

Outer East Koorie Education Workforce Christmas Newsletter

16th December, 2024



The Outer East KEW acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country and recognise our continuing connection to land, sea, culture, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Welcome to our term 4 **Christmas Edition** newsletter. This edition is packed with merriment and celebrations with 'Walk on Country', Acknowledgements, Yarning Circles, Mural, Koorie Conversations Conference (KCC), Yarning up about Early Years and upcoming holiday events.

Throughout this newsletter the term 'Koorie' is used inclusively as a matter of local protocol and refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria. 'Koorie is a contemporary collective or group term. Aboriginal people, whose traditional lands and waters exist within the boundaries that today frame the state of Victoria, are often collectively called Koorie peoples or Koories' (VAEAI 2016).

A reminder that our KESOs will be on leave during the school holidays starting from Friday 20th of December 2024 and will return to the office in term 1 on Tuesday 28th of January 2025. You can reach out to the KEC at during this time.

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Walk on Country



Badger Creek Primary School



In October staff from Badger Creek Primary School were incredibly grateful to spend the morning with Darren Wandin, local Wurundjeri man and parent at Badger Creek Primary school. We went for a Walk on Country at Badger Creek Weir.

Darren spoke of the importance of stories and the different stories surrounding Badger Creek and its history. Story telling connected with many of our staff. As teachers, we hone this craft, it is what builds relationships with our students.

Darren told us stories of his people and their connection to the land, how they care for it and what resources can be found within. These stories gave us a greater understanding and helped to build our knowledge that we look forward to celebrating with our students.



An important message from the day was connection to places and people. This connection is what we strive to build within our Badger Creek Community every day. We look forward to future learning together.



Beautiful Country! Merry Christmas BCPS!



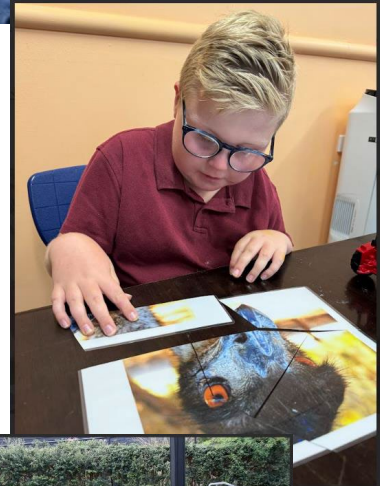
Yarning Circle

Eastern Ranges School



Over the last term, Aboriginal students from Eastern Ranges School have had the opportunity to join a weekly Yarning Circle run by our Marrung Lead, Tarryn.

Students have predominantly been focusing on getting to know each other, painting, listening to music, puzzles, games, reading stories written by indigenous authors or about Aboriginal history, games and other sensory-enhancing experiences.



Yarning Circle



Eastern Ranges School

Students have worked hard to produce artwork that will be displayed as our new Acknowledgement in our front office.



Acknowledgement Plaque



Eastern Ranges School

Happy Holidays to All



Yarning Circle



Knox Park Primary School

Mark Hanson, Principal at Knox Park Primary School was very proud to share a photo of their Yarning Circle which was part of the 'Hands on Learning' group project in term 4. They are still not finished but are looking to invite significant others out to see this in person and meet some of the team.

Below they have their proposed wording for a plaque that will be installed in the area.



Yarning Circle

This Yarning Circle has been made possible by the generous support of the Knox City Council. The contribution has allowed the Knox Park Community Connections Club to create a special space for cultural learning, storytelling, and community connection.

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

With Much Respect



Koorie Conversations Conference – KCC Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow



KCC at Mantra Lorne Hotel

We would like to acknowledge the KCC artwork 'Inclusion' by Joel Campbell and the 2025 KCC theme 'Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow' by Thomas Harrison.

The Koorie Conversations Conference (KCC) provides the Victorian Department of Education's Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) the opportunity to gather and build their professional capability through strengthening relationships and sharing effective practice.

The conference supports the implementation of the Marrung Education Plan 2016-2026 and the KCC is an in-person event held annually in Term 4.



This year, the KEW teams ventured to the peaceful retreat of the Mantra Hotel in Lorne. The official opening was led by a Traditional Owner from the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, setting a meaningful tone for the event.



Following an informal dinner, the group enjoyed a lively Trivia Night hosted by April Clarke and Anjee-lee Bamblett from VAEAI where Mob had the chance to test their knowledge of 80's music, sparking plenty of fun and friendly competition. It was a night filled with energy and camaraderie showcasing the vibrant spirit of the KEW teams.



Day 1 the morning session of the Conference began with an opening address by Angela Singh, Acting Deputy Secretary First Nations Strategy, Policy and Programs (FNSPP).

David Howes, Deputy Secretary of Schools and Regional Services followed with a presentation analysing data on Koorie students' numeracy and literacy outcomes, comparing their results to those of non-Aboriginal students. *The findings from the data were highly encouraging.*

Our first keynote speaker, Kamarra Bell-Wykes, Education Consultant and Theatre Maker, shared her inspiring and honest life story offering an enlightening and thought-provoking perspective.

Following a brief morning teak break, we had regional presentations from NEVR, NWVR, SWVR and SEVR. The initiatives and projects being undertaken in these regions were truly exciting and inspiring.

Angela Swindle joined Brooke Kogelman, Project Manager for the Lilydale and Yarra Valley District Education Plan, to present at the conference, sharing insights into the project, its outcomes and the successes celebrated.



Koorie Conversations Conference – KCC Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow



The afternoon sessions comprised of concurrent workshops which included Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST), Communities of Practice (CoPs) and Leading Conversations with Confidence ‘.

Dinner and Entertainment’ was the next item on the agenda but no one was prepared for what was to come after our evening mealYESSSS

Koorieoke

Among the many stars who made guest appearances were Slash, appearing solo without his Guns N Roses bandmates, and the star attraction, none other than the legendary Michael Jackson!!!



Names withheld to ensure anonymity - LOL



Koorie Conversations Conference – KCC

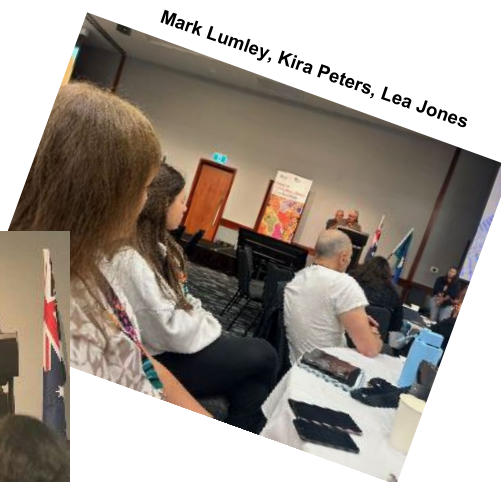
Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow



Day 2 featured an impressive line up of keynote speakers including Gail Lister, Manager First Peoples Self-Determination & Reform – Department of Transport & Planning, Tammy Walsh, Acting Executive Director of Koorie Outcomes Division, Tom Cazaly, Executive Treaty Coordinator with FNSPP each updating us on Self Determination in Education Reform and Treaty, Professor Mark Rose from VAEAI and Angela Singh, Acting Deputy Secretary of FNSPP who also provided updates. After lunch, Mat Lillyst from Self Determination in Education joined us, leading into the conference Yarn Up and wrap up sessions.



Shane Mitchell, Angela Swindle, Brooke Kogelman



Mark Lumley, Kira Peters, Lea Jones



Angela Swindle & Brooke Kogelman Project Manager



Shane Mitchell KEM on stage

Deadly work KCC Working Group



What's Happening in Schools

Kilsyth Primary School Mural



Kilsyth Primary School recently had the privilege of working with Merilyn Duff, a respected Aboriginal artist, to create a stunning mural that celebrates Indigenous culture and community. The collaborative project, which involved students, staff, and Merilyn, is now a vibrant centrepiece of the school, showcasing the rich traditions and stories of Australia's First Nations people.

Merilyn guided the students through the creative process, sharing her knowledge of Aboriginal art and the significance of its symbols and patterns. Under her mentorship, students learned about connection to Country, the importance of storytelling, and how art can bring people together. The mural features bold, colourful designs inspired by nature, Dreamtime stories, and the students' interpretations of community and belonging.

This project was more than an artistic endeavour; it was an educational journey that fostered respect and understanding of Aboriginal culture. By engaging with Merilyn, the students gained a deeper appreciation of Indigenous heritage and its importance in shaping Australia's identity.

Kilsyth Primary School is proud of this collaborative effort and grateful to Merilyn Duff for sharing her talent, wisdom, and passion. The mural will stand as a lasting reminder of the power of art in connecting communities and celebrating culture.



Artist: Merilyn and School Principal Daniel Gooding



Merilyn sharing the story of the artwork

Merry Christmas Everyone



What's Happening in Schools

Bimbadeen Heights Primary School



Bimbadeen Heights Primary School has taken a meaningful step towards deepening its connection to First Nations culture by creating a new [Acknowledgement of Country](#) video. This inspiring initiative showcases the school's commitment to honouring the Traditional Owners of the land and fostering respect for Indigenous heritage.



Bimbadeen Heights Primary School.

The video features Bimbadeen students delivering the Acknowledgment of Country in a heartfelt and engaging way. Set against the backdrop of the school grounds and local natural landscapes, it highlights the beauty of the land and its significance to the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the area.

The project was a collaborative effort, with students playing an active role in scripting and presenting the acknowledgment. They worked closely with teachers and local Indigenous community to ensure the video accurately and respectfully represents the importance of Country, culture, and community.



What's Happening in Schools



The new Acknowledgment of Country video ensures that respect for Indigenous culture remains a central part of Bimbadeen's values.

By embracing projects like this, the school continues to promote reconciliation, education, and unity.

Click here to view the video: [Homepage - Bimbadeen Heights Primary School](#)

Have a Holly Jolly Christmas



Early Years



Wantirna Kinder Haven

At Wantirna Kinder Haven they have been deeply committed to fostering reconciliation across all classrooms. They are thrilled to announce that their Reconciliation Action Plan has been officially published and approved.

Highlights of their reconciliation journey include creating vibrant artwork of the Rainbow Serpent, incorporating a daily Acknowledgement of Country, celebrating NAIDOC Week and engaging in active painting activities using ochre.

Additionally, their educators are participating in a training session with Yarn Strong Sista, developing and enhancing their skills and knowledge to authentically embed Aboriginal culture into their centre and classrooms.



Deadly Work Haven Kinder Wantirna

Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten

Koorie Kids Shine was launched by the Victorian Government to help promote participation by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in kindergarten.

From 2025, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to Pre-Prep, with programs across Victoria increasing from 15 to 30 hours each week. In 2026, between 16 and 25 hours of Pre-Prep will be available statewide for Victorian children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Find out more here: [Four-Year-Old Kindergarten is becoming Pre-Prep \(opens in a new window\)](#).

To be eligible, your child must turn 3 or 4 years old by 30 April in the year they go to kindergarten.



Santa is coming Bubups!



School Holiday Fun

School Holiday Programs



OONAH
ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Surf's Up! Fam Day

Grab your board shorts and shades because it's time to catch some waves with the fam!

Oonah are partnering with Surfing Victoria to bring a fun-filled day of surfing that the whole family can enjoy. We will be providing bus transport to and from Inverloch for registered families, with light lunch provided.

Please note, this is not a child-minding event. All children must be supervised by a parent/carer.

20th January 2025

Time: Bus transport 8:45 am Gather at Oonah
Depart 9am sharp
5pm Arrive back at Oonah

Location: Inverloch Surf Lifesaving Club
163 Surf Parade, Inverloch Vic 3996

RSVP: By 9th January 2025
events@oonah.org.au
Nikki 0487 888 655

What to bring:

- Swimmers
- Towel
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Snacks
- Sunnies
- Change of Clothes
- Wet Bag/Plastic Bag

VICTORIAN INDIGENOUS SURFING PROGRAM

SURFING VICTORIA

Merry Christmas All



Keeping Culture



4Dec24 - Keeping
Culture - WEEKLY REL

PDF version attached. Links embedded in the headings. Thanks to Community for sharing their initiatives. New Term events added to 'Term 4 Activities' link.

- [24-hour telephone support services](#)
- [FOSTER CARING? Learn More.](#)
- [VACCA On Country Newsletter \(December 2024\)](#)

Stories

Language - [RECLAIMING LANGUAGE - YouTube Shorts Series](#)

4-part YouTube shorts series exploring Losing, Discovering, Remembering and Sharing Language. With Wurundjeri linguist Brooke Wandin. Each video is less than 90 seconds. For young viewers.

Deadly Story - [The Archaeology of KUTIKINA CAVE](#)

Deep in the side of a large limestone cliff like Kutikina Cave. Located 35 m from the eastern bank of the Lower Franklin Rive and 10 km from where it joins the Gordon River, this cave was home to a high number of artefacts helping to prevent the damming of the Franklin River.

Story - [12 Days of Bush Christmas Book](#)

12 Days of Bush Christmas is a children's picture book that adapts the lyrics of yuletide classic 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' with a festive Koorie spin.

3KnD - [Unveiling of Uncle Archie Roach & Aunty Ruby Hunter Statues](#)

3KND attended the unveiling of the Archie Roach & Ruby Hunter statues in Atherton Gardens Fitzroy.

N.I.T. - [Statue of Indigenous icons unveiled in Fitzroy](#)

The legacy of "two icons" of Australian music took another step on Saturday with the unveiling of a statue of Archie Roach AC AM and Ruby Hunter.

N.I.T. - [Calls for Indigenous Victorians interested in health and wellbeing careers](#)

The peak body for Indigenous community-controlled health organisations in Victoria has launched a new campaign calling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into health and wellbeing careers.

Treaty - [News coverage of Treaty negotiations \[Video\]](#)

Source: ABC News

Resource - [Embrace Kids - Building better body image](#)

EMBRACE KIDS is an uplifting film by Taryn Brumfitt, which brings together a vibrant collection of stories from young people and famous friends alike, who share their experiences about body image, bullying, gender identity, advocacy and representation.

Indig X - [Pitch an Article](#)

Do you have an idea for a story or article? Pitch it directly to Indigenous X via this online form.

Yoorrook – [Make a Submission](#)

Make your submission. Closing 30 November. Last days.



Keeping Culture

Youth Events & Notices

EOi - Receiving the School Saving Bonus - VIC

A one-off \$400 to help families cover the costs of their kids' school uniforms, textbooks, excursions and activities.

EOi - Casting Call - First Nations Girls Aged 8 - 11 years - AUS

To play lead roles in Warwick Thornton's new feature film, 'Wolfram'. Shooting in Alice Springs April/May/June 2025 No acting experience necessary but willing to have a go. All PAID roles.

Support - ATAR 24/7 Hotline for Koorie Students - VIC

Toorong Marnong's ATAR hotline is now available for Koorie Students. Staffed by Indigenous academics and university support staff, our 24/7 hotline is here to assist you with any questions or concerns regarding your pathway into university.

NOW OPEN - Kids Active Voucher Program - VIC

Eligible children may receive up to \$200 to cover the costs for membership and registration fees. Applications will open in Spring 2024.

10 Jan - Youth Basketball Clinic - WANTIRNA SOUTH

Join us and the Koorie Academy for a fun Basketball clinic for young mob Suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 16-25.

15 Jan - Aus Open 2025 First Nations Ballpark Day - MELBOURNE

The AO Ballpark presented by Emirates is the go-to destination for families with kids ages 3-8 years old. The Hot Shots Tennis program gives kids the chance to practice skills, test their serves with speed tracking, and compete in friendly matches on mini courts.

Community Events & Notices

Community Events & Notices

EOi - Casting Call for new Warwick Thornton Film - AUS

Seeking Indigenous Men 25 - 38. No experience needed. Two lead roles in a feature film with Director, Warwick Thornton.

Support - Djirra's Reverse Advent Calendar

Djirra has once again teamed up with other Koori orgs including Elizabeth Morgan House, Boorndawan Willam and Yappera so together we can deliver hampers to Aboriginal women and children who are doing it tough this Christmas.

Stay Safe, Stay Strong, Stay Deadly!



Local Community Organisations

Regardless of where we live, or who our mob is, we can all go through tough times. You and your loved ones can find support through your local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Oonah Aboriginal Health & Community Services	http://hicsa.org.au/
Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place - Ringwood	https://www.mmigp.org.au/
VACCA – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	https://www.vacca.org/
Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service	https://www.bwahs.com.au/
Eastern Health Aboriginal Health Service	https://www.easternhealth.org.au/site/item/127-aboriginal-health
VAEAI	VAEAI – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
Orange Door – Croydon, Box Hill, Heidelberg	https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/oema@orangedoor.vic.gov.au 1800 271 150 Walk in 4-16 Devon Street Croydon

To all our Mob



Contact Us

Acting Koorie Education Coordinator (KEC)



**Lea Jones, Yorta Yorta, Ngurai illam Wurrung
And Direct Descendant of Coranderrk**
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Kelsey Leatham, Palawa
Dandenong Ranges Network
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From our families to yours

*Merry
Christmas*

Koorie Education Workforce (KEW)

You can contact our team if you need any advice or support using our details on the previous page or our team email at nevr.koorie.outereast@education.vic.gov.au. You can also reach out to your kindergarten, primary school, or secondary school if there is anything that you or your child would like to talk about, or you can visit the [Department of Education](#) website for information.

What we do:

1 x Koorie Education Coordinator (KEC)

- Assistance to early years services, schools, parents and community with Koorie cultural inclusion, Koorie education guidance and support through their region.
- Support to implement education initiatives to enhance inclusive Koorie specific practices.

5 x Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)

- Advice to early years services and schools about culturally inclusive learning environments.
- Coordination of services to facilitate improved engagement of Koorie children and young people.

Have a Holly Jolly Christmas





VICTORIA ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION INC

VAEAI is a state-wide Koorie Community organisation consisting of eight regions. These regions are divided based on traditional networks with several Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) within each region. Click [here](#) for further details.

Framed around significant events throughout the calendar year, the interactive [VAEAI Koorie Calendar4.pdf](#) has been developed by VAEAI to assist educators and learners alike. The Calendar draws the learner to Victorian Koorie voices, stories, and achievements, and features Koorie leaders, artists, authors, playwrights and more. The Calendar is updated annually and can assist schools in planning for key events and locating information about Victorian Koorie cultures, histories, and perspectives. Designed to be viewed online and printed on A3 paper for planning.

Any queries or feedback about these resources, please contact vaso@vaeai.org.au.

LAECG (Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group)

LAECGs operate to support parents of Aboriginal students to discuss Koorie education initiatives within their local community. To find out more information and to participate contact your local LAECG Chairperson:

Lea Jones email: lea.jones@education.vic.gov.au

