

Koorie perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin: October-November 2016

As we commence the last term of the school year, there are plenty of great opportunities to incorporate Koorie perspectives into your learning and teaching program over the next couple of months.

For this bulletin, we've added some new Victorian Curriculum links. Select the code and it will take you directly to the VC site with additional elaborations. This is not extensive by any means - as we become more familiar with the curriculum we hope to improve this bulletin.

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) has also produced a guide summarising the key learning areas (content descriptions) directly related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures within the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

Within the curriculum, schools are also provided with elaborations to support their planning. These elaborations give guidance about further opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives; and many other content descriptions provide the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in ways that best utilise local resources, expertise and contexts.

Select the link for a copy of the VCAA's: [Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](#).

October

With the weather warming up after a long cold in many parts of Victoria, explore Koorie seasons in your region, such as the 6-8 seasons

of the Wurundjeri and learn about how seasonal change is signalled through plants, animals and other signs such as the night sky.



Emu formation in the Milky Way signalling the time to collect emu eggs (April-June)

Where possible, invite knowledgeable Koorie cultural educators into the classroom to discuss further. Learn about significant foods, animals and plants for Victorian Koories such as the staple murrnong (yam daisy) for the Kulin, eel farming practices of the Gunditjmara, and possum skin cloaks for warmth, comfort and much more



[Watch the video](#) with Boon Wurrung Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs who discusses how to gather and hunt for food with respect to seasons and ongoing life, and discuss traditional sustainable practices with your students.

With your students and based on research, re-design an alternative seasonal calendar for your region, highlighting key changes in the natural environment - be creative in naming.



Victorian Curriculum: Geography F-2

Weather and seasons and the ways in which different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, describe them ([VCGGK067](#))

Geography / Levels 9 and 10 / Geographical Knowledge / Biomes and food security

Land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve food security over time ([VCGGK137](#))

If your school environment allows, consider raising some frogs from tadpoles in the classroom and document their life-cycle; when it's time to return them to their original water source do so with care and ceremony.

Try and research local Koorie language words and stories for frogs by working closely with Koorie Community members, and by contacting the Victorian Corporation for languages (VACL) for language support. Many school students across Australia are familiar with the Dreaming Story *Tiddalik* – but did you know this story originated from the Gunnai/Kurnai people of Victoria, in today's Gippsland? For a Gunnai / Kurnai version of this Creation story, see [The Story of Jiddelek](#).

Victorian Curriculum: Science / Levels 3 and 4 / Science Understanding / Biological sciences

Different living things have different life cycles and depend on each other and the environment to survive ([VCGGK067](#))

Phenology is the science of the timing of natural cycles. Discuss with students how rising temperatures and shifting weather patterns due to climate change might cause these cycles to move. Record changes in wildlife or plants on [Climate Watch](#), a resource where you can help scientists understand what's happening with the behaviours of common species of birds, insects and plants. Go nature spotting using the Koorie seasons calendar as a guide for the wildlife and plants you might see. Museum Victoria has a succinct [guide](#) on the flora and fauna found in the Kulin nation.

Find out more about Indigenous seasons in other Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, using the Bureau of Meteorology's [Indigenous Weather Knowledge](#) website. This project aims to record 50,000 years of weather observation, knowledge of weather phenomena, weather patterns and long-term environmental changes by Indigenous Australians.

November

Remembrance Day on the 11th of November marks many anniversaries in Australia - the anniversary of the armistice (truce) which ended the First World War (1914-18), aka Armistice Day, the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in 1975, and the day legendary bushranger Ned Kelly was hung in the Old Melbourne Gaol in 1880.

However one anniversary that affected all Aboriginal Victorians remains mostly forgotten. Let's also remember that on this day, November 11th 1869, the Victorian colonial government passed an act "To Provide for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria", commonly known as the **Aborigines Protection Act 1869**. This gave the Victorian government control of where Aboriginal people could live, of how they would relate to Europeans, of their labour and earnings and of the "care, custody and education" of all Aboriginal children.

With older students read the 2009 article "[Lest we forget a cruel act of dispossession](#)", by Gunditjmarra activist, singer/songwriter, author and film director, Richard Frankland and Reconciliation leader Peter Lewis and discuss.

Remembering the Aborigines Protection Act 1869 is important because it recalls a time when Aboriginal peoples' lives were entirely controlled by mission managers and government, when Aboriginal people were isolated from the rest of the community and in many cases from their land and traditional cultural practices.

With older students discuss whether such an act could be passed again in contemporary Australia. Could governments today restrict and control the earnings of Aboriginal peoples, remove them from their homelands and take their children away? In discussions, consider the implications of the NT Emergency Intervention in recent years and the closing of

remote communities in W.A from an Aboriginal perspective.

History / Levels 5 and 6 / Historical Knowledge / Australia as a nation

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 ([VCHHK094](#))

Keep an eye out this term for the eminent launch of the [Minutes of Evidence](#) Teacher Resource Package. The Minutes of Evidence project focuses on extending public and scholarly understanding of structural justice and of structural injustice. The Project itself focuses on the Coranderrk Reserve near Melbourne, the 1881 Parliamentary Inquiry into sub-standard conditions at Coranderrk, and more broadly missions and reserves in Victoria and across Australia. Curriculum-aligned digital resources and learning activities will build on key themes for investigation such as dispossession, justice and collaboration, and the curriculum will draw on historical information and themes in the context of the 1881 Parliamentary Coranderrk Inquiry, as researched by the Minutes of Evidence project. For more information about the overall project, see the dedicated [Minutes of Evidence](#) website.

Victoria's first permanent European settlement was established at Portland Bay by [Edward Henty](#) on 19 November 1834. Until then the area had been used by European whalers as a base from which to carry out their activities.

What followed over the next 20 years were long and sustained battles for land, fishing and whaling rights.

With older students research the settlement of Portland bay, the **Eumeralla War** and what is known as **The Convincing Ground** in the

Portland Region. Why is this site called the 'Convincing Ground'? Read the newspaper article [A Forgotten War, a Haunted Land](#). There is no public memorial to the Eumeralla War. In this month of Remembrance, and remembering fallen soldiers, what could be done to make this part of our history more visible and more broadly known?

Victorian Curriculum: History / Levels 3 and 4 / Historical Knowledge / First contacts

The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others, for example, the Macassans and the Europeans, and the effects of these interactions ([VCHHK081](#))

The Long Walk: On 21 November 2004, Michael Long embarked on an historic trek, walking from his home in the suburbs of Melbourne all the way to Parliament House in Canberra – more than 650 kilometres away. After returning home from yet another Aboriginal funeral, Michael decided that something needed to be done about the plight of his people. He took it upon himself to get Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues back on the national agenda and resolved to meet with the then Prime Minister John Howard to discuss his concerns... even if he had to walk all the way to Canberra to do it.

Michael was joined on the road by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal supporters from all over Australia. Some walked in support for an hour, some for a day and some took the journey all the way to Canberra. As the walkers passed through the Victorian countryside, local people came out to meet them, offering encouragement, support and assistance.



Mark Latham walks with Michael Long in Canberra yesterday. Photo: Chris Lane. The Age. [Click on image to see article.](#)

If you haven't done so already, [register](#) your school with **The Walk the Talk Education Program** for free resources or a school visit and explore the interactive [activity zone](#) with students.

With middle years or older students read [the letter](#) presented to the then PM John Howard, and [media](#) reports (another sample [here](#)) about the Long Walk, and discuss the reasons behind it. Discuss with your students the powerful impact and effect of mass marches and walks.



Reconciliation walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge, 2000. Source: <http://www.sydneymarani.com.au/sites/significant-aboriginal-events-in-sydney/>

Victorian Curriculum: Ethical Capability / Levels 3 and 4 / Decision Making and Actions

Discuss the role of personal values and dispositions in ethical decision-making and actions ([VCECD008](#))

Victorian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship / Levels 7 and 8 / Citizenship, Diversity and Identity

Identify how values can promote cohesion within Australian society, including the values of freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go' ([VCCCC025](#))