

# Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin:

## May 2021

### Issue #3 of the Koorie Perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin features

- National Sorry Day
- The 1967 Referendum
- National Reconciliation Week

Focused on Aboriginal Histories and Cultures, the aim of the Koorie Perspectives Bulletin is to highlight Victorian Koorie voices, stories, achievements, leadership and connections, and suggest a range of activities and resources around key dates for starters. **Of course any of these topics can be taught throughout the school year and we encourage you to use these [Bulletins](#) and VAEAI's [Koorie Education Calendar](#) for ongoing planning and ideas.**

In this bulletin, you will find Victorian Curriculum links to Content Descriptions. Select the code and it will take you directly to the Victorian Curriculum site with additional elaborations. Select pictures and videos to take you to online resources and further info.

**We know that Aboriginal people are the best equipped and the most appropriate people to teach Indigenous knowledge.** Therefore, wherever possible you should seek to involve your local Koorie community in education programs that involve Aboriginal perspectives. For some guidance about working with your local Koorie community to enrich your teaching program, see VAEAI's [Walking Together](#) and [Aboriginal Early Childhood Cultural Protocols](#) resource, and [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, select the link for the VCAA's: [Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.](#)

May



**National Sorry Day** on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, is a day of commemoration and remembrance for the **Stolen Generations** - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children forcibly removed from their families, communities and cultures between the 1800s and the 1970s. The *first* Sorry Day was held in Sydney on 26 May 1998 and has been commemorated nationally on 26 May each year since, with thousands of Australians from all walks of life participating in memorial services, commemorative meetings,

survival celebrations and community gatherings, in honour of the Stolen Generations.

National Sorry Day was born out of a key recommendation made by the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families in the *Bringing Them Home Report* that was tabled in Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997.

Over time, state and territory governments issued apologies for the laws, policies and practices which had governed forcible removal. However, at that time (1998), the Australian Government, refused to make a formal National Apology in the Australian Parliament and instead offered a *motion of reconciliation*.

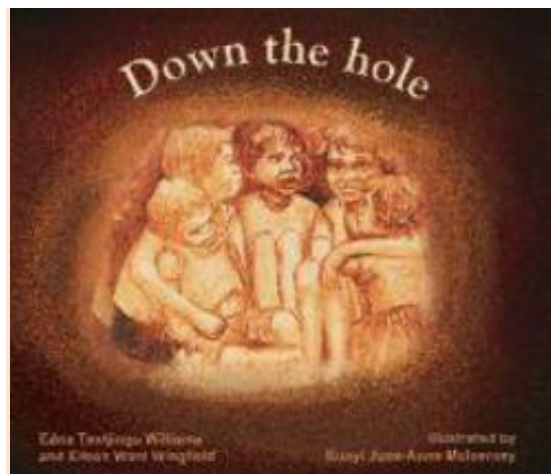
**View and download** VAEAI's [National Sorry Day Feature](#) for background information, suggested activities, curriculum links and a host of online resources.

**Further look into** the [Learning about the Stolen Generation: the NSDC's school resource](#) for great classroom and whole-of-school activities.

**Well-worth exploring** for deeper understanding, the website [Stolen Generations Testimonies](#) allows students to view and hear the personal stories of those taken from their homes and communities, and information about the subsequent Inquiry.

**Organise** a school National Sorry Day event, such as an assembly, ceremony, concert, or oral history/ story-sessions.

The illustrated children's book [Down the Hole](#) by Edna Tantjingu Williams, tells a true and different story about a group of children in Cooper Pedy, and how when the government came to take the fair-skinned Aboriginal children away, they didn't always find them ...



[They went Home: racialised spaces in contemporary picture books](#) attests to the power of stories such as *Down the Hole* in “positioning child readers both to understand the dislocation and pain caused by government policies such as those which enforced the removal of the Stolen generations in Australia, and to appreciate the tactics of resistance by which children evaded or subverted institutional power”:

Plenty of songs, screen and stage-plays powerfully tell the stories of the Stolen Generations and can be explored with primary and secondary students.

**On winning the 2016 NIMA Song of the Year, for *The Children Came Back*, Yorta hip-hop and rap artist Adam Briggs** told the crowd he wanted to "pay respect ... a tip of the hat, a homage" to veteran performer Archie Roach, who helped inspire *The Children Came Back*. Discuss the place and role of this music genre.

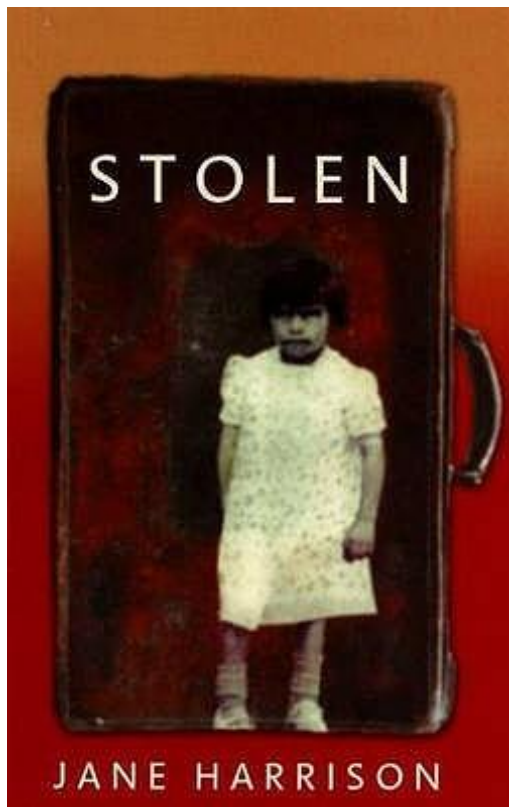
Listen to and study the lyrics of songs by artists such as Victorian Mati-Mati singer Kutcha Edwards, a member of the Stolen Generations who sings about his and others' experiences; Archie Roach's legendary [They took the Children Away](#) which famously says it all and [The Children Came Back](#) by the award-winning Adam Briggs with Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu (RIP) and Dwayne Everettsmith.

The acclaimed plays ***Stolen*** and ***Yibiyung*** come with teacher notes.

Since its 1998 debut, ***Stolen*** has become a mainstay in high school drama and English school rooms. It's toured extensively.

By Murrawarri (NSW) writer Jane Harrison, ***Stolen*** tells of five young Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their parents, brought up in a repressive children's home and trained for domestic service and other menial jobs. Segregated from society from their earliest years, not all of them successfully manage their lives when released into the outside world.

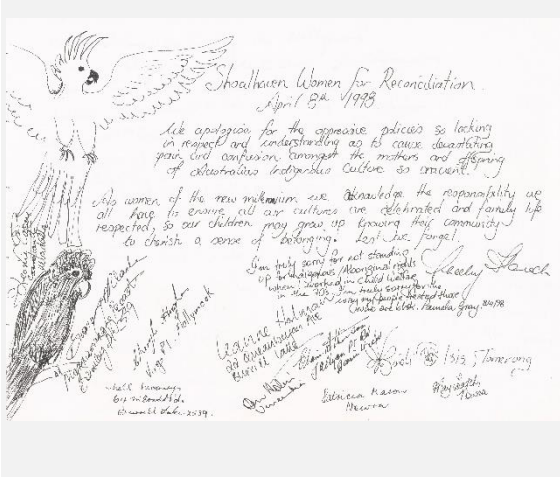
In this [Blak Stage](#) interview, Jane Harrison talks from the heart about her influential play ***STOLEN***, which was commissioned by Ilbjerri Theatre Company and debuted in 1998. Learn how ***Stolen*** was commissioned, the development process and her advice for anyone considering producing the play, including advice to schools.



***Yibiyung*** by Dallas Winmar is a Western Australian Noongar story of the play writer's nan who was forcibly removed from family, community and country. ***Yibiyung*** was Dallas Winmar's grandmother, and this is her growing-up story uncovered through archived government records. ***Yibiyung*** was one of hundreds of girls swept up in the forced removals of the 1920s and trained to become model domestic servants. But it's ***Yibiyung***'s break from this regime and her extraordinary flight across Western Australia which gives her story its rolling, expansive rhythm of survival.

***Yibiyung*** is about finding a way out of centuries-old cycles of anger and despair. It is a song of hope and change, a celebration of fronting up and finding place and family.

AIATSIS holds over [500 Sorry Books](#); 461 of these have been placed on the [UN Australian Memory of the World Register](#). The **Sorry Books** were a response to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, which released its findings in 1997. A key recommendation of the Bringing Them Home Report was the need for official acknowledgement of, and apology for, the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The Sorry Books are a powerful record of the personal responses of Australians to the unfolding history of the Stolen Generations. They are a "people's apology" for past wrongs to Indigenous Australians, a public expression of regret, compassion, and hope. The Sorry Books campaign was launched in Sydney on Australia Day, 26 January 1998. Over the following four months, around 1000 Sorry Books were circulated around Australia by ANT, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, and networks of volunteers. Many organisations and individuals also made up their own Books.



\* Developed by the National Sorry Day Committee in 2013, the **Learning about the Stolen Generations Resource** provides accurate and concise background information about the Stolen Generations as well as a set of age-appropriate useful classroom exercises and ideas for commemorating both National Sorry Day and the Anniversary of the Apology.

*Note in previous years schools were encouraged to register with the NSDC, join their schools program and download the **Learning about the Stolen Generations Resource** from their website. However, this program is no longer active and the resource unavailable on their site. Given the value of this resource to schools and the NSDC's original aims, VAEAI has temporarily made this resource directly available on our resources site. To download a copy, click [here](#).*

## 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: Community, remembrance and celebrations.

**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.

**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: Government and Democracy.

**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.

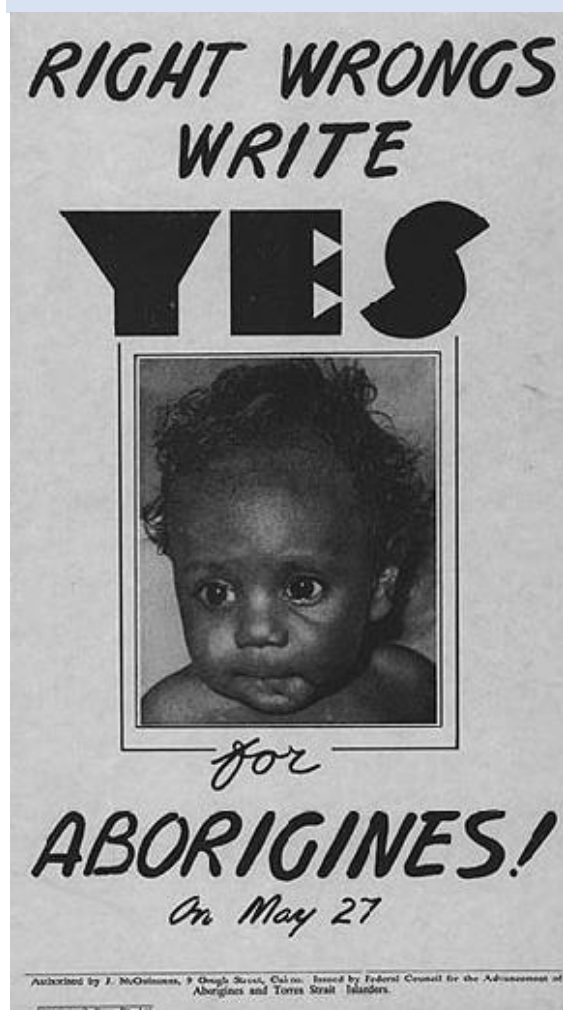
### Personal and Social Capabilities:

**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.



# Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum



On 27 May 1967, the Australian Government held a referendum.

This was a momentous turning point in Australian history. **More than 90 per cent** of Australian voters chose 'Yes' to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the census and give the Australian Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The purpose of the **1967 Referendum** was to make two changes to the Australian Constitution. These changes enabled the Commonwealth Government to:

(i) Make laws for all of the Australian people by amending s51 of the Constitution (previously people of the 'Aboriginal race in any state' were excluded) and;

(ii) Take account of Aboriginal people in determining the population of Australia by repealing s127 of the constitution (formerly, Indigenous peoples had been haphazardly included in the census but not counted for the purposes of Commonwealth funding grants to the states or territories)

From 1967, Aboriginal people were counted in the census and included in base figures for Commonwealth funding granted to the states and territories on a per capita basis.

Contrary to popular thinking the 1967 Referendum did NOT

- give Aboriginal peoples the right to vote
- give Aboriginal peoples citizenship rights
- give Aboriginal peoples the right to be counted in the census.

**Did you know** that from 1947 Torres Strait Islander People were counted in the official Commonwealth census but were first classified as Polynesians, then as Pacific Islanders? Prior to 1947, Torres Strait Islander people were regarded as 'aboriginal natives' and were excluded from population figures if they were of more than 50 per cent Torres Strait Islander heritage. [Read more.](#)

Download the [VCAA 1967 Referendum sample history unit](#). The unit is a series of six activities and a historical inquiry assessment task which could form part of a unit of learning on 'Rights and freedoms (1945-the present)', at Levels 9 and 10. The unit also contains a section 'Background reading on the 1967 Referendum', which teachers should consult before beginning the teaching and learning activities.

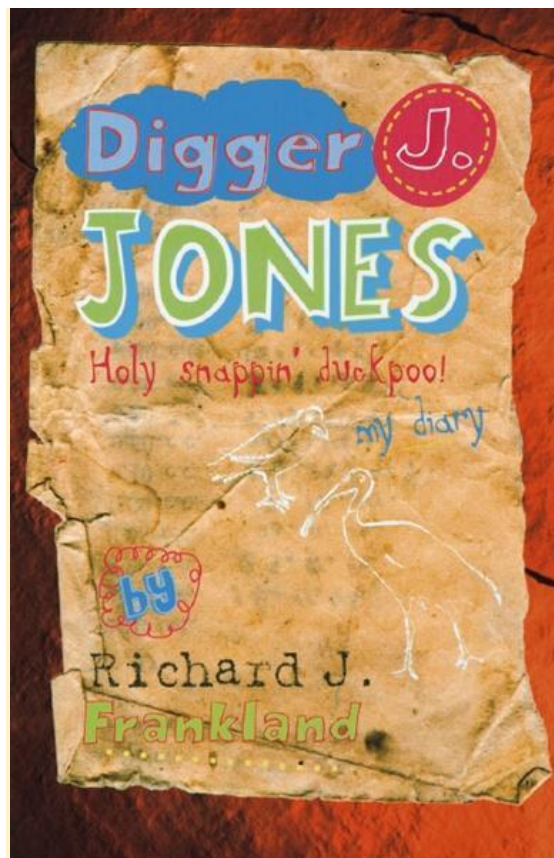
SBS aired this story on the 26th of May 2017. Click on it to see this coverage of the 1967 Referendum to count Aboriginal people in the census and introduce laws specifically for the benefit of Aboriginal people.



With secondary students explore the excellent '67 [Referendum site](#) [Collaborating for Indigenous Rights](#) and [teaching resources](#) and incorporate suggested activities into your lessons.



Older students and teachers alike will enjoy the highly readable novel **Digger J. Jones** by prominent Gunditjmara author Richard Franklin. [Teaching notes](#) offer a range of class discussion points. Told in diary form, *Digger J. Jones* tells the story of Digger - an Aboriginal boy caught up in the events of the 1960s and the lead up the 1967 Referendum which officially counted Aboriginal people in Australia as citizens in the eyes of the Federal Government.



Set up a school [referendum](#) around issues relevant to your school or local community and involve students in electoral processes as a prelude to discussions about the 1967 Referendum. *Suitable for upper primary school students.*

**Watch** the short video with Faith Bandler, former Secretary of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders talking about why it was so important to have a referendum and discuss with students.

**Watch** *Vote Yes for Aborigines* (2007) directed by Yorta Yorta woman Frances Peters-Little about the 1967 referendum and the campaign for Aboriginal citizenship rights that led up to it. [Download](#) the teachers' study guide to *Vote Yes for Aborigines* and design some lessons and activities suitable for your students.

**Investigate** the role of the Victorian [Aborigines Advancement League](#) in the '67 referendum.



Bill Onus's protest banner in the 1940s.

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 Referendum the nation acknowledged the hugely significant impact of this event. [Watch](#) the late WA Nghanagardi Elder Clarrie Cameron's recollections of that period in 1967 and the changing Australian political scene post WWII migration from ABC [Right Wrongs](#).



Right wrongs: Clarrie Cameron



#### Victorian Curriculum:

[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*

[VCCCG021](#) Describe the process of constitutional change through a referendum: *Civics and Citizenship 7-8*

[VCCCG030](#) Analysing how citizens' political choices are shaped, including the influence of the media: *Civics and Citizenship 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*

[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*

[VCHHC125](#) Evaluate different historical interpretations and contested debates: *History 9-10*

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

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

[VCHHK151](#) Significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including Australia's involvement in the development of the declaration: *History 9-10*

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

[VCHHK153](#) Effects of the US civil rights movement and its influence on Australia: *History 9-10*

[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*

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

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





# National Reconciliation Week

27 May - 3 June

## More than a word. Reconciliation takes action.

“We need more people speaking up, asking the hard questions and taking action during and beyond National Reconciliation Week .

This National Reconciliation Week, make reconciliation more than a word. Move from safe to brave on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

Reconciliation Australia’s theme for 2021, *More than a word. Reconciliation takes action*, urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action.

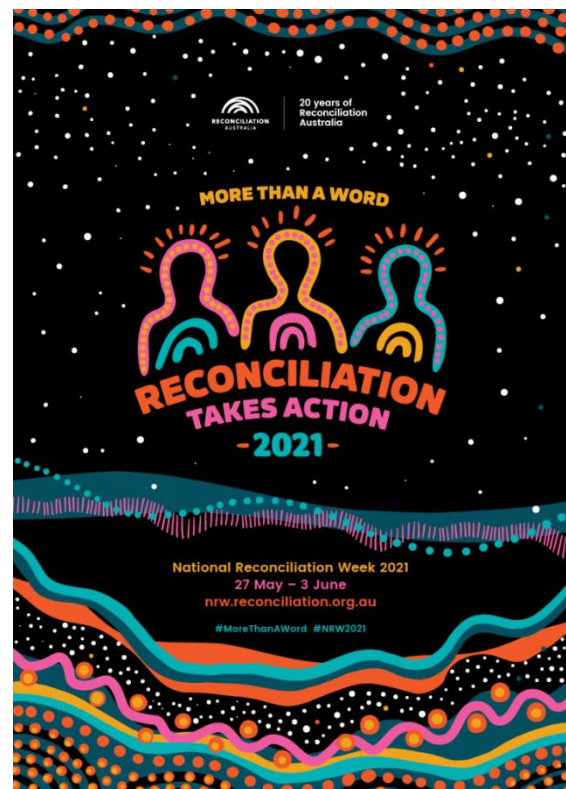
“The goal of the reconciliation movement is for a just, equitable and reconciled country. This will only be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Peoples of this land, are able to equally contribute to daily life of the nation. Until this happens, Australia will not reach its full potential.

We need more people speaking up, asking the hard questions and taking action during and beyond National Reconciliation Week. To help you, we have compiled [20 actions for reconciliation](#).

If you are hesitant to challenge some of the long-held but incorrect ideas in your community, be assured that across this country many people just like you are joining First Nations peoples in this effort.

This National Reconciliation Week, make reconciliation more than a word. Move from safe to brave on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.” Reconciliation Australia

Did you know that **National Reconciliation Week** starts with the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and ends on the anniversary of the Mabo victory, which led to the Australian Government recognising native title and acknowledging Indigenous Australians as the original occupants of Australia?



**National Reconciliation Week** celebrates the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and all other Australians. Every year, the week is held between the same dates, 27 May to 3 June. The dates draw attention to significant historical events. The 27 May marks the day in 1967 when the referendum was passed for the Australian Government to make



laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and to allow them to be recognised in the census. The 3rd of June marks the day in 1992 that led the Australian Government to recognise native title and acknowledge Indigenous Australians as the original occupants of Australia.

If your school does not already have one, consider developing a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) and include activities linking National Sorry Day and reconciliation Action Week, so that colleagues and students see how these days are inter-connected. Include students, colleagues and your [LAECG](#) where possible in its development.

To find out more about planning events to celebrate National Reconciliation Week, contact [Reconciliation Australia](#). The site has a number of updated resources.



With younger students read stories to encourage thinking about reconciliation such as the Broome-set [Two Mates](#) by Melanie Prewett (teaching [resources](#) available).

With local Koorie community members and colleagues organise a week of cultural activities such as performances, films, stories, workshops. Focus on the contribution that Aboriginal people have and continue to make to Australian society, and work with students to complete a variety of tasks that explore what reconciliation means for young Australians.



#### 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*

**VCCCC027** Examine how national identity can shape a sense of belonging and examine different perspectives about Australia's national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' perspectives: *Civics and Citizenship 7-8*

**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*



*And a final word ...*

*Send us any questions around Koorie perspectives in teaching and we'll try and include some suggestions in a new Q&A section. If you're wondering, then so are others ...*

*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) June 2021.**

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

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

