



Eastern Maar
Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 546
Warrnambool VIC 3280

Thursday 25 January 2024

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY UNEARTHES OUR ANCESTRAL REMAINS.

Remnants of an ancient Aboriginal burial place were unearthed during construction activities in Warrnambool this week.

Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) representing Eastern Maar peoples in the protection and management of our cultural heritage, in consultation with the Victorian coroner, confirmed the remains are of Aboriginal ancestral origin, and will lead efforts to protect and honour the sanctity of the site.

EMAC CEO Marcus Clarke said the initial discovery, not immediately identified as ancestral remains, was reported to the local authorities. The Victorian coroner, in collaboration with EMAC, conducted an examination, conclusively identifying the remains as Aboriginal.

“This vital determination shifted the site's management from a potential criminal matter to a culturally significant heritage site, with EMAC at the helm,” Mr Clarke said.

“EMAC is dedicated to ensuring the burial site is treated with the utmost respect and dignity and is taking all necessary steps to safeguard the site, reflecting the profound spiritual and cultural significance of these remains.”

This discovery serves as a reminder of our people's longstanding connection to Country. There is the potential for ancestral remains to be unearthed at any time during construction and development activities.

EMAC acknowledges the swift action taken to halt construction activities at the site. This decisive response was crucial in minimising further disturbance to the uncovered remains.

EMAC Biocultural Landscapes General Manager John Clarke said they were very appreciative of the response to the discovery and actions taken leading to the coroner's decision.

EMAC will continue its collaboration with local authorities, the construction company, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the ancestral burial place is preserved with honour and care.