Wollombi Field Trip

with Uncle Paul Gordon

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Catalyst Clemente
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Students & Learning Partners
I was introduced to another dimension to life, another way of looking at things. I felt I was walking through a culture, a spirituality that had something to teach me. I was struck by:

- The Aboriginal view that we live out life in our mother’s womb because the earth is our mother and we are nourished by the earth and what it provides (explains why they did not farm the land).
- The Aboriginal understanding that knowledge emanates from the belly.
- The idea that the aim of growing older was to achieve wisdom—being humble and knowing how to listen, and
- How the rock carvings are not really art but “stories” to teach the people about values, important people and ways.

Mel N
The hills because the Aboriginals saw them as giant animals. The elderly elders only were allowed to climb Mt. Yengo to the top. Figure of Biame in the cave—huge, overpowering (father of all things) Rock carvings (figures) were fairly basic—Aboriginals paid more attention to the male sex organ than the female’s.

Stuart Brown

The experience allowed us to feel something in the close connection between the people and the land.

Paul’s explanation of the rock carvings gave us some understanding of the way Indigenous people communicated. It was surprising to learn how they communicated and travelled over vast distances.

Deanna

An amazing experience! To realise these artefacts were in such close proximity and are accessible was news to me.

The explanations by Paul were invaluable and necessary to understanding and interpreting the carvings (maps). This gave so much clearer insight into the historical and spiritual content of the images.

A very moving and enlightening experience.

Brian

Mount Yengo

Dominating the landscape, the basalt peak of Mount Yengo is an important feature of the region’s rich indigenous heritage.

This flat-top mountain is said to be the place where the Dreamtime ancestral being, Blamie stepped off into the heavens after creating the world.

Access to the mountain is possible via the Yango Walk, the Aboriginal community, however ask that you respect the significance of the site and refrain from ascending to the peak.

The Yango Walk traverses halfway up Mount Yengo and provides fantastic views in all directions, access is via Big Yango (for access see Big Yango opposite).
I got a very spiritual feeling for being Aboriginal, that came from the stories that the lecturer had told me about the way it was for us Aboriginals. It amazed me how the carvings and paintings are still there today after thousands of years, which is backed up scientifically.

I remember getting a feeling of contentment that made me feel I was in a special place, and that made me proud to be Aboriginal, and also a feeling of respect that made me feel the best that I have in months, maybe years.

Tim Nean

Wollombi is beautiful country.

Being there made me understand more about the connection Aboriginals have to their land and to the nature. The trip made me feel more connected to the Aboriginal culture.

It was a great experience for me.

Erin C

A beautiful town, very rich country. We were privileged to be taken there. It was very special to hear song and language. I gained an understanding of Lore, and the structure of Aboriginal families in the past. Also heard about timber logging and its effect—removal of scar trees.

A wonderful experience.

Marg MacGregor

Visually—very beautiful landscape.

Dramatic.

Easy to imagine that the Aboriginal people chose sites there to be considered “sacred”.

The carvings were significant to me as the footprints of the Aboriginal people themselves.

John Frize
My impression that remains with me is that the black man shared, & the white man acknowledged & received. Then when the enlightenment came in the form of humility, we were united in spirit. Then the air & the birds shared with us & we became one. That will never leave me as the voice of a leader sang us into unity & the earth embraced our togetherness.

Pamela

My feelings on this day were actually quite mixed. On setting off on the journey I was expecting at least some mixed emotions. On the drive up, it was one of re-awakening old memories. Good ones, of the trips I had made by myself and with my friends and family. When finally arriving at the site I became amazed by the fact that I had been here before. Many times. About a lifetime ago. These hills had been the very first that I had explored on my arrival in Australia. Days that I had loved, and memories I would cherish. These memories along with a great deal more had been lost in some back room after my stroke. It was slowly coming back on the journey up, but was not until we stood around the carvings and they were explained to us that the full memory came thundering back. But the new information that was being explained to me, gave me a great sense of remorse at what had gone before and to a great extent was still being carried out today. Whom do we trust, whose story has more bearing on just what it was that went on. That question is still to be told.

Noel Johnson
We enjoyed a beautiful drive out to Wollombi. I was pleased to bring my friend Lauren along who thoroughly enjoyed the day also.

Being at the top of the lookout was just beautiful. Paul's singing was so special and welcoming to the land.

The whole day was an honour to be part of—thank you.

?? Anon

Coming into Wollombi the bush seemed more lively than the bush we had passed. Wollombi was like stepping back in time. The local pub and shop hadn’t changes in a century. Head- ing up to Mt. Yengo the feeling changed again. Looking out over the Basin and lush ranges felt like a totally different feeling. You could feel the magic of the place. It was inspiring to know that over thousands of years that the different tribes travelled thousands of miles from all corners of Australia to teach their children their laws and religion.

Neil Settimo
My impression of the Wollombi trip was amazement. So much culture close to home.

I thought it would have been locked down but access was easy.

The rock art is well detailed and a must for the tourist trail.

Sean Donoghue

My impression of the Wollombi walk were informative and educational. But without Paul’s explanation we would have been “lost”. The weather was a little cold for the time of year. The caves were good to see many of the pictures drawn on the walls. The present drawings were like those already pictured in books and library records.

Jennifer Boswell

The Wollombi National Park was a visually stunning spectacle. To think there is such beauty in our backyard that we are unaware of. The history of the rock carvings and getting an understanding of what they mean was very interesting. Also the age of the painting at Mt. Yengo is very hard to comprehend as the condition of it looked like it could have been done yesterday. A very enjoyable experience.

Scott Crawley