimed storyteller Anne E Stewart to write and produce [Eureka Tales](#), a 20-part radio series bringing to life the people involved in the events leading up to the Eureka Stockade, and what happened in the aftermath.

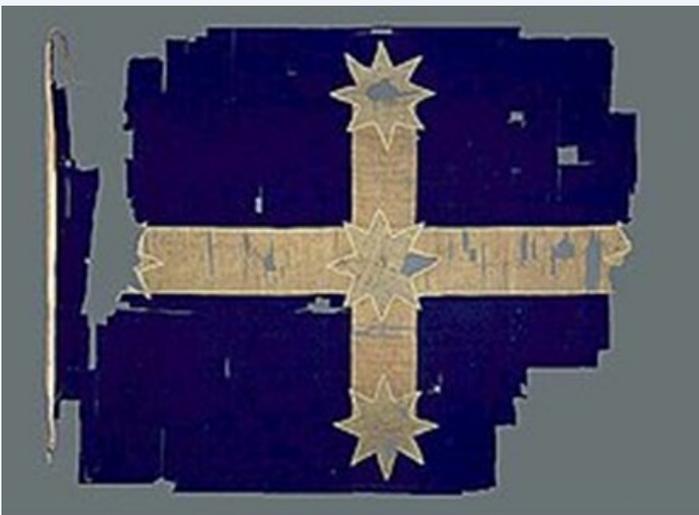


Produced by Paul Nunn, *Eureka Tales* takes the listener on an aural journey back to the days of 1854 upon the Ballarat goldfields.

The series begins with words from one of Ballarat's original inhabitants, Aunt Lizzie of the Wathaurung people; and listeners are then taken into the sprawling mining settlement of Ballarat to meet figures on both

sides of the law who influenced one of the defining moments in Australia's democracy.

[Download 01 Eureka Tales: Aunty Lizzie](#), to begin with a Wathaurung perspective.





NATSIEC 2015 Possum-skins. Photo: Vaso Elefsiniotis

Possum skin cloaks were highly sought after on the Victorian goldfields, selling for as much as £5, and known as the best way to keep out the cold.

[Read](#) more about the trade for possum skin rugs and cloaks on the goldfields by selecting the link.

*"The tribe still continue to make possum rugs, and, if steady, might make a good living by it, as they generally get 20s. to 30s. for each rug, which they can make in 14 days. The women also employ themselves in making baskets and nets, which they sell to the European."*

*Andrew Porteous, Honorary Correspondent for the Aborigines in the Ballarat District.*

#### Victorian Curriculum:

[VCHHC086](#) Explain the causes of significant events that shaped the Australian colonies, contributed to Australian Federation and the effects of these on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and migrants: *History: 5 – 6, Historical Concepts and Skills, Cause and effect.*

[VCHHK090](#) The effects of a significant development or event on a colony: *History 5 – 6, Historical Knowledge, The Australian colonies.*

[VCHHK106](#) The significant beliefs, values and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures including trade with other communities, causes and effects of warfare, and death and funerary customs: *History 7-8, Historical Knowledge, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.*

[VCGGK080](#) The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, and the custodial responsibility they have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability: *Geography 3 – 4, Geographical Knowledge, Diversity and significance of places and environments.*

[VCHHK081](#) The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions: *History 3 – 4, Historical Knowledge, First contacts.*

[VCHHC085](#) Identify and describe patterns of continuity and change in daily life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 'native born' and migrants in the Australian colonies: *History 5 – 6, Historical Concepts and Skills, Continuity and change.*

[VCCCL013](#) Explain how and why laws are enforced and describe the roles and responsibilities of key personnel in law enforcement, and in the legal system: *Civics and Citizenship 5 – 6, Laws and Citizens.*

[VCHHK137](#) Different experiences and perspectives of non-Europeans and their perspectives on changes to society, significant events, ideas, beliefs and values: *History 9 – 10, Historical Knowledge, The making of the modern world, Australia and Asia.*

