

Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements



The Koorie Parent and Community Engagement Model

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President's Foreword

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) has put together this document as a guide for schools and for Koorie parent/caregiver groups who want to establish Koorie School Community Partnership Agreements in their community.

You may be wondering, what exactly is a Koorie School Community Partnership Agreement? A Koorie School Community Partnership Agreement is both a document and a continuing process. The Agreement sets out how Koorie parents/caregivers and schools will work together for the benefit of Koorie students.

The ultimate aim of a Koorie School Community Partnership Agreement is to improve educational outcomes for Koorie students. Koorie student enrollment, retention and Year 12 completion rates have improved significantly in recent years, with 298 of our students completing Year 12 or equivalent in Government schools in 2012! This is an increase of 80% since the implementation of the Wannik Strategy in 2008, and a 30% increase from 2011.

We want to continue to see our numbers growing at such a rate, and we believe that Koorie School Community Partnership Agreements play an important part in achieving our education goals for Koorie students. Koorie School Community Partnership Agreements align with National and Victorian initiatives to improve the education outcomes for Koorie students, under the Wannik Strategy (2008) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (2010-2014).

In assembling this guide, VAEAI drew upon our experiences in conducting a pilot Koorie Parent and Community Engagement (KPaCE) program from 2010-2011. An important part of the program involved establishing Koorie School Community Partnership Agreements. Agreements were negotiated at:

- Swan Hill Primary School
- Gowrie Street Primary, Shepparton
- Reservoir Secondary College

Outcomes from this pilot, including feedback from program participants, have been used in the development of these guidelines. It is important to remember that these are guidelines, and that each Koorie School Community Partnership Agreement should be adapted to meet the educational needs and priorities of individual communities.

Agreements can also be adapted over time and need not be limited to school settings: early childhood services can also develop their own Koorie School Community Partnership Agreements.

Most importantly, the key ingredient for a successful Koorie School Community Partnership Agreement is active engagement from Koorie parent/caregiver groups and school staff and principals. Underpinning the Agreement is a recognition that regular, positive communication between Koorie parents/caregivers and education staff can make an enormous difference to Koorie students and their experience in school.



Swan Hill Primary School Koorie School -
Community Partnership team

We hope this guide will assist Koorie communities, schools and early childhood services wanting to work together to improve educational outcomes for Koorie students.



Geraldine Atkinson
VAEAI President

VAEAI: A Brief Overview

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI) was first established in 1976 as the Victorian Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, before becoming incorporated in 1985.

VAEAI enables Koorie communities to have a voice in the development of education policy and programs at all stages of education: from early childhood, to compulsory schooling, and higher education and training. We advocate for the needs of the Koorie community in education, and advise our community of education opportunities. VAEAI monitors the progress of Koorie education policies, strategies and programs. We provide advice to State and Federal governments, and education institutions.

VAEAI is made up of 32 Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) and a coordinating Secretariat based in Melbourne.

LAECGs are comprised of local Koorie people who work together for the progress of Koorie education in the area where they live. Participation in LAECGs is voluntary. The Chairperson of each LAECG sits on the VAEAI Committee of Management.

LAECGs have a wealth of local knowledge and are an excellent first point of contact if it is the school who is seeking to initiate a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement. By contacting the LAECG the school can access a well established group of local Koorie people who are active in education issues. Members of the DEECD Koorie Education Workforce will also be able to provide assistance to schools in the process of establishing Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements.



What is a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement?

A Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement brings a school together with the Koorie parents/caregivers whose children are enrolled in the school. The aim of the Agreement is to improve communication and form shared education goals.

The process of developing a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement involves regular meetings between school staff and Koorie parents/caregivers. In the lead up to establishing a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement, meetings should be held at least fortnightly. Once the Agreement has been established, meetings can be held less frequently (e.g twice every school term).

The aim of the meetings is to:

- Develop a regular means of exchanging communication between the school and Koorie parents/caregivers.
- Create a school environment which is welcoming for Koorie parents/caregivers.
- Enable the school to work with Koorie parents/caregivers for the benefit of Koorie students.

In these school-community meetings Koorie parents/caregivers can discuss any questions they have regarding the education of their children. Likewise school staff have the opportunity to discuss what is happening at the school with the Koorie parent/caregiver group. The aim of the meetings is to work through any issues and develop local strategies to support Koorie students.

A formal step in the process is developing and signing a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement. The Agreement outlines the principles and practices that Koorie parents/caregivers and the school believe will be of benefit to Koorie students. These Agreements should be negotiated and customised to local needs. The Agreement should be a living document that can be adapted over time. **A standard format for the Agreement is at Attachment F.**



Example of a signed Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement

The Koorie Parent and Community Engagement Program

For VAEAI, the development of Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements was part of the overall pilot Koorie Parent and Community Engagement (KPaCE) program. To achieve the aims of the KPaCE pilot VAEAI employed three KPaCE Officers, based in selected pilot areas, and one KPaCE Coordinator.

VAEAI employed local Koorie people as KPaCE officers because the role demanded an in-depth knowledge of the local Koorie community and broader community networks.

The role of the KPaCE officer was to facilitate Koorie parent/caregiver groups and connect these groups with local schools. The first step of the process involved developing the Koorie parent/caregiver group and ensuring that all members felt comfortable to contribute.

While these parent/caregivers groups were being established, the KPaCE officer was also working to develop connections with local schools. From this base the Koorie parent/caregiver group and school staff met and worked together on the formation of a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement in each pilot school.

VAEAI hopes to continue and expand the KPaCE program in the future. Of course a KPaCE facilitator will not always be available for schools who want to establish Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements. That is why we have established this guide so that other parties can initiate these Agreements.

KPaCE officers reflections on engagement

Below are some comments from the KPaCE officers on the pilot program and best practice in establishing the Agreements:

- Patience is vital and persistence will pay off.
- Flexibility is required, because things don't always go as planned.
- It is important to be respectful and sensitive because children's wellbeing is at stake.
- One-to-one contact is important because parents can't always come to meetings.
- For that reason, it's often good having other activities as well, such as family activities or barbecues.



Agreement co-launched on the 28th April 2011 at Reservoir High School, by Hon. Minister Martin Ferguson representing the Federal Government, the Hon. Martin Dixon Minister for Education, Northern Metro LAECG Chairperson Karin Williams and VAEAI President Geraldine Atkinson.

Why have a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement?

When Koorie children enter education settings, their families continue to support the child's education and progression through school. For Koorie parents/caregivers to successfully engage with their child's education, it is vital that they are able to form a positive relationship with the child's school and teachers.

By developing a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement that involves regular and sustained communication, Koorie parents have a support structure they can go to where there are agreed processes in place for hearing their views.

Schools benefit from a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement because they are able to work on developing a school culture that is inclusive of Koorie families.

As partners, the school and community agree to create a culturally inclusive environment, to meet regularly with Koorie parents and caregivers for information sharing and access, and to openly discuss and negotiate programs, projects and issues relating to the education of Koorie students and the education of students in general.

KPaCE reflections on engagement

- The fact that some parents are disengaged should not be taken as meaning they lack interest in the welfare and education of their children. The opposite is generally true.
- Parents' lives are often complicated, and they have many demands on their time.
- It isn't always easy for parents to be entirely open when they are in situations they don't find comfortable.

A Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement, and the regular meetings that should go along with it, create opportunities for:

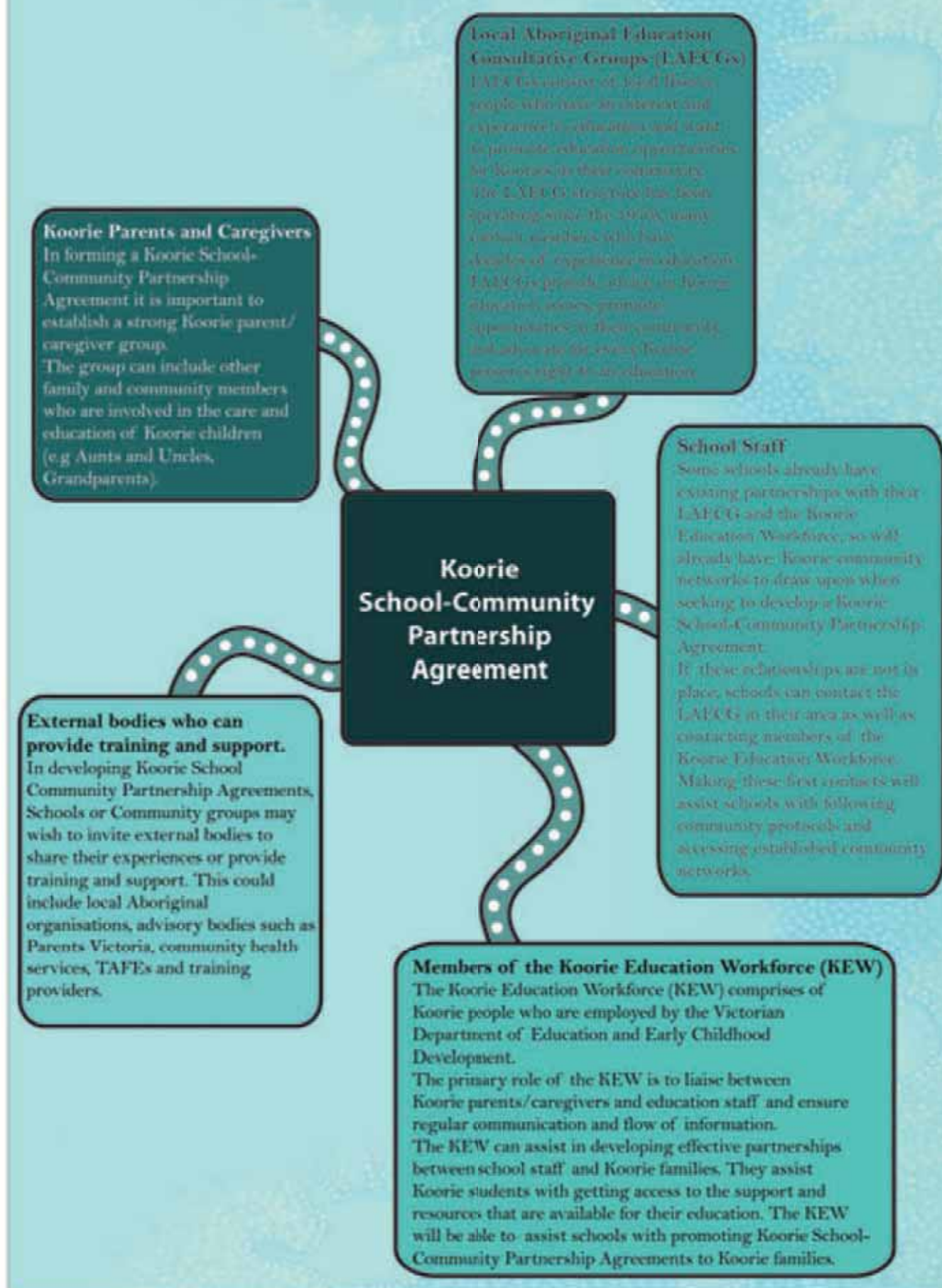
- Better communication between schools and Koorie parents/caregivers.
- A supported structure where Koorie parents/caregivers can feel comfortable to share their views.
- A basis for developing a school environment that is inclusive of Koorie people and culture.



The signing of the Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement at Swan Hill Primary School by School Council President Bruce Myers.

Who Should be Involved in a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement?

VAEI KOORIE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT STAKEHOLDERS



How VAEAI developed Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements

The VAEAI KPace Program ran from early 2010 to mid 2011. During this 18 month period VAEAI worked to create supported environments that enabled groups of Koorie parents and caregivers, relatives and other Koorie Community members to “be heard”. This was engagement enacted in a practical and structured way, with parents working on the formation of partnerships with local schools.

The following is a step-by-step representation of how VAEAI went about forming Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements as part of the KPace program. All of VAEAI’s KPace officers adapted this basic structure to their local needs.

Step One: Appointing a facilitator

There is no set rule for who first initiates a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement. In the case of VAEAI’s KPace program, the KPace officer acted as initiator. Of course KPace officers are not always available to perform this role. Instead Koorie parent/caregiver groups (including LAECGs) can initiate the Agreement. Or it could be the school itself who is looking to bring a group of Koorie parents/caregivers together. Members of the DEECD Koorie Education Workforce in a particular area could also be the first party to initiate a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement.

It is useful for one person to be appointed as the facilitator for the Agreement, to assist with the process running smoothly. The facilitator could be a Koorie parent/caregiver, a member of the LAECG, a member of the DEECD Koorie Education Workforce, or a member of school staff.

Step Two: Contacting the school and securing school ‘buy-in’

An important first step - regardless of who initiates the Agreement - is to secure the school’s commitment to the importance of the process and the outcomes. This can be done by contacting the school and meeting with the principal and any staff who are involved or interested in Koorie activities within the school.

It is also important to involve the dedicated Koorie Education Workforce, such as the Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) and the regional Koorie Education Coordinator (KEC). This initial meeting is to explain the concept of a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement and what it represents. The school needs to be aware that Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements are in line with strategies in Victoria to improve the education outcomes for Koorie students under the Wannik Strategy (2008), the National Strategies and COAG Partnership Agreements in ‘Closing the Gap’, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (2010-2014).

The school needs to also recognise how this will benefit the school, and the need to take a shared responsibility in forming the partnership.

Step Three: Initial parent forums

The next step is to convene a number of forums with the school’s Koorie parents and caregivers in conjunction with LAECGs. The time and effort that goes into this process will be directly related to how active the local Koorie parent/caregiver network is. Weekly meetings are particularly important for a group where members are not all familiar with each other and a rapport needs to be established.

Where a Koorie parent/caregiver group is well established:

In some instances the Koorie parent group will already be well established. For example the LAECG of an area may already contain a number of parents/caregivers whose children attend a particular school. In these instances, given that the structure is already in place, the first forum could be held at the school and school staff may attend.

Where a Koorie parent/caregiver group is not well established:

The situation is quite different, however, when the LAECG does not contain many parents/caregivers whose children attend the particular school that is seeking to form a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement. In these cases more work is required to establish the Koorie parent/caregiver group and develop communication and familiarity between members. It should not be assumed that members will automatically feel at ease in sharing their opinions and concerns.

In cases where the parent/caregiver group is not established, initial meetings should not involve school staff and should be held at a neutral venue – separate from the school. The reason for this is to give Koorie parents/carers and other family members a safe environment to raise issues and concerns that they may have with the school.

Holding a number of open forums for parents and caregivers to express concerns and issues amongst each other, can help to expel tensions and clearly pinpoint any issues as a group. Furthermore decisions can be made about how to raise any issues or concerns with the school.

In VAEAI's KPACE pilot, some of the KPACE officers already had access to well established Koorie parent/school groups that they could expand upon using local contacts for the development of an Agreement. Other KPACE officers had to do more initial work to form a group. This was achieved through activities like a community barbeque. Community events provide an opportunity to welcome new parents/caregivers and explain the aims of the KPACE project. The events were promoted through the LAECG and the Koorie Education Workforce.



Community BBQ

KPACE reflections on engagement

- Many different mechanisms might be needed to achieve genuine parent participation. Even if small groups meet, this can still be a valuable activity and should be fostered. Contact with individual parents/caregivers, especially to give feedback and gather ideas, is also vital.
- It is often a good idea to begin with activities for parents which help them feel comfortable at the school rather than going directly into formal "meeting mode".



KPACE local reference group including DEEWR Officer, DEECD Koorie Education Coordinator and Koorie Education Support Officer, School Principal and VAEAI KPACE Officer.

Step Four: School and parent meetings

Once the initial parent forums are held – where issues, concerns and needs are openly discussed as a group – a joint meeting can be organised with the school Principal and any relevant school staff and school council members. This meeting allows for parents as a group to raise any issues, needs and concerns with the school and is an important first step in being heard and resolving these issues. Additionally, while it helps the school to become more aware of parent and community concerns, it clears the way to move forward with the Agreement.



Meeting between Koorie parent/caregiver group.

Step Five: Negotiating the Agreement

Meetings to negotiate the Agreement are then held as regularly as needed. Again, there is no set rule for who initiates the meetings to negotiate the Agreement. The appointed facilitator could come from the Koorie parent group, the KEW, the LAECG, or the school. The important thing is to work cooperatively and ensure the availability of all involved parties.

During these meetings issues between the school and parents can be discussed and worked on, as well as ways to increase parental and Koorie Community engagement with the school. For example, designating Koorie parent positions on School Council, raising the Koorie Flag alongside the official Australian flag on a daily basis, conducting an Acknowledgement of Country at school assemblies and supporting and celebrating Koorie student achievements may be strategies considered.

Step Six: Enhancing engagement and connections: parent and community forums

Through the pilots, we found that one of the best methods to support parents, caregivers and other Community members to connect with the school and engage in the Agreement process was through Community/Parent forums and workshops. These forums are an ideal venue for providing requested information to parents through guest presentations - such as information on support programs and services, Koorie Pathways, current Koorie education policies and strategies, developing individual Koorie Education Learning Plans (KELPs) for their child, careers and training advice.

KPaCE reflections on engagement

- Large meetings of parents may be difficult to arrange because of the general busy-ness of parents' lives.
- Even small group discussions are worthwhile, and provide important information.
- Agreements require understanding and trust, and those things take time to build. In some situations the expected outcome cannot be achieved, until this understanding and trust has been achieved.

Step Seven: Signing and implementing the Agreement

Once prepared and accepted by the Community, the school and the school council, the Agreement needs to be signed. A public launch of the Agreement, involving the whole school, staff, school council, parents, community members and other stakeholders is highly recommended to give prominence to the Agreement and the high status it deserves.

Framing the signed Agreement and placing it in a prominent position, such as in the entrance to the school building will ensure its visibility to all.

It's important that the terms of the Agreement, or the initiatives negotiated, are acted on quickly so as not to lose momentum. In our pilot schools, for example, this included:

- Each school having at least one Koorie nominated position on the School Council
- Flying the Koorie flag every day rather than only on special cultural events days
- Holding regular and well attended Koorie parent meetings at the schools
- Providing morning teas on a regular basis for parents, carers and families that the Principal also attends; at one pilot school for example, these morning teas were held fortnightly.
- Holding a recognition night BBQ at the end of each term to encourage, promote and celebrate Koorie student achievements.
- The option of home visits was negotiated at one school, to better help teachers and families mutually develop Koorie Education Learning Plans (KELPs).
- Celebrating significant cultural events such as Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and Sorry Day.



Aunty Steph Charles, Swan Hill LAECG Chair, speaking at the launch of the Swan Hill Primary School Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement

Step Eight: Monitoring and reviewing the Agreement

Once the Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement is in place – the real work begins! Koorie parent meetings should continue to be held regularly (at least once per term), so that the work of developing the agreement is sustained and connections are built upon. Regular meetings with parents will allow schools to report on ongoing education outcomes and improvements, and how the school is meeting its targets.

We recommend that the Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement be reviewed at least annually, and amended if needed. An annual review, undertaken mutually with Community and school, will provide an opportunity to examine the strength of the partnership - to see what's working and what's not - and to recognise and celebrate positive changes, improved relationships and increased parental and community engagement.

Conclusions

Historically, many Koorie people's personal experiences of schooling – both as students and as parents – have not been positive. To turn around feelings of mistrust, resentment, hopelessness, suspicion and anger takes sustained effort.

Of equal significance is a historical lack of Aboriginal perspectives in school curriculum and teacher training. This historical absence means that often school staff may be uncertain of engaging with Koorie communities. In forming effective partnerships with Koorie communities, schools also require support. LAECGs and the Koorie Education Workforce can provide advice on how to form successful partnerships with Koorie parent/caregivers.

VAEI's Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) are based in 32 locations around Victoria, and will support the ongoing development of Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements by acting as a community base where Koorie parents/caregivers can discuss education issues and share information on programs and policies at the local level.

Changing perceptions, attitudes and expectations on both sides of the Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements will lead to a greater engagement of Koorie parents with schools and education generally, as well as a greater, more meaningful engagement of local schools with Koorie parents and community. This change can only be achieved from the ground up. As Aboriginal academic and former teacher Kevin Lowe states;

"Schools can only acquire the skills and knowledge to establish meaningful educational partnerships [by following] an authentic Indigenised partnership framework that allows informed Aboriginal parents and Communities to engage with the core business of school."

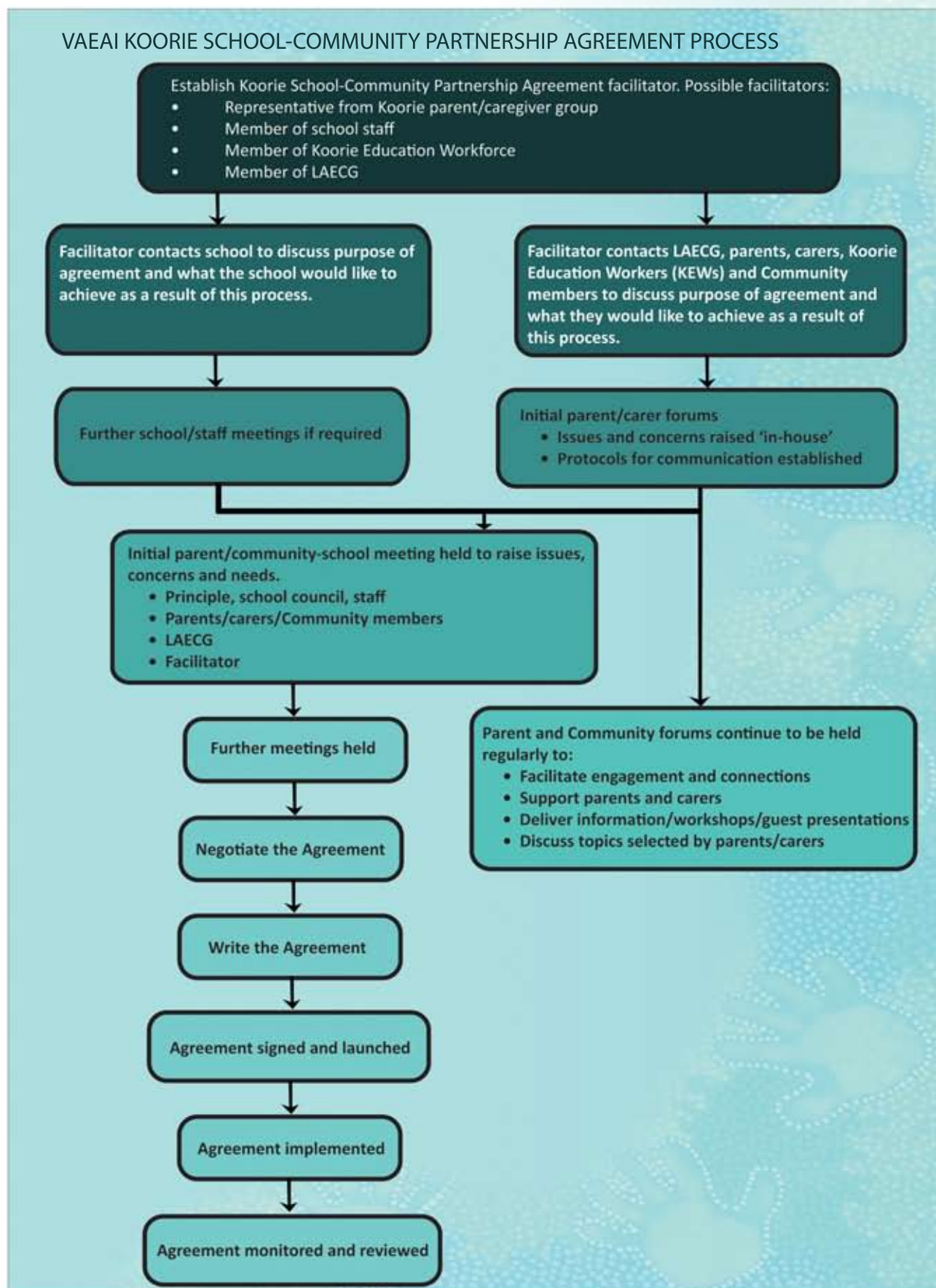


Back Left to Right: Kain Chaplin (Parent), Local MP Donna Petrovich and School Council President Bruce Myers
Front Left to Right: School Principal Janet Barnard, VAEI President Geraldine Atkinson, Swan Hill LAECG Chairperson Stephanie Charles and DEECD Regional Network Leader Ron Payne.

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

VAEAI has put together resources that we used in developing School-Community Partnership Agreements, including policy information and templates. The templates can be adapted to local needs.

Attachment A: Process Flow Chart



VAEI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment B: Policy Directions

School-Community Partnership Agreements and NATSIEAP

While School-Community Partnership Agreements are not new, there is a new imperative under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (NATSIEAP) for such Partnerships to be formed. The National Action Plan contains a range of local, systemic and national actions that support local level engagement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their schools. One of the primary local level actions is focused on School-Community Partnership Agreements, namely:

Local action 19: Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal School-Community Partnership Agreement between the school, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in 2011, which sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes.

In Victoria, there are currently 122 focus schools (both Government and Catholic) which have been targeted in the National Partnership of State and Federal government for the development of School-Community Partnership Agreements. Focus schools in Victoria are primary schools with more than ten Koorie students that have been identified as having the greatest need and where efforts should be focused to make the greatest difference. Primary schools have been selected so as to concentrate national, state and local efforts on the early years of learning.

VAEI encourages all schools wanting to work collaboratively with their local Koorie Community to create a culture of high expectations for Koorie students whether they are focus schools, primary or secondary.

The aim of a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement is to improve educational outcomes for Koorie students. Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements align with National and Victorian initiatives to improve the education outcomes for Koorie students, under the Victorian Wannik Strategy (2008) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (2010-2014).

Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreements connect schools, parents, and the Koorie Community through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) to form a relationship based on shared goals. The goals are then used as a basis for ongoing discussions between the Parents/Carers/Community and school about the progress and wellbeing of Koorie students.

Koorie Education Policy and Strategies in Victoria

Yalca (2001) overview:

Through VAEI the Victorian Koorie Community has maintained and strengthened a partnership arrangement with the Victorian State Government. The goal of the partnership is to build success in Koorie education and training through Koorie community participation in education decision making. This partnership was first formalised in 1990 under the Partnership in Education: Koorie Education Policy.

In October 2001 both the Victorian State Government and VAEI recommitted to this partnership with the launch of Yalca: Koorie Education Policy. Yalca acknowledges that local Koorie communities, through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs), are best able to determine local education and training needs.

Yalca (2001)

Through VAEAI the Victorian Koorie Community have maintained and strengthened a partnership arrangement with the Victorian State Government. In October 2001 both the Victorian State Government and VAEAI recommitted to this partnership with the launch of Yalca: Koorie Education Policy. Yalca provides the framework to develop strategies and programs that keep the student at the centre and enable Koorie communities to have direct involvement with education institutions.

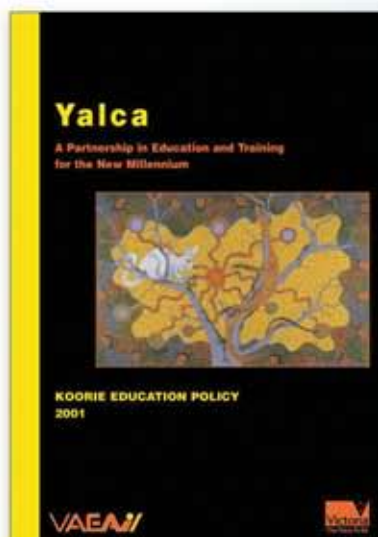
Wannik (2008)

Wannik, developed in partnership with VAEAI, is the Victorian Government's key strategy for Koorie education. It is designed to:

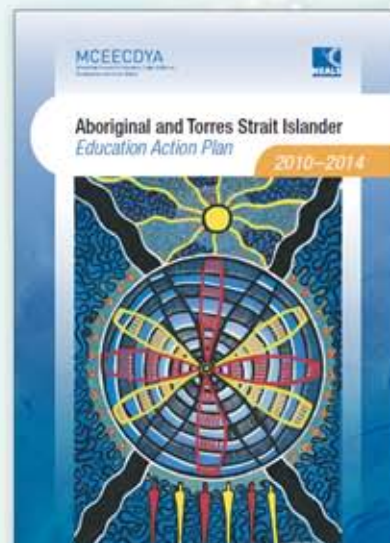
- reform the government school system's education of Koorie students
- expand and develop the Koorie Education Workforce
- support greater student and parent engagement
- provide more literacy and numeracy support
- provide support and encouragement for high-achieving students
- renew focus on parental engagement
- share responsibility appropriately across government
- create an environment that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity through practice and curriculum, and
- develop leadership opportunities for Koorie students in secondary schools.



WANNIK (2008)



YALCA (2001)



NATSIEAP (2010-2014)

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment C: Sample letter to school



Dear Principal,

I am writing to inform you of the Koorie Parent and Community Engagement (KPaCE) Program which will be commencing in your local area. The Koorie Parent and Community Engagement program (KPaCE) is a Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) program funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The KPaCE Program is a Community driven program which focuses on the development and implementation of creative and innovative approaches to improve the educational outcomes of Indigenous school students through enhancing Indigenous parental engagement with schools and education providers.

The KPaCE Program supports Koorie families and communities to 'reach-in' to schools and education providers, to develop partnerships with them with the aim of enhancing their children's educational outcomes. The KPaCE program acknowledges improved outcomes for Koorie students and young people is dependent on ensuring that parents and communities are supported to engage in the education system.

Program Objectives

- Engage with schools and education providers in order to support improved educational outcomes for their children
- Build strong leadership that supports high expectations of Indigenous students educational outcomes
- Support the establishment, implementation and/or ongoing progress of Community-School partnerships
- Support and reinforce children's learning at home.

I would like to extend an invitation to your Koorie parents to become involved in the KPaCE program. The KPaCE program will involve a series of parent and Community forums and workshops. The KPaCE program will commence in [date]. If you would like more information please feel free to contact me on the numbers below.

Kind Regards,

KPaCE Program Coordinator
[Contact Details]

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment D: Parent Questionnaire



Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.

Parent Questionnaire

- | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|
| 1. I visit my child's school | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| 2. The school communicates with me | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| 3. My interactions with my child's school are mostly | Negative | Varied | Positive |
| 4. I would attend meetings at the school if I had time | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| 5. The school has informed me about the ways I might be involved | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| 6. Would you like to be more involved in your child's school? | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| 7. My child would benefit if I were more involved in their school | Never | Sometimes | Often |
| 8. Do you know who to contact within school regarding your child's education? | Yes | No | |
| 9. List the reasons that might encourage you to become more involved in your child's schooling. | | | |
| 10. List the reasons that might stop you from becoming more involved in your child's schooling. | | | |

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment E: Forum reporting template

PARENT / COMMUNITY FORUM REPORTING TEMPLATE	
INSERT LAECG LOCATION: _____	
Attendees	Provide a list of names of who attended the forum
Speakers	Provide details of speakers and what they presented
Issues	Provide details of issues raised
Actions	Provide details of any follow up and who is responsible and what you did to follow up the actions.

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment F: VAEAI Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement template

Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement between [insert school name] and Koorie parents/guardians and Community Developed by/through [insert group / programme]

Acknowledgment

The Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement is a project that has involved VAEAI, the Koorie Parent and Community Engagement Program (KPaCE, funded by the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)) the Koorie Community in the [insert region], and the staff of [insert school]

All parties involved would like to acknowledge the [insert group name] people of the [insert region/nation if appropriate] who are the traditional owners of the land on which [insert school name] is situated. It is also the land on which negotiations and meetings occurred in developing this Partnership.

Partnership Agreement

This Agreement was developed through a [insert timeframe or relevant alternative] process, which involved consultations between the Koorie Community and [insert school name] in an effort to build a strong relationship between the school and the Koorie Community. The overarching aim of the Agreement is to provide a safe and supportive education for the Koorie students at [insert school name] and promoting parent engagement.

Terms of the Partnership between the Koorie parents/caregivers and [insert school name]

- Continue to hold regular meetings at [insert school name] with Koorie parents and caregivers to discuss and negotiate programs, projects and issues relating to the education of Koorie students.
- Work together in providing a quality education for Koorie students.
- Consult between parent/guardians and school regarding any relevant Koorie education programs, issues etc.
- Establish effective and accessible avenues for communication for parents/guardians to connect with teachers/staff.
- Encourage a sense of pride in the school.
- Encourage Koorie student involvement in school activities eg. debating groups, clubs and leadership roles.

**Parent/School Community
Member**

School Council President

VAEI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment F: VAEI Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement template

VAEI's Recommendations

VAEI's recommendations for providing a culturally inclusive environment for the Koorie students at [insert name of school]: recommendations are a result of numerous KPaCE meetings and consulting with the Koorie community, as well as consulting with the school.

- Develop a formalised relationship with the Koorie Community through a Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement.
- Establish a Koorie Education Leadership team comprising parents, staff and Koorie Community members. The function of this leadership team is to consult with the Koorie parent/guardian group to discuss programs and policies within the school that relate to Koorie education.
- Collaborate with the school's Koorie Community in implementing the Wannik Strategy.
- Provide Professional Development opportunities for all school staff.
- Acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the area. Educate staff and students as to why this is important. A plaque should be permanently erected in an area of high prominence and verbal acknowledgements should be regularly made at school events and on special occasions.
- Explore ways of involving Community Leaders and parents/guardians in school activities.
- Provide accessible and effective avenues of communication for parents/guardians to connect with teachers
- Involve the LAECG when necessary
- Provide a safe, respectful learning environment for the Koorie students of [insert school name]

Recommendations are standard recommendations that VAEI endorse to schools with Koorie students. These recommendations are made available for school and parents to negotiate within the Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement.

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment F: VAEAI Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement template

Meetings

Rights of Parents regarding meetings

All parents/caregivers of Koorie students:

- Have the right to be treated with respect at all times and to have their contributions valued.
- Have the right to discuss all relevant educational issues to do with their child(ren)
- Have the right to voice complaints in a constructive way and to be heard by a representative of the school.
- Have the right to involve unresolved complaints with Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs), Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs), Koorie employees at the school, and if necessary, VAEAI.
- Have the right to be informed by the school of any changes to programs and/or information regarding Koorie education.
- Have the right to invite school representatives to be present at particular meeting/s.

Obligations of Parents

All parents/caregivers of Koorie students:

- Are obliged to respect the rights of all persons in attendance at meetings.
- Are obliged to be culturally sensitive towards all persons in attendance at meetings.
- Are obliged to work in a constructive and positive manner with all involved parties.
- Are obliged to attempt to resolve school-related issues in a constructive way.
N.B. If issues are unable to be resolved in an amicable or respectful manner, involvement of the LAECG, KESOs/Koorie Workers or VAEAI should be arranged.
- Are obliged to invite [insert school name] representatives to attend meetings.

Rights of [insert school name] Representatives regarding meetings.

All representatives of [insert school name]:

- Have the right to be treated with respect at all times and to have their contributions valued.
- Have the right to discuss relevant education issues when invited to meetings.
- Have the right to request meetings with Koorie parents/guardians and community, as long as sufficient notice is given.
- Have the right to share their views when in attendance at meetings.

Obligations of [insert school name] Representative:

All representatives of [insert school name]:

- Are obliged to give notice to share relevant school information at meetings.
- Are obliged to respect the rights of all persons in attendance in meetings.
- Are obliged to be culturally sensitive towards all persons in attendance at meeting.

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment F: VAEAI Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement template

Meetings

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- Are obliged to invite [insert school name] representatives to attend meetings

Rights of [insert school name] Representatives regarding meetings.

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- Have the right to discuss relevant education issues when invited to meetings
- Have the right to request meetings with Koorie parents/guardians and community, as long as sufficient notice is given.
- Have the right to share their views when in attendance at meetings.

Obligations of [insert school name] Representatives

All representatives of [insert school name]:

- Are obliged to give notice to share relevant school information at meetings
- Are obliged to respect the rights of all persons in attendance in meetings

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment F: VAEAI Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement template

Signatures

We the undersigned hereby agree to the terms of this Agreement and respect the participation and input of all involved in the development of this Agreement:

.....
[insert school name] Council President

.....
Koorie Parents and Community Members rep.

.....
Negotiations for the agreement started on:

The agreement was completed on the:

VAEAI's Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement Resources

Attachment G: Template Certificate

Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement

The partnership is an Agreement between {insert school name} School and the Koorie Community.

We agree to the Koorie School-Community Partnership Agreement to provide the best possible education for the Koorie Students of {insert school name} School.

Koorie Parent/Family Representative
{Insert school name} School Council Representative
School Principal
Partnership launched by:



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Namalaata

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PO Box 113 Northcote, VIC 3070

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