

Framlingham gears up for 150th anniversary



Much-loved musician Archie Roach, who was born at Framlingham, will be among the headline acts at this weekend's 150th anniversary event. Image: www.blackarmband.com.au

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[/dropcap]espite being less than 30km from Warrnambool, the **Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve** has often seemed like a million miles away to many south-west Victorians who have never visited the area.

This week there is a significant opportunity to reverse that trend, when the reserve marks its 150th anniversary with an open invitation to visit the reserve and celebrate aboriginal culture as it exists today, and as it has done for the past 50,000 years.

The 150th anniversary will be celebrated with an all-day, free event on **Saturday (April 12) from 10am to 6pm** and include music by much-loved local musicians Archie Roach (who was born at Framlingham) and Shane Howard, plus performances by Kutcha Edwards, Lee Sonny Boy Morgan, Johnny Lovett and comedian Denise McGuinness among others.

The day will also feature historical talks and displays, plus a range of hands-on activities for kids and adults, including the tricky art of eel-trapping.



Aboriginal men and boys at the newly established Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve in 1867. This image has been reproduced from *A Distant Field of Murder*, written by historian Jan Critchett (1990).

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he Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve has a long, rich and complex history, beginning with its early days as an Anglican mission set up to “protect” the local Aboriginal people from the devastating impact of white settlement in the area in the 1830s.

At that time, about 1800ha of land was set aside, but was never actually owned by the indigenous people in the European sense of land ownership.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the Framlingham community – by then living on a much smaller area of land than was originally designated – was granted control of 237ha via the Aboriginal Lands Act. The community later campaigned to regain rights to the Framlingham Forest and, after a long and hard-fought battle, won control over a further 457ha in 1987.

Although the history of the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve is one that is ultimately traced back to the devastating impact of white settlement on indigenous Australia, the anniversary celebrations are all about honouring a proud community that has, against all the odds, kept its culture alive.

The Framlingham Aboriginal Community is 20 mins north of Warrnambool. Gates will open at 10am on Sat April 12, with an opening ceremony at 11am. Free entry.



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