

Arboretum's "wawa biik" culture tour a wonderful experience

By ELLEN DOYLE

A WAWA biik culture tour at the Euroa Arboretum was held during the recent school holidays and the first to include children who came with adults, from Melbourne, Bendigo, Kyneton, and so on.

Children were encouraged to join in the activities and needed to be 5+ years.

wawa biik means "hello country" in Taungurung language.

The morning started with a traditional Welcome to Country smoking ceremony (which has been used by Aboriginal people for over 60,000 years and only in recent years non-Indigenous people have been invited).

Most cultures around the world also utilise smoking to clear space and so on.

The smoking ceremony was conducted and explained by elders Uncle Shane Monk and Aunty Jo (Joanne) Honeysett.

A bush walk followed including tasting bush food and later a traditional morning tea, which was enjoyed by all.

Talks were given by Uncle



ELDERS AT THE ARB: Elders Uncle Shane Monk and Aunty Jo (Joanne) Honeysett at the wawa biik Culture Tour at the Euroa Arboretum.

Shane and Aunty Jo explaining Aboriginal art symbols and there was an activity for children to paint their own story on wooden leaves.

Later the children were encouraged to tell their story to everyone present.

Uncle Shane and Aunty Jo spoke about the various Tra-

ditions including the making of the possum cloaks and their purpose.

It was a wonderful experience to be part of and to learn more about their culture and traditions.

Most of us have some knowledge and we can learn more if we want to.