

MAJOR MITCHELL EXPEDITION, 180 Years ago: 1836 - 2016

Journeying through Dja Dja Wurrung Country,

The final weekend of Sept, and early Oct marks exactly 180 years since Major T L Mitchell traversed Dja Dja Wurrung Country, now known as Central Victoria. Artist and expeditioner Eliza Tree has organized a series of events over the weekend, to revisit the significance of his journey, and the impact of events to follow.

Major Mitchell named the 'Australia Felix', the abundant or happy Australia. His descriptions of land "resembling an English park" are what we now understand to be of Indigenous cultural landscapes, populated and actively cultivated for ongoing abundance by Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples, for millennia

Eliza's new paintings focus increasingly on pre-contact times, revealing abundant landscape and ecology, amidst a fascinating and varied geological region - ranging from volcanoes to granitic metamorphic aereols and outcrops, ancient ocean beds and extensive systems of waterways. Inspired and informed by primary source documents, and maps, and the works of Bruce Pascoe and Bill Gammage, the new paintings shine new light on the region and Indigenous ownership and occupation.

Eliza Tree's ongoing research also reveals that the 'Land rush' of squatters and sheep which followed hot on Mitchells wheel tracks 1836 - 1851, caused dispossession and disaster for the Indigenous peoples, of unprecedented scale. The fifteen years preceding the Gold rush(s) wrought destruction upon Culture and landscape, with the introduction of hard hooves, firearms and lawless pastoral invasion, in what is now be understood to be the 'Fastest land grab in history'.

This Event is not to celebrate, but to recognise Mitchell's journey and the avalanche of events which were to follow.

Friday, 30th September :

11 am - 1 pm : Forest Creek walk - through Castlemaine Landcare Rehabilitation area, retracing Mitchell's steps with references to his Journal and maps. Meet at Happy Valley Rd, corner of Verlin St, Castlemaine. 2.5 km walk. BYO drinks. Gold coin donation.

Saturday, 1st October :

1pm - 6 pm : Exhibition of paintings by Eliza Tree. **Launch at 4 pm.** Billy Tea & bubbles. **137 Mostyn Street, Castlemaine.**

Sunday, 2nd October :

10am- 4 pm : Retracing Major Mitchell's 1836 Expedition by Road, from Newstead to Redesdale, Revisiting descriptions from Mitchells Journals and maps. Meet at the Rotunda, 10 am. Pyrenees Hwy, Newstead. To book seat on bus ph: 0413 191 227 or Carpool. BYO lunch and drinks. Cost \$20.00, \$15.00 concession.