

HAVE A SIP HALT  
W DEADLY ARE YOU? HUM  
HAT? I'M GONNA BUST YOU: I'M G  
KEEP A BOONDI BY YOUR BED TO K  
JT KEEP GOING NOW LET RIP LET'S HUM  
OWS MEN'S BUSINESS MY NAN USED TO  
E WITH BRANCH OF THE TREE OR THE THON  
HHH NAH ON ME OFF WEEK NAH JUST GAI  
IFICALLY SAID NOT EVEN AUNTIE GIRL NOT EV  
NO RESPECT THAT ONE NO SHAME PARTY  
ULLA WAY SHAIR SHAIR AUNTIE GIRL SHAME  
OW RESPECT, GET RESPECT SING OUT SLAF  
A LA SORRY BUSINESS SOLID STRAIGHT OUT S  
ID OVER STREET LIGHT BLACK STRETCHED S  
TURE STYLIN UP SWEET SWEET AS THEY F  
MIM THAT'S MAD THAT'S PAY BACK THAT'  
MAKE ME SORRY TICK UP TOO DEADLY  
WANNA GO, WANNA GO AROUND OR  
WOMEN'S BUSINESS YARNING  
GOOD JOB NOW YOU'RE  
YOU SMASHED

# KOORIFIED

ABORIGINAL COMMUNICATION AND WELL-BEING



# KOORIFIED

## ABORIGINAL COMMUNICATION AND WELL-BEING

This document was developed through a partnership between the The School of Nursing and Midwifery at LaTrobe University and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO).



**LA TROBE**  
UNIVERSITY



VACCHO

First printed in 2014

This work is copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or in part for study or training purposes, or by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations subject to an acknowledgment of the source and no commercial use or sale. Reproduction for other purposes or by other organisations requires the written permission of the copyright holders. We acknowledge the ideas, experiences and reflections contributed to this document by all those involved in the project. We ask that appropriate acknowledgment is made for the use of any quotations from this document.

### Contact

The Public Health and Research Unit  
Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)  
5-7 Smith Street  
Fitzroy VIC 3065 Australia  
T: +61 3 9411 9411  
F: +61 3 9417 3871  
E: [enquiries@vaccho.com.au](mailto:enquiries@vaccho.com.au)  
W: [www.vaccho.org.au](http://www.vaccho.org.au)

Editor: Karen Adams

Contributors: Jill Gallagher, Brad Brown, Anna Liebzeit, Karen Adams, Craig Holloway, Shannon Faulkhead, Genevieve Grieves, Jimi Peters, Sharon Thorpe, Andrew Hood, Peter Waples Crowe, Nicole Cassar, Tammy Chatfield, Shakara Montalto, Simone Andy, Robyn Bradley, Kulan Barney, Karen Jackson, Raelene Clinch, Paul Stewart.

Artwork: by Anna Liebzeit and Andrew Hood

This work was produced for the subject Indigenous and Intercultural Health developed by The School of Nursing and Midwifery at LaTrobe University. Details about the subject can be found here. [http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Indigenous\\_and\\_Intercultural\\_Health](http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Indigenous_and_Intercultural_Health)



[creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)

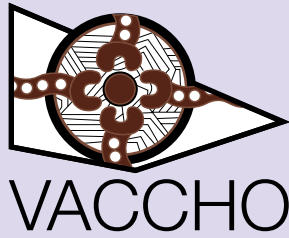


# CONTENTS

## CONTENTS

ABOUT VACCHO .....	3
ABOUT KOORIFIED .....	4
WHAT HAS KOORIFIED GOT TO DO WITH HEALTH? .....	4
WHO IS THIS WRITTEN FOR? .....	4
RESPECT .....	5
TALKING WITHOUT SPEAKING .....	6
INDIRECT LANGUAGE .....	6
HUMOUR .....	7
DIVERSITY IN LANGUAGE .....	8
EMPHASIS AND CONTEXT OF WORDS .....	8
LOCAL LANGUAGE .....	8
LANGUAGE REVIVAL .....	8
DIVERSITY IN LANGUAGE .....	8
ENGLISH WORDS WITH ABORIGINAL MEANING .....	8
DEADLY AY? .....	9
COUNTRY .....	13
MOB .....	15
GREETINGS .....	18
INSULTS .....	18
NAMES AND EXPRESSIONS .....	18
LANGUAGE THEMES .....	20
DEADLY AY? .....	20
COUNTRY .....	21
MOB .....	21
ENDNOTES .....	23

# ABOUT VACCHO



## ABOUT VACCHO

VACCHO is Victoria's peak representative Aboriginal health body and champions community control and health equality for Aboriginal communities. It 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.



### **"IF YOU'RE NEW TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNICATION:**

- **RESPECT THAT THERE IS DIVERSITY IN COMMUNICATION. EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN PARTICULAR WAYS OF COMMUNICATING**
- **SEEK CLARITY AND ADVICE IF YOU WANT CREATE MESSAGES AIMED AT ABORIGINAL PEOPLE"**

## ABOUT KOORIFIED

### ABOUT KOORIFIED

Aboriginal people in South East Australia have particular ways of communicating, it is a system in which day to day language reflects meaning, values, and culture<sup>1</sup>. The continuing use of Aboriginal communication in South East Australia<sup>2</sup> indicates that a coloniser language is not suitable to fully describe Aboriginal life. Aboriginal communication styles include a complex mix of grammar, language, sounds, tones, timing, politeness, humour, visual communication and body language<sup>3</sup>.

This project began by extending an invitation to Aboriginal English speakers within VACCHO to assist compile a list of common words and sentences used in Aboriginal English. The speakers came from different regions across Victoria. The words and sentences provided were grouped into themes using an inductive process<sup>4</sup> and these themes were then validated with a larger group Aboriginal people. Three themes were identified and each was given a title in Aboriginal English. These include Deadly Ay?, Mob and Country. During the collation of the word list the contributors also discussed other communication ways or practices. Koorified contains the language themes, language list and other communication ways.

## WHAT HAS KOORIFIED GOT TO DO WITH HEALTH?

### WHAT HAS KOORIFIED GOT TO DO WITH HEALTH?

Having some understanding of common Aboriginal communication ways can help improve

- health promotion and social marketing messaging for Aboriginal people
- mutual understandings about health and health care
- communication and interactions with Aboriginal people
- broaden your general understanding about communication

## WHO IS THIS WRITTEN FOR?

### WHO IS THIS WRITTEN FOR?

Anyone who has an interest in communication and Aboriginal people

# RESPECT

## RESPECT

Our use of the word respect is quite different to the general English use. There are many ways in which we practice or pay respect. In other parts of Australia there are similar practices, such as, dadirri or deep listening<sup>5</sup>.

Respect can include things like,

- being present and listening well to people
- providing time and space for people to tell their story
- respecting that everyone's story is important
- paying attention to body language, silences and non-participation which may or may not be indicators that people don't feel respected or don't feel they can contribute
- leaving people alone when requested
- being careful when on another person's Country; to listen carefully to advice and pay attention to and follow local protocols
- being present and mindful about Country
- listening to and paying attention to signs from Country and Ancestors
- listening and paying attention to Elders
- looking after children well
- acknowledging that there are some things people just don't want to talk about
- being a polite guest in someone else's culture
- enjoying and appreciating humour
- and more

*"you have to show respect to get respect"*

*"When the lights flicker in the house we know mum's around (her spirit), we say 'Yeah OK mum' and let her know that we know she's there, it's respect"*

*"when I'm on someone else's Country, in another community, I'm careful, If someone says I should meet this person or go to this thing, I do, if people are meeting and I'm not invited, I don't go, it's not my Country"*

Having no respect is considered rude and offensive, some examples of this type of practice are

- cutting someone off when they are speaking
- ignoring people
- leaving people waiting, without saying why
- serving other people first before those that have been waiting, without saying why
- not listening well
- not following local Aboriginal protocols, such as, acknowledging Country
- not paying attention to Elders
- denying that Aboriginal people have particular ways of being and doing
- being a busy body and expecting that Aboriginal people should teach you about Aboriginal culture

*"She cut me off while I was speaking, so after that I wasn't going to say anything, she had no respect"*

*"I don't mind if people want to know things, you know, ask me about Aboriginal culture, but sometimes I'm not in the mood or I'm tired, every now and then you get one that doesn't get it, they keep going, asking questions, it's rude"*

**"PRACTICE  
RESPECT, IT'S  
GOOD FOR  
EVERYONE"**



## TALKING WITHOUT SPEAKING

### TALKING WITHOUT SPEAKING

Every person uses body language and Aboriginal people have a certain style of body language that we use particularly with other Aboriginal people. This may be used alone or a combination with speech. For instance, it can include things like,

- hand signals to indicate if something is ok or not, thumbs up or thumbs down
- brushing hands together in a particular direction to indicate it's time to leave
- a particular handshake may be given to recognise and respect another Aboriginal person
- shaking back and forth of a horizontal hand to indicate "I got no money"
- eye movement to indicate to a person that they should look toward a certain way
- eye brow raising to question something someone has said as in "really?"
- a certain look to question "what is going on here"
- using lips to point towards a direction to go towards or a direction to look at
- and many, many more.

*"I did the hand signal to go and the person looked at me funny, I had to say 'come on now let's go' because they didn't realise my signal"*

*"Sometimes at meetings you don't have to say anything to another Aboriginal person, you can say it all with your eyes. It's like there's two meetings the talking one and this one (points at eyes)"*

## INDIRECT LANGUAGE

### INDIRECT LANGUAGE

Indirect communication involves a less questioning and demanding style of communication<sup>6</sup> which many Aboriginal use.

An example of this style is, if I was thirsty using direct communication I would ask "can I have some water?". Using indirect communication I would say "gee I'm dry (thirsty)". An indirect language speaker would generally pick up this cue and ask "would you like some water" while a direct language speaker may not realise that a cue has even been given.

Aboriginal people would generally not expect non-Aboriginal people to use indirect language, however, we may use indirect language with non-Aboriginal people and our needs may not be noticed. For instance, an Aboriginal person may say in response to a question about pain 'I have some' and this requires further unpacking, for instance by asking 'is it a little bit, a lot or somewhere in the middle?'

**"REMEMBER  
EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN  
COMMUNICATION STYLE AND  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE MAY**

- **HAVE HEIGHTENED  
AWARENESS OF BODY  
LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION**
- **USE INDIRECT LANGUAGE"**



Indirect language has inbuilt properties of politeness. Rather than assume someone wants to answer a question or carry out a request, indirect questions provide the person with a choice and ask permission for the listener to engage with the speaker's experience<sup>7</sup>.

### EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT LANGUAGE

#### Example One

*Indirect question "Is it normal to have a headache for 3 days?"*

*Direct question translation "I've had a headache for 3 days and I'm worried, what do you think?"*

*Indirect language response "I don't think so, have you had a headache?"*

#### Example Two

*Indirect question "Do you know much about skin problems?"*

*Direct question translation "I have a skin problem and I'm wondering if you can help me?"*

*Indirect language response "No not really, but has the person been to the health service?"*

## HUMOUR

### HUMOUR

Aboriginal people use humour in many ways., we use it to

- make people feel more comfortable
- talk about a stressful situation in a light hearted way
- allow people to feel included
- to make connection with people
- build relationship and trust

One style of humour is through rhyming of words, for instance, "daughter daughters of the Yorta Yortas" or "my sister from another mister" Accidentally rhyming words when talking is often considered to be funny.

*"When you go to a non-Aboriginal org they don't laugh much, they're real serious over there"*

*"If I see a young one and they're on their own, I go over and have a joke, I make sure they're OK"*

*"We were all in the room and the lady was telling us about her cat, she said its name and it sounded like 'mootcha' it wasn't that, but it sounded like that, we all cracked up and even she laughed once she knew, she could laugh at it, she got it"*





# DIVERSITY IN LANGUAGE

## DIVERSITY IN LANGUAGE

### Emphasis and context of words

Many of the words described in the language lists have multiple meaning depending on how they are used, emphasised and placed in sentences.

### Local language

Local Aboriginal communities will have their own communication variations. There will be local stories and history unique to that community.

### Language revival

Many Victorian Aboriginal communities practice language revival. The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) is an organisation that works across Victoria to retrieve, revive and strengthen Indigenous Languages for Victorian Aboriginal people. For more information about language revival you can go to <http://www.vaclang.org.au/>

### Diversity in language

In South East Australia Aboriginal people sometimes adopt language from other areas of Australia. For instance, people move into the area for employment or family reasons and some of their language may get adopted and visa-versa.

### English words with Aboriginal meaning

Aboriginal communication often includes use of English words with an altered meaning. Some examples of this are

- ignorant is generally used in English to mean unaware, however in Aboriginal communication it is used as an insult to mean stupid
- deadly is not going to kill you it but rather means something is good or excellent
- shame has altered meaning to describe stigma and embarrassment associated with gaining attention through certain behaviour or actions
- the female name Doris means to be a stickybeak
- cousin to most non-Aboriginal people means first cousin and to Aboriginal people is used to refer to far reaching extended family.
- Auntie or uncle is used to address an older person who may or may not be a relation
- and many more

*“They told us deadly wasn’t a good word to use, they didn’t understand it meant good, they didn’t listen”*

## DEADLY AY?

### DEADLY AY?

This language theme describes continuing social lore; the practice of analysis of behaviour, affirmation of deadly or desired behaviour and management of shameful embarrassing or undesired behaviour.

*WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE, WHAT ARE THEY ALL LOOKING AT?  
WANNA GO DORIS?*

*YEAH, DEADLY AY,  
LET'S GO*

*AYYYY,  
I DON'T KNOW  
THOSE FULLAS,  
SHAME JOB*



At the end of the day we're all just blakfella	we're all community members no-one's better than anyone else
Awwww poor darlen	expressing empathy
Awwww poor nyoin	expressing empathy
Ay?	what? I'm confused
Ayyyyy	multiple uses can be used to indicate surprise, happiness, disbelief or humour
Ay cuz, budj, sis?	isn't that right
Ay don't try to be a blackman now	don't try and be cool
Ay little woman now	a girl who's being assertive or acting older than she is
Ay look out	wow look at you, or wow look at that
Ay, look out, big shot now	you're being a show off
Ay she's/he's got jelly beans there	she's/he's jealous
Ay which way now	that's odd, why would you do that?. Also used by Murries to ask what are you doing, what's happening
Barred	being told that you're not allowed to go somewhere
Black and proud	I'm proud of being Aboriginal
Bin done got that	I already have that
Bin in	spent time in prison
Blackfella or Koori time	having to prioritise how you spend your time because of family and community responsibilities or taking the time to fulfil obligations and consult properly with community
Bookin' up	building a tab or credit
Bot	ask for someone to give you something without paying
Busted	caught out doing something you shouldn't be doing
Busted out laughing	laughing a lot, loudly
Busted up	beaten up or relationship ending
Cadj	ask to borrow money
Cadja	person who asks to borrow money
Can you say that?	why would you say that or I can't believe you said that
Captain	man who pays for a woman's drinks
Car dog	someone who comes along for a drive usually doesn't have their own car
Cashed up	a person who has spare or extra money, good person to ask for a loan
Charged up	drunk
Charging up	drinking alcohol
Cheeky	being mischievous
Come at me bro	I dare you to have a go at me (hyperbolic humour)
Cultural man	a man with expertise about his culture
Cut me out?	asking for a loan
Dardi (from WA)	that's right
Deadly	good, excellent
Deadly one	that's good, excellent
Fix me up	pay me back
Flash black	humorously said to an Aboriginal person who is being showy about money, possessions, good job, sometimes used in a derogatory way
Gammon	joking, fake, as in, 'that's gammon' or 'you're gammon' or 'I'm just gammon'
Goin walk about	I need a break, some time out
Good go	good try but I don't believe you or good try but I'm not going to do what you asked me to
Goomi-lad	a joker
Gorn den	go on then I dare you to keep doing that, let's see what happens

Gotta lend?	asking for a loan
A gunna	person who intends to do something but never gets around to it
Gunna	I'm going to do it
Have a dorie	Have a sticky beak
Have a sip	drink alcohol
Half charged	a bit drunk
Hammered	really drunk
Hold up now	stop, slow down
How deadly are you?	you're fantastic
Humbug	annoy
I didn't jeri	I didn't realise/know
Ignorant or what?	are you stupid
I'm gonna bust you	I'm going to hit you (hyperbolic humour)
I'm gunna flog you if you don't....	you better do this or else (hyperbolic humour)
Keep a boondi by your bed to keep 'em in or keep 'em out	usually said to a female to advise about protection, safety and being choosy about who you let into your life
Keep going now	I dare you to keep doing that, you better stop
Let rip	tell someone off
Let's hump it	let's get out of here
Listen up, now	pay attention to me
Lows	depression, as in, "I'm low" or "I've got the lows"
Men's business	things that men do
Muckin' up	naughty
My nan used to threaten to flog me with branch of the tree or the thong off her foot	my nan didn't tolerate bad behaviour (mostly said jokingly)
Nahhhh	no
Nah on me off week	I haven't got any money
Nah just gammon ay	only joking
No! I pacifically said	Your not listening to what I'm saying (usually said in frustration or anger)
Not even Auntie girl	I don't think so (to female)
Not even budj	I don't think so (to male)
Nothing	no way, it's not happening, it didn't happen
No respect that one	that person doesn't know how to behave properly
No shame	gregarious, out there, more front than Myers
Party up	go out for the night, to have a good time
Real Blackfulla way	doing something only an Aboriginal person would do
Shair	I don't think so
Shair Auntie girl	I don't think so (to female)
Shame	not good, embarrassing
Shame job	embarrassing behaviour
Show respect, get respect	if you behave well you get treated well
Sing out	yell out or ask someone to let you know if they need help 'sing out if you need me'
Slapped up	being slapped emotionally or physically
Sookie la la	being a sook
Sorry business	responsibility to take part in funerals and family gathering when someone passes away
Solid	strong, good

Straight out	plain talking, telling it like it is
Straight up?	used as a question as in “is that tru?”
Stand over	threaten or bully someone
Street light black	urban Aboriginal
Stretched	stress of having to make a little bit of food or money go along way
Strong in your culture	to have a good understanding and interest about custodial lands, family and cultural practices making the person confident and resilient
Stylin up	getting dressed up to go out
Sweet	good
Sweet as	really good
They don't get it	that person doesn't understand me or the situation or Aboriginal ways or how to work with Aboriginal people
That's him	that's right
That's mad	that's good
That's pay back	you deserved that, karma
That's sic	that's good
They get it	they understand me or the situation or Aboriginal ways or how to work with Aboriginal people
They make me sorry	I feel bad for that person
Tick up	building a tab or credit
Too deadly	good, fantastic
True?	is that right?
True that!	that's right!
Unna (from SA, NT, WA)	that's right
Wanna go, wanna go around or wanna have a crack	do you want a verbal or physical fight (mostly jokingly said)
Wha?	what? What are you up to? What have you been doing?
Women's business	things that women do
Yarning	talking, telling stories
Yarning up big time	talking a lot, telling a lot of stories
Yeah ay?	That's right or is that right?
Yeah, good job now	said sarcastically, when something unfortunate happens and the person is thought to deserve it
You're deadly	you're awesome, fantastic
You're a killer	you're awesome, fantastic
You killed it	you're awesome, fantastic
You smashed it	you're awesome, fantastic
You're a doris	You're a sticky beak
You make me weak	is used in two ways, one being you make me weak with laughter and the other is you're embarrassing or behaving badly.



# COUNTRY

*"I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WE ARE ON AND ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT"*

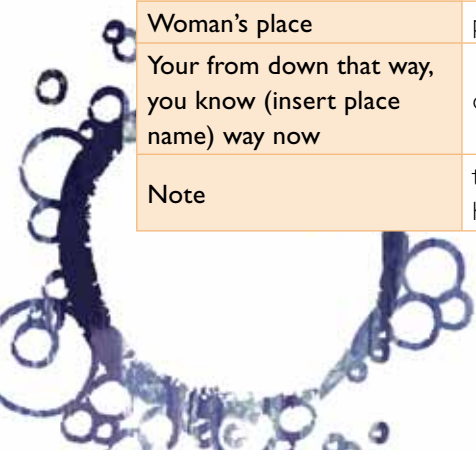


## COUNTRY

This language theme describes continuing relationships with Country before and after the beginnings of colonisation.

<b>Aboriginal</b>	a first nations' person from Australia
<b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>	someone who is not a traditional custodian acknowledging the traditional custodians of the Country they are on
<b>Camp</b>	where you are staying or visiting, as in 'can I camp at you're house tonight?'
<b>Clan</b>	smaller group within a tribe
<b>Countryman</b>	man from the same Country, usually said to another man
<b>Cultural Lore</b>	understanding and respecting cultural practices and knowledge
<b>Dad's</b>	land where dad lives
<b>Desert people</b>	people whose custodial land includes desert, as in 'I'm a desert woman'
<b>Douligha or Doulighal</b>	hairy creature you stay away from
<b>Fresh water people</b>	people whose custodial land includes fresh water, as in, 'I'm fresh water'
<b>From the mish</b>	when your family lived on a mission or land where the mission was
<b>Goin or gorn fishing</b>	spending time with Country or having time out by going fishing
<b>Goin' home or goin' bush</b>	Going to your custodial land, or the land you grew up on
<b>Goin to the mish or mission</b>	goin to the land where there was an Aboriginal protectorate mission
<b>Goonki</b>	spirit or ghost
<b>Gubbah</b>	non-Aboriginal person
<b>Hairy Becker</b>	hairy creature you stay away from
<b>Hairy man</b>	creature you stay away from
<b>Healing place</b>	a place where people go to feel better and improve well-being
<b>I am the land and the land is me</b>	I am part of Country
<b>I got a tap tap</b>	spirit is trying to tell me something
<b>Koorie</b>	an Aboriginal person from Sth Eastern Australia
<b>Land rights</b>	the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to land as traditional custodians and first nations people

Lawman	respected and revered Elder
Massacre map	a map of colonisation massacre sites
Massacre site	a place where Aboriginal people have been killed or murdered as part of colonisation
Men's place	place where only men go can be associated with ceremony
Midden	camping site
Mimi eyes or mimi lights	lights that appear at night to get you lost, people are often warned not to look in their car mirrors at night or they'll see them
Mooki	spirit or ghost
Mookiman	spirit or ghost
Moorie	someone who is Murrie and Koorie
Murrie	someone from Queensland or northern NSW
Mum's	land where mum lives
Names of missions	for example Cumra (Cummeragunja), Fram (Framlingham), Condah (Lake Condah), Tyres (Lake Tyres) etc
Nan's	land where nan lives
Net Nets	small hairy creatures you stay away from
Ocean people	people whose custodial land includes ocean
On Country	being on your custodial land
Pop's	land where pop lives
Only the goanna can hold his oil	goanna skin is the only thing that can hold goanna oil
Possum skin cloak	rug or cloak made from possum skins decorated with symbols about clan, family and Country
River people	people whose custodial land includes river
Fresh water / Salt water people	people whose custodial land includes salt water
Scar tree	tree that has had bark removed for ceremony or implement making
Singing Country	someone who sings or plays music to, about or for their Country
That's whale/emu/roo/goanna/murray cod etc. Country	That Country is known to be associated with this animal
They think they're so good they say their name twice	said jokingly to people whose language group has a repeated word in it, such as, Yorta Yorta or Wemba Wemba.
Torres Strait Islander	a first nations person from the Torres Strait Islands
We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land you are on	placed on websites to acknowledge Country
Welcome to Country	A traditional custodian of the Country providing a welcome
Where <u>you</u> goin'?	where are you going to, what place
White fulla	non-Aboriginal person
Where are you from?	what community do you live in or what Country are you from?
Woman's place	place where only women go can be associated with ceremony
Your from down that way, you know (insert place name) way now	oh you're from (insert place name)
Note	there are many language groups in Victoria more detail on language groups can be found here <a href="http://www.vaclang.org.au">http://www.vaclang.org.au</a>



# MOB



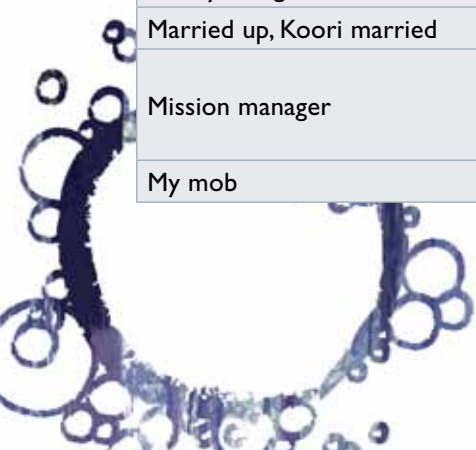
## Mob

This language theme describes identity and relationships between family, Aboriginal communities, the broader Australian and international communities.

Are you mad on that one?	do you have the hots for that person
Aunt	used to address an older female as in "How are you aunt?". Alternately it is used to address a younger female, but not a peer
Auntie	used to address an older female or can be said to a younger female
Auntie girl	someone the same age or younger
Auntie mum	closely related older female
Baby cousin	younger cousin
Baby boy	younger male
Baby girl	younger female
Basket makers	women with knowledge, responsibility and skill of making baskets
Biggest mob	a lot of people
Black out	a lot of Aboriginal people in one place
Blow in	said to undermine a person's identity it is a product of assimilation policies and a form of lateral violence that is considered unacceptable
Boomerang/shield/spear/canoe etc maker	someone who holds knowledge, responsibility and skill in making one or more of these tools
Boorai	baby
Bro	male (peer)
Brotha from another motha	good friend who's like a brother
Bruz	male (peer)
Bub	younger person
Budj	male (peer)
Bud	male, often younger male
Buddah	male (peer)



Buddah boy	boy or man (peer)
Coconut	said to undermine a person's identity it is a product of assimilation policies and a form of lateral violence that is considered unacceptable
Co-op, ya local ogs, health service, ACCHO, legal service, etc.	Aboriginal Community Controlled Services
Corroboree	a big get together (the word originates from the Sydney area)
Cultural design	designing something based on knowledge about your mob or tribal group
Cuz	cousin
Cuzzy wuzzy	cousin
Cousin	can be a first cousin or extended family
Didg player	male who has knowledge, responsibility and skill in playing the didgeridoo
Doner	dad that's not around or isn't a good dad
Elder	respected older person in the community
Fulla	person
Darlen	term of endearment
Emu egg carver	someone who carves designs into emu egg shells
Good fulla	good person
Fringe dweller	Living on the edge of towns or cities because of racism and inequality, sometimes used to express feelings of not being included
Gum leaf player	someone who knows how to make music with a gum leaf
Handbag	husband or boyfriend
Healer	someone who makes you feel better energetically, physically, emotionally or spiritually
I got mobbed	I was surrounded by people who wanted me or I was contacted by a lot of people
I grew/reared him/her up	I looked after that person as a child
I'm a community member 24-7	At work I'm still an Aboriginal community member and what happens at work impacts on my community relationships
I am an Aboriginal woman from (insert tribal name or Country)	My culture is important it is who I am
I am a proud (insert tribal name) man from (inset place)	My culture is important it is who I am
Jambi	cousin or another Aboriginal person
Jambi jobs	asking someone to do a job by emphasising relationship
Jetta	used to address an auntie or older female
Johnny come lately	said to undermine a person's identity, it is a product of assimilation policies and a form of lateral violence that is considered unacceptable
Knock about	hang out or spend time with another person or group of people
Koorified	make something developed by non-Aboriginal suitable for Aboriginal people
Little fulla	child
Love ya long time	I love you a lot
Married up, Koori married	living with a partner without a marriage licence
Mission manager	someone who is doesn't believe Aboriginal people can manage our own affairs and believes they know what is best for Aboriginal people. Creates dependent relationships and undermines self-resourcefulness.
My mob	my family or people



<b>NAIDOC</b>	stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee stems from Aboriginal groups in the 1920's which raised awareness about treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Held in July events celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
<b>Nan</b>	grandmother
<b>Number one gubba</b>	a good non-Aboriginal usually of European origin
<b>One</b>	person, as in 'this one here she's really good'
<b>Oral history</b>	information conveyed between generations as part of oral culture, sometimes recorded in written or multimedia formats
<b>Respected or significant person</b>	may not be an Elder but are well respected in community and generally have some type of authority
<b>Sis</b>	female (peer)
<b>Sista</b>	female (peer)
<b>Sistagirl</b>	female (peer)
<b>Sister from another mister</b>	good friend who's like a sista
<b>Sorry day</b>	held on the 26 May the anniversary of the day the Bringing them home Report was tabled in 1998. The day validates the experiences of removed people and celebrates the strength of those who survived.
<b>Stolen gens</b>	someone from a stolen generation, adopted, fostered or institutionalised as a baby or child
<b>Story teller</b>	someone with expertise in passing on oral culture
<b>Tidda</b>	female (peer)
<b>The community</b>	local Aboriginal people
<b>The old people</b>	ancestors
<b>Them mob</b>	a group of people different to yours
<b>Them young ones</b>	younger people in the community
<b>Therem therem</b>	said to comfort a baby or to make fun of a sookie la la
<b>They're in welfare</b>	they were removed from the family by child protective services
<b>Uncle</b>	used to address an older male as in "How are you uncle?" or can be said to a younger male, but not a peer
<b>Unc</b>	used to address an older male or can be said to a younger male, but not a peer
<b>Visit the family</b>	spend time with family
<b>Whitefulla</b>	non Aboriginal person usually of European origin
<b>Who dat?</b>	Who is that person, how do you know them, are they Aboriginal, where are they from?
<b>Who's that fulla?</b>	Who is that person, are they Aboriginal, where are they from?
<b>Who's your mob or family?</b>	who are you related to
<b>You fullas</b>	you people
<b>You mob</b>	a group of people
<b>You should talk to (insert name) about that</b>	that person is a keeper of knowledge eg healing, culture, genealogy

## GREETINGS

### GREETINGS

Catchya	see you later
Cooooe	call out to let people know your there
Nukkinya	from SA, see you later
Oola or Hoola	hello or call out to let people know your there

## INSULTS

### INSULTS

Boof	clumsy
Boofhead	clumsy head
Coonie cutta	shit head
Coonie head	shit head
Coonie moom	shitty bum
Coonie moom cheeks	shitty bum
Dawg	you're a lowlife
Dendin/Denben	stupid
Dish licker	you're a lowlife
Doot head	F***head
Doopey	stupid
Gwani	stupid
Ignorant	stupid
In your moom	in your bum
Kuthic	stupid or silly
Mission gin	loud or outrageously behaved female

## NAMES AND EXPRESSIONS

### NAMES AND EXPRESSIONS

Bindies	spikey ground cover that prickles your feet or get stuck in your socks (has been adopted generally in Australia now)
Biggest	enormous
Big mobs	a lot
Box	a slab of beer or a cask of wine
Buut	sex
Buutable	sexy
Boobles	testicles
Boo boo	a sore or a bruise
Boondi/waddy	multipurpose tool weapon, hunting implement and can also be used as a digging stick
Boonta	mentally unwell, crazy
Boonti up	pregnant

<b>Catch and kill</b>	an answer for “what’s for dinner?”, it means you can cook your own dinner
<b>Camp dog</b>	pet dog or a skinny or mangy dog
<b>Canji</b>	wee
<b>Carton</b>	slab of beer
<b>Cat</b>	gay male
<b>Coonie</b>	poo
<b>Coolomon</b>	wooden dish or carrier
<b>Crusty</b>	grumpy
<b>Cuddgerie</b>	from NT woman
<b>Cuttin’</b>	leaving
<b>Damper</b>	flour, water and salt mixed and cooked in oven or ashes.
<b>Damper foot</b>	big or flat foot
<b>Dere la</b>	look over there
<b>Dilly bag</b>	carrying bag
<b>Djillawa</b>	toilet
<b>Djunghas</b>	police
<b>Djunghis</b>	police
<b>Doonghi</b>	penis
<b>Doori</b>	sex
<b>Doot</b>	sex
<b>Durrie</b>	from QLD cigarette
<b>Ring my flannel</b>	have a wee (female)
<b>Flagon</b>	alcohol
<b>Flashest</b>	impressive
<b>Fork</b>	camel toe
<b>Gin</b>	Aboriginal woman (sometimes used in a derogatory way)
<b>Goin ere</b>	going here
<b>Goom</b>	cheap alcohol
<b>Goomi</b>	drinker
<b>Grog</b>	alcohol
<b>Grog sick</b>	hung-over
<b>Havin’ a sing-songs</b>	when people get together and sing or make music
<b>Hold the phone</b>	wait
<b>Humpy</b>	home or hut
<b>In the foot falcon</b>	walking
<b>In them days</b>	in the past
<b>I work for the government I sign a form every fortnight</b>	receiving government benefits
<b>Johnny cakes</b>	flour, water and salt mixed, made into small flat cakes and fried or grilled

<b>Koorie grapevine</b>	heard it by word of mouth
<b>Koori Licence</b>	driving or owning a car without a government drivers licence
<b>Kopi</b>	mourning cap made for sorry business
<b>Let my pearl go</b>	have a wee (female)
<b>Lingo</b>	language
<b>Little bit</b>	a small amount
<b>Loon</b>	white person
<b>Mia-mia</b>	house or hut
<b>Mission ankles</b>	skinny ankles
<b>Mook eyed</b>	ghost eyes, scary eyes or cat green eyes
<b>Moola</b>	money
<b>Moom</b>	bum
<b>Moom cheeks</b>	bum cheeks
<b>Moonas</b>	headlice
<b>Mootch or Mutj</b>	vagina
<b>Mootcha or Mutja</b>	vagina
<b>Mosey</b>	cask of wine
<b>Mullagha</b>	from NT man
<b>Not even</b>	no, I don’t believe you or that’s not happening
<b>Old man weed</b>	plant that is used to make a tonic, disinfectant and cure all
<b>On the pension</b>	receiving government benefits.
<b>Pension day</b>	government benefit payday
<b>Pipi</b>	penis
<b>Poonjies</b>	pyjamas
<b>Poor man’s meat</b>	devon
<b>Rations</b>	reference to mission days when Aboriginal people were made reliant on missions for provision of food.
<b>Riding shot gun or I call shot gun</b>	I’m sitting in the front seat of the car
<b>Shair-la</b>	look at that
<b>Survival Day</b>	Held on Australia Day acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have survived colonisation
<b>Swig</b>	drink alcohol
<b>The lock up</b>	police station prison
<b>The Trust</b>	The Koorie Heritage Trust
<b>Tonguing for a drink</b>	thirsty
<b>Way back in the way backs</b>	in the past
<b>Woomba</b>	mentally unwell, crazy
<b>Yandi</b>	marijuana



## LANGUAGE THEMES

### LANGUAGE THEMES

#### Deadly ay?

This language theme describes continuing social lore; the practice of analysis of behaviour<sup>8</sup>, affirmation of deadly or desired behaviour and management of shameful embarrassing or undesired behaviour.

Health, well-being and behaviour are strongly linked and Aboriginal communication has a strong focus on behaviour. Yarning is a common method of reflecting and analysing behaviour; people yarn to reflect on their own and others actions<sup>9 10 11</sup>. Rather than gossip, this is a way of affirming and reinforcing cultural practices and healthy yarning thoughtfully supports self-development and development of others.

Deadly or desired behaviour is celebrated and affirmed, for instance, by saying to someone or to a group 'you're too deadly' when they have done something good. Collective culture, as a desired behaviour, is often reinforced with humour. For instance, if peers are observed to be acting like they are more important than others they may be told, 'ay big shot now' or 'shair' or 'at the end of the day we're all just blackfellas'. This is not to say that individual achievements are not important and desired, the undesired behaviour is more about when a person thinks they are more important than others.

Shameful or undesired behaviour is often addressed using hyperbolic humour via an over the top threat, such as, 'I'm gonna flog you if you keep doing that', 'gorn den', 'keep going' or 'come at me bruz'. The humour element comes from the knowledge that the person is being over the top, in reality they would not flog you or have a physical confrontation over that particular act. Rather the person is letting you know they will become angry if the behaviour doesn't stop. Occasionally this language can be used as an actual threat but angry tone and circumstance make this obvious and common sense. Shameful behaviour can also be pointed out by an older person, Elder or peer, depending on the circumstance. Sometimes this can be done with subtle body language, such as, eye contact.

If an Aboriginal person feels shame about a situation they may practice certain behaviour. For example in the presence of someone in power, such as a teacher or police officer, a person may feel shame, be nervous speaking and keep quiet. Another example can be if a person is in pain and feels shame about it, they may keep quiet. In these cases it is important to listen to people's body language and silences. Ways of reducing shame can be to engage an Aboriginal support person, depending on the setting; this could be a family member or an Aboriginal employee, such as, an Aboriginal liaison officer or an Aboriginal Health Worker. The person may also need more time to develop trusting relationships and reduce shame.

Resource relationships are described in this language theme. Inappropriate resource behaviour is described as when resources are taken from others without return investment. This is generally seen as negative practice and is described by the words 'bot' or a 'cadja'. Other inappropriate resource relationships can exist whereby benefactors, described as or 'mission managers', gain pleasure from helping Aboriginal people at the expense of undermining self-

resourcefulness and creating dependent relationships. This can reinforce stereotypes that Aboriginal people are unable to self-manage. This differs from programs developed for Aboriginal people which build resilience and self-management. Building and making accessible skills and knowledge for self-resourcefulness are important for wellbeing<sup>12</sup>. Concernedly, Institutionalisation which reduces self-resourcefulness<sup>13</sup> continues to occur with higher rates for Aboriginal people, such as, incarceration<sup>14</sup> and children being placed in out of home care<sup>15</sup>. How resources are managed with Aboriginal people needs to be well thought out to ensure respectful relationships and empowerment.

Continuing disruption, dismissal and cultural blindness of Aboriginal practices has had negative effects<sup>16</sup>. One of these is internalised oppression<sup>17</sup> or when members of an oppressed group unconsciously accept and live out the inaccurate myths and stereotypes applied to the group. In this context language can be used to undermine someone's integrity rather than support the person's development. For example, a person may internalise a belief that Aboriginal people are unsuccessful and misuse collective language, 'they just think they're a big shot now', to undermine success in a case where a person is not acting in a way where they think they are better than others.

In small well-networked Aboriginal communities the practice of social lore is important and cultural blindness to its existence can create further trauma and barriers to well-being.

## Country

This language theme describes continuing relationships with Country before and after the beginnings of colonisation.

People name and identify themselves by Country or Countries, for instance, Gunai Kurnai or Yorta Yorta. Other ways people express connection to their Country is to refer land forms on Country, such as, we're river people or we're salt water people. Understanding, respecting and acknowledging the country a person lives, works and plays on is a common day to day practice and way of being in the world. Locally Aboriginal communities will have many more stories about Country and names of particular areas. What has been captured here are only some of the terms used in Victoria.

A person having access to understanding of and connection to their Country supports identity and well-being<sup>18 19</sup>. In Victoria some Aboriginal people live on their Country while others engage with Country in many different ways. Aboriginal people may: visit their Country, attend events or ceremonies on Country<sup>20 21</sup>, learn about their Country through Elders stories recorded in multimedia formats<sup>22 23</sup>, learn about their Country through organisations established to teach in this area<sup>24 25</sup>, possess photographs or artwork relating to Country<sup>26</sup> or use other means to connect to Country.

References to Country may relate to sorry business and traumatic history, for instance, local massacre sites where Aboriginal people were murdered during colonisation. Significant parts of Country may be emotionally complicated, such as, sites where missions were established. These can have a traumatic history but also may contain important family history and may be places where people still live.

The language list describes how people are constantly in relationship with Country. For instance, acknowledging and having awareness of the language group and ancestors of land that people is on, whether that be the persons own Country or the Country of another person.

## Mob

This language theme describes identity and relationships between family, Aboriginal communities, the broader Australian and international communities.

Health, wellbeing and mob are inextricably linked<sup>27</sup>. Mob can have a positive influence on health by providing social connection, cultural immersion and exposure to knowledge and practices that support well-being<sup>28</sup>. For instance, a person knowing who their family members are and how they are related to people, strengthens identity and confidence, particularly as they are able to answer the question 'who's your mob?'

Institutionalisation and family separation can create barriers that prevent people connecting with and developing their mob knowledge. For instance, children in out of home care or Aboriginal children who have non-Aboriginal parents who for many reasons may not have opportunity to have contact with their Aboriginal family. As mob connections carry knowledge, skills and understanding these children and their future children may experience loss and trauma through

these experiences. Denial of colonial impact and interruption to Mob relationships can have negative influences on health by providing relationships that are toxic to well-being and reinforce behaviour that undermines well-being<sup>29</sup>. For example, assimilation policies aimed to eliminate or diminish Aboriginal identity and culture. Some people internalise this racism and attempt to undermine or lessen someone's Aboriginal identity, such as, calling someone a 'Johnny come lately'. Instead of naming assimilation as the problem the Aboriginal person is problemised, essentially recreating assimilation and discouraging people from identifying as Aboriginal.

In closely networked, small communities, where people are often related, knowing your role and relationship with others in different situations is crucial. For instance, Aboriginal employees often have complicated working environments where they have an organisational and a community relationship. The receptionist may be a well-respected Elder and a project officer may be a local traditional custodian. Employees may be related to other employees and clients. Aboriginal people often need to be mindful of these multiple roles and develop different strategies and behaviour to navigate these relationships. Non-Aboriginal people may be culturally blind to these multiple relationships.

Mob includes relationships with non-Aboriginal people. Reconciliation is important for Aboriginal well-being in many ways and Aboriginal people acknowledge and appreciate non-Aboriginal people who practice this well, for instance, by saying 'they're a good mob' or 'number one gubba' indicates a culturally safe person or group that supports wellbeing. Understanding concepts about mob is important to any work with Aboriginal people. For instance, it is crucial to respect and listen to Aboriginal people with mob expertise to know the best way to navigate and engage with the diversity of Aboriginal people within communities. Not all Aboriginal people have mob expertise; those that do are usually older, more networked people or have been particularly mentored and trained to develop skills to navigate mob relationships<sup>30</sup>.

Inclusion of mob concepts assists create spaces that provide improved cultural safety, access to services, social networks and essentially supports Aboriginal wellbeing<sup>31</sup>.



# ENDNOTES

1. Halliday, M.A.K. 1977. Text as semantic choice in social contexts. Reprinted in full in *Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse*. Volume 2 in the *Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday*. Edited by J, J. Webster. London and New York: Continuum. pp. 23–81.
2. Roberts, F. 2007. *Aboriginal English in the courts kit*. Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Fitzroy.
3. Eades, D. 1988. They Don't Speak an Aboriginal Language, Or Do They? [online]. In: Keen, Ian (Editor). *Being Black: Aboriginal Cultures in 'Settled' Australia*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press: 97-115. Availability: <<http://search.informit.com.au>>
4. Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). pp. 77-101.
5. Atkinson, J. 2002, *Trauma trails, recreating song lines : the transgenerational effects of trauma in Indigenous Australia*, Spinifex Press, North Melbourne. ISBN: 1876756225
6. Eades, D. They Don't Speak an Aboriginal Language, Or Do They? 1998. [online]. In: Keen, Ian (Editor). *Being Black: Aboriginal Cultures in 'Settled' Australia*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press: 97-115. <<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=393266898588734;res=ELIND>> ISBN: 0855751851. [cited 19 Nov 13].
7. Silvia, A. Politeness in social interaction and indirect speech acts. Undated. [https://www.academia.edu/2344547/Politeness\\_and\\_Indirect\\_Speech\\_Act](https://www.academia.edu/2344547/Politeness_and_Indirect_Speech_Act). [Cited 19th Nov 2013]
8. Conner, M. and Norman, P. 2005. *Predicting health behaviour*. Open University Press.
9. Adams, K. & Faulkhead, S. 2012. This is not a guide to Indigenous research partnerships. *Information, communication and society*. Vol.15, Iss. 7,
10. Bulman, J., & Hayes, F. 2010. *Yarning Spaces: Dealing with depression and anxiety among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males the Proper Way*. LaTrobe University, Bundoora.
11. Bessarab, D., and Ng'andu, B. 2010. "Yarning about yarning as a legitimate method in Indigenous research." *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* 3.1: 37-50.
12. Tsey, K., Whiteside, M., Deemal, A. and Gibson, T. 2003. Social determinants of health, the 'control factor' and the Family Wellbeing Empowerment Program. *Australasian Psychiatry*. 11:s1, S34-S39
13. Krieg, A. 2006. Aboriginal incarceration: health and social impacts. *Medical Journal of Australia*. 184 (10). 534-536.
14. Victorian Department of Justice. 2006. *Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2*. Victorian Government Melbourne.
15. Victorian Department of Human Services. 2002. *Aboriginal Child Placement Principle Guide*. Victorian Government.
16. *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice*. 2012. Editors: Nola Purdie, Pat Dudgeon and Roz Walker. Australian Government, Canberra
17. Alleyne, A. 2005. Invisible injuries and silent witnesses: The shadow of racial oppression in workplace contexts. *Psychodynamic Practice* Vol. 11, Iss. 3, 2005
18. Kingsley, J., Townsend, M., Phillips, R. & Aldous, D. 2009. "If the land is healthy ... it makes the people healthy": The relationship between caring for Country and health for the Yorta Yorta Nation, Boonwurrung and Bangerang Tribes. *Health and Place*. 15(1):291–299
19. Burgess, C. P., Johnston, F. H., Bowman, D. M. J. S. & Whitehead, P. J. 2007. Healthy Country: Healthy People? Exploring the health benefits of Indigenous natural resource management. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 29 (2), 117-122.
20. City of Port Phillip. 2013. *Yalukit Wilum Ngargee: People Place Gathering*. Accessed 6th of March 2013. [Yalukit Wilum Ngargee: People Place Gathering](http://www.yalukitwilumngargee.com.au/)
21. Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Corporation. 2012. Accessed 5th of March 2013. *Three Fires*. <http://gegac.sidelong.com.au/>
22. Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Film Victoria & Koorie Heritage Trust. 2004. *Mission voices*. <http://www.abc.net.au/mission-voices>
23. ABC News. 28th of November 2012. Accessed March 6th 2013. *Aboriginal Elders' stories on Iphone app*. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-11-28/aboriginal-elders27-stories-on-iphone-app/4396750>
24. Koorie Heritage Trust. Undated. Accessed 6th of March 2013. <http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com/>
25. Parks Victoria. Undated. Tower Hill. Accessed 6th of March 2013. <http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/tower-hill-w.r>
26. Culture Victoria. 2010. Accessed 6th of March 2013. *Possum skin cloaks*. <http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/possum-skin-cloaks/>
27. Holmes, W., Stewart, P., Garrow, A., Anderson, I. & Thorpe, L. Researching Aboriginal health: experience from a study of urban young people's health and well-being, *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 54, Issue 8, April 2002, Pages 1267-1279, ISSN 0277-9536, 10.1016/S0277-9536(01)00095-8.
28. Tsey, K. and Every, A. 2000, Evaluating Aboriginal empowerment programs: the case of Family WellBeing. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 24: 509–514. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-842X.2000.tb00501.x
29. Tsey, K. and Every, A. 2000. Evaluating Aboriginal empowerment programs: the case of Family WellBeing. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 24: 509–514. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-842X.2000.tb00501.x
30. Adams, K. & Merylyn, S. 2001. *Keepin Ya Mob Healthy: Aboriginal Community Participation and Aboriginal Health Worker Training in Victoria*. *Australian Journal of Primary Health* 7, 116–119.
31. Hayman, N.E., White, N.E. & Spurling, G.K. 2009. Improving Indigenous patients' access to mainstream health services: the Inala experience. *Med J Aust* 2009. 190 (10): 604-606.