

AD HOCKERY

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An occasional one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy



Gunditjmara elder Denise Lovett at the Convincing Ground, 2005.
Visible (just off-shore) the remnants of the 1834 whaling station jetty.
Not visible: the spirits of the Kilcarer gundidj clan.

We're on the foreshore just East of Portland – a place called the Convincing Ground. This is the scene of two conflicts: the first (in the 1830s) between whalers and the Aboriginal inhabitants; the second between two opposing camps in the politico-academic 'History Wars' of recent decades.

On whitefellas' land status plans it looks pretty ordinary. Below high water mark it's unreserved Crown land; inland from an unfenced title boundary it's freehold land. The Victorian [Heritage Register](#) recognises its significance in terms of whitefella history, with a mere passing and equivocal mention of the massacre from which its name derives.

We can deduce that the site is listed on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (which contains culturally sensitive information and is not publicly accessible) because it appears as an 'Area of Cultural Sensitivity' on the DELWP map base – if you know how to drill down into it.

In a way, the Convincing Ground is a victim of the [History Wars](#) which have caused ideologically-driven aspersions to be cast over the collective memory of the Gunditjmara people. In our opinion this misses the point: there is also doubt as to the precise nature and location of the Eureka Stockade, doubt which in no way diminishes the significance of that event, and the political watershed it reflects. Should the miners' uprising go uncelebrated because their flag has since been hijacked, and they didn't have a GPS?

See you there! Lex Loci