

VAEA **ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

A REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS
AND ACTIONS OF 2018

**VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION INC.**



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this publication may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

Artwork: Kevin J Williams & Anjee-Lee Bamblett

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FOREWARD

Since the 1970s, VAEAI has been the voice of the Koorie community in education. We speak to government and represent all Aboriginal communities across the state of Victoria.

Community input is our strength – we work from the ground up. The VAEAI committee of management is made up of Elders and emerging leaders from 30 communities.

Our Committee of Management members have always been determined to ensure that Aboriginal people enjoy the right to an education, and in particular an education that respects our unique identity as First Nations people. Because of this determination we have made real progress. Inclusive community-driven strategies like Marrung show how far we have come.

We must remain vigilant about future challenges. More Koorie young people are finishing year 12 and going on to university and vocational training than ever before. We must continue to grow those numbers. We must ensure that from early childhood onwards, all education environments in Victoria promote and celebrate First Nations history and culture – and they must always do this in partnership with Koorie communities.

Never again should a Victorian student - Koorie or non-Koorie - be able to say they spent their school days learning nothing about Aboriginal history and culture. It's a new era, one that we have fought hard for, and one that we can never take for granted.

VAEAI thanks all of our committee members, for your dedication, your commitment, and your unwavering belief that every Koorie person deserves the opportunities a good education brings.

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Acknowledgement of Land

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work, we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people, who are future leaders.



PRESIDENT

Over the last 12 months VAEAI has continued to ensure that Victoria's Koorie communities remain at the centre of education and training decision making.

We know how important it is that all stakeholders come together at local, regional, state-wide and national levels to discuss education and training needs as well as the issues and priorities for their communities.

The holistic nature of Marrung means we now look at education and training across all sectors – from early childhood, schooling, higher education and vocational education and training.

Ensuring that self-determination underpins education decision-making is so important. This year we have continued to look at how we can create more opportunities for the voices of Koorie people to be heard.

Community involvement in education is fundamental to our goal of self-determination, allowing Koorie people to identify and prioritise what is best for their children their community and themselves.

In 2018, VAEAI began supporting 29 Kindergarten services to deliver languages as part of the Early Childhood Language program funded by the Department of Education & Training. We will continue to provide support including advice on development of language resources and protocols.

Examples like this reflect our collective and continued effort to prioritise Koorie perspectives in education and training and the progress in this regard is a reason to celebrate.

Focusing on key transition stages along the education lifecycle continues to be important for our community. Over the last year, VAEAI began focusing on the skills, training and higher education sectors, in particular the transition of Koories from Year 12 into employment or further study – both higher education and VET.

We have made incredible progress since the implementation of the Marrung 10-Year Plan (2016-2026) but there is still so much left to achieve.

We look forward to creating a future which further nurtures Koorie learners at every stage of the education pathway.

Geraldine Atkinson

ABORIGINAL
EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE GROUP
2016 - 2026

GENERAL MANAGER

The efforts of VAEAI have ensured that the organisation has a primary role in advancing Koorie education and training. Now more than 18 months into Marrung we are in the full swing of its implementation.

We are continuing to strengthen partnerships at all levels between Koorie communities through the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECEG), Department of Education & Training and service providers. There has been some really positive progress made between the community, government and service providers with the coming together of stakeholders across a variety of forums.

Successfully implementing Marrung means that there has been an increased demand on LAECG's and the efforts of our community members have been integral to the process.

In 2018, the VAEAI Secretariat focused on strengthening LAECG's, building their capacity to hold regular meetings and for the Chairpersons to chair Koorie Education Roundtables among other forums.

We are working closely alongside the LAECG's and communities to ensure there is a strong LAECG committee that can provide input to Marrung's implementation and bolster a unified local community voice towards education and training.

It is essential that correct and practical information is making its way to community and that everyone has the opportunity to share updates on programs, initiatives and opportunities as well as issues and possible solutions.

The 10-year Marrung Plan (2016-2026) and its structures have provided us with some valuable mechanisms and we are witnessing cohesion and strengthened partnerships from all the parties involved.

There is still plenty of work to do but we are dedicated to ensure that we work towards the best possible outcomes for Koorie students and our communities.



Lionel Bamblett

LEADING THE WAY

Department of Education & Training 2019

122

Victorian schools had an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student as a school captain

80%

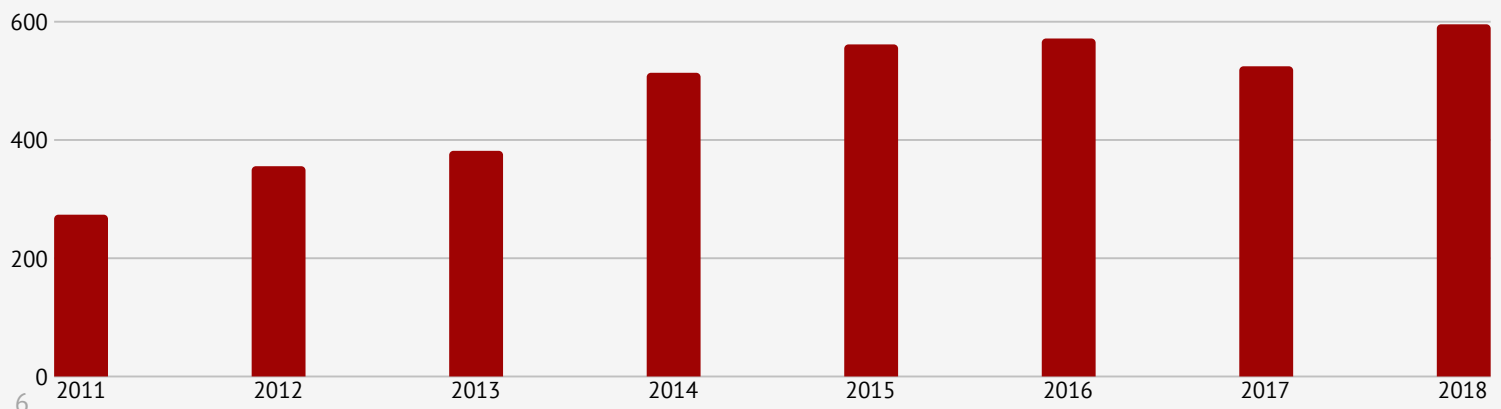
of Victorian schools reported flying the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags.

FLY THE FLAG

Department of Education & Training 2010

RAISING THE BAR

A steady increase of Koorie students completing VCE, VCAL or a VET in Schools Certificate has been observed. (DET Statistics)



HIGHER LEARNING

Department of Education & Training 2019

5753

Koorie learners enrolled in Victorian VET programs in 2018.

431

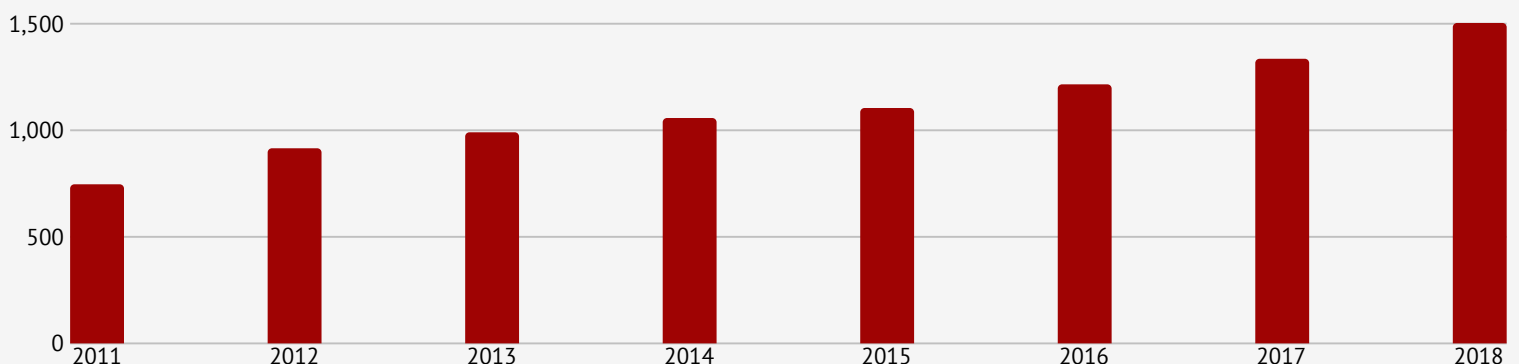
Victorian schools have received Cultural Understanding and Safety Training since Term 2, 2018.

OPEN TO UNDERSTAND

Department of Education & Training 2019

STARTING EARLY

The number of Koorie children enrolling in a kindergarten program the year before school has been increasing since 2011. (DET Statistics)



OUR VISION

A BRIGHT FUTURE

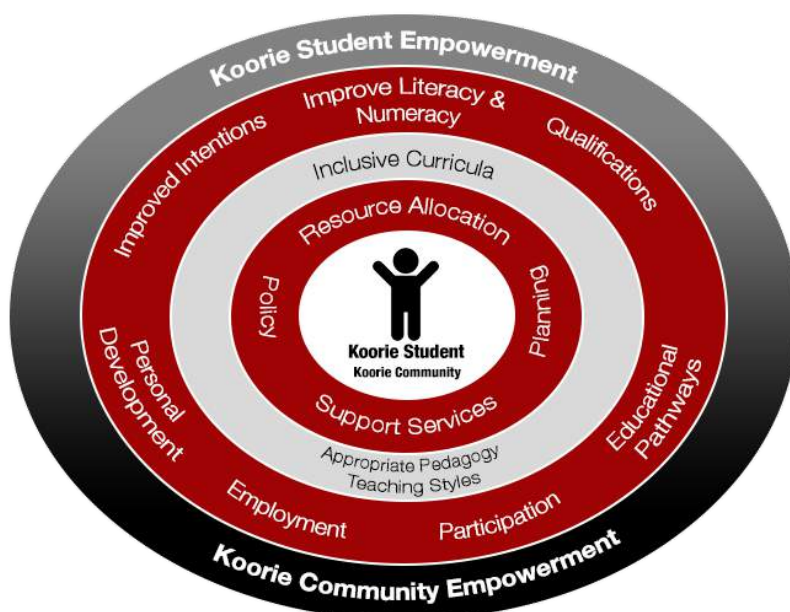
We have to ensure that the education system is responsive to allow and assist our Koorie learners to achieve their dreams.

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, or VAEAI, is the peak state-wide Aboriginal community-controlled organisation for education and training in Victoria. We work for our community to build success in education and training.

As an organisation, we have been pushing and fighting for a holistic education system that genuinely and authentically reflects and respects our prime place in this nation's history and culture. We want our rights to be actively involved in decisions that affect our communities' education and training outcomes as First Nations Peoples.

We formed, over 40 years ago, because of the extremely poor education outcomes for our Koorie communities, due to the complete lack of cultural understandings in schools, to make a change.

Koorie communities needed and still need structural and systemic change, to better the educational outcomes of Koorie students, their educational outcomes, and to create a first-class educational environment for all students.



OUR STRUCTURE

AN INCLUSIVE DESIGN

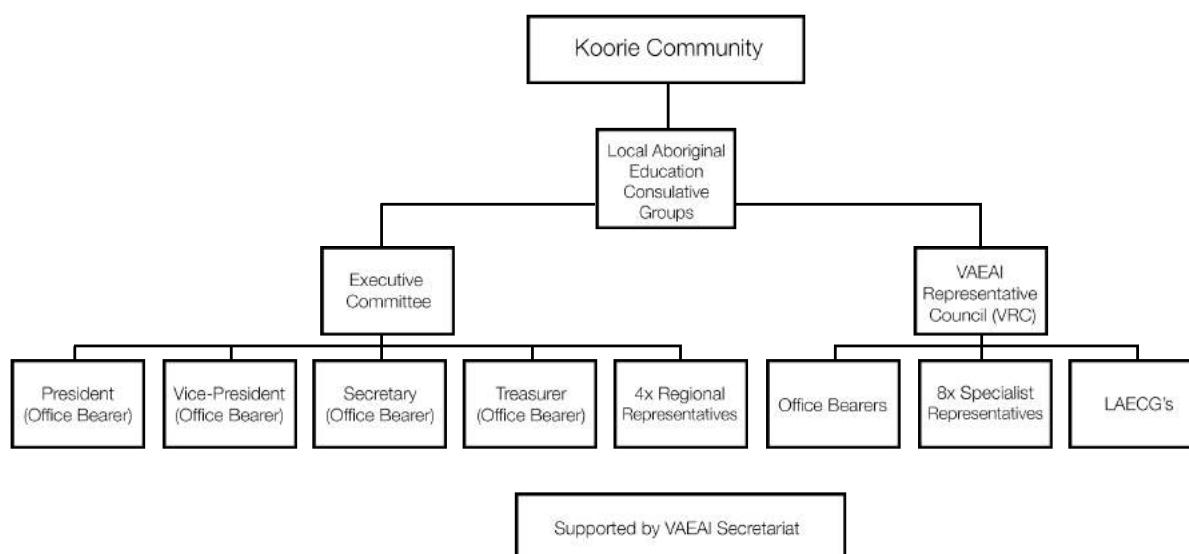
The structure of our organisation reflects our operations, with an emphasis on collaboration and communication.

VAEAI is a state-wide Koorie Community organisation, consisting of eight regions that are divided on the basis of traditional networks, with a number of Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECG's) within each region.

The advisory arrangements are embedded in local communities through the LAECG's, which are constituent units of VAEAI and each is a representative on the state-wide VAEAI Representative Council (VRC).

The VAEAI Secretariat is the working arm of VAEAI and the organisation's central coordinating function guided by the VRC.

The Secretariat has staff working in early childhood, school education, post compulsory education and training, community engagement and policy.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

LEADERSHIP

We have a wealth of experience, inspiration & guidance stemming from our Executive Committee.



Geraldine Atkinson
President

A Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman, Geraldine Atkinson has devoted her career to expanding the possibilities available for Koorie people through education. Geraldine has been the president of VAEAI since 1998.



Mark Rose
Vice-President

A Gunditjmara man from Western Victoria with a thirty plus year career in education who has contributed to a variety of educational settings within the state, nationally & internationally.



Keith Randall
Treasurer

A Yaegl, Bundjalung & Gumbainggir man from North east NSW. Keith has lived in Victoria for over 20 years and has a big passion for youth, Aboriginal education and Aboriginal justice. Keith has been a member of VAEAI for over 9 years.



Linda Bamblett
Secretary

A Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman, Linda has had a longstanding involvement in Victorian Aboriginal Affairs, particularly in education, justice and community services. She has contributed to Koorie education at the state-wide and national settings, and has been a long standing member of VAEAI.

The Executive Committee is established by Clause 45 of the VAEAI Constitution, which lists the Office Bearer roles that are elected at each Annual General Meeting, and also four additional representatives

LEADERSHIP

Our Specialist Representatives oversee areas of expertise to ensure that community is heard and represented across the structure.



Rose Bamblett
Early Childhood



Nicole Briggs
Primary Schools



Dennis Mitchell
Higher Education



Vicki Atkinson
Adult, Community &
Further Education



Sheree Lowe
Vocational Education &
Training



Bobby Wise-Moore
Catholic Education



Vera Briggs
Secondary Schools



Miranda Edwards
Independent Schools

The VAEI Representative Council (VRC), established by Clause 37 of the VAEI Constitution, is the major consultative making body of the organisation, formulating priorities for policies, strategies and programs for Koorie education and training in Victoria, across all educational sectors.

MARRUNG LIGHTS THE WAY

Koorie education and the partnerships in Victoria have been enhanced since the implementation of the Marrung 10-year Education Plan (2016-2026)

The Marrung 10-year Education Plan (2016-2026) is a strategy developed to ensure that all Koorie Victorians achieve their learning aspirations.

Marrung is the Wemba Wemba word for the Murray Cypress pine tree, which represents the branches of education and knowledge.

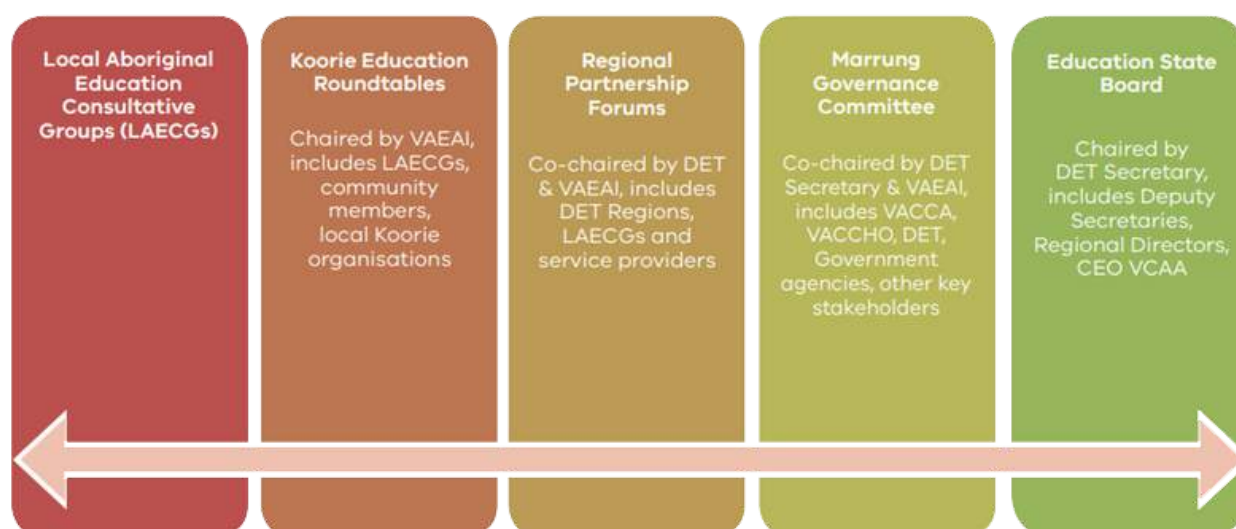
The vision of Marrung stipulates that Victoria will be a state where:

The rich and thriving culture, knowledge and experience of our First Nations peoples are celebrated by all Victorians.

Our universal service systems are inclusive, responsive and respectful of Koorie people at every stage of their learning and development journey.

Every Koorie person achieves their potential, succeeds in life, and feels strong in their cultural identity.

Marrung's governance is dependent on Koorie communities and stakeholders coming together at local, regional and statewide forums, to discuss education and training needs, issues and priorities for their communities, and feed into DET's education planning and delivery processes.



Marrung's lateral governance model

MARRUNG BY THE NUMBERS

KOORIE EDUCATION ROUNDTABLES

33

The Roundtables, established in each of the eight VAEAL regions, met through the year to discuss local priorities, needs and share information to support place-based action. There were 33 Roundtable meetings across Victoria in 2018.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FORUMS

20

With each Marrung Partnership Forum meeting held at least twice the year, a total of 20 Regional Partnership Forum meetings occurred across Victoria.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING FORUMS

17

17 VET Forums were held in 2018 regionally across Victoria. This brought post compulsory education and training stakeholders together to discuss Marrung related initiatives and implementation for the post-compulsory education and training sector.

CENTRAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

3

The Committee, which through the high level state-wide partnership, oversees the implementation of Marrung, met three times in 2018.

LOCAL ABORIGINAL CONSULTATIVE EDUCATION GROUPS

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

LAECG members are local Aboriginal community members who have an interest and commitment to Koorie education, and bring knowledge and experience to Koorie education issues across all sectors. Currently there are 30 LAECGs driving educational change and achievement for students and the community.



The Local Aboriginal Consultative Groups are an integral part of VAEAI's operations and a key element in the implementation of Marrung. Consultation with all of the regions across Victoria ensures that the voices of the community are heard.

WHAT WE DO

VAEAI has worked with unwavering commitment for many years to improve educational access, experiences, and outcomes for Koorie children, young people and families.



ADVOCACY

We advocate for our community by representing their views at the local, state, regional and national level.



ADVICE

VAEAI advises governments and the education system of ways to improve the outcomes and education experiences of Koorie students. We regularly advise our community of important issues and opportunities in Koorie education.



POLICY & MONITORING

VAEAI monitors current issues and trends in education and training. Our community provides perspectives and real time updates about what is happening in Koorie education.



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Celebrating successes in Koorie education and training, also serves as a way of informing our community about the opportunities available.

We believe a cross-sectoral approach, where education services are delivered collaboratively across all sectors on the education and training pathway. We also believe collaborating closely with health, housing, justice and employment, is necessary for the social well-being and economic development of Koorie communities.



KOORIE KIDS SHINE

VAEAI is committed to ensuring that young Koorie learners have a pathway into education through Early Years and kindergarten services.

One of the greatest areas of growth under Marrung 10-Year Plan (2016-2026) has been the enrollment and participation of Koorie learners in kindergartens.

Statistics have shown a steady increase of Koorie learners entering the education pathway and the enrollment percentage of 94% is a fantastic indicator that Kindergartens are becoming more adaptable and inclusive.

The Koorie Kids Shine campaign along with the work of the VAEAI Early Years Unit and the Koorie education workforce has made a big impact with kindergartens becoming more accessible.

“The current campaign in partnership with the Department of Education has assisted in developing the Koorie Kids Shine campaign, which has really helped Koorie families become more familiar with the fact that their children are entitled for 15 hours of free kinder and will be supported” said Early Years Coordinator Kim Powell.

“The information of Koorie Kids Shine being promoted at forums, meetings and through our platforms has helped families to better understand the assistance available.

The workforce is also doing fantastic work to assist in enrolling and making sure Koorie kids are participating in early years learning and getting kids into kinder. It’s helped immensely in closing the gap in participation between Koorie and non-Koorie learners.” Said Powell

Another key factor of developing culturally inclusive Kindergartens is driven by VAEAI’s professional development sessions hosted by Aunty Esme Bamblett.

“The objective of the professional development sessions is to help teachers and schools understand how to be more inclusive of Koorie culture and how to engage community. Over the past five years we’ve done well over 60 sessions, within those sessions we encourage teachers not to be scared in approaching Koorie culture,

“We have been able to promote Aunty Esme as a well-respected and knowledgeable resource when it comes to integrating Koorie culture into kindergartens. Given her experience in the area there is a great connection and she really is encouraging Early Years educators to not be scared and give things a try.

“We’re finding that Early Years educators are leaving our sessions feeling more confident knowing how they can be more inclusive.” Added Powell





I HAVE YOUR BACK

VAEAI partnered alongside the Department of Education & Training and the Melbourne Football Club to create the 'I Have Your Back' campaign to target racist bullying in schools.

VAEAI partnered with the Wellbeing and Engagement unit of DET and The Melbourne Football Club to develop the 'I Have Your Back' campaign to address racism and bullying in schools.

A video campaign was created to bring attention to incidents of racism and bullying, and the need for those who witness these behaviours to 'stand-up' against them.

The video aims to show students that being a bystander and not standing-up to racism only perpetuates the issue in schools.

It was important to convey the message that standing up to bullying and racism doesn't mean engaging in confrontation, but rather acting in a manner that supports the victim and shows the perpetrator that what they are doing is not acceptable.

The campaign was launched on the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence, and was shared widely via VAEAI, DET and Melbourne Football Club's social media platforms using the hashtag #ihaveyourback.

The video has also been aired on the big screen at the MCG during Melbourne Football Club home games in season 2019.

The development and implementation of the #ihaveyourback campaign worked to further strengthen the partnership between VAEAI and DET and fostered an ongoing working relationship with The Melbourne Football Club and their Aboriginal players.

The statistical results of the campaign were extremely positive, with the video garnering almost 10,000 views across the VAEAI and Melbourne Football Club platforms.





UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

VAEI oversee the Cultural Understanding & Safety Trainings that have been implemented within schools across the state of Victoria.

VAEI have been tasked in overseeing the introduction of Cultural Understanding and Safety Trainings to educate and prepare schools when approaching Koorie culture.

Over 300 CUST sessions were conducted in 2018 with a goal to bring schools up to speed with the appropriate methods and understanding of including, teaching and embracing Indigenous culture.

The CUST trainings, as outlined in the Marrung 10-Year Plan (2016-2026), are a method to assist educators and schools with helpful information to better understanding.

“One of the first steps in making sure schools are culturally safe and inclusive for Koorie learners and families in the future has been the implementation of the CUST training in schools,

It’s the first-time sessions like this have been offered to schools and education pathways in Victoria and we are seeing a real benefit.” Said Schools Coordinator, Leann Graham.

The sessions which are hosted and presented by members of the community associated with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, as well as the appropriate Koorie Engagement Support Officers, help give a clearer understanding on the cultural issues and boundaries that affect Koorie learners attending mainstream services.

Schools and educators are receiving a direct representation of what Aboriginal culture and history represents with the aim of breaking down the stigma and pre-conceived notions that are often generated in the absence of the truth.

“We hope it will encourage everyone to challenge their understanding of Aboriginal culture and entertain a conversation which presents both sides of the story.”
Added Graham

The CUST trainings continue to operate as a mechanism for making schools and their staff on how to allow space for Koorie culture and inclusiveness.





PATHWAYS OPEN

VAEAI assists Koorie learners looking to expand their skill set through the Wurreker (Message Carrier) Strategy and by connecting and ever-growing network of opportunities.

Ensuring that Koorie learners have an approachable and viable pathway into further education to maximise their employment opportunities is a key role for VAEAI.

A structure has been refined so that support is available for Koorie learners seeking higher education and to ensure that there is support and guidance on to the next step of the journey.

The Wurreker strategy has been a key asset for VAEAI under the Marrung 10-Year Education Plan (2016-2026) with representatives available for consultation across every region in Victoria.

Wurreker Coordinator Phil Murray believes the opportunities and networking available through the Wurreker strategy has resulted in more Koorie learners engaging in VET, TAFE and university pathways to improve their employment opportunities.

"We play an advocacy role through the Wurreker brokers and programs to assist in providing information and communicating avenues and services that can best support Koorie learners embarking on the next step of the education pathway, whether it be university, TAFE or employment,

"We receive a lot of calls for support, financial and logistical and it's our responsibility to know what is out there and what can be provided for Koorie students looking to up-skill their abilities." Said Murray.

A part of VAEAI's philosophy is a promotion of adding skills, regardless of age. There is a plethora of opportunities and networks connected to help and these avenues will only strengthen as Marrung and the Wurreker strategy grows.

"There are some fantastic initiatives available with universities and TAFE's getting involved with scholarships, financial and resource assistance which encourages Koorie learners to increase their portfolio and further their opportunities for employment,

"We've seen a big push and effort with TAFE over the last year, with an increase of Koorie learners enrolling in courses and furthering studies. There's still work to do but with Marrung and our Local Aboriginal Consultative Groups we are seeing real progress." Added Murray





INSPIRED LANGUAGE

VAEAI are heavily involved with the implementation of Indigenous languages in the education pathway and play a crucial role to ensure that language programs are introduced with cultural sensitivity and community engagement.

Strengthening the learning and use of Aboriginal language is a growing priority for education in this state, with various programs being implemented to support the reclamation and revival of Aboriginal languages across Victoria.

One of these key initiatives was the development of an accredited course, the Certificate III in Learning and Endangered Aboriginal Language, which is a new pilot program customised for Victoria and developed in accordance to the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan (2016-2026).

Multiple parties came together to develop the program including VAEAI, Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), Victorian School of Languages (VSL) and the Department of Education & Training.

The Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language has been developed around a student empowerment model designed to give participants the understanding, skills and resources to build up knowledge of their own traditional languages by engaging with their community, whilst also incorporating early wordlists and grammar found in historical records.

The Certificate III program also involves community learning and relies on Community Elders and respected persons to guide and educate throughout the process as Aboriginal Languages and cultures are taught and learned.

"It is a journey, not only for the individual but for the whole Aboriginal community in which language is being revived or learnt." Tina Sahin | VAEAI Language Education





WORKING TOGETHER

Collaboration with the Department of Education & Training and stakeholders is a key role for VAEAI as we journey further into the implementation of Marrung.

VAEAI continue to work in partnership with the Department of Education & Training to provide opportunities and sustainable pathways for Koorie learners and communities.

A part of the ongoing work under Marrung, VAEAI regularly engages with sector stakeholders and the Koorie community to ensure that the outcomes identified in the strategy are embedded in our approach.

As part of Marrung Action 8A, we are working to support Koorie students through the redesign of the VET workforce to ensure that the system better supports Koorie learners in their education, training and qualifications for employment.

Part of this work includes state-wide consultations with local Koorie communities, students and VET sector providers to gain an understanding of what is working well and where we can further enhance the system.

Ongoing collaboration and community consultation has been vital in ensuring that the needs of the community, are well reflected and result in a more effective ability to shape policy and support.

“The partnership we have with government, as well as our community and stakeholders continues to strengthen, said Lionel Bamblett, VAEAI General Manager

“The structure we have now under Marrung has enabled communication and consultation with the community, which then leads into collaboration with government,

“We are able to capture the voice of the community through the current processes and deliver outcomes that benefit all parties involved.”

A key target since the implementation of Marrung has been a focusing on higher learning and employment opportunities which aligns with VAEAI’s birth to death education philosophy.

“Our advocacy is a holistic approach to education and training, however historically the missing ingredient has often been how to improve pathways into higher education and training to further employment opportunities,

“The current relationship with the State and the collaboration in re-designing structures stipulated in Marrung article 8a are resulting in positive changes for the parties involved.” Added Bamblett

VAEAI continue to work on refining the Koorie Education Workforce alongside DET to further improve the VET and TAFE opportunities for Koorie learners



CONNECTIONS

VAEAI continued its long-standing active participation as a member of state-wide and national bodies and conglomerates.

VAEAI is committed to building partnerships with state-wide and national bodies to ensure that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander education aspirations and perspectives are widely reflected and represented.

Our involvement with bodies such as ATSIEAG, IECB, AEC and the NATSIEC helps strengthen the connection between Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations across the state and country as we continue to strengthen the voice and representation of Indigenous communities in education policy and programs.

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION ADVISORY GROUP

ATSIEAG

VAEAI is a member of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group. The group membership is made up of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations within each State and Territory, and Government representatives from each of the Departments of Education across each State and Territory.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS EDUCATION CONSULTATIVE BODIES (IECB)

IECB

The IECB network met at the end of 2018 with Acting Secretary, Commonwealth Department of Education & Training.

The IECB's were again advised that there was no discretionary funding available to the IECB Network. The IECB's agreed to push for funding for the network in the 2019-2020 cycle.

CONNECTIONS

VAEAI continued its long-standing active participation as a member of the network of Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies.

ABORIGINAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AEC

VAEAI is a member of the Aboriginal Executive Council (AEC). Over 2018 the AEC worked towards their involvement in participating and contributing to the national Coalition of Aboriginal Peaks to advocate to Premiers / Ministers and DPC for a genuine process of agreement making to finalise Closing The Gap.

A network will be facilitated of AEC Policy Staff to support AEC participation in Closing The Gap partnership arrangements & working groups.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EDUCATION CONFERENCE (NATSIEC)

NATSIEC

NATSIEC is a biennial National Indigenous Education Conference that brings educators, community members, leaders and students together from across Australia. The NATSIEC 2018 conference program featured 40 workshops, 10 keynote plenaries, cultural performances and a conference dinner.

The theme for the 2018 conference was "Engage, Empower; Excel". A large contingent of VAEAI staff and VRC members attended the conference held from the 19th to 21st of November 2018 in South Australia

A PROUD HISTORY

VAEAI has worked with unwavering commitment for many years to improve educational access, experiences, and outcomes for Koorie children, young people and families.



The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association was first established in 1976 as the Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (VAECG).

The shared aim of the VAECG was to increase the presence and voice of Koorie people in education and decision making.



In the early years of VAEAI, representatives from Koorie communities across Victoria came together to build an advocacy voice.

The VAECG eventually registered as the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) in 1985 and formally initiated a partnership alongside the Victorian State Government in 1990.



ALF BAMBLETT

**"WE WALK IN THE
FOOTPRINTS OF
GIANTS"**

In 1994, VAEAI registered as an industry Training Advisory Board. VAEAI's first Koorie State Training Plan for the Vocational Education and Training sector is published.

A tripartite agreement between VAEAI, the Victorian Government and the Commonwealth government was finalised in 1996.

A PROUD HISTORY

VAEAI has worked with unwavering commitment for many years to improve educational access, experiences, and outcomes for Koorie children, young people and families.

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association continued to build over the years, adapting to the needs of our community and the need for more inclusive educational pathways.

As VAEAI has grown our functions have been enhanced through a number of policies and strategies, including, Wurreker: The Koorie Community and TAFE in Victoria in Equal Partnership (2000), Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium (2001), Wannik: Learning Together – Journey to Our Future (2008) and the Marrung 10-Year Education Plan (2016-2026)

Today VAEAI represents the Koorie community in relation to education policy development and strategic programming at the local, state and national levels.

We support the provision of education and training that reinforces our community's cultural identity and increases awareness in the wider community of Koorie culture and aspirations in education and training.

GERALDINE ATKINSON

**"EDUCATION IS THE
MEANS TO DRIVE SELF-
DETERMINATION"**



LIFE MEMBERS

GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS

We have had many great pioneers, leaders and people over the course of VAEAI's existence and Life Membership is a way to honour their contributions.

VAEAI awards Life Membership status to select individuals to acknowledge their longstanding dedication and commitment to Koorie education through VAEAI.

VAEAI's Life Members are:

Aunty Mary Atkinson

Aunty Melva Johnson

Aunty Laura Bell

Dr Alf Bamblett

Aunty Lil Petit

Aunty Rose Bamblett

Aunty Vera Briggs





THE PAINTING

This painting is entitled “The Wurreker” or “Message Carriers”. It can be found behind the reception VAEI’s Office in Northcote and has become a symbol for our organisation.

The story to the painting is that of Wile the Possum and Tyuling the Goanna.

Wile and Tyuling are the Totems of learning and they are reaching out to all Kooris and their communities to carry the message of the need for our people to gain greater knowledge.

The eight circles surrounding Wile and Tyuling are representative of the eight VAEI regions. Grey is the rock of the region, blue relates to rivers in the various regions, green relates to the forests in those regions.

The ninth circle in the centre of the picture is the VAEI community and is coloured red, for this is the heart of VAEI where all communities have their input.

Artist: Kevin J Williams

Language: Wemba Wemba

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas



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