

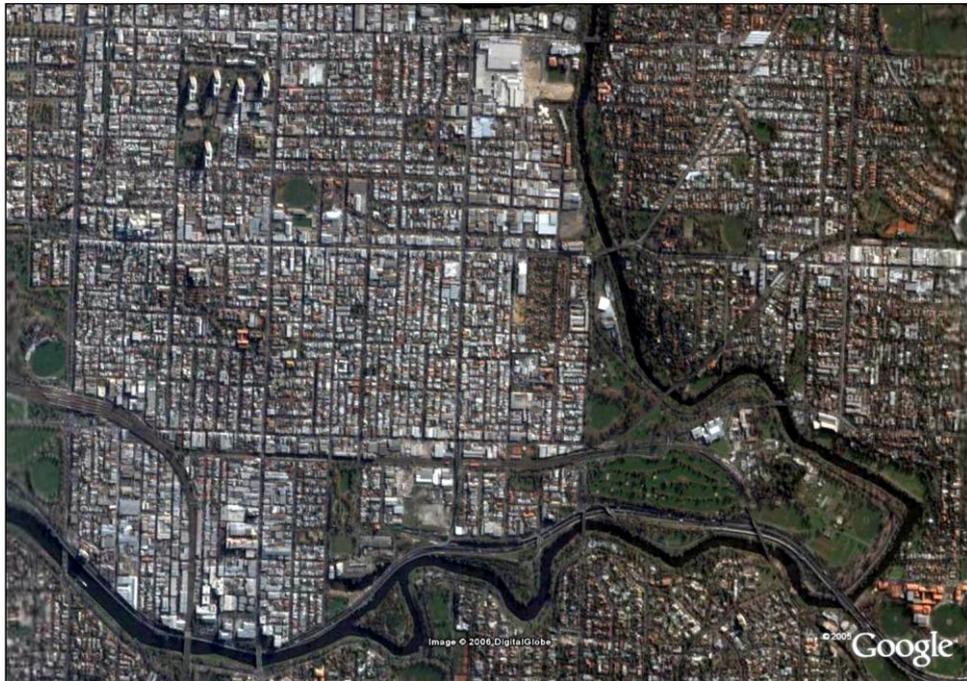
RICHMOND HISTORY - PART 1

The Yarra River - geology, division and subdivision of the land

Richmond's landscape is shaped as a result of volcanic activity occurring about 2 million years ago.

The lava flowed over the sedimentary rocks to form a hard basalt layer, blocking off the original course of the Yarra.

The Yarra River renewed its course around the eastern edge of the hard basaltic rock. On the other side the river flow created cliffs in the mudstone, forming very steep sided channels.



Prior to European settlement Richmond looked very different than as we know it today.

The original inhabitants were several groups of the Wurundjeri people. They lived in a land of grasslands, swamps, woodlands, creeks, and forests.

Aboriginal life was lived in harmony with the environment. Plant materials were used for different purposes, such as food, medicines, tools and weapons. Fire was often used to stimulate fresh growth and maintain an open vegetation structure. From the river they gathered fish, eels, freshwater mussels and waterfowl. The group hunted and lived in the area along the Yarra River flats.

European settlement has changed the shape of the area through quarrying of Basalt (bluestone) for building and road construction. Early settlers cleared the land for building materials, market gardens and grazing for sheep and cattle. The removal and introduction of top soil, quarrying, diverting natural water flows, removal of native vegetation and trees and draining of swamps has significantly altered the landscape. In addition the introduction of introduced species, plant and animals, as well as pollution and litter have severely altered the natural ecology of the area.

By 1898, Melbourne's industrial and metropolitan advancement has so polluted the Yarra, fresh drinking water was a major public headache.

The Yan Yean reservoir was built in 1857 and several others were constructed in remote catchment areas to provide clean water for Melbourne. The civic fathers locked up the headwaters of the Yarra to guarantee a pristine catchment. From 1957 the Upper Yarra dam was completed, providing pure water for Melbourne's growing population.

The name Richmond.

The area was previously referred to as part of the Parish of Jika Jika it was generally accepted that it gained its name from Richmond on the Thames, where the first Tudor King, Henry VII, built his palace and named it after his own early title, Earl of Richmond.

Between 1839-1842, the area was unofficially called Richmond on the Hill.

Richmond did not officially get its name until 1842 when it appeared in the Government Gazette.

Richmond became a:

Municipality, on 24th April 1855.

Town, on 28th September 1872 with a population of 12,000

City, on 17th February 1882 with a growing population of 24,000.

Subdivided into 5 wards - May 1890

Area of Municipality 578.6 hectares (1974)

(1974 Ratepayers on roll 12,804)

Richmond integrated into the City of Yarra - June 1994