

Koorie perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin: March 2018

This edition of the Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin features:

- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Harmony Day
- Anniversary of Native Title Recognition for Gunditjmarra
- Budj Bim, ancient engineering pioneers & world heritage listing

Focused on Aboriginal Histories and Cultures, the aim of the Koorie Perspectives Bulletin is 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 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 P-10 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](#).



Thornbury Primary School student outside school gate. Photo by Vaso Elefsiniotis

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 to the VCAA's [UPDATED: Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](#).



Young student at Wooragee PS learning about possum skin coats (djirabi) in her Dhudhuroa Language class. Photo courtesy of Bec Crawley

Following the first month of the school year and a busy month in February with the Anniversary of the National Apology and Sorry Day, March is a good month for further curriculum and activity planning. This might be a good time to **set up a school NAIDOC committee** and seek out local and state [funding opportunities](#) to support your events and activities.

Take this time to get to know your Koorie families, to see who may be willing to come to the school or your class to support the school's Koorie cultural curriculum throughout the year.

If you can get to Carlton in inner-Melbourne, take a day to explore the brilliant **First Peoples Exhibition** and Indigenous Garden tour at the [Bunjilaka Museum](#).



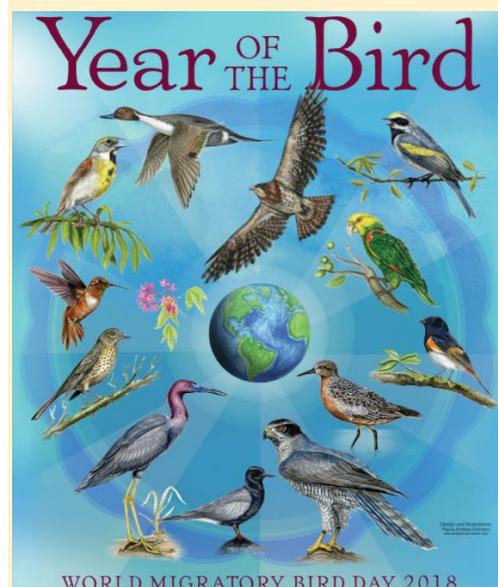
Opening of the First Peoples Exhibition, Bunjilaka, Melbourne 2014; photo by Vaso Elefsiniotis

Running from March until mid-July, visitors can also see [Bush Mechanics: The Exhibition](#). Drawing on images, objects and footage from the much-loved Bush Mechanics television series (PAW Media and ABC), this exhibition explores Indigenous knowledge and ingenuity, the importance of cars to remote communities, bush life and the humour of the outback. Through comedy and storytelling, learn more about Warlpiri and Yuendumu communities and contemporary Indigenous issues in the heart of Australia.

Scholarship and funding opportunities are often available around this time of year. Senior Koorie students with a flare for acting might be interested in applying for an [Indigenous scholarship](#) with the **Melbourne Theatre Company**. Melbourne Theatre Company, in partnership with the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development, offers a one-of-a-kind learning opportunity to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interested in a career in the performing arts. The program is made up of a series of workshops that explore performance skills, writing for the stage, technical and design aspects of creating a production and more. Program participants are supported by Indigenous teaching artists, mentors and the Wilin Centre where they can receive cultural support and assistance in making an application to the Victorian College of the Arts, The University of Melbourne, if they wish to explore further study. In 2018, applications close in May.

Did you know that 2018 is the **International Year of the Bird** to mark the centennial of the U.S Migratory Bird Treaty Act?

How about designing a poster or local bird book incorporating as much of the traditional language of your region as possible?



March

The 21st March is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Did you know that in 1938 prior to WWII, an Aboriginal delegation headed by Yorta Yorta leader William Cooper, protested against the treatment of Jewish People in Germany and tried to hand a resolution to the German consul-general condemning the Nazis' persecution of Jewish people? At the time, the German consul-general refused to see the Aboriginal delegation, which had walked into town from William Cooper's home in Melbourne's west.



The Argus, 7 December 1938. p. 3

For more information, read the transcript or listen to the ABC [PM report](#) from the anniversary of this unique protest against ethnic discrimination and persecution, eighty years ago.

The 21st March is also known as Harmony Day across Australia, with schools and councils across the nation celebrating cultural diversity.

The **Harmony Day [website](#)** has background information, promotional materials and resources for schools. Remember that Aboriginal Australia represents around 250 different language groups and diverse cultures. Focus on celebrating the cultural range and diversity of your school community.

Native Title Recognition for Gunditjmara

The 30th March is the 11th anniversary of Native Title recognition for the Gunditjmara of S.W. Victoria.

On the 30th March 2007, Gunditjmara People in south-western Victoria won an 11-year legal battle for native title rights over 140,000 hectares of crown land. Celebrations were held on Gunditjmara country to celebrate a Native Title Consent Determination – a Determination that was reached through the consent of all parties, rather than through litigation. Celebrations were held at the base of the volcanic mountain Budj Bim, also known as Mount Eccles National Park, and followed a special hearing of the Federal Court of Australia on Country.



The Federal Court convening at Budj Bim (formerly Mt Eccles national park), for the Gunditjmara Native title claim. Photo by Damian White

With older students [research](#) the Gunditjmarra struggle for Native Title recognition.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCECU014](#) Explore the contested meaning of concepts including freedom, justice, and rights and responsibilities, and the extent they are and should be valued by different individuals and groups: *Ethical Capability: 7 and 8: Understanding Concepts.*

[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: Australia as a nation.*

[VCHHK155](#) Effects of methods used by civil rights activists to achieve change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the role of one individual or group in the struggle: *History 9 – 10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present).*

[VCHHK153](#) Effects of the US civil rights movement and its influence on Australia for rights and freedoms to national attention: *History 9-10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present).*

[VCHHK156](#) Continuity and change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in securing and achieving civil rights and freedoms in Australia: *History 9-10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present).*

With your students research Gunditjmarra, Country, people, history and culture.

If able, invite Gunditjmarra community members to come to the class or school and speak about Gunditjmarra, by contacting the Warrnambool or Heywood [LAECGs](#) or the [Gunditj Mirring](#) Traditional Owners Corporation.

Lake Condah, extremely significant to Gunditjmarra People, is an Indigenous Protected Area. Visit or learn about Victorian Indigenous Protected Areas ([IPA](#)) in Victoria, such as Kurtonitj or Lake Condah in the South-west of Victoria.

Watch the [video](#) with Gunditjmarra Elder Ken Saunders about Museum Victoria's Bush Blitz program, involving Gunditjmarra Traditional Owners to survey biodiversity in Indigenous

Protected Areas and investigate the program and some of the flora and fauna surveyed. Where else is Bush Blitz Working?

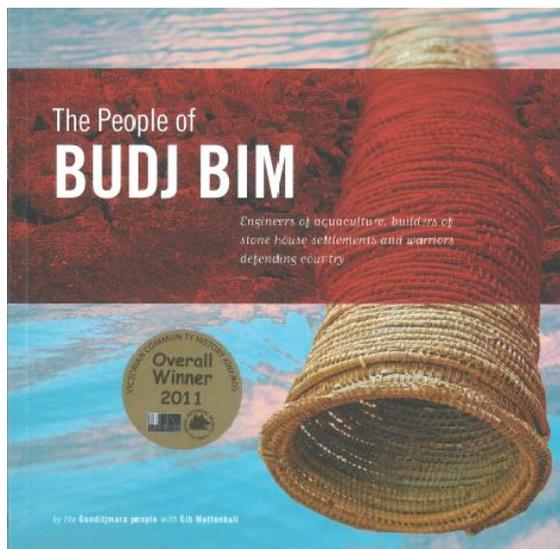


Woven eel trap

Lake Condah in the Budj Bim world heritage area is one of the world's most ancient examples of traditional aquaculture, dating back at least 6600 years and preceding Stonehenge or the Pyramids of Egypt, consisting of complex systems of traps and ponds engineered by the Gunditjmarra people. Regarded as the world's first engineering project, the extensive and elaborate system of channels and dam walls were used over millennia predominately for catching short-finned eels for consumption and trade. SBS reported further [here](#).

The Budj Bim region is listed as a National Heritage Landscape. In January 2017, the Budj Bim region was put on Australia's list for World Heritage nomination to recognise the unique cultural heritage of permanent houses, fishtraps, channels and weirs for growing and harvesting eels created by Gunditjmarra people 6600 years ago. World Heritage bodies will be assessing Budj Bim, and then make a listing recommendation to the World Heritage Committee in [mid-2019](#). Australia currently has 19 World Heritage listings, if successful Budj Bim would be the 20th, and the first solely based on Indigenous cultural value and significance.

Research Lake Condah, Budj Bim and traditional eel farming methods and purposes.



Victorian Curriculum:

[VCGGK052](#) The Countries/Places that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people belong to in the local area: *Geography Level D: Places and our connections to them.*

[VCGGK068](#) Natural, managed and constructed features of places, their location and how they change
Elaboration: identifying constructed features such as eel traps and exploring activities in local rivers and lakes: *Geography F-2: Places and our connections to them.*

[VCGGK080](#) The many Countries/Places of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, and the custodial responsibility they have for Country/Place, and how this influences views about sustainability: *Geography 3-4: Diversity and significance of places and environments.*

[VCGGK082](#) Types of natural vegetation and the significance of vegetation to the environment, the importance of environments to animals and people, and different views on how they can be protected; the use and management of natural resources and waste, and different views on how to do this sustainably: *Geography 3-4: Diversity and significance of places and environments.*

[VCGGK083](#) Similarities and differences in individuals' and groups' feelings and perceptions about places, and how they influence views about the protection of these places: *Geography 3-4: Diversity and significance of places and environments.*

[VCGGK120](#) Spiritual, cultural and aesthetic value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, that influence the significance of places, and ways of protecting significant landscapes: *Geography 7-8: Landforms and Landscapes.*

[VCGGK137](#) Land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve food security over time: *Geography 9 – 10: Biomes and food security.*

[VCGGK149](#) Application of environmental economic and social criteria in evaluating management responses to an environmental change, and the predicted outcomes and further consequences of management responses on the environment and places, comparing examples from Australia and at least one other country: *Geography 9 – 10: Environmental change and management.*

[VCHHK078](#) The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the significant ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the effects on their daily lives: *History 3 – 4: First contacts.*

[VCHHK105](#) How physical or geographical features influenced the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' communities, foundational stories and land management practices: *History 7 – 8: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.*

[VCHHK106](#) The significant beliefs, values and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures including trade with other communities, causes and effects of warfare, and death and funerary customs: *History 7 – 8: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.*

[VCDSTC024](#) Investigate how forces and the properties of materials affect the behaviour of a designed solution: *Technologies 3 - 4: Engineering principles and systems.*

[CDSTS055](#) Explain how designed solutions evolve with consideration of preferred futures and the impact of emerging technologies on design decisions: *Technology 9-10: Technologies and Society.*

[VCDSTC056](#) Investigate and make judgements on how the characteristics and properties of materials are combined with force, motion and energy to create engineered solutions: *Technology 9-10: Engineering principles and systems.*

Research the lives of Gunditjmarra Elders and community members who have been strong advocates for their communities such as Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll inductees Edna Brown and William Rawlings; the [Lovett Brothers](#); [Laura Bell](#); and Young Australian of the Year state finalist, Gunditjmarra and Wemba Wemba descendant [Benson Saulo](#); world famous singer Archie Roach; playwright,

author and musician Richard Frankland; and first commissioned army Aboriginal Officer Reginald Saunders for starters.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCHHC084](#) Describe perspectives and identify ideas, beliefs and values of people and groups in the past: *History 5 - 6: Historical concepts and skills.*

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.

This edition and previous *Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletins* are available on the [VAEAI website](#).

Produced by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), 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 VAEAI [Koorie Education Calendar](#).