

**Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission****From: Michael Merkin****Dated: 25 April 2024****Submission:**

When I was growing up in the 1950's and 60's in Ivanhoe, I would go with my parents, weekly out to Christmas Hills to visit my grandparents. We would often stop at the Kangaroo Ground Cemetery for a rest. (It was a dirt road from the old Manningham Road Bridge, through Eltham and all the way to Christmas Hills). The Kangaroo Ground Cemetery had three numerous graves. Three very old headstones from around 1840's or 50's were a lady, her 13yo son and a Medical Doctor.

The lady's headstone stated her name and 'killed by the blacks'. The boy's headstone gave the following day as the date of death and stated 'speared by the blacks'. The Doctors headstone also gave a day following the death of the lady as his date of death. His headstone read; 'Here lies the bones of (his name) Surgeon, murdered by the blacks'. By stating he was a surgeon indicated he was a Medical Doctor and not an untrained self appointed doctor of the day.

Unfortunately I went to the Kangaroo Ground Cemetery around 2010 with the view of taking photographs of these headstones. Unfortunately they were not there. A particular Council employee informed me that those headstones were removed, because it disparaged aboriginals.

I provide this information because I find that the failure to reveal and tell the truth in the entirety of history is promoting systemic injustice. I myself am part aboriginal about 9% so I'm told. I have numerous stories from aboriginal people, including elders, whose stories then are completely different to the stories that are being told today.

Without written history, stories appear to be like 'Chinese Whispers' and are well misinterpreted, or just made up to suit the circumstances at the time. I have a couple of University Degrees and have always been taught to think, and gather information, no matter how good or bad the outcome. I hope you do the same.

**END OF SUBMISSION**