

Goolum Goolum Early Years March/April 2024



Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the country we live and work on – Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Jupagulk and Wergaia peoples and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

In this newsletter we have shared with you:

- VAEI Koorie Early Years: Best Practice and Protocols – A Practitioners Guide
 - This year VAEI (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated) have released a fully updated version of this document, which we shared with you in our previous newsletter & we strongly encourage all Educators to view *“This document provides guidance on how best to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood services and increase inclusion of Koorie families through respectful use of protocols and local Koorie structures and community.”*
- Reconciliation Week, held from 27th May – 3rd June each year.
 - Including an insightful read into the Narragunnawali Program: Reconciliation in Education
- Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start update
- Look what;s happening in – Green Park Kindergarten Acacia Room
- Information and resources relating to “What it means to be Visually Culturally Capable”
- & Information and resources on 8 Aboriginal ways of Learning

Goolum Goolum Early Years Team

Michelle Cameron	Early Years Manager michelle.cameron@goolumgoolum.org.au
Tori Power	Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Facilitator tori.power@goolumgoolum.org.au
Renae Podolski	wayipungitj & Black Cockatoos Playgroup renae.podolski@goolumgoolum.org.au
Phoebe Tucker	wayipungitj & Black Cockatoos Playgroup phoebe.tucker@goolumgoolum.org.au



We have produced this guide, **VAEAI Koorie Early Years: Best Practice and Protocols – A Practitioners Guide**, in response to requests from early childhood educators on appropriate protocols for center's to follow when seeking to provide a welcoming educational environment for Victoria's Koorie communities.

This document provides guidance on how best to incorporate guidance on how best to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood services and increase inclusion of Koorie families through respectful use of protocols and local Koorie structures and community.

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation focused on advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by providing advice from Koorie communities to Government on Koorie education and training priorities.

The Koorie community has an invaluable role in contributing to education today and into the future by imparting unique cultural knowledge and heritage to the broader community. Valuing Koorie culture and heritage in the Victorian education sector is a key step in the processes of reconciliation and self-determination.

This guide has been discussed and authorised by VAEAI and representatives from Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECG's), the vehicles through which Koorie parents, carers and community members have a voice in education in Victoria. They represent local Koorie community perspectives and have Statewide coverage.

Please click on the link to access the Koorie Early Years Best Practice & Protocols document in full
<https://www.vaeai.org.au/9200/>

Updated: February 2024



KOORIE EARLY YEARS: BEST PRACTICE & PROTOCOLS

A Practitioner's Guide

NOW MORE THAN EVER

The National Reconciliation Week theme for 2024, Now More Than Ever, is a reminder to all of us that no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will –and must – continue.

There have been many moments in Australia's reconciliation journey that make us want to turn away. But when things are divisive, the worst thing we can do is disengage or disconnect.

Now more than ever, we need to tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation. We know that the 6.2 million Australians who voted YES are committed to better outcomes for First Nations people, and are with us. Reconciliation supporters must stand up to defend and uphold the rights of First Nations peoples. To call out racism wherever we encounter it, and to actively reinforce the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this continent.

Now more than ever, the work continues. In treaty making, in truth-telling, in understanding our history, in education, and in tackling racism. We need connection. We need respect. We need action. And we need change.

Now more than ever, we need reconciliation.

<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/>



Upcoming Dates of Importance May and June

- 26th May – National Sorry Day
- 27th May – 3rd June
 - **National Reconciliation Week**
- 27th May – Anniversary of 1967 Referendum
- 31st May – Annual Victorian Aboriginal Commemorative Service – Shrine of Remembrance
- Mabo Day

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association – VAEAI

Is the peak Koorie community organisation for education and training in Victoria. They work for community to build success in education & training.

To find the latest VAEAI news, and access to the link for the Koorie Education Calendar head to their website:

www.vaeai.org.au

NOW MORE THAN EVER

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK 2024 27 MAY – 3 JUNE #NRW2024 RECONCILIATION.ORG.AU



National Reconciliation Week

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education Program



Narragunnawali: Alive, Wellbeing, Coming Together & Peace

Narragunnawali is a program of Reconciliation Australia. A free online platform with *tools and resources, for schools and early learning services, to take action towards reconciliation between non-First Nations Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/about>

All tools and resources provide practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation actions in and around classrooms, schools and your local community. With each resource you will find:

- Learning Outcomes
- Inquiry Questions
- Activity guidelines and/or further learning activities
- & Curriculum links – linking to EYLF Outcomes

The Narragunnawali program also allows teachers and educators professional learning along side these curriculum resources, from early learning, primary and secondary levels.

Some of the resources you will find include:

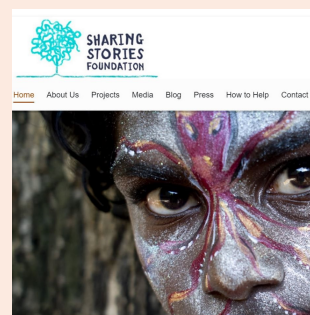
Building Belonging



Caring for Country



Sharing Stories



<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/curriculum-resources>



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start



Dalki Muwill (Hi All)

As promised, this newsletter brings another example of the work Educators are doing in the Best Start space. This time, a Kindergarten's journey to developing a new Acknowledgement of Country.

I met with Kathryn and the team of educators at **Cooinda Kindergarten** last year to discuss possible change ideas. The team came prepared and reported that they wanted to review the services Acknowledgement of Country with the children and families at the service, and develop a new one that reflected the services current population and wider community.

Kathryn and her team worked with the children in small groups so that all children could participate and have a voice. Educators read the existing Acknowledgement to the groups, breaking it down into sections and asking the children to talk about what they thought each part meant. Together, they picked out key words and phrases to create the new Acknowledgement.

Once an Acknowledgement was agreed upon, Kathryn sought feedback from Traditional Owners at GGAC through myself as the Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Facilitator. Kathryn sent the new Acknowledgement out to families to seek feedback as well.

For the last week of term 3, and all of term 4, 2023, the Educators and children were using the new Acknowledgement to Country each day. The children have confidently picked up on the easier part of the Acknowledgement at the end, but continue having a go and growing in confidence as the term went on. After the plan was completed, Kathryn offered the following reflections:

- 1. It was good to have a goal to work towards as it ensured that we actually followed through with our plan.*
- 2. Our key learnings were to listen to the voices of the children and involve the community, including Goolum Goolum.*

Kathryn felt that this could be revisited at the start of each year with new children and families. She also included a photo of the Acknowledgement on display in the foyer alongside some Aboriginal artwork. In future, she will invite the children to create a display or the Acknowledgement



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Continued....



If you're still feeling nervous about creating your own Acknowledgment of Country at your service? Then check out these additional resources:

- In this video (1), Educators explain how they initially struggled with including an acknowledgement of Country at their service and how they overcame this. It includes discussion of tailoring their acknowledgement across age groups. It also has an accompanying resource: This kit is a small example of the many tools and resources available to guide ways of offering and providing respectful work with First Nations People and primarily focuses on Dja Dja Wurrung Country (2)
 1. <https://youtu.be/aiRdlwAxen0?si=BQhjRIND-db5F08t>
 2. [Connecting-with-Culture-on-Dja-Dja-Wurrung-Country-Resource-Kit-OCTOBER-2020.pdf \(c4cbendigo.com.au\)](#)
- This three-page article from the Victorian Inclusion Agency, discusses the difference between and an Acknowledgement of Country and a Welcome to Country. The article goes on to say this about the importance of an Acknowledgement of Country: *It recognises the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first custodians of this land and, importantly, promotes awareness of the history and culture of Indigenous peoples. This increased awareness will help us create a more united Australia that celebrates and embraces our First Nations peoples.* (Victorian Inclusion Agency, Embrace: Your Inclusion Support Magazine, Edition 06, pp. 6-8). The article includes a link to another short video that includes an example.
[VIA Embrace 6 Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country 101.pdf \(viac.com.au\)](#)
- The below link will take you to a video from Reconciliation Australia. It shows various educational settings demonstrating how they implement their Acknowledgement of Country.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksBoJT_gkVc

Finally, for those of you who like a "deep dive" into content, I invite you to click on the below link to read an article shared recently by the Victorian Inclusion Agency. Its regarding research into how various services implement an Acknowledgement of Country, and how the practice contributes to the lives of children and cultural discourse view (westernsydney.edu.au).



Look what's
happening in ...
**GREEN PARK
KINDERGARTEN
ACACIA ROOM**



Alice Clarke is a Kindergarten teacher at Green Park, Acacia room. Alice had reached out to our wayipungitj staff (Renae & Phoebe) for guidance around how to respectfully request permission to use local language. Alice wanted to both promote cultural awareness and assist with the preservation of language, by naming the Acacia classroom mascots using Wergaia local language. Following local protocols, we were able to facilitate the request to the Language Council and BGLC for use of Wergaia names.

Familiar in a lot of education settings, a child takes one of the class animals home with the animal having it's own bag. Included is an Adventure Book where children add their adventures at home and things they have done together throughout the week. They might choose to share aspects of their family, culture, daily life or special events.

The bag also includes some books and games to promote literacy in the home environment... oh and also a toothbrush – children are prompted to 'care for' animal by demonstrating "brushing" teeth twice a day.

"We are very excited to introduce Wergaia language to our kindergarten program, I have added a note in the front page of the Adventure Book (that families read) with information about the Wergaia language name and permission granted for us to use"

What it means to be Visually Culturally Capable



What it means to be Visually Culturally Capable (CELA)

To be Visibly Culturally Capable refers to the degree of cultural capability that a service is demonstrating to their First Nations Families.

When families/ community members/ children attending enter your centre, they should be met by clear and visible actions that show your centre's commitment towards including Indigenous Australia into their service in a respectful and authentic way.

"A parent should not have to dig too deeply to find out how an early education service is incorporating First Nation's Culture respectfully". – Deborah Hoger.

7 Steps: How services can become 'visibly culturally capable'.

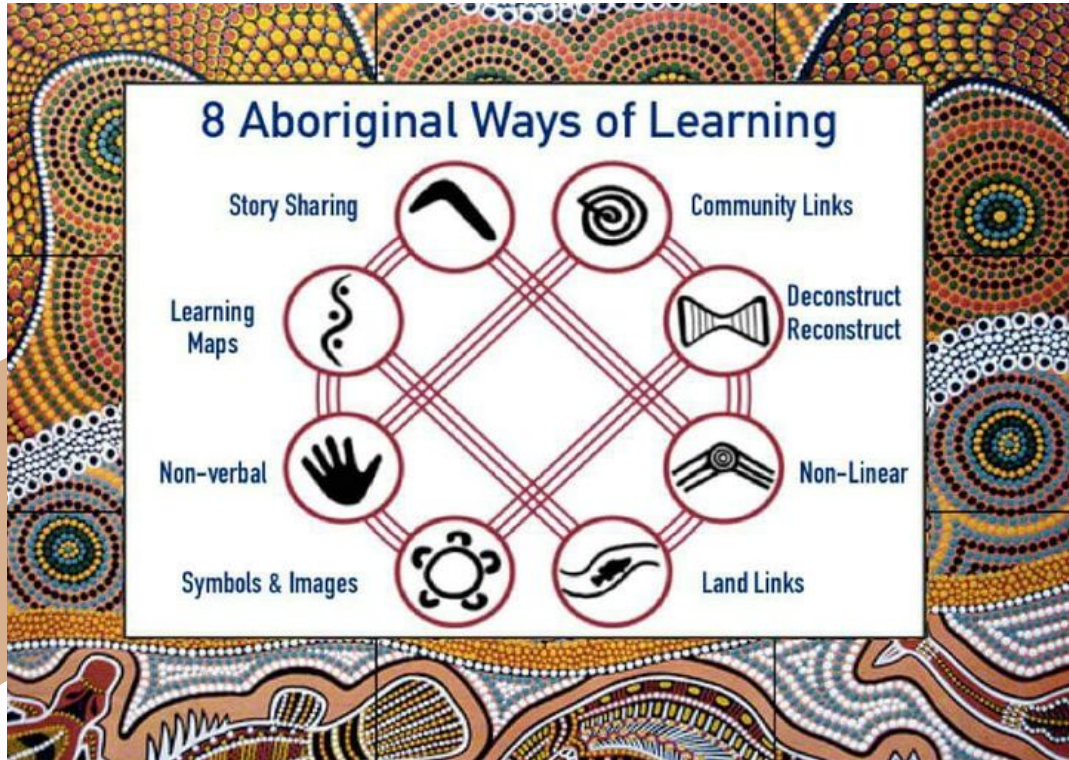
From Summer May Finlay – a Yorta Yorta Woman.

1. Preference our voices – We have a voice.
2. Be ok with not always being apart of the conversation – Some yarns may be off limits to non-Aboriginal people.
3. Be there for the good times and the bad.
4. Say something when you hear someone say inappropriate things about Aboriginal people.
5. Don't take it personally when we don't agree with you.
6. Don't go it alone – Connect with Aboriginal families and communities. Ensure you're on the right track.
7. Understand that Aboriginal People are not all the same – They also have different views to one another just like other Australians.

<https://www.cela.org.au/publications/amplify!-blog/jan-2023/what-it-means-to-be-visibly-culturally-capable>



Discover 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning



The 8 Aboriginal Ways of learning is a learning framework used at Deadly Kindy to share Aboriginal knowledge authentically and productively with Kinder students.

The framework also helps guide teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives in their programs, with a strong focus on Aboriginal learning techniques.

The following links describe some of the differences between mainstream learning and Aboriginal learning, and provides tools to integrate learning in ways that benefit all children.

<https://www.deadlykindy.org.au/8-aboriginal-ways-of-learning/>

https://www.newcastle.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/379003/8-Aboriginal-Ways-of-Learning.pdf

