



Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated  
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One For All

# WALKING TOGETHER

An inclusion support and protocols resource for generalist early childhood education and care services – developed in partnership between the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) and the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA)

# Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to support 'WALKING TOGETHER' developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEI) and the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA), with assistance from Yappera Children's Service Cooperative.

I am a Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman who has lived in the Goulburn Valley for most of my life. I was born the eleventh of fourteen children and my mother was widowed, so we all looked after each other. My mother knew how important it was for us to get an education and she wanted her children to end up working in the Community, so she really encouraged us with our schooling. I've now been working in the field of education for over forty years, and I'm particularly passionate about early childhood education.

I also have four children of my own, with my husband Nev, and we have nine grandchildren.

It's really important for early childhood education and care staff to have an understanding of Aboriginal people, culture, lifestyles, and the impact of colonisation on the Community. This is not about feeling guilt, but feeling empathy and having an appreciation for the struggles that our people have endured and still do. There should be opportunities for professional development in cultural understanding and safety, so that educators are able to create Koorie-inclusive learning environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are welcomed and acknowledged. And this needs to be an ongoing practice – not something that happens just for NAIDOC or Reconciliation Week, but something that is embedded in daily routines, centre resources and the physical setting of services. Starting with displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and an acknowledgement plaque to recognise Traditional Owners is simple. Building a relationship with the local Community is integral to an ongoing, more in-depth practice.

Partnerships such as the one between VAEI and the VIA are imperative to the health and wellbeing of our kids, and contribute to closing the gap in kindergarten participation. I encourage you to read 'WALKING TOGETHER' – a product of this partnership – with the aim of creating positive outcomes for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. VAEI is excited about the prospect of as many generalist Victorian ECEC services as possible becoming places where Koorie children, their families and the community feel acknowledged, welcome and included.

Geraldine Atkinson

President, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEI)  
2018 Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll Inductee  
Inaugural Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria



# Acknowledgments

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Co-authors Dr Anne Kennedy and Anne Stonehouse contributed significantly to the original version of this resource by bringing to bear their experience as early childhood educators, researchers and authors, and guiding educators to challenge and examine practice in education and care services.

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## SECTION 1

# INTRODUCTION TO WALKING TOGETHER



## 1.1 OVERVIEW

Every child should be able to see *themselves*, their *identities* and their *cultures* reflected in the curriculum, so they can fully participate in learning and build a positive self-esteem. As the First Peoples of this country and the world's oldest continuous living cultures, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people occupy a *unique* place in Australia's past and present, which should be not only acknowledged, but valued.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) recognises that generalist services need to offer more *welcoming environments* to Koorie families, because of the crucial role that Koorie culture plays in learning and self-determination. It is also clear that experiences of inequalities in early childhood can underpin lifelong disparities in health, educational achievement and wellbeing (Marrung p.24).

Importantly, all students – regardless of cultural background – have a right to learn a full history of Australia and deserve to be able to engage in learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures. This knowledge and understanding *enriches* all students' ability to participate positively in the ongoing development of Australia.

Not only will learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, history and cultures and appreciating the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia assist in achieving respect, recognition and reconciliation; it is also essential to understanding and implementing the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture is highlighted in the VEYLDF as the first of four important areas of practice, and it is clearly stated that learning about and valuing the place of Aboriginal people will enhance *all* Victorian children's sense of place in our community.

Similarly, the guiding principles that underpin the National Quality Standard in early childhood education and care (ACECQA) include the mandate to value Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being and caring for children, as informed by the principles in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

*It is important for early childhood educators to understand that both content and methods of teaching are culturally subjective and value-laden. For this reason, there is a need to regularly examine whose perspectives are being prioritised in the classroom and whose are being minimised or even left out altogether.*

Every child has a right to participate fully in educational settings that respect their culture and language; settings where every child's identity and *belonging* to family and culture are supported. All children benefit and learn from experiences that promote *respect* for many kinds of *diversity*.

Walking Together is a Victorian resource that provides a starting point for achieving three aims that focus on culturally appropriate and inclusive practice related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander\* people and cultures:

1. *Welcoming* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children, *and supporting* children's learning in the most effective ways possible;
2. *Increasing* educators', families' and children's *knowledge and understanding* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, histories, cultures, perspectives and contemporary contexts; and
3. Contributing to *reconciliation* and *countering racism and prejudice* of all kinds, particularly as they affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is a crucial aim for all children's services, whether or not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are part of a service community.

Educators who are interculturally understanding and responsive will achieve the aims above.

The EYLF describes this process as the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures, and states that educators who do this respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences (DET, 2010, pp. 18-19).

Being intercultural understanding and responsive involves:

- ④ being aware of your own world view
- ④ developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences
- ④ viewing culture and the context of family as central to children's sense of being and belonging, and to success in lifelong learning
- ④ continually learning about different cultural practices and world views
- ④ finding ways to promote children's understanding of different cultures
- ④ developing skills to communicate and effectively interact with people across cultures

*\* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are distinct and separate cultures with different histories, languages and cultures. However, they do share some cultural characteristics, traditions and strong connections with the land.*

The main audience for Walking Together is educators in early learning (long day care, family day care, kindergartens) and school-age care services, where educators are beginning to explore possibilities for action.

This resource focuses on a range of topics that non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators need to be familiar with and offers some suggestions for practice.

Working for reconciliation calls for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to examine their beliefs and values and for everyone to counter racism, bias and prejudice at all levels. Doing so takes many forms and occurs over time. Working for reconciliation is not simple and straightforward. It is not a matter of just including artefacts in the physical environment and making symbolic gestures or adding specific practices at particular times. There is no one recipe or formula for what to do.

When considering the practices suggested in this resource, it is essential to appreciate the complexity and the intersecting layers involved in working toward reconciliation. The practices are meaningful only if the values and beliefs behind them are well informed and genuine. *The beginning point for working toward reconciliation is deep respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their history, traditions and cultures.*

Respect and valuing these cultures commit us to action, which may start with practical and simple acts or strategies. Commitment and broadening our professional learning allow us to go deeper.

This resource does not address broader issues of racism, bias and prejudice or ways to support children to be comfortable with diversity and difference and to recognise racism and bias. There are a number of excellent resources, some of which are listed in Section 5, which can help educators understand and tackle these important issues.

*Two of the guiding Principles of the national Quality Framework are:*

- ④ Equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the framework
- ④ Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.

(Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2018, p.4).

If you have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in your service and in your community, they are likely to be the best source of information about what is relevant and meaningful. However, all people identify with their cultural background in varying degrees. It is important to avoid making assumptions about anyone's cultural identity. Once you have established a relationship with families you will learn more about what they want for their children, including culturally relevant practices.

At times non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators hesitate because they fear making a mistake; saying or doing something that turns out to be inappropriate or even offensive. The hope is that using this resource will build your confidence and commitment to do more and to do it better.



## 1.2 CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN GENERALIST SERVICES

*“What message would we give other services? Just start. It’s okay to start small. Doing nothing is not an option. What do early childhood professionals do well? Setting up experiences such as puzzles, books, imaginative and dramatic play, hanging up pictures, telling stories. Start by incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander images, colours, and resources all the time. Check back on your program; how and where are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and culture represented?”*

*Denise Rundle and Sandra Dean,  
Boroondara Kindergarten, Richmond, Victoria.*

*“I feel welcomed in a mainstream service when I observe an awareness of different cultures, not one westernised culture. Visibility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through publications/leaflets, posters, Aboriginal staffing and cultural competency gives me a sense of belonging.”*

*Aunty Sharon Hughes*

‘Cultural perspectives’ is a broad term that covers many ways of seeing the world and living lives, some ways more visible, some ways more assumed. Examples of possible cultural perspectives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include strong ties to the land, strong ties to extended family and a generous approach to sharing.

It is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are consulted with about their cultural perspectives and how to include them. Both the consulting and the inclusion of their perspectives are acts that honour their right to **self-determination** and ensure that their perspectives are not lost in generalist services.

Respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives in generalist services helps to:

- ⑤ promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s strong sense of identity
- ⑤ enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children’s knowledge and appreciation of their own cultures
- ⑤ promote all children’s respect for and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- ⑤ ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families feel welcome, respected, appreciated and acknowledged
- ⑤ enhance all children’s development and learning
- ⑤ ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and families feel valued, respected and supported in their efforts to provide a culturally inclusive program for all children

## 1.3 LINKS TO BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

*Belonging, being and becoming are not new concepts to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. They are the essence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities* (Educators Guide to EYLF, 2010, p. 22).

Experiencing **belonging**—knowing where and with whom you belong—is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's **interdependence** with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, **relationships** are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to **being** and **becoming** in that it shapes who children are and who they can become (Department of Education and Training (DET), 2019, p.7).

All of the concepts in the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF), My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care (FSAC) and the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (NQS) relate directly to including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and supporting learning that contributes to reconciliation.

Particularly relevant in the EYLF and the FSAC are:

Principles:

- ⑤ Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- ⑤ Partnerships
- ⑤ High expectations and equity
- ⑤ Respect for diversity

Practices

- ⑤ Responsiveness to children
- ⑤ Intentional teaching
- ⑤ Cultural competence

Learning outcomes:

- ⑤ Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
- ⑤ Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- ⑤ Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

*You can use the Quality Areas and Elements in the NQS in a number of ways. One way to approach embedding messages about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and people, as well as respect for diversity, is to reflect on how the NQS Elements connect with the practices outlined in WALKING TOGETHER. That is, what practices or possible practices suggested in this resource are examples or applications of particular Quality Areas or Elements? Equally useful is to start with your practices and link them back to one or more of the Elements.*

## 1.4 EMBEDDING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CONTENT AND PERSPECTIVES IN PRACTICE

*The practice of cultural competence requires a whole-of-setting focus that promotes equity and respect for diversity for all as well as a strong approach to countering racism and bias.*

(DEEWR, 2010, p. 22)

It is important to keep in mind that the term 'curriculum' as used in the EYLF encompasses all of the children's experience. The curriculum emerges from and links closely to a strong statement of philosophy. The service philosophy statement and policies provide a strong foundation that guides all aspects of the operation of the service. It includes:

- 🔊 how you welcome families at the beginning of their participation and build collaborative relationships
- 🔊 the way physical environments are set up materials and equipment used
- 🔊 the conduct of daily living experiences or routines communication and interactions with families and children teaching and learning experiences and opportunities connections with the community.

Increasingly these philosophies include statements about reconciliation, which then inform and guide policies and practices.

*The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated's (VAEAI's) Early Years Unit has developed two videos on best practice in Koorie-inclusive early childhood education. The videos feature four of Victoria's Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS), and are intended to be watched and used by early childhood educators and other staff members who work at early childhood education and care (ECEC) services. The videos, and accompanying questions for reflection, can be accessed here: <http://www.vaeai.org.au/best-practice-in-koorie-inclusive-early-childhood-education/>*

Taking action can start with one small step. Although services and individual educators may begin with simple and straightforward efforts, it is important that there is a clear vision about aims, going beyond tokenism and superficial gestures. It is also critically important to avoid outdated or irrelevant stereotypes about cultural groups.

The chart on page 12 (adapted from Miller, 2011) lists a variety of ways to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and messages in the curriculum and to contribute to reconciliation.

Most of the examples of practice or action listed in the chart are also contained in this resource. They are listed under three headings: Practical, Symbolic and Substantive and Significant.

The practical and symbolic actions or practices are more obvious and, in some ways, more straightforward. The actions in the section labelled Substantive and Significant are more complex and need ongoing attention over time. The Practical and Symbolic approaches suggest good ways to begin, but it is important that educators and services move beyond those practices to address more complex, substantive and significant issues. Considered on their own, the approaches suggested under the Practical and Symbolic headings can seem to be tokenistic.

*The Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA) has created a video on how to meaningfully embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into early childhood curricula. It can be accessed here: <https://vimeo.com/301748734>*



Approach	Examples of Practice or Action
Practical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a wide range of resources (for example, books, puzzles, dolls, posters, cultural artefacts) that represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures. Ensure that they are appropriate and avoid stereotypes</li> <li>• Incorporate a variety of opportunities for children to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures: storytelling, excursions and incursions, music and dance, visual arts, cooking, learning about the natural environment, games, using words from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community languages</li> <li>• Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, musicians or dancers to come to the service on a regular basis to work with the children</li> <li>• Acknowledge and celebrate NAIDOC week and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day with all children and families</li> </ul>
Symbolic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags</li> <li>• Display a sign acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the Land where the service is located</li> <li>• Display in the foyer or entry a framed copy of the Apology to the Stolen Generations (Rudd, 2008)</li> <li>• Always acknowledge Country at meetings, and consider when it is appropriate to do so with children</li> <li>• Invite a local Elder to extend a 'Welcome to Country' at major events</li> </ul>
Substantive & Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build respectful partnerships that lead to ongoing collaboration with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and engage Elders and local community leaders</li> <li>• Review the service philosophy to ensure that it provides an explicit solid foundation for contributing to reconciliation</li> <li>• Take advantage of every opportunity to help children learn to counter bias, prejudice and racism</li> <li>• Develop and implement a workforce strategy that involves actively recruiting and employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, particularly educators</li> <li>• Develop and endorse a reconciliation plan, identify actions and timelines to support its implementation, and evaluate ongoing implementation</li> <li>• Embed opportunities into the curriculum for children to learn about the contributions of a range of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, for example in areas of the arts, sports, science, and politics, both at the national and international levels and in the local community</li> <li>• Support all staff to participate in professional learning experiences that strengthen their knowledge and skills in areas related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures and cultural competence</li> </ul>

*Make a list of all your practices that facilitate the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children in your service or that contribute to reconciliation. Try to place them under the headings in the chart. Are they spread under all three headings? If not, what might you do to address this?*

Representations of culture are hollow and meaningless unless they are underpinned by acceptance and respect for the people to which the representations refer. Symbols, artefacts and experiences are meaningful only if the values and beliefs behind them are well informed and genuine. Talking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children about what is meaningful to them will help to ensure that you are on the right track.

## SECTION 2

# VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE, CULTURES, CUSTOMS AND PROTOCOLS

## 2.1 ANNIVERSARIES AND SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

There are many important days or weeks in Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These relate to significant events in history or connect with international celebrations for Indigenous people. You can include these days or weeks in your calendar as a reminder that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in your community might be participating in them. Your service can also acknowledge these days or weeks in solidarity with and out of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **JANUARY 26 – SURVIVAL DAY (AUSTRALIA DAY)**

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people mark Australia Day as the day of invasion of their country by Europeans. They highlight the survival of their cultural heritage on this day.

### **FEBRUARY 13 – ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF NATIONAL APOLOGY BY KEVIN RUDD AS PRIME MINISTER**

To download a copy of the Apology transcript, audio or video recording (including a sign language version) visit the Australian Government website at: <https://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/our-country/our-people/apology-to-australias-indigenous-peoples>

### **MARCH 21 – HARMONY DAY (INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION)**

To find out more, visit the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs Harmony Day website at: [www.harmony.gov.au](http://www.harmony.gov.au)  
May 26 - June 3 – National Reconciliation Week  
To find out more, visit the Reconciliation Australia website at: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/national-reconciliation-week/>

### **MAY 26 – NATIONAL SORRY DAY (REMEMBRANCE OF THE STOLEN GENERATIONS)**

The Bringing Them Home Report on the forced removal and separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families was tabled in the Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997. From 1997 National Sorry Day has acknowledged the tabling of the Report annually. Information about this event and how you can acknowledge it in your community or service is available from the Healing Foundation website at: <https://healingfoundation.org.au/>



### **MAY 27 – ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFERENDUM**

On 27 May 1967 the Referendum approved two amendments to the Australian Constitution relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The first amendment allowed the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian census, and the second gave the Federal Government a mandate to introduce policies to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

To find out more visit the Creative Spirits website at: <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australian-1967-referendum>

### **JUNE 3 – MABO DAY**

On 3 June 1992 the High Court of Australia overturned the legal concept of 'terra nullius' ('land belonging to no one', from the time of Captain Cook's voyage in 1770) that denied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ownership and custodianship of the land for thousands of years. Eddie Mabo's campaign for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Rights led to this significant legal decision.

To find out more visit the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) website [www.tsra.gov.au](http://www.tsra.gov.au)

### **JULY 1 – COMING OF THE LIGHT FESTIVAL**

This is a special Torres Strait Islander celebration.

To find out more visit the Torres Strait Island Regional Council website at: <http://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/our-communities/celebrations-holidays>

### **A WEEK IN JULY (SUNDAY THROUGH SATURDAY) – NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDERS' DAY OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE (NAIDOC) WEEK**

To find out more visit the NAIDOC website [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au)

### **AUGUST 4 – NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHILDREN'S DAY**

To find out more, visit the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) website at: <https://www.snaicc.org.au>

### **AUGUST 9 – INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

To find out more visit the Australian Government website at: <https://www.indigenous.gov.au/news-and-media/event/international-day-worlds-indigenous-peoples>

### **FIRST WEDNESDAY IN SEPTEMBER – INDIGENOUS LITERACY DAY**

This is a national celebration of Indigenous culture, stories, language and literacy, which also aims to raise funds to raise literacy levels and improve the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Australians living in remote and isolated regions.

To find out more, visit the Indigenous Literacy Foundation website at: <https://www.indigenousliteracyfoundation.org.au/indigenous-literacy-day-2019>

All these important dates and more, can be found on VAEAI's website with ideas for learning activities and links to further information. Visit: <http://www.vaeai.org.au/support/dsp-default.cfm?loadref=126#KoorieEducCalendar>

## 2.2 COOPERATIVES AND ORGANISATIONS

*Regional map of Victoria showing VAEAI Regions and LAECGs*



Every region in Victoria has an Aboriginal Cooperative that can provide advice about protocols and customs as well as information about local Aboriginal culture, language and history. There are also Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) throughout these regions.

See Appendix for contact details

## 2.3 CREATION STORIES

Creation Stories (sometimes referred to as Dreaming Stories) are stories that help to explain the history and some of the traditional beliefs held by Koorie people. They are stories which blend scientifically verifiable events from the ancient past with stories that relate to beliefs, tales of morality and life lessons.

Creation Stories tell the origins of the environment, how the Spirit Ancestors formed and gave life to the land and laid down the Law: structures of society, rituals to maintain the life of the land, and rules for living.

The Aboriginal oral tradition is over 60,000 years old, spanning more than 2,000 generations. Some Creation Stories talk about events from the last ice age, when long extinct animals still roamed the land, of lands being flooded, and of stars turning super nova. Creation stories also teach how to be good to one another, to listen to Elders, look after Country and understand how many things work (Bunjilaka).

Above all, Creation Stories are stories of the land, living with the land and belonging to the land. (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), 2005, p.1).

Creation Stories are not like fairy stories or imaginative fiction. They have an important purpose: to communicate significant messages across generations and places. Creation Stories are connected with the past, present and future and are the essence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's beliefs about the creation of the world, spirituality and existence (Department of Human Services (DHS), 2005).

Respectfully sharing the Creation Stories of Australia's first people is one way to help young children connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's ways of being, culture and traditions. Creation Stories can be told, read or viewed.

Torres Strait Islander cultures have their own stories that have the same deep spiritual meaning and importance (ABC, 2011).

*Students from Thornbury Primary School have created illustrations and recorded narratives for digital Creation Stories of the Wurundjeri People in both Woi Wurrung and English. The students' creative use of language, art and technology has enabled the telling of Balayang Wurr Garrabil-u (Why Bats are Black), Dulaiwurrung Mungka-nj-bulanj (How the Platypus Was Made) and Gurrborra Nguba-nj Ngabun Baanj (Why the Koala doesn't Drink Water) to a global audience. These, along with Creation Stories from other language groups, can be downloaded as Apps.*

Visit <https://vaclang.org.au/resources/apps/woi-wurrung.html> for more information.





## 2.4 FAMILY

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people place great importance on the role of families and connections with extended family or kin for maintaining cultural identity and raising children. Families may comprise parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters who are connected by strong family ties. Elders are held in high regard and are the key decision makers, models and storytellers in extended family networks and communities.

Kinship relationships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families may have different meanings and names from those used in non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. For example, when an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child talks about 'Aunty' they may be talking about an older woman whom they respect and have connections within their community rather than their mother's sister. Talking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children about their kinship connections is the best way to find out about their importance and meaning.

### Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Kinship Relationships

Aunty	An older woman of status in her community who holds traditional knowledge and customs. 'Aunty' is also used as a form of address to an older woman.
Uncle	An older man of status in his community who holds traditional knowledge and customs. 'Uncle' is also used as a form of address to an older man.
Blood	Close relatives.
Cousin	A relative, either female or male, and can be used as a form of address.
Brother/Brotha	A close relative of the same generation. Males may call a friend a 'brother'.
Sister/Sista	A female of the same generation, who may be biological or extended family. Females may call a friend 'sister'.
Father	A man of the generation above, who stands in the relation of parent.
Mother	A female relative of the same generation as the speaker's biological mother, or mother's sister.
Grandfather	A biological father's father or a great uncle.
Grandmother	A biological mother's mother or a great aunt.

## 2.5 FLAGS

### ABORIGINAL FLAG



Aboriginal people are very proud of their flag. The Aboriginal flag was recognised under Federal legislation in July 1995. It was first displayed on 12 July 1971, National Aborigines' Day, at Victoria Square in Adelaide. It was also used at the Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972, which brought it to national attention and created greater awareness of the flag in the broader community.

The Aboriginal flag was designed by Indigenous Elder Harold Thomas in 1971 to symbolise Aboriginal identity. The colours of the flag are symbolic:

- Yellow represents the sun, the giver of life, and yellow ochre.
- Red represents the red earth and the relationship to the land, and the red ochre used in ceremonies.
- Black represents the Aboriginal people of Australia.

The flag is flown or displayed permanently at Aboriginal organisations and other centres throughout Australia. It is popularly recognised as the flag of the Aboriginal people of Australia. The flag is protected under the Copyright Act 1968. Further information about the flag can be found on the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' website at: [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)



Rex, 4 years old

*When Aunty Sandra Young (Harrison) was asked what the Aboriginal flag means to her she replied, "Makes me feel proud".*  
*When Rex, 4 years old, was asked how the Aboriginal flag makes him feel, he replied, "Happy".*

### TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG



The Torres Strait Islander flag, designed by Islander Bernard Namok, was adopted in 1992 during the Torres Strait Islands Cultural Festival. In July 1995 the Torres Strait Islander flag was proclaimed as an official flag in Section 5 of the Flags Act 1953.

The colours and symbols on the flag represent important aspects of the life of Torres Strait Islander people, and their environments and culture:

- Green represents the land.
- Blue represents the sea.
- Black represents the Torres Strait Islander people.

A dancer's headdress, known as a Dhari, is an important symbol for all Torres Strait Islanders.

The white five-pointed star is a symbol for navigating the sea and the points represent the island groups in the Torres Strait.

The flag is flown or displayed permanently at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and other centres throughout Australia. It is popularly recognised as the flag of the Torres Strait Islander people of Australia. The Torres Strait Islander Regional Council has the copyright for the flag. Further information about the flag can be found on the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies website at [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

### SECURING AND FLYING THE FLAGS

You can purchase the flags through the Koorie Heritage Trust, located at Levels 1 & 3, The Yarra Building, Federation Square, Melbourne; phone (03) 8662 6300. You can also call your local council or local member of parliament to enquire about receiving the flags.

There is an approved protocol for flying Australian State or Territory and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags together. At events at which flags are displayed, the order of display from an audience perspective from left to right, is the Australian flag, the Victorian State flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag.

## 2.6 QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED

No genuine question about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and customs can be considered too silly to ask. Following are some of the questions that are often asked:

### *How do I address an Elder?*

You may only address an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle' when they have been introduced to you as such. You must not assume you can call the person Aunty or Uncle.

### *When did Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture start?*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture has been around for thousands of years, long before Australia was colonised.

### *Can anyone play the didgeridoo/yidaki?*

No. Traditionally the didgeridoo (or yidaki) is part of men's business and a female cannot touch or play the didgeridoo.

### *If you listen to what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people call each other, you get the idea that most of them are related to each other. Is this so?*

No. It is a sign of respect to call each other brother, sister, cousin and Aunty, Uncle, Nan or Pop.

### *Why do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children call their teachers Aunty or Uncle?*

It is a sign of respect for a child to call their teacher Aunty or Uncle. If you do not want a child to call you Aunty or Uncle explain why and give them an alternative.

### *How do you know if a child is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person?*

Only by asking. This information should be requested on the enrolment form.

### *Who can identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?*

People who identify themselves as Aboriginal range in appearance from dark-skinned, broad-nosed to blonde-haired, blue-eyed people. Aboriginal people define Aboriginality not by skin colour but by relationships (Creative Spirits, <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/aboriginal-identity-who-is-aboriginal>).

The Australian Government's three-part definition of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is that they:

1. Are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
2. Identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
3. Are accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by the community in which they have lived in the past or in which they currently live.

### *When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people meet other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, they often ask each other straight away where they come from. Why?*

Land and Country are very significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They can make the connection with each other by asking their last name and where they come from.

### *What is important to think about when buying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art?*

Sometimes what is labelled as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has been done by non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is therefore not genuine. It is important to buy art from reputable dealers.

### *What do the symbols in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art mean?*

The meaning depends on what area you are in because different symbols mean different things. To find out, you need to contact your local Aboriginal cooperative.

### *I often hear Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use the term 'deadly'. What does it mean?*

The term is used to mean 'excellent, really good'.

Aboriginal Australia



## 2.7 COLLECTIVE TERMS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AROUND AUSTRALIA

There is enormous diversity amongst Aboriginal communities, just as there is amongst non-Indigenous communities. The following terms are used by Aboriginal people in different parts of Australia to refer to themselves in collective groups or communities:

Victoria	Koori/Koorie
New South Wales	Koori/Goorie
Tasmania	Palawa/Palawah
Southern South Australia	Nunga
Northern South Australia	Anangu
Southern Western Australia	Noongar/Nyoongah
Coastal & Mid-West Western Australia	Yamatji
Central Western Australia	Wongai/Wangai
Northern Territory (Central)	Anangu
Arnhem Land Northern Territory	Yolngu
Southern Queensland	Murri



*Do you know whose land you're on today?*

link for more information

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2017/01/26/do-you-know-what-aboriginal-land-youre-today-1>

## 2.8 LANGUAGES

In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in the Aboriginal languages of the south-eastern corner of Australia. The boundaries between one language area and another are not distinct. Rather, mixtures of vocabulary and grammatical construction exist in such regions, and so linguistic maps may show some variation about where one language ends and another begins (Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), 2012).

It is important to note that language and tribal groups are not confined to Australian State and Territory borders.



*This map is just one representation of many other map sources that are available for Aboriginal Australia. Using published resources available between 1988–1994, this map attempts to represent all the language, social or nation groups of the Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is NOT SUITABLE FOR USE IN NATIVE TITLE AND OTHER LAND CLAIMS. David R Horton, creator,*

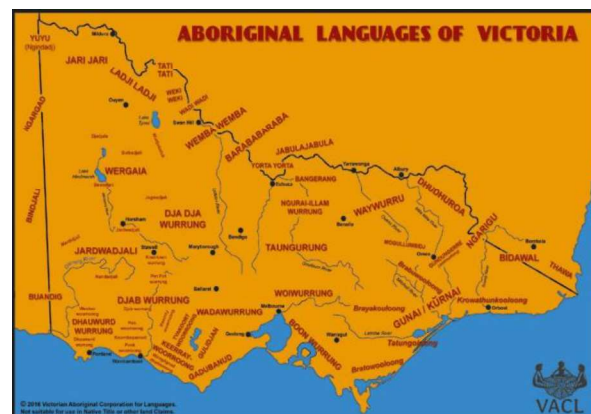
© Aboriginal Studies Press, AIATSIS and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996.  
No reproduction allowed without permission.

Viewing the Aboriginal Languages map of Australia can be found on the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies website [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

Many Australian Indigenous languages have declined to a critical state. More than three-quarters of the original Australian languages have already been lost, and the survival of almost all the remaining languages is extremely threatened (VACL, 2012).

However, in 2019, 30 Victorian kindergartens expressed interest in teaching an Aboriginal language, as part of the State Government Department of Education and Training's (DET's) Early Childhood Language Program. With the support of Aboriginal teachers, Elders and communities, many of these kindergartens have now commenced teaching an Aboriginal language.

This Program is the first of its kind in Australia and will contribute significantly to Aboriginal language reclamation and revival efforts in Victoria.



*This map has been produced with contributions from both the Indigenous Community & academic research. It can be accessed at:*  
<http://www.vaclang.org.au/item/aboriginal-languages-of-victoria.html>

## 2.9 SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES

### TRADITIONAL OWNERS

'Traditional Owners' is the term used to describe the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who inhabited an area. Traditional Owners today, are descendants of these original inhabitants and have ongoing spiritual and cultural ties to the land and waterways where their ancestors lived.

### ELDERS

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, Elders are custodians of traditional knowledge, customs and community matters. Elders are responsible for providing guidance to the community on cultural matters. It is the Elders who hold the history, know the culture and pass on the laws that govern the community.

## 2.10 TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND IN VICTORIA

In Victoria there are different Aboriginal clans or language groups who are the Traditional Owners of specific geographical regions or lands. This custodianship and connection with the land goes back many thousands of years. Aboriginal clans or groups in each region or Nation spoke their own language and had different lifestyles, cultural traditions and ceremonies. When Acknowledging Country at meetings or events it is respectful to use the name of the Traditional Custodians of the Land where you are meeting.

For example, if your event is in the Mornington Peninsula area, you would pay respects to the Boon Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the region.

Check with your local cooperative to find out who are the Traditional Custodians of the land in your area. Another way to find out who the Formally Recognised Traditional Owners are for an area is to consult the interactive map: <https://achris.vic.gov.au/weave/wca.html>

## 2.11 WELCOME TO COUNTRY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Two protocols related to Country are important to know about in order to show respect for Aboriginal people and their custodianship of and close ongoing connection to the land.

### WELCOME TO COUNTRY

A Welcome to Country involves Traditional Owners welcoming people to their land at the beginning of a meeting, event or ceremony. This welcome must be conducted by an appropriate person, such as a recognised leader or Elder from the traditional landowners of the country where the meeting, event or ceremony is taking place. Including a Welcome to Country enables Traditional Owners to give their blessing for the event and is an important mark of respect for Aboriginal people.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Acknowledgement of Country is when people other than Traditional Owners acknowledge and show respect for the Traditional Owners of the land on which an event is taking place. This acknowledgement is a sign of respect and it should be conducted at the beginning of a meeting, event or ceremony. It is important to note in the acknowledgement that Aboriginal people have ongoing connections with the land.

There are many versions of Acknowledgements of Country, and it is best if the person doing the acknowledgement adapts one or creates their own rather than simply repeating a standard acknowledgement.

## 2.12 TOTEMS IN VICTORIA

Aboriginal people believe that every person, group or region has a totem. A totem is a symbol of the relationship or connection between a person, group or region with an animal or a plant species. Totems are a complex concept for a non-Aboriginal person to understand. It is recommended that educators speak with their local Aboriginal cooperative to find out more about the concept of a totem and their significance for Aboriginal people and communities.

Some of the totems for different regions in Victoria include:

- Musk duck
- Pelican
- Fairy wren
- Turtle
- Black cockatoo
- Eagle
- Snake

## 2.13 SAD NEWS AND SORRY BUSINESS

Many Torres Strait Islanders use the term 'sad news' and many Aboriginal people use the term 'sorry business' when there has been a death in a community. When there is sad news or sorry business in a community most Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisations close for the day of the funeral out of respect for the family. It is respectful not to plan events, meetings or consultations with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or organisations during this period, which may last for several weeks.

In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it is offensive to refer to a deceased person by name or to show photographic images of the person during the mourning period unless agreed to by the person's family. Mourning periods differ among communities; sometimes the person's name or image cannot be used for a week or a year and sometimes for an indefinite period. Before using the name of a deceased person or publishing their image, it is essential to get the family's permission.

Many organisations and publishers are now using cultural warnings when publishing or showing material that includes the names, voices and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For example, a warning might read as follows: This material contains voices and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are deceased.

It is important to be aware of this protocol and respect it in relation to any images you may have of a recently deceased person.



## SECTION 3

# SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

### 3.1 CHOOSING RESOURCES RELATED TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES

There are a few important questions to ask before your service selects resources related to Aboriginal cultures:

Is the material relevant to your local community or the broader community and to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today?

Are the resources written or developed by or in consultation with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or agency?

Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented in a positive and respectful fashion?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources can be downloaded from websites and many others can be purchased from a range of suppliers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

### 3.2 LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES

Two important considerations to keep in mind when including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum, are (i) avoiding stereotypes and (ii) ensuring that content is truly embedded, rather than singled out as special or 'different'.

Seeking advice from families attending your service and from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community organisations is critically important, as it helps to ensure that what you offer children is relevant and authentic.

There are many ways to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the curriculum, including through:

**Block Play:** with small Australian animals, deserts and billabongs, for example, and linking with storytelling and music and movement.

**Cooking and Food-related Experiences:** using indigenous and/or native ingredients, finding and tasting 'bush tucker' in collaboration with a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

**Dolls and Props:** having dolls with a range of skin colours and features, and using traditional baby carriers (coolamons) and other culturally relevant items.

**Family Histories:** talking with children about where they come from, who they are connected to, who the members of their families are. Using questions such as these along with maps can assist in showing family connections to other countries and places. Part of this exploration can be about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's connections to their Land and their Country, tribal groups and Nations.

**Games:** traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander games or games involving Australian animals. The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) website [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au) has games for children to play and Children's Activity Kits.

**Language:** using words in local Aboriginal languages for greetings, finding out the Aboriginal names of Australian animals, plants, body parts and other terms children understand. Be sure that you use a reliable source of information for these words, for example the local cooperative or local families. As you would do with all children, ask Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's families about words they commonly use at home so that you could include them at your ECEC service or school, and so that you have a better understanding of the words the children might use.

**Movement Experiences:** learning some traditional and contemporary Aboriginal dance movements, for example those that are based on Australian animals, and creating new movements.

**Music Experiences:** listening and responding to traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music or making and using clapping sticks. Remember that traditionally only males are allowed to play or even handle didgeridoos.

**Nature-related Experiences:** planting trees or other plants indigenous to your area using advice from an Aboriginal Elder or Leader from the local cooperative or exploring indigenous plants in the area; gathering natural materials such as pods, leaves, bark, flowers and seeds and sorting and classifying them.

**Puzzles:** sourcing and using puzzles that have diverse images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, people and animals.

**Resources:** puzzles, books, musical instruments, recorded music, DVDs, posters and images of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, dolls, artwork, flags, maps and fabric with traditional and contemporary patterns. It is important to source these resources where possible from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies or organisations to ensure that they are authentic.

**Seasons:** learning about the seasons as described and understood by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Significant Anniversaries and Celebrations:** including significant days/weeks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in your service's calendar of events.

**Storytelling, Reading and Using Picture Books:** including Creation Stories and oral storytelling.

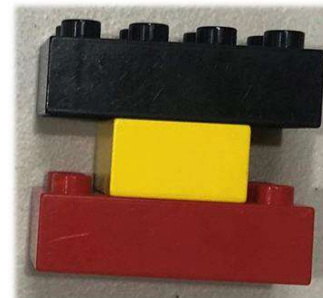
**Visitors:** inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancers, musicians or storytellers or those in the community with other talents and interests to share these with the children. It is critically important to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in ways that go beyond sharing traditional culture. It is important for children and families to learn about the various ways that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contribute to the community.

**Visual Arts Experiences:** using natural materials such as ochre and natural colours for painting and drawing; discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art by different artists and identifying styles, symbols and stories.

### 3.3 INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are likely to feel welcome and included in your setting when you:

- ◇ fly their flags
- ◇ Acknowledge Country at meetings or events, for example staff, committee, or annual general meetings
- ◇ include materials related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and people in the library
- ◇ acknowledge significant events and anniversaries for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ◇ invite Elders to present a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony at significant events
- ◇ invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers, dancers or artists to work with the children
- ◇ give children opportunities to learn about contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- ◇ ensure that relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are evident in resources such as jigsaws, music, posters, books or dolls
- ◇ incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance, music, stories and art into the curriculum in appropriate ways keeping cultural sensitivities in mind, display cultural artefacts and images of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ◇ offer educators and other staff professional learning opportunities about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives
- ◇ make meaningful connections with local Elders
- ◇ involve the service in activities within the local Aboriginal community.





### 3.4 WELCOMING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILIES

Forming relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families involves applying the same principles and practices that you would with any family. The relationship begins with respect, a sense of welcome and communicating a genuine desire to know what the family wants for their child.

Partnerships are based on the foundations of understanding each other's expectations and attitudes, and build on the strength of each other's knowledge.

(DEEWR, 2009, p.12)

Early in the relationship it is important to find out if the family wants to be identified as Aboriginal or not and to respect their choice. This information should be included in the enrolment form and can also be a topic for discussion with families. Some families choose not to identify themselves as Aboriginal because they have experienced discrimination in the past. Some may be unsure and will need to know what the educators' or the service's response is likely to be. Others want to be identified as Aboriginal.



*The best strategies for getting to know all families and forming reciprocal relationships with them are to:*

- ⑤ create a welcoming physical environment that contains evidence of families' lives outside the service
- ⑤ listen carefully to learn about the family, have two-way conversations
- ⑤ avoid putting pressure on families or asking them to divulge sensitive information
- ⑤ ask families what they think is important for you to know about their child
- ⑤ invite families to tell you how they see their child: what are the child's strengths and interests, fears and worries? In addition, ask them questions about their child as a learner
- ⑤ ensure that families see evidence of how you use the information they give you
- ⑤ be patient, as it can take time to build the trust that underpins a partnership
- ⑤ always show respect
- ⑤ have high expectations of the child as a learner
- ⑤ know and be responsive to the family's aspirations for their children
- ⑤ work in partnership
- ⑤ support meaningful family participation in the life of the service include extended family wherever possible
- ⑤ embed culturally appropriate experiences into everyday practice.

# SECTION 4

# RESOURCES

These resources are suitable for early childhood professionals who want to learn more about Aboriginal history, cultures, people, customs and protocols, as well as obtain information to support the process of embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum and other aspects of service operation.

## 4.1 VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES

### *The Aborigines Advancement League – The AAL*

The Aborigines Advancement League is located in Thornbury in Melbourne's northern suburbs, and is the oldest Aboriginal organisation in Australia. Its aim is to establish and administer programs which improve the social, economic and cultural circumstances of Aboriginal people. These include family support, food assistance, home visits, advocacy, counselling and educational programs, drug and alcohol awareness and funeral services.

Telephone: 9480 7777 Website: [www.aal.org.au](http://www.aal.org.au)

### *Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated – VAEAI*

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) provides advice and supports the provision of education and training that reinforces Koorie community cultural identity. VAEAI represents the Koorie community in relation to education policy and strategy development at the local, state and national levels by liaising with governments, department offices and education and training providers. VAEAI's local advisory arrangements are solidly embedded in local communities through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs).

Telephone: 9481 0800 VAEAI Website: [www.vaeai.org.au](http://www.vaeai.org.au)

### *Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited – VACSAL*

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL) is the recognised state-wide peak advisory body on Aboriginal Community issues. VACSAL is a community based, community-controlled organisation, comprising representatives from Koorie organisations across the State. As well as having an advisory role VACSAL also delivers and manages a range of critical community services across Victoria. VACSAL works from the following philosophical base in all its advocacy work and service provision: Community and individual choices; self-determination and managing change; strengthening identity; strengthening culture; and strengthening families. Telephone: 9416 4266 VACSAL Website: [www.vacsal.org.au](http://www.vacsal.org.au)

### *Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation – VACCHO*

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) is Victoria's peak representative Aboriginal health body and champions community control and health equality for Aboriginal communities. VACCHO is a centre of expertise, policy advice, training, innovation and leadership in Aboriginal Health. VACCHO advocates for the health equality and optimum health of all Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) have a proud history as sustainable, democratic grassroots organisations that assist in building community capacity for self-determination and direct provision of community services. ACCHOs are committed to assisting every Aboriginal person to realise their full potential as a human being and as a member of their community.

Telephone: 9411 9411 VACCHO Website: [www.vaccho.org.au](http://www.vaccho.org.au)

### *Victorian Aboriginal Childcare Agency – VACCA*

VACCA is the lead Aboriginal child and family welfare organisation in Victoria, protecting and promoting the right of Aboriginal children, young people, families and the community. VACCA provides programs and services to strengthen Aboriginal culture, encourage best parenting practices, and advise governments in relation to child abuse and neglect in the Aboriginal community.

Telephone: 8388 1855 VACCA Website: [www.vacca.org.au](http://www.vacca.org.au)

### *Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care – SNAICC \*national, but based in VIC*

The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) is the national non-government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. SNAICC has a membership base of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based childcare agencies, Multi-functional Aboriginal Children's Services (MACS), crèches, long day care childcare services, pre-schools, early childhood education and care services, early childhood support organisations, family support services, foster care agencies link up and family reunification services, family group homes, community groups and voluntary associations, and services for young people at risk.

Telephone: 9489 8099 SNAICC website [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)

## 4.2 BOOKS

There are many excellent books about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Creation Stories, traditions, and history that are suitable for adults and/or young children. It is important to check if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people wrote these books or whether non-Aboriginal authors collaborated with Aboriginal people, communities or agencies in writing the book. It is also important to know from which community or nation these books have come and from whose perspective they are written. One person or group's story is not representative of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or groups.

### *For Adults*

Reading for Reconciliation is a book club that seeks to expand their knowledge and understanding of current issues impacting on Australia's First Peoples and how these issues have arisen, by reading works written mostly by Indigenous authors. Their extensive book list can be found here:

<http://www.readingforreconciliation.org.au/>

### *For Children*

The Indij Readers Project is based on collaboration, consultation and advice from Elders, community members, Aboriginal organisations, educational practitioners and literacy academics. These readers are to help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children to read and explore contemporary Aboriginal perspectives and issues and so progress reconciliation in Australia. All profits from the sale of these books are directed to Aboriginal literacy projects. [www.indijreaders.com.au](http://www.indijreaders.com.au)

### *For Adults and Children*

Magabala Books is Australia's leading Indigenous publisher. In addition to a large selection of fiction and non-fiction books, it has an Education section that includes Teacher Notes with links to the Australian Curriculum. [www.magabala.com](http://www.magabala.com)

Aboriginal Studies Press is the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS) publishing arm and Australia's leading publisher of Australian Indigenous studies. It has a substantial catalogue of books for adults and children. [www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press)

## 4.3 TELEVISION, FILM, RADIO AND PODCASTS

National Indigenous Television (NITV) is a channel made by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. [www.sbs.com.au/nitv/](http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/)

Screen Australia has an extensive archive of films about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including titles that have been funded by the Indigenous Department. [www.screenaustralia.gov.au/the-screen-guide/showcases/titles-funded-by-the-indigenous-department](http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/the-screen-guide/showcases/titles-funded-by-the-indigenous-department)

The ABC Indigenous portal aggregates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories from the ABC & around Australia.

[www.abc.net.au/indigenous/watch-listen/](http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/watch-listen/)

This list contains mainly Australian Aboriginal podcasts, but also podcasts by, for, and about other First Nations people. <https://player.fm/podcasts/aboriginal>

## 4.4 EDUCATION WEBSITES

Narragunnawali's online platform is free to access and provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in classrooms, centres and with the community. Through the Narragunnawali platform, early childhood educators can access professional learning and curriculum resources to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

[www.narragunnawali.org.au/curriculum-resources](http://www.narragunnawali.org.au/curriculum-resources)

Numerous resources can be accessed via VAEAI's website through the Early Childhood section, including the 'Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin', which features curriculum news and links, background information on topics, a great range of online multimedia education resources and suggested classroom activities. [www.vaeai.org.au](http://www.vaeai.org.au)



## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX - VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL COOPERATIVES AND ORGANISATIONS

### GUNAI KURNAI

#### Sale

Ramahyuck Aboriginal Cooperative  
Street Address: 2 Stead Street, Sale VIC 3850  
Phone: (03) 5144 6511  
Website: [www.ramahyuck.org](http://www.ramahyuck.org)

#### Bairnsdale

Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 634, Bairnsdale VIC 3875  
Street Address: 37-53 Dalmahoy Street, Bairnsdale VIC 3875  
Phone: (03) 5150 0700  
Website: [www.gegac.org.au](http://www.gegac.org.au)

#### Lake Tyers

Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust  
Postal Address: PO Box 1147, Lakes Entrance VIC 3909  
Street Address: Rules Road, Toorloo Arm VIC 3909  
Phone: (03) 5156 5475  
Website: [www.laketyersaboriginaltrust.com.au](http://www.laketyersaboriginaltrust.com.au)

#### Orbost

Moogji Aboriginal Council  
Postal Address: PO Box 617, Orbost VIC 3888  
Street Address: 52 Stanley Street, Orbost VIC 3888  
Phone: (03) 5154 2133  
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/moogji>

### WATHAURONG

#### Geelong

Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 402, North Geelong VIC 3215  
Street Address: 62 Morgan Street, North Geelong VIC 3215  
Phone: (03) 5277 0044  
Website: [www.wathaurong.org.au](http://www.wathaurong.org.au)

#### Ballarat

Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 643, Ballarat VIC 3353  
Street Address: 5 Market Street, Ballarat VIC 3350  
Phone: (03) 5331 5344  
Website: [www.badac.net.au](http://www.badac.net.au)

### DJA DJA WURRUNG

#### Bendigo

Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative  
Street Address: 119 Prouses Road, North Bendigo VIC 3550  
Phone: (03) 5442 4947  
Website: [www.bdac.com.au](http://www.bdac.com.au)

### TAUNGURUNG

#### Broadford

Taungurung Land and Waters Council  
Postal Address: PO Box 505, Broadford 3658  
Street Address: 37 High St, Broadford 3658  
Phone: (03) 5784 1433  
Website: [www.taungurung.com.au](http://www.taungurung.com.au)

### YORTA YORTA

#### Echuca

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation  
Postal Address: PO Box 201, Echuca VIC 3564  
Street Address: 86 Hare Street, Echuca VIC 3564  
Phone: (03) 5480 6252  
Website: [www.njernda.com.au](http://www.njernda.com.au)

#### Mooroopna

Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 614, Mooroopna VIC 3629  
Street Address: 20 Rumbalara Road, Mooroopna VIC 3629  
Phone: (03) 5820 0000  
Website: [www.rumbalara.org.au](http://www.rumbalara.org.au)

#### Barmah

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation  
Postal Address: c/o Barmah PO, Barmah VIC 3639  
Street Address: Cnr Schier and Maloney Streets, Barmah VIC 3639  
Phone: (03) 5869 3336  
Website: [www.yynac.com.au](http://www.yynac.com.au)

## BANGERANG

ShepparTOn  
Bangerang Cultural Centre  
Street Address: 1 Evergreen Way, Shepparton VIC 3630  
Postal address: PO Box 1386, Shepparton VIC 3630  
Phone: (03) 5831 1020  
Website: [www.bangerang.org.au](http://www.bangerang.org.au)

## WURUNDJERI

MelBOurne  
Aborigines Advancement League  
Street Address: 2 Watt Street, Thornbury VIC 3071  
Phone: (03) 9480 7777  
Website: [www.aal.org.au](http://www.aal.org.au)

dandenOnG  
Dandenong and District Aborigines Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 683, Dandenong VIC 3175  
Street Address: 62 Stud Road, Dandenong VIC 3175  
Phone: (03) 9794 5973  
Website: [www.ddacl.org.au](http://www.ddacl.org.au)

## BOON WURRUNG

BoOn Wurrung fOundaTiOn  
Street Address: Level 1, 14 Acland Street, St Kilda VIC 3182  
Phone: (03) 9537 2222  
Website: <http://www.boonwurrung.org>

## GUNDITJMARA

WarrnaMBOOI  
Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 732, Warrnambool VIC 3280  
Street Address: 135 Kepler Street, Warrnambool VIC 3280  
Phone: (03) 5559 1234  
Website: [www.gunditjmara.org.au](http://www.gunditjmara.org.au)

heyWOOD  
Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation  
Street Address: 21 Scott Street, Heywood VIC 3304  
Phone: (03) 5527 0000  
[www.windamara.com.au](http://www.windamara.com.au)

## BARENGI GADJIN

halls Gap  
Brambuk Cultural Centre  
Postal Address: PO Box 43, Halls Gap VIC 3381  
Street Address: 277 Grampians Tourist Road, Halls Gap VIC 3381

horSham  
Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative  
Street Address: 43 Hamilton Street, Horsham VIC 3400  
Phone: (03) 5381 6333  
Website: [www.goolumgoolum.org.au](http://www.goolumgoolum.org.au)

## LATJE LATJE

Mildura  
Mallee District Aboriginal Services  
Postal address: PO Box 5134, Mildura VIC 3502  
Street Address: 120 Madden Ave, Mildura VIC 3500  
Phone: (03) 5018 4100  
Website: [www.mdas.org.au](http://www.mdas.org.au)

rOBinvale  
Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative  
Postal Address: PO Box 680, Robinvale VIC 3549  
Street Address: 87 Latje Road, Robinvale VIC 3549  
Phone: (03) 5026 3353  
Website: [www.mvac.org.au](http://www.mvac.org.au)

## WAMBA WAMBA

Swan hill  
Mallee District Aboriginal Services  
Street Address: 70 Nyah Road Swan Hill, VIC  
Phone: (03) 5032 8600

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