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## Training with Wurundjeri improves cultural awareness

Local Wurundjeri representatives have provided Cultural Awareness Training to VicForests' staff for the first time.

Nathan Trushell, VicForests' Director, Corporate Affairs, said around 30 VicForests' staff from across the Central Highlands attended the full day session with Wurundjeri elder, Bill Nicholson, and local Wurundjeri man, Darren Wandin.

"The training provided staff with an overview of various aspects of indigenous culture including the history of the Wurundjeri in and around the Central Highlands region," Mr Trushell said.

"A key focus for the day was the identification of culturally significant sites in the forest, both above and below ground.

"This included instructions for staff to help with identifying these sites and highlighted the areas where extra care should be taken such as on ridgelines, and close to creeks and rivers.

"The day finished with a visit to Coranderrk cemetery, outside of Healesville. The emotion showed by the Wurundjeri representatives during the visit was particularly telling for VicForests' staff," he said.

Mr Trushell said the training highlighted the importance of working closely with local indigenous groups.

"The opportunity to meet and talk with local communities is extremely valuable in improving our understanding of Indigenous culture and heritage," he said.

"VicForests' staff complete cultural awareness training every two years with staff previously undergoing a more generic Cultural Awareness Training Program.

"This is the first group of VicForests' staff to work directly with the Wurundjeri people.

"The day highlighted the importance of forming partnerships and VicForests looks forward to continuing to build a productive, ongoing relationship with the Wurundjeri.

"This was a fantastic opportunity for our staff and we thank Bill and Darren running the session," Mr Trushell said.

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