

# Koorie perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin: January- February 2019

This edition of the Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin features:

- The International Year of Indigenous Languages
- Australia Day & The Great Debate
- The 1939 Cummeragunja Walk-off & a Dhungala - Murray River focus
- Charles Perkins & the 1967 Freedom Rides
- Anniversary of the National Apology
- International Mother Language Day

Welcome to the first Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin for 2019. 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 and whenever 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, view or download the VCAA's curriculum guide: [Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](#).



2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
Indigenous Languages



## 2019 is the International Year of Indigenous Languages

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL-2019) to raise awareness of the crucial role languages play in people's daily lives. Given the theme: *Indigenous languages matter for sustainable development, peace building and reconciliation*, Victoria is well-placed to take advantage of this global priority with a growing number of Koorie language programs in schools and kindergartens across the State.

In Australia, of the estimated original 250 distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, only around 120 are still spoken. Of these approximately 90 per cent are endangered. Many languages are being reclaimed by Community, with language renewal and revitalisation programs and activities in very many regions of Australia.

**In 2019, Victoria will be the first state in Australia to fund Aboriginal language learning at kindergartens, with 29 services granted funding to rollout programs this year, according to [The Age](#).** Aboriginal languages, Chinese and Auslan are set to be the most popular languages taken up by Victorian kindergartens under a new \$17.9 million state government initiative. The funding will provide 160 kindergartens with extra staff to teach 15 languages. A total of 31 kindergartens will run Chinese programs, 29 will run Aboriginal language classes and 26 will teach Auslan sign language. Children will also learn Japanese, Italian, Hebrew, Spanish, French, Arabic and other community languages. To find out more about this 4-year [DET](#) initiative click on the picture below.

For a glimpse at **Aboriginal Languages in Victorian schools** and direct links to the Vic Curriculum Victorian Aboriginal Languages site, explore the [Koorie Languages in Schools Program](#).



IYIL-2019 is an opportunity to continue raising awareness and taking further actions to improve the preservation and promotion of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

## January

### Australia Day, Survival Day and The Great Debate

A day off, a barbecue and fireworks? A celebration of who we are as a nation? A day of mourning and invasion? A celebration of survival? Australians hold many different views on what the 26th of January means to them. In 2017 a number of councils controversially decided to no longer celebrate Australia Day on this day, and since then *Change the Date* debates have raged across the country in homes, schools, on the streets and elsewhere.

See our online resource [Australia Day, Survival Day and The Great Debate](#) for great discussion ideas to start the school year.



Held annually on the 26<sup>th</sup> January are the Australian of the Year Awards. In 1968, celebrated Kurnai-Gunditjmara world champion boxer [Lionel Rose](#) was the first Aboriginal person to be named *Australian of the Year*.

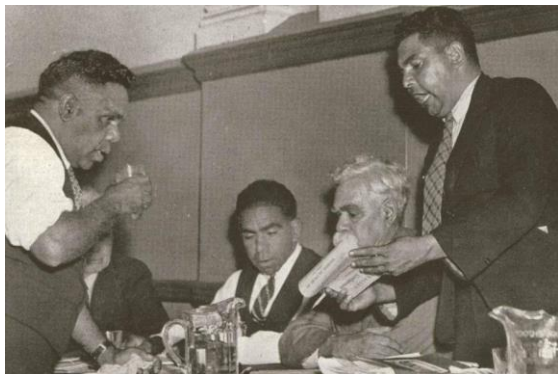


*"I have interviewed champs from the 1920s ... all the way up to the current world heavyweight king, Wladimir Klitschko. But few fighters I have known were as inspiring as Lionel Rose: humble, gracious, funny and so unaffected by his success ... Boxing gave him a platform and a status he might otherwise never have known and his 1968 victory over the great Japanese bantamweight, Fighting Harada, was a milestone for the embracing of Indigenous Australians."*

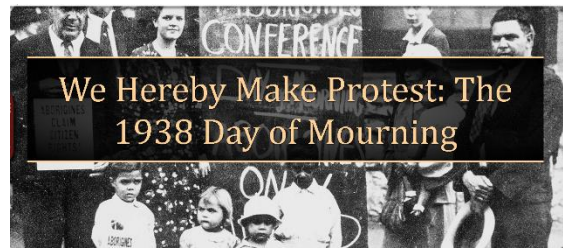
Read more in [Lionel Rose and the fight game](#), as leading boxing journalist and cornerman Grantlee Kieza writes about his book, *Boxing in Australia* (2015).

## Aborigines Day of Mourning, 26 January 1938

January 26, 1938 marked the 150th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet in Australia. For some this was a day to celebrate, for many a day to mourn.



On that day a group of Aboriginal men and women including Victorian civil-rights leader [Doug Nichols](#) gathered at Australia Hall in Sydney and moved a major resolution (pictured above with President Jack Patten) proclaiming the day as a day of national mourning. To learn more, explore our [Australia Day Feature](#) or go directly to the included AIATSIS online exhibition.



### Victorian Curriculum:

[VCHHK076](#) Significance of days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia and the importance of symbols and emblems, including Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Harmony Week, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and National Sorry Day: *History 3-4, Historical Knowledge, Community, remembrance and celebrations.*

[VCHHC125](#) Evaluate different historical interpretations and contested debates: *History 9-10, Historical Concepts and Skills, Historical sources as evidence.*

[VCHHC101](#) Explain different historical interpretations and contested debates about the past: *History 7- 8, Historical Concepts and Skills, Historical sources as evidence.*

[VCHHK160](#) The perspectives of people and different historical interpretations and debates from the period: *History / Levels 9 and 10 / Historical Knowledge / The modern world and Australia / The globalising world.*

[VCELY367](#) Participate in formal and informal debates and plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements for defined audiences and purposes, making appropriate choices for modality and emphasis: *English 6, Literacy, Interacting with others.*

[VCELT406](#) Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts: *English 8, Reading and Viewing, Literature.*



## February

The 4<sup>th</sup> February marks the anniversary of the famous **Cummeragunja Walk-off**.

On that historic day in 1939, 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).



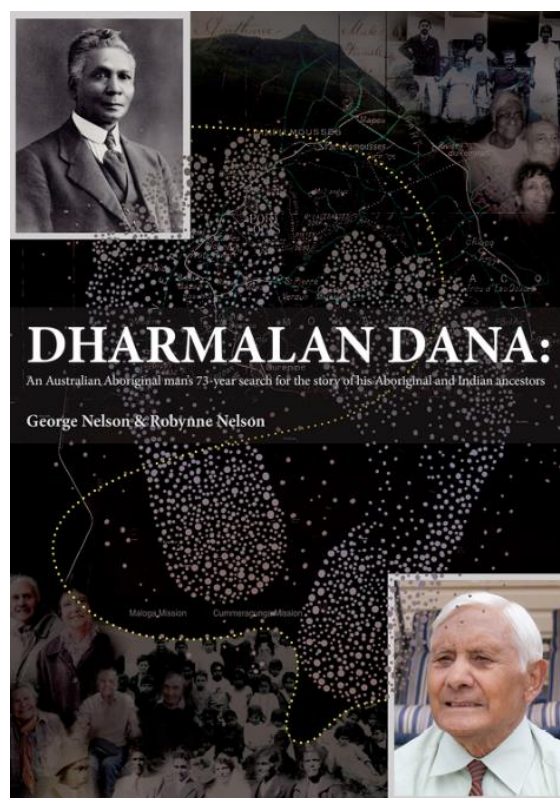
Cummeragunja lies on the NSW side of Dhungala – the Murray River – on the traditional lands of the Bangerang and Yorta Yorta peoples which also cross into Victoria. The river is hugely important to the people and has sustained them for thousands of years.

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 Cummeragunja](#) links and read or listen to the late Bangerang Elder Uncle Sandy Atkinson [talk](#) about conservation practices.

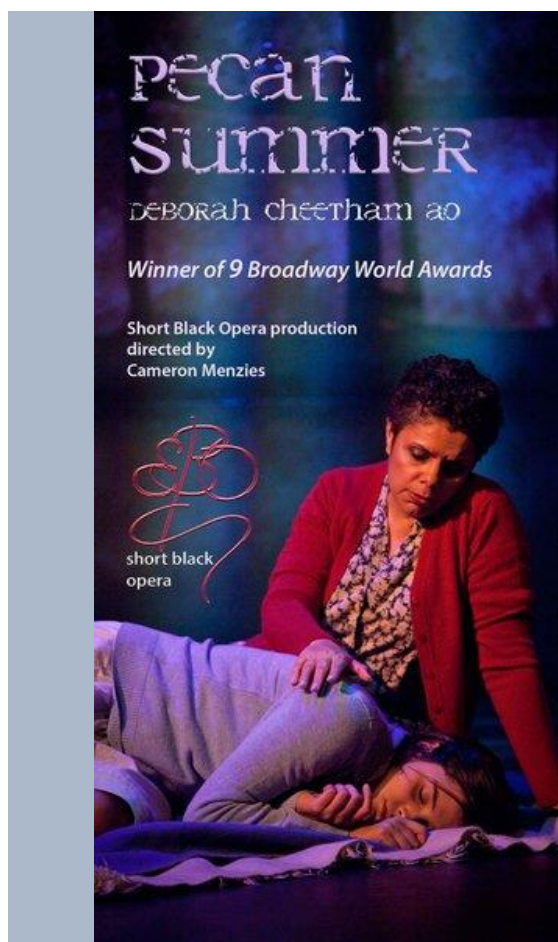
What evidence is there that people lived in harmony with their land? Provide at least one specific example of their conservation practices. ('Real Player free software may need to be downloaded').

[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.



*Try to embed real life stories and perspectives from your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members across your curriculum throughout the year.*

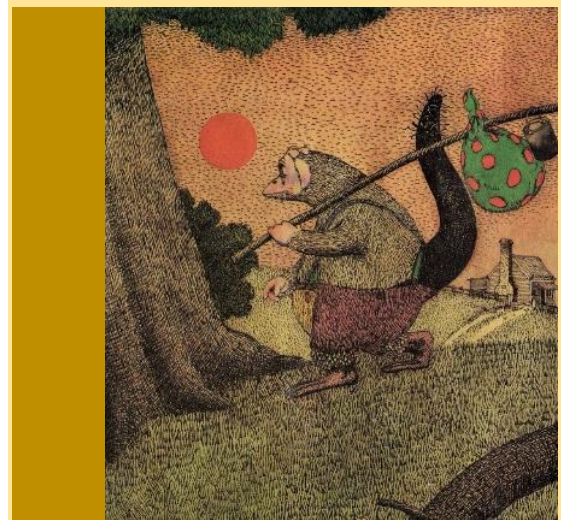
**Pecan Summer** is Australia's first Indigenous opera, written by Yorta Yorta soprano, Deborah Cheetham. The opera is based on the events surrounding the walk-off from Cummeragunja mission in 1939. Deborah Cheetham began writing Pecan Summer in 2008, and the opera premiered on country in Mooroopna (VIC) 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), the Murray River, and the famous [Bunyip](#) stories. Significantly in 2016, rock art featuring four bunyips was rediscovered in a sandstone shelter in Victoria's Gariwerd region - or the Grampians as they have been called since colonisation. [The Age](#) recently reported that this find shines 'new light on an age-old story – that of a cosmic struggle between creator spirit and his monstrous enemy,' possibly explaining mother and son-in-law avoidance customs and double rainbows!

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?

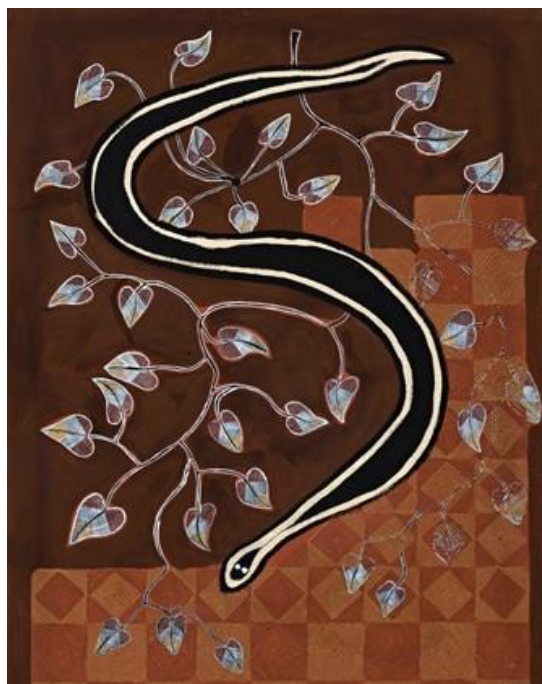


*Illustration from The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek Written by Jenny Wagner and illustrated by Ron Brooks First edition: Longman Young Books, Melbourne, 1973.*

**Behind the News (BTN)** look at life along Australia's largest river system, the Murray River in [River Kids](#), narrated by Tyrone, a young SA Ngarrindjeri boy, who introduces us to people who depend on it – well worth exploring!



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.



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

[Murray River Country: An ecological dialogue with traditional owners](#) by geographer Jessica Weir comes with [teaching notes](#) and discusses the water crisis from a unique perspective – ‘intimate stories of love and loss from the viewpoints of Aboriginal peoples who know the inland rivers as their traditional country.’

*\*Depending on the region or the language group, there are a number of Creation Stories about the Murray River. For good background material see: [Ponde the Murray Cod – River Creator](#).*

#### 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*

[VCHHK152](#) *Causes of the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for rights and freedoms before 1965: History 9-10*

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

[VCHHC121](#) *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*

[VCHHC123](#) *Analyse and corroborate sources and evaluate their accuracy, usefulness and reliability: History 9-10*

[VCHHC127](#) *Analyse the long-term causes, short term triggers and the intended and unintended effects of significant events and developments: History 9-10*

[VCHHC124](#) *Analyse 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*

[VCHHC126](#) *Identify and evaluate patterns of continuity and change in the development of the modern world and Australia: History 9-10*

[VCHHC128](#) *Evaluate the historical significance of an event, idea, individual or place: History 9-10*

#### Victorian Curriculum: Civics & Citizenship

[VCCCC028](#) *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*

[VCCCC030](#) *Analyse how citizens' political choices are shaped, including the influence of the media: Civics & Citizenship 9-10*

[VCCCC036](#) *Discuss challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society: Civics & Citizenship 9-10*

[VCCCC038](#) *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*

#### Victorian Curriculum: The Arts - Music

[VCAMUR039](#) *Identify and connect specific features and purposes of music from contemporary and past times including music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to explore viewpoints and enrich their music making: Music 7-8*

[VCAMUM043](#) *Plan, develop and notate compositions with an understanding of style and convention: Music 9-10*

[VCAMUR046](#) *Analyse a range of music from contemporary and past times, including the music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints, enrich their music making, and develop understanding of music practice in local, national and international contexts: Music 9-10*

#### Victorian Curriculum: The Arts - Drama

[VCADRR032](#) *Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts including in the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Drama 7-8*

[VCADRE033](#) Combine the elements of drama in devised and scripted drama to explore and develop issues, ideas and themes: Drama 7-8

[VCADRR039](#) Identify and connect specific features and purposes of drama from contemporary and past times, including the drama of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to explore viewpoints and enrich their drama making: Drama 7-8

[VCADRE041](#) Manipulate combinations of the elements of drama to develop and convey the physical and psychological aspects of roles and characters consistent with intentions in dramatic forms and performance styles: Drama 9-10

[VCADRD042](#) Practise and refine the expressive capacity of voice and movement to communicate ideas and dramatic action in a range of forms, styles and performances spaces: Drama 9-10

[VCECU015](#) Investigate why ethical principles may differ between people and groups, considering the influence of cultural norms, religion, world views and philosophical thought: Ethical Capabilities 7-8

#### Victorian Curriculum: Geography

[VCGGK109](#) The spiritual, economic, cultural and aesthetic value of water for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and peoples of the Asia region, that influence the significance of places: Geography 7-8

[VCGGK111](#) Factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places: Geography 7-8

#### Victorian Curriculum: English

[VCELA164](#) Understand that English is one of many languages spoken in Australia and that different languages may be spoken by family, classmates and community: English F

[VCELA234](#) 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

[VCELT240](#) Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created: English 2

[VCELY220](#) Discuss different texts on a similar topic, identifying similarities and differences between the texts: English 2

[VCELA303](#) 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

[VCELA362](#) Understand that different social and geographical dialects or accents are used in Australia in addition to Standard Australian English: English 6

[VCELT393](#) Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts: English 7

[VCELT404](#) 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 12, 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.

Image from The Daily Mirror, February 22 1965 found at: <http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/images/history/1960s/freedom/fr13.html>

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.



The Daily Mirror's full-page coverage of the demonstration at Moree pool, 22 February 1965. (Photo courtesy of Newspix)





Why were students compelled to take this action? What do these types of actions achieve?

VAEI has produced a separate brief for easy access, [The 1965 Freedom Rides](#) downloadable [here](#).

#### 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: 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.

*Elaborations: investigating the role of Charles Perkins in the Freedom Ride of 1965 and the efficacy of television in bringing 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)*



Excerpt of Unidentified boys in wood shack, February 1965 / from The Tribune archived collection. At: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryofnsw/20829135935/in/album-72157654250887374/>

## 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. Last year significantly marked the 10<sup>th</sup> 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.





Reaction to the Prime Minister's apology in Canberra and Sydney today.  
Photos: Peter Rae, Jon Reid and Mark Graham., Sydney Morning Herald.

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?

VAEI 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](#).

## 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: Australia as a nation*

[VCHHK076](#) Significance of days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia and the importance of symbols and emblems, including Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Harmony Week, National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week and National Sorry Day: *History 3-4: Community, remembrance and celebrations.*

[VCHHK154](#) Significance of the following events in changing society: 1962 right to vote federally, 1967 Referendum, Reconciliation, Mabo decision, Bringing Them Home Report (the Stolen Generations), the Apology and the different perspectives of these events: *History 9-10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present).*

[VCCCG031](#) Explain the Australian government's roles and responsibilities at a global level, including provision of foreign aid, peacekeeping and the United Nations: *Civics & Citizenship 9-10*

[VCDSTS044](#) Investigate the ways in which designed solutions evolve locally, nationally, regionally and globally through the creativity, innovation and enterprise of individuals and groups: *Design and Technology 7-8: Technologies and Society.*

[Personal and Social Capabilities](#) (various CDs) - For Levels 9 and 10, the curriculum focuses on analysing factors that influence respectful relationships in a range of diverse settings and the importance of empathy and respect for diversity in creating a cohesive society. Students are provided with opportunities to engage in activities that promote initiative, independence, interdependence and leadership. They evaluate their contribution to group tasks and suggest improvements to enable achievement of a team goal. Students explore the nature of conflict in a range of personal, local, national and global contexts. They evaluate a variety of strategies to prevent or resolve conflict.

**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.





### 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!



*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), January 2019.

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

For more Koorie Perspectives, see the 2019 VAEAI [Koorie Education Calendar](#).