

"Australia must acknowledge its history, its true history..... what happened all across Australia, the massacres and the wars. If that were taught in schools, we might have one nation, where we are all together".

Darwin Regional Dialogue, Uluru Statement from the Heart.

"People spoke of the mass slaughter of Aboriginal People and how genocide had been committed on over one hundred and eighty clans in Victoria".

Melbourne Regional Dialogue, Uluru Statement from the Heart.

"We have co-existed as First Nations on the Land for at least sixty thousand years. Our sovereignty pre-existed the Australian State and has survived it".

Our Story - from the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

On the Lands where these photos have been taken, it is estimated that from a population of around seven thousand people, within the first twenty to thirty years of contact with the invaders, the population decreased by approximately eighty five to ninety percent . This was due to massacres, including mass poisonings, the introduction of many fatal diseases (smallpox, syphilis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, tuberculosis, whooping cough, pneumonia etc). Rape was perpetrated on many Aboriginal women, with impunity. There were almost no convictions of the perpetrators of crimes across Australia during these times. Shock and outrage was expressed by colonisers, when seven of the ten perpetrators of the Myall Creek Massacre were convicted and sentenced to death in 1838. On Mission Stations, lack of adequate food, poor living conditions and poor sanitation increased mortality. On Missions and Stations it wasn't unusual for many children to die before reaching adulthood and many young adults also died prematurely. Women frequently wrote letters to the 'so called' "Board for the Protection of Aborigines" asserting and fighting for their rights. They called for justice and better treatment, frequently and forthrightly. (See: "Letters from Aboriginal Women 1867-1926 - Edited by Elizabeth Nelson, Sandra Smith, Patricia Grimshaw, Melbourne University 2002.)

Current research at Moyjil (Pt Ritchie) in Warrnambool is suggesting evidence of human occupation, 80,000 - 120,000 years ago, yet the marketing of the coastline is almost solely focussed on The Great Ocean Road, The Twelve Apostles and the history of, in the main, British lives lost on the Shipwreck Coast. Where else in the world would the Oldest Living Culture not be a central feature of the promotion of the area?

There is little mention of the history of genocide and the Eumeralla Frontier War that took place on these lands between the 1840's and the 1860's. Can you imagine walking over the soils of Gallipoli or Fromelles or Paschendale or Villiers Brettoneux oblivious to what that land bore witness to?

This book is my beginning attempt to highlight the 'Long and Deep History' of the land that has only very recently been known as 'Australia'.