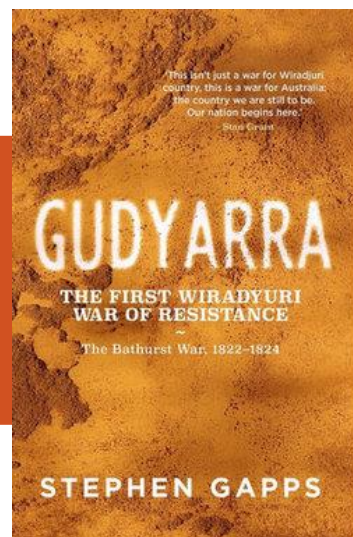




Gudyarra

The First Wiradyuri War of Resistance
The Bathurst War, 1822-1824

Dr Stephen Gapps



Author Background

Dr Stephen Gapps is a Sydney-based museum curator and historian working to bring Frontier Wars histories into broader recognition as Australia's Resistance Wars. He has a long-standing interest in public history and the military history of early colonial Sydney. His PhD thesis was a history of historical re-enactments and public commemorations of the past. Stephen has taught Public History at the University of Technology Sydney, and worked extensively as consultant historian in heritage, museums, film and television, and history events and performances. In 2011 he won the NSW Premiers' Community and Regional History Prize and since then Stephen has held a position as a curator at the Australian National Maritime Museum. Most recently he co-curated a new permanent museum display called Shaped by the Sea (opened in June 2022), which explores deep time, environmental and Indigenous histories. In 2017 Stephen was awarded the NSW State Library Merewether Fellowship, during which he conducted research for his 2018 publication with New South Press, *The Sydney Wars – Conflict in the early colony 1788-1817*, which won the Les Carlyon Award for Military History in 2020. In 2019 Stephen became the President of the History Council of New South Wales and a Conjoint Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle. His latest Frontier Wars history, *Gudyarra – The First Wiradyuri War of Resistance, the Bathurst War 1822-1824*, was published by New South Press in 2021.

Book Summary

'In May 1824, what can only be described as a period of all-out, total gudyarra ('war' in the Wiradyuri language) had begun west of the Blue Mountains. Relations between Wiradyuri people and the colonists in the country around Bathurst had completely broken down, and the number of raids and killings occurring across isolated stock stations in the district had intensified.'

In *Gudyarra*, Stephen Gapps – award-winning author of *The Sydney Wars* – unearths what led to this furious and bloody war, beginning with the occupation of Wiradyuri lands by Europeans following Governor Macquarie's push to expand the colony west over the Blue Mountains to generate wealth from sheep and cattle.

Gudyarra traces the co-ordinated resistance warfare by the Wiradyuri under the leadership of Windradyne, and others such as Blucher and Jingler, that occurred in a vast area across the central west of New South Wales. Detailing the drastic counterattacks by the colonists and the punitive expeditions led by armed parties of colonists and convicts that often ended in massacres of Wiradyuri women and children, Gapps provides an important new historical account of the fierce Wiradyuri resistance.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What did you know about the Bathurst War prior to reading *Gudyarra*?
- ❖ How did you feel reading the book?
- ❖ Why did it take so long for the Wiradyuri resistance to start?
- ❖ How did the first Wiradyuri war end?
- ❖ Dr Gapps calls the Bathurst War “the first Wiradyuri war of resistance”. Were there other Wiradyuri wars of resistance?
- ❖ With colonists and commentators at the time calling the conflict a ‘war’, why do you think these events, as well as the participants, haven’t been recognised by the Australian War Memorial? What differences, if any, are there between this war and those fought by Australians overseas?
- ❖ Has reading this book changed the way you think about the history of Bathurst?
- ❖ After reading, what do you want to know more about in relation to the friction between colonists and the Wiradyuri?
- ❖ Does reading this book inspire you to share the story with others?
- ❖ Is there anything you would like to do or see being done locally to acknowledge the Bathurst Wars?
- ❖ There is a lack of historical records for this period. If you have any information to add from family history, and/or from oral or written records, please contact Bathurst Library library@bathurst.nsw.gov.au. Any relevant information will be added to our Local History collection and forwarded to Dr Gapps.

References and further explorations

- ❖ The Wire: Interview with Stephen Gapps: <https://www.thewire.org.au/story/goodyurra-war-of-resistance-at-bathurst/>
- ❖ NITV: Interview with Stephen Gapps: <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/audio/the-wiradjuri-war-of-resistance-as-it-happened-on-both-sides>
- ❖ [The Barker Lecture 2022 on YouTube](#) (41 minutes)
- ❖ 102.7 FM RRR podcast: <https://www.rrr.org.au/explore/podcasts/the-mission/episodes/5568-stephen-gapps-and-veronica-gorrie>