

Winnifred Evelyn Quagliotti

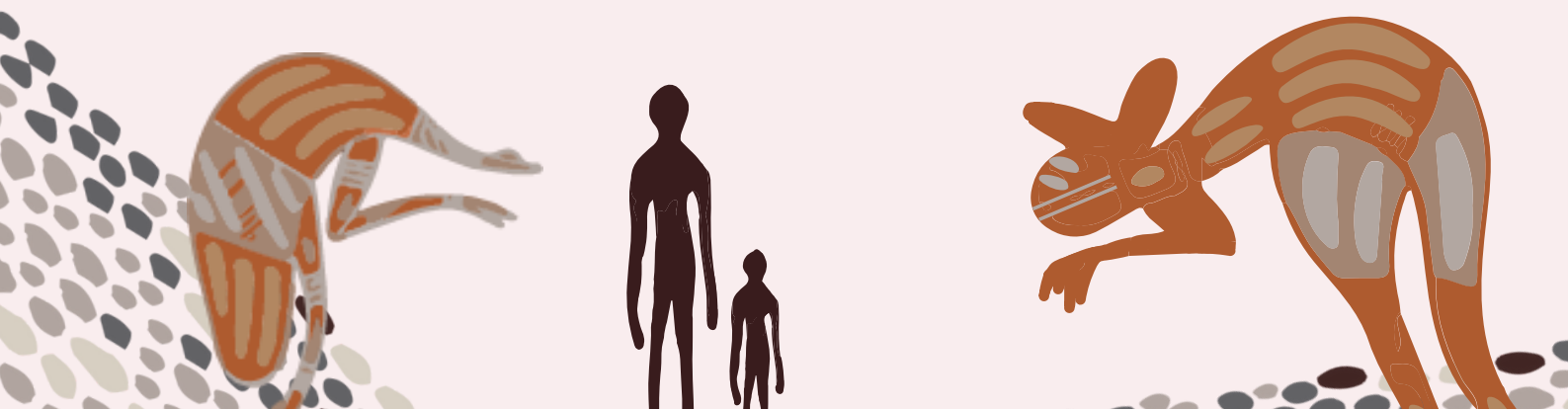
(1931-1988)



A prominent Wurundjeri Elder, Aunty Winnie Quagliotti (née Terrick) fought for the needs of the Aboriginal community in Dandenong, Victoria. Also known by her traditional name 'Narrandjeri', she spoke resolutely of the need to preserve cultural heritage in Victoria and was admired for her pragmatic solutions to the issues affecting her people.

Winnie was born in 1931 at Koondrook-Barham on the border of New South Wales and Victoria. The family lived at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, near Healesville. As a young girl, Winnie would stay with relatives in Fitzroy. There she witnessed the birth of the Aboriginal civil rights movement.

Winnie married Edward Mullins. The couple had two children before separating. Winnie fostered many more children over the years. Winnie and her brother Johnny Terrick helped form an association with other local families to deliver housing, welfare and employment services to the Aboriginal community in Dandenong. It was incorporated as the Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Society Ltd (DDACSL) in 1975. Winnie was the organisation's first chairperson, a position she held until 1988.



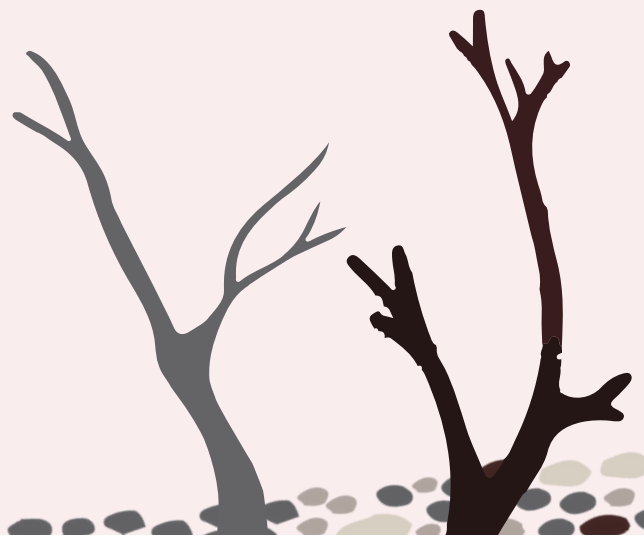
A leader in developing family support programs

Earlier, in 1972, a hostel called Gunai Lodge was set up in Dandenong to address the shortage of temporary accommodation for Aboriginal boys. Working as a cleaner and cook alongside the hostel manager Walda Blow, Aunty Winnie was employed by Aboriginal Hostels Ltd until 1983. Winnie also managed the William T Onus Hostel in Northcote.

During the 1980s, as the DDACSL expanded, Aunty Winnie was instrumental in developing several family support programs, including the Burrai Child Care Centre – one of the first multifunctional Aboriginal childcare centres – and the Aboriginal Family Aid Support Unit. She was also a founding member of the Camp Jungai Co-operative at Rubicon, near Thornton, which was established in 1973 to teach Aboriginal culture to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups.

Aunty Winnie campaigned tirelessly to improve housing for Aboriginal people. She chaired the Narrogal Co-operative Housing Society, which provided home loans to Aboriginal people. In 1981, Aunty Winnie was one of the first people appointed to the Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (AHBV). She represented the Western Port region and chaired the board in 1987–1988.

Aunty Winnie was highly critical of government's tendency to fund services for Aboriginal people without consulting communities on how the money should be spent.



Aunty Winnie educated communities on the need to preserve and revive Aboriginal culture

As a great supporter of Worawa Aboriginal College, Aunty Winnie served as vice president of the council and was involved in negotiations to secure the school's present site in Healesville in 1983. In 1985 she was the founding member of the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Incorporated and was elected as its chair and spokesperson.

As the highly respected Elder spokesperson for the Wurundjeri people, Aunty Winnie was called on by members of local councils, state and federal ministers, business leaders and even had an audience with the Queen. She educated communities on the need to preserve and revive Aboriginal culture. Aunty Winnie's contribution to the Victorian Archaeological Survey included efforts to protect sacred sites such as Bolin Bolin Billabong in Manningham and the Corroboree Trees in St Kilda and Burnley Park.

In her lifetime, Aunty Winnie significantly raised the profile of the Wurundjeri people as Traditional Owners. She participated in popular events such as the Melbourne Moomba Parade – she entered a float featuring a rainbow serpent and another bearing the image of an Aboriginal man with a tear in his eye.

In 1988, Aunty Winnie protested against the arrival of the tall ships in Melbourne as part of the nation's bicentenary celebrations. The image of her standing defiantly in her possum skin cloak was a powerful one and inspired a mural commissioned by the International Labour Organisation, which reflected Aunty Winnie's image onto a building in Wall Street, New York. Sadly, that same year Aunty Winnie suffered a stroke. She passed away at only 56 years of age.

