

A timeline for Aboriginal Victoria

YEARS AGO	EVENT
182	John Batman meets the Aboriginal owners of what is now Melbourne. His party is ceremonially welcomed and generously offered personal safety and the temporary use of the land and its resources.
300	At Springfield Gorge near Lancefield, the remains of a young Aboriginal woman were wrapped in a fibrecraft container and interred in a small cave. Possessions placed with her include stone tools, feather decorations, part of a possum-skin cloak, and emu bones. The ceremony is a secondary burial, meaning that she was first buried elsewhere and later her bones were removed and reburied at this special site. The reinterment of her remains is further evidence that this place was of special significance to her.
1000	Cooked and ate shellfish and fish. A large shell midden at Moonlight Head in the Otway Ranges is created. Coastal sites have always been occupied, but as the sea rose the older sites have been submerged. Coastal midden sites are usually as old as the coast on which they are located.
1100	A stone quarry at Berrambool in south-western Victoria is mined and treated with heat. Heat-treating makes the stone more suitable for working into axes.
1500	Seal Point shell middens at Cape Otway have distinctive depressions that suggest huts were being built on them.
2000	Greenstone from Wilamimurring (Mount William) in central Victoria is being traded throughout central and western Victoria and into New South Wales. This stone is used for making valued stone axes.
2000	Repeated camping on the same sites forms large mounds in the Nyah forest in north-western Victoria. These mounds are used up until the late 19th century. They contain burials and the remains of camp activities.
2300	Earth mounds, formed by the camping on the same site and the collapse of seasonally abandoned turf huts, develop on low-lying lands in the central Western District.
2500	Continued camping and disposal of shells form the shell middens at Mallacoota Inlet in eastern Gippsland. The middens also contain burials, stone and bone tools, shellfish, fish and other animal remains. A dingo, probably a pet, is deliberately buried in one site sometime after 2300 years ago.
2500	Large earth mounds are built up by deliberate transport of soil and the remains of huts and camp activities, were built along the Hopkins River flood plain in central western Victoria. The oldest is dated to about 2500 years ago while the youngest date to 100–200 years, indicating at least 2500 years of continual building and occupation.
3000	This is the earliest certain date for use of stone fish traps at Lake Condah in western Victoria.
3000	A painting thought to be of a Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger) suggests that the Mt Pilot region of north-central Victoria was occupied by 3000 years ago and before the Tasmanian Tiger became extinct on the mainland.
3500	Use of a rock art site at Mudgegonga in north-eastern Victoria. Other evidence suggests the site was used several thousand years before this.
4000	The coastal resources along the Warrnambool coastline of south western Victoria are being continually exploited. Shell middens are formed.
4500	Use of coastal resources in the Gippsland Lakes and Ninety Mile Beach area of Gippsland. Shell middens are being formed.
5000	Occupation of rock shelters in Gariwerd (the Grampians). Associated paintings may also be 5000 years old.

6500	Shell middens are built and stone tools are scattered on Wilsons Promontory.
7000	Formation and use of coastal shell midden sites in the Warrnambool region.
7300	Aboriginal people are burying their dead along the banks of the Werribee River.
8000	Shell middens are formed on the edge of lakes of the Raak Plains region, near Mildura.
8000	Midden sites between Portland and South Australia are occupied. The coast was always occupied, but as the sea rose between 10 000 and 6000 years ago older sites were submerged. Coastal midden sites are thus usually as old as the coast on which they are located.
9000	Bone fish hooks are interred with the remains of an Aboriginal man in a burial at Wallpolla Island in north-western Victoria.
10 000	Rock shelters and caves are occupied along the Snowy River near Buchan in eastern Victoria. Delicate cave paintings and engravings may be more than 10 000 years old.
10 000	Aboriginal people in south-eastern Australia make finely crafted boomerangs. Examples of these are found preserved at Wylie Swamp in South Australia.
12 000	Rock shelters are occupied in the Cape Bridgewater region of western Victoria.
12 500	Bone deposits on the margins of Lake Bolac in north-western Victoria show that Aboriginal people are catching and preparing Red Kangaroos at least this early.
13 000	Aboriginal people were living in the Maribyrnong River Valley in central Victoria.
13 000	Burials at Kow Swamp in north-western Victoria show evidence of associated ceremonies. One burial has a beautiful headband of kangaroo incisors similar to those worn by Aboriginal people until recently.
18 000	Cloggs Cave rock shelter in the hills of the Buchan region is occupied. Bone tools and animal remains suggest that people were making possum and kangaroo skin cloaks at this time.
20 000	At Karadoc Swamp in north-western Victoria, mussels are collected from what was then a lake and cooked and eaten on the sand dune on the lake's eastern margin.
22 000	Druak rock shelter in the Gariwerd (Grampians) region is occupied.
26 000	Stone artefacts found near the bones of now extinct megafauna suggest Aboriginal people are living alongside giant marsupials at Lancefield in central Victoria.
27 500	Aboriginal people cook and eat emu eggs beside lake Tyrrell in north-western Victoria.
30 000	Stone tools and bones are evidence for occupation of the Keilor area in the Maribyrnong Valley.



An indigenous shell midden from coastal Victoria. Samples taken from this midden site underwent dating and indicate shell ages from 6000 years ago to present day.