Welcome to the first Koorie Perspectives in the Curriculum Bulletin for 2018. Focused on Aboriginal Histories and Cultures, we aim to highlight Victorian Koorie voices, stories, achievements, leadership and connections, and suggest a range of activities and resources around key dates for starters. Of course any of these topics can be taught at any time throughout the school year and we encourage you to use these bulletins and VAEAI’s Koorie Education Calendar for ongoing planning and ideas.

In this bulletin, you will find Victorian Curriculum links to Content Descriptions. Select the code and it will take you directly to the Victorian Curriculum site with additional elaborations.

We know that Aboriginal people are the best equipped and the most appropriate people to teach Indigenous knowledge. Therefore wherever possible you should seek to involve your local Koorie community in education programs that involve Aboriginal perspectives. For some guidance about working with your local Koorie community to enrich your teaching program, see VAEAI’s Protocols for Koorie Education in Primary and Secondary Schools.

For a summary of key Learning Areas and Content Descriptions directly related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Victorian Curriculum F-10, select the link for an UPDATED 2018 copy of the VCAA’s: Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

February

The 4th February marks the anniversary of the famous Cummeragunja Walk-off of 1939.

On that historic day, over 200 residents of the Cummeragunja Mission walked off the mission station in protest against conditions at the station, and crossed the Murray River into Victoria, leaving the state of NSW. At the time, this was in contravention of rules set by the NSW Aboriginal Protection Board restricting the movement of Aboriginal people. Many settled in Barmah, Echuca, Shepparton, Mooroopna and Fitzroy (Melbourne).
Cummeragunja lies on the NSW side of Dhungala – the Murray River – on the traditional lands of the Bangerang and Yorta Yorta peoples. The river is hugely important to the people and has sustained them for thousands of years.

The now archived Mission Voices website developed by the Koorie Heritage Trust is a great multimedia resource. Listen to the late Bangerang Elder Uncle Sandy Atkinson and other descendants of Cummeragunja discuss life in the day, belonging and connection to place. (‘Real Player’ free software may need to be downloaded’).

With younger students (years 5-8) explore the Voices of Cummerangunja links and read or listen to the late Bangerang Elder Uncle Sandy Atkinson talk about conservation practices. What evidence is there that people lived in harmony with their land? Provide at least one specific example of their conservation practices. (‘Real Player free software may need to be downloaded’).

Dharmalan Dhana (ANU, 2014) by George and Robynne Nelson and available in many formats tells the story of a man’s 73-year search for the story of his Aboriginal and Indian ancestors and contains a lot of deeply personal and historical information about Maloga and Cummeragunja Missions both before and after the walk-off.

Pecan Summer is Australia’s first Indigenous opera, written by Yorta Yorta soprano, Deborah Cheetham. The opera is based on the events surrounding the walk-off from Cummeragunja mission in 1939. Deborah Cheetham began writing Pecan Summer in 2008, and the opera premiered on country in Mooroopna (VIC) in 2010. The success of Pecan Summer led to the formation of Short Black Opera Company, a national not-for-profit opera company devoted to the development of Indigenous opera singers.

With students research the opera Pecan Summer by Yorta Yorta composer Deborah Cheetham. A filmed version of the opera Pecan Summer is now available through SBS On Demand and quite a number of video clips and news reports have been uploaded to youtube. Further explore the life of Deborah Cheetham and her journey to be an opera singer and author.
For a **Murray River feature**, focus some learning activities around Koorie peoples, languages and stories of the Murray River region, such as the **Bangerang Dreaming story** *about the creation of Dungala (Tongala), aka the Murray River, and the famous Bunyip story.*

Behind the News (BTN) have produced a short documentary that looks at life along Australia’s largest river system, the Murray River. **River Kids** is narrated by Tyrone, a young SA Ngarrindjeri boy, who introduces us to people who depend on it.

*Depending on the region or the language group, there are a number of Creation Stories about the Murray River. For some good background material: **Ponde the Murray Cod — River Creator.**

**Did you know** that the legendary **Bunyip** is said to get its name from the Wemba Wemba and Wergaia languages of the Murray River Region?

**Snake and Water-lilies by Ralph Nicholls (Koorie Heritage Trust AH2527)**

**With older students**, explore the ecological, spiritual, economic and aesthetic significance of the Murray-Darling basin and approaches to custodial responsibility, environmental management and sustainability. **Murray River Country: An ecological dialogue with traditional owners** by geographer Jessica Weir comes with downloadable **teaching notes** and discusses the water crisis from a unique perspective – the intimate stories of love and loss from the viewpoints of Aboriginal peoples who know the inland rivers as their traditional country.


**Victorian Curriculum: History**

- VCHHK094 The different experiences and perspectives of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants, women, and children: History 5-6
- VCHHK134 Intended and unintended causes and effects of contact and extension of settlement of European power(s), including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: History 9-10
- VCHHC123 Sequence significant events in chronological order to support analysis of the causes and effects of these events and identify the changes they brought about: History 9-10
- VCHHC122 Analyse and corroborate sources and evaluate their accuracy, usefulness and reliability: History 9-10
Analyse the long-term causes, short term triggers and the intended and unintended effects of significant events and developments: History 9-10

Analyze the different perspectives of people in the past and evaluate how these perspectives are influenced by significant events, ideas, location, beliefs and values: History 9-10

Identify and evaluate patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia: History 9-10

Evaluate the historical significance of an event, idea, individual or place: History 9-10

Discuss the role of political parties and independent representatives in Australia’s system of government, including the formation of governments, and explain the process through which government policy is shaped and developed: Civics & Citizenship 9-10

Analyze how citizens’ political choices are shaped, including the influence of the media: Civics & Citizenship 9-10

Discuss challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society: Civics & Citizenship 9-10

Examine the influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity and how ideas about Australian identity may be influenced by global events: Civics & Citizenship 9-10

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Understand that English is one of many languages spoken in Australia and that different languages may be spoken by family, classmates and community: English 2

Understand that spoken, visual and written forms of language are different modes of communication with different features and their use varies according to the audience, purpose, context and cultural background: English 2

Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created: English 2

Discuss different texts on a similar topic, identifying similarities and differences between the texts: English 2

Understand that Standard Australian English is one of many social dialects used in Australia, and that while it originated in England it has been influenced by many other languages: English 4

Understand that different social and geographical dialects or accents are used in Australia in addition to Standard Australian English: English 6

Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts: English 7

Explore the interconnectedness of Country and Place, People, Identity and Culture in texts including those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors: English 8
The 1965 Freedom Rides

One lesson we can all draw from the Freedom Ride is the importance of speaking out against injustice, challenging oppression and discrimination, and doing it now.

Ann Curthoys, honorary professor, author, and original freedom-rider.

On February 13, 1965 a group of Sydney University students called Students for Aboriginal Rights (SAFA), led by Aboriginal students Charles Perkins and Gary Williams, began a trip that would change Australian history. Their journey was both an attempt to emulate the US Civil Rights Movement action in the early 1960s, and designed to expose the racist underbelly of Australian society in rural NSW. The book "Freedom Ride: a freedom rider remembers" by Ann Curthoys, relives the experience of the Freedom Ride, drawing largely upon a diary written during the journey and the recollections of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who were involved. Contemporary media reports as well as secondary accounts supplement the story, drawing attention to the impact of the ride and highlighting the ways in which the events have been remembered.

Learn about the 1965 Freedom Rides against prejudice and racial discrimination by exploring the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies’ (AIATSIS). AIATSIS’ site includes the diaries of freedom-rider Ann Curthoys, a photographic exhibition and a great reading list which includes a list of sources, news articles and external websites about the 1965 Freedom Ride. Your first stop for information could be the curated online exhibition, The 1965 Freedom Ride, which brings together primary sources from students that took part in this landmark event with newspaper coverage from the time.

Amongst the Freedom Riders was Darce Cassidy, an arts student who was also a part-time reporter for the ABC. His vivid recordings of the 1965 Freedom Ride weren’t broadcast until 1978. In this excerpt, we’re taken right to the centre of the confrontation at the Moree swimming pool, where tempers run high in this encounter, revealing the extent of racial segregation that prevailed in country towns at the time.

Previously unpublished photographs of the 1965 Freedom rides discovered in the NSW State Library of NSW archives were first exhibited in 2015. Encourage students to explore these photographs useful for discussions and presentations.

Watch the 2015 anniversary of the Freedom Rides film on Living Black about the Freedom Rides. Discuss how things were then and how the freedom riders feel about that time, and their historic action. Alternatively, students, especially primary school students might prefer to watch the BTN program on the Freedom Rides 50th anniversary and discuss similarly.

Why were students compelled to take this action? What do these types of actions achieve?
10th Anniversary of the National Apology

On February 13, 2008, a long-awaited National Apology to Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples was delivered by the then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd which acknowledged in particular the Stolen Generations. This year significantly marks the 10th anniversary of this historic occasion.

Each year the National Sorry Day Committee encourages all schools, community groups, workplaces and individuals to commemorate the anniversary of this important event in Australia’s history.

With sensitivity, honouring the Apology Anniversary and National Sorry Day builds understanding and respect between school and community, teachers and students.

If possible, invite a Stolen Generations member or another Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander parent, Elder or community member to speak with your students about the Stolen Generations and the importance of celebrating the Apology Anniversary. Discuss with your guest speaker prior to the lesson what they are willing to talk about, especially relating to potentially sensitive issues. Remember that across Victoria and the rest of the nation almost every, if not all Aboriginal families have been negatively affected by the policies and practices that have led to dispossession and what we now call the Stolen Generations. For some, this is still very difficult to reconcile and talk about.

Download the National Sorry Day Committee’s excellent resource Learning about the Stolen Generation: the NSDC’s school resource for great classroom and whole-of-school activities.

For the speech that stopped the Nation, listen to or play footage from the Apology.

To hear personal stories from members of the Stolen Generations, go to the dedicated website: Stolen Generations’ Testimonies.

Some questions you might want to consider with your students as part of a lesson:

1. When might we apologise and say sorry for something, and how important is it? Any personal stories to share? How did you feel when someone apologised?

2. How did your family members feel when the Australian Parliament said ‘sorry’ in 2008?

3. Why was it so important for Parliament to make an Apology?

VAEAI has produced a separate publication to commemorate the anniversary of the National Apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People which includes a transcript of Prime minister Kevin Rudd’s National Apology, downloadable here. Note that curriculum links will be updated for the 10th anniversary.
February 21 commemorates International Mother Language Day, celebrating language diversity and variety worldwide annually. Significantly it also remembers events such as the killing of four students on February 21, 1952, because they campaigned to officially use their mother language, Bengali, in Bangladesh.

This is a day to celebrate languages spoken world-wide, especially in Australia, and to highlight the importance of preserving linguistic diversity and the human right to use these languages.

Talk with students about their own language backgrounds using maps where possible.

Explore Australian Languages online with the magnifying glass on the language map link connecting making connections between language and place where students and teachers were born. Large printed maps can be purchased from AIATSIS and other outlets.

"Towards Sustainable Futures through Multilingual Education."

IMDL 2017 theme
With your students identify the language group or country associated with your school and research the language and its traditional speakers.

Selecting the map below will take you to a high-resolution image where sections can be easily enlarged,

See:
http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/images/asp_languages_map_large_151126.png

And a final word ...

We are always seeking to improve this bulletin and to make it useful, relevant and highly readable. We invite you to email through suggestions including how you as educators incorporate Aboriginal perspectives, especially Victorian ones in your teaching and curriculum.

Produced by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), February 2018.

Any enquiries, feedback and suggestions are welcomed, by contacting VAEAI on (03) 94810800 or emailing vaso@vaeai.org.au.

For more Koorie Perspectives, see the

Victorian Curriculum:

There are a great many content descriptors in the Victorian Curriculum related to understanding the diversity of languages and cultures represented in the classroom, and the multilingual and multicultural character of Australian society. Entering Australian Languages in the Vic Curriculum search engine for example generates a possible 2,345, across all learning areas and many within the study of other languages. This is no surprise in a country like Australia and therefore well worth acknowledging on the day!

(Yes, apologies but Tasmania is missing from this poster, unfortunately!)