

Goolum Goolum

Early Years

Term 1 2026



Welcome to our Term 1 edition of the Goolum Goolum Early Years Newsletter!
Our Early Years team are committed to supporting services to provide accessible, high quality Early Childhood services that are culturally inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. In our everyday work and within this newsletter, we strive to provide you all with information to support you in this important work. Cultural inclusivity benefits everyone and we thank you all for your continued efforts in this space.

This issue's key topics include:

- Dates of Significance
- Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update
- Girrin Playgroup Update
- Little Koorie Smiles
- Gariwerd Seasons
- Funding Cultural Services

And we have also included some important information for upcoming days of significance:

- ANZAC Day

GGAC Early years team are also excited to announce that we are working towards developing an Educators resource link on the Goolum Goolum website!

Under the Early Years tab on our main website, we will be having direct links to all of the information we share with you, as well as links to past copies of our newsletter for you to continually refer back to. WATCH THIS SPACE!

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Dates of Significance

- **Jan- March** Kooyang Season (Late Summer) Which is known as Eel Season
- **25th April**- Anzac Day
- **26th May** - National Sorry Day
<https://healingfoundation.org.au/stolen-generations/national-sorry-day/>
- **27th May** - Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum
- **27th May - 3rd June** - Reconciliation Week
<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/all-in-for-national-reconciliation-week-2026/>
- **31st May** - Shine of Remembrance Annual Victoria Aboriginal Commemorative Service
- **3rd June** - Mabo Day
- **5th June** - World Environment Day
- **6th June** - Anniversary of Batman's Treaty with the Kulin, signed 1835
- **30th June** - Coranderrk (Badger's Creek) Aboriginal Reserve officially gazetted in 1863
- **5th - 12th July** - NAIDOC Week

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

By following this link, you can download free resources, access further reading, and learn ways in how you incorporate these meaningful conversations within your Early Years settings.



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update



Dalki Muwill (Hi all),

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that a few educators had shared with our team that they did not feel confident in talking to families about why educators are being asked to embed First Nations perspectives. Short of directing families to the VEYLDF, EYLF, NQS and Child Safe Standards, they wanted to be able to explain why this was an important focus in our education settings. We will explore this further by looking at topics such as truth telling and Reconciliation throughout the 2026 newsletters. Sadly, we can offer no short cuts. The onus is on you as individuals and professionals to engage and learn...but we are here to help.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have experienced a long history of exclusion from Australian history books, the Australian flag, the Australian anthem and for many years, Australian democracy. This history of dispossession and colonisation lies at the heart of the disparity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other Australians today”.

Taken from : [Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country - Reconciliation Australia](#)

The 2018 Reconciliation Australia report identified that Education has a critical role to play in our Nations continued reconciliation journey (You can access the entire report [here](#)). You can see this reflected in how Reconciliation is increasingly becoming a part of our industries teaching standards, curriculum frameworks, quality areas, etc. Our future generations will have the advantage of knowing Australia's full history, being taught with empathy and understanding.

“We can't change what happened in the past, but we can make a better future by understanding the past”

Taken from: Reconciliation: A Streetwise Comic Production, produced for the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1997 as sourced from: [f0ac2ce785bebd4fcda1d52fb1a4488e.pdf](#) and [Narragunnawali - Reconciliation in Action \(Primary\)](#)



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update cont...



There are many resources available to help educators understand why embedding First Nations perspectives into our education and care settings is a critical step forward for all Australians. We need to create inclusive, culturally aware learning environments. But we appreciate that it can be hard to know where to start. Following are some direct quotes from learning resources with links to direct you to them for further exploration and learning.

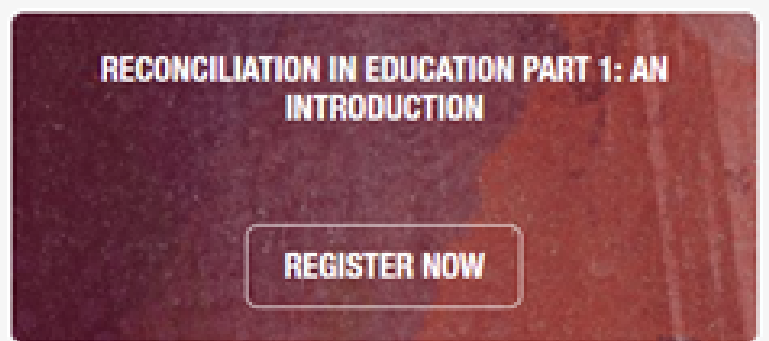
“As educators, we carry enormous influence. With the right knowledge and support, we can help shape a generation that not only understands the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, but celebrates, respects, and learns from them”.

Deborah Hoyer - 12 September 2025. Taken from: [Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives: Why Ongoing Professional Development for Educators Matters](#) — Riley Callie Resources

Let's start by directing you to the [Narragunnawali](#) website that we have shared many times over the years that we have been sending out our newsletters. Below is a direct link to their Webinars page that you can watch. It is also recommended that you watch the webinars with your teams and reflect together on the content and your individual learning as you go. Maybe watch one a month at team meetings?

[Narragunnawali - Webinars](#)

Look for the webinar titled
[“Reconciliation in Education Part 1:
an introduction”](#)



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update cont...



Here is the description of the 16 minute webinar:

Reconciliation in Education: An Introduction – is the first webinar in the three-part Reconciliation in Education webinar series, provides an introduction to the concept and context of reconciliation in Australia, and an overview of the important relationship between reconciliation and education. It explores some key messages about reconciliation in education, and will equip participants with the knowledge and skills required to understand how reconciliation can be respectfully embedded in the classroom, around the school and with the community. Participants are encouraged to critically reflect on their current attitudes and actions towards reconciliation in education, and to recognise the importance of ongoing personal and professional learning, unlearning and relearning about diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

Please consider engaging with the Reconciliation in Education: An Introduction Professional Learning Resource (<https://www.narragunnawali.org.au/professional-learning/113/reconciliation-in-education-part-1-an-introduction>) before you view the webinar.



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update cont...



We sincerely hope you will go on to explore all three parts of the webinar series. However, the first one is a great starting point for understanding why it is so important embed First Nations perspectives into our education spaces. This work benefits everyone.

NOTE: Consider recording the work that you do as part of your professional learning. “Any activities that teachers engage in that develop their professional knowledge and practice to support student learning and that are relevant to their teaching context can be counted as professional learning”.

Taken from: Professional learning, | Victorian Institute of Teaching

Have you participated some training, or read an article that has been helpful to you in your work towards embedding First Nations Perspectives into your program and environment? Let us know and we can include in our next newsletter to share with other educators.

Remember that National Reconciliation week is coming up in May! Now is the time to plan and prepare to make sure you have the connections and resources together and ready to go.

“National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia”. Taken from: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/our-work/national-reconciliation-week/>



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update



50 words website

In 2025, Barengi Gadjin Land Council shared a collection of Wergaia language held on the [50 Words website](#) as part of celebrating [Mother language day: Bringing First Nations languages to life in ECEC settings](#) - CELA

Since then, many services explored the 50 Words website and looked for ways to use Wergaia language within their programs. The following are two local examples of the inclusion of Wergaia language, and one from St Arnaud, on Dja Dja Wurrung Country:

Firstly, I spoke to Madelaine at the Bennett Road kindergarten: Madelaine and her team of educators wanted to introduce some Wergaia language into their program. Madelaine visited the 'fifty words' website and researched everyday words that could be introduced in meaningful ways. Madelaine shared that Dalk (Hello), ngai (Yes), and warti (Come here), were everyday words for quite a while. Then after the 'bird count' in October, they introduced Wityawil (Bird) – when colouring in pictures of birds and adding them to a display tree. Madelaine added that when participating in the gross motor movement program called "Animal fun", they talked with the children about how the "Mirrin" (wind) helped them to move. Madelaine finished by saying, "This inclusion of Wergaia language has been mostly unscripted and travelled as the program evolved. We have displayed words of significance around the room and pinned these to specific play areas, water area e.g. gadyin. We shall always continue to update staff and visitors of the importance of using words. We have found that many of our indigenous families come over and 'read' the words to their children also".



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update Cont...



50 words website

Melissa from the Dimboola Early Learning Centre Kindergarten also shared how they were using Wergaia language within their program:

The children displayed a great interest in the days of the week as well as the weather. This prompted educators to include a calendar at our group Meeting Times. During these meetings, we would discuss what month and number day it was, the weather, and the season. To embed Indigenous perspectives further into our program, using the '50 words project' website, we learnt how to say 'hello' as well as words describing different types of weather in Wergaia language. The children not only were observed to use these words during meeting, but also throughout their day when describing whether it was 'mu-mut' 'mityak' or "mumbai'.

<u>dalk</u> 'hello' in <u>Wergaia</u> language	
<u>mityak</u> 'rain' in <u>Wergaia</u> language	
<u>nyauwi</u> 'sun' in <u>Wergaia</u> language	
<u>mirrin</u> 'wind' in <u>Wergaia</u> language	
<u>mut-mut</u> 'cold weather' in <u>Wergaia</u> language	
<u>mumbai</u> 'hot weather' in <u>Wergaia</u> language	



Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Update Cont...



50 words website

And finally, Tracey from the St Arnaud Kindergarten Tracey wrote:

In 2025, we introduced a special class mascot to our program—something meaningful that the children could connect with and take home to share adventures with their families. Along with our mascot, a journal was sent home so children could document and reflect on its journey and experiences.

As our classroom is the Koala Room, it felt natural to choose a koala as our mascot. We sought and received permission from the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA) to respectfully use language from the Dja Dja Wurrung people as part of this project. At the time, there was no specific word for koala, so we chose the name Weka, which means “to laugh” in the Dja Dja Wurrung language.

Weka is a joyful and positive name that reflects the spirit of our classroom, and our mascot became a much-loved part of our learning community.



Are you doing work that embeds Indigenous perspectives in your program?

Proud of what you're doing and want to share? Please reach out to our team and let us know as we would love to share the work you are doing and help to inspire others in their own settings.

Appreciate what you read? Reach out to our team and let us know! Want something specific?

You guessed it, reach out to our team! Our contact details are on the front page, and we would love to hear from you



Girrin Playgroup



**GOOLUM
GOOLUM**
ABORIGINAL CO-OPERATIVE
Early Years

Girrin Playgroup is back on for 2026! We enjoyed a nice summer break with our loved ones and we hope you did too!

This term Matt and Meishy have taken the reins with playgroup, allowing Phoebe to focus more on the wayipungitj role.

Horsham has been great with very high attendance most weeks, while Stawell still has low numbers due to children starting kindergarten and school.

So far, our focuses for playgroup have included Warm & Gentle (from Small Talk), out on country (a morning at the Botanical Gardens), healthy eating from the Closing the Gaps outcome "Everyone enjoys long and healthy lives) and coming up - Dental Health inspired by Little Koorie Smiles, Harmony Week and an incursion with Elizabeth from the Dalki Garringa Native Nursery (Barenji Gadjin Land Council).

We are also very excited for Meishy, as she has started her Certificate 3 in Early Childhood Education classes with Are-Able each week, which she is absolutely loving

We hope you're all having a great term & look forward to sharing more with you soon.





Little Koorie Smiles



We recently had the Little Koorie Smiles workshop come to Goolum Goolum to teach us about the importance of child dental health.

“Little Koorie Smiles aims to **improve the oral health of Victorian Aboriginal children** by building the capacity of supported playgroup facilitators working with Aboriginal families to promote oral health.”

We thoroughly enjoyed this workshop and gained lots of valuable information, tips and tricks for our own knowledge and to share with our playgroup families.

The ladies that ran the workshop were kind enough to leave us with lots of deadly resources, including Chomper the puppet (with human teeth), toothbrush and toothpaste packs, colouring books and activity sheets, and lots of other dental and healthy eating books and charts for the children.

They also offer a mainstream workshop called “Healthy Little Smiles” that is available to Early Childhood Educators, Supported Playgroup Facilitators and Library Storytime Facilitators.

We highly recommend this training!



Gariwerd Seasons - Kooyang



We are now getting to the last of those nice warm days - **Kooyang** (Late Summer)! Jan-March

Kooyang is one of the six seasons from Gariwerd.

It is known as “Late Summer” - The season of eels and parched landscape

There are six different seasons in Gariwerd, recognised by the Djab Wurrung and Jardwadjali Peoples - This is due to the changing patterns of the environments (such as the behaviour of animals, weather, plant growth etc).

The Six Seasons, as written on the Deadly Story website:

Kooyang (Late Summer) - Season of eels and parched landscape

Gwangal Moronn (Autumn) - Season of honey bees, sunrises and flocking birds

Chinnup (Winter) - Season of cockatoos, cool climate and early wildflowers

Larneuk (Early Spring) - Season of nesting birds and changeable weather

Petyan (Late Spring) - Season of wildlife and wildflowers

Ballambar (Early Summer) - Season of butterflies, warm weather and wetland plants

To read more about the Six Seasons, please click the following links to these websites:

https://deadlystory.com/page/aboriginal-country-map/Community_Spaces/Gariwerd

<https://www.bom.gov.au/resources/indigenous-weather-knowledge/indigenous-seasonal-calendars/gariwerd-calendar>



Goolum Goolum Early Years ANZAC DAY 2026



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contribution to War

As most of us know, Anzac Day falls on the 25th of April each year.

Indigenous Anzacs are overlooked when it comes to commemorations. Over 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders fought in World War 1, over 4000 in World War 2. The biggest community in Australia to contribute to World War 2 were the Torres Strait Islanders. Indigenous Anzacs received lower pay and poorer conditions than all the other soldiers.

There were profound barriers when it came to Indigenous peoples trying to enlist in the wars, including being discriminated against because of the colour of their skin, who their family/ parents were, if they were seen to be 'not substantially of European origin or decent'.

A lot of Indigenous soldiers had to lie about their background to be accepted. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples wanted to enlist for many reasons, some including: to serve their country, regular work and income, and to be treated with better respect and equality.

As a part of the soldier settlement scheme, soldiers returning to Australia were promised to be leased land to work and live on. Indigenous Anzacs were also promised this, but were very rarely given the land they were promised, coming home to nothing or forced to live on missions. Even traditional owners were forced off their own land to give to non-Indigenous servicemen.

These Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men went to War for decades to protect a nation that denied them the most basic of human rights.

It is important we remember our Mob who served, and acknowledge and commemorate them.

Websites and Resources

<https://www.vaeai.org.au/wp-content/uploads/delightful-downloads/2023/04/ANZAC-Day-Indigenous-Service-2023.pdf>

[Generations of Service: The Lovett Family Digibook – Anzac Portal \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

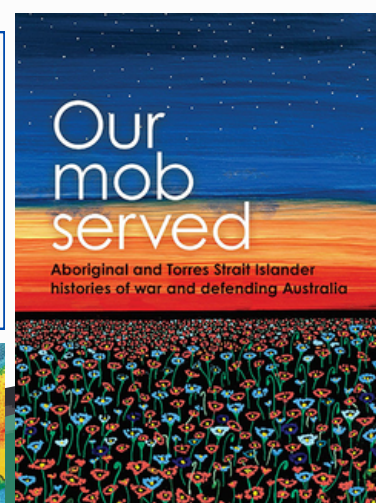
[Advanced Search | Australian War Memorial \(awm.gov.au\)](#)

[For Indigenous veterans | Department of Veterans' Affairs \(dva.gov.au\)](#)

[Research a soldier | Australian War Memorial \(awm.gov.au\)](#)

[Our Mob Served – a vivid picture of Indigenous war service | AIATSIS](#)

[About us | Serving Our Country \(anu.edu.au\)](#)



Funding Cultural services



VAEI and other key Indigenous services, recommend accessing your local Aboriginal Nations Cultural knowledge and services before accessing something outside of your area. But what if you find a service or provider that is not on the School Readiness Funding (SRF) menu? If you find a local service or artist you want to work with, have a yarn about what services they can offer. They may align with the menu item "Aboriginal Cultural Supports". This is a generic menu item, where service's reach out to their local providers - more details are available here:

[Aboriginal cultural supports | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-cultural-supports)

So, you can reach out to services, and if they match your identified SRF goals, you can talk to the Department of Education to have a chat with your local KIA about making a change to your SRF plan.

There is also an option for services to access "Flexible Funding" for items that aren't listed on the menu, provided the item aligns with your service's goals, there isn't another local provider, and DE approves the item.

The screenshot shows the 'School Readiness Funding Menu' on the vic.gov.au website. It includes a search bar with the placeholder 'Enter keyword(s)' and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar are several filter sections: 'Filters' (expanded), 'Priority area' (dropdown), 'Audience' (dropdown), 'Cost' (dropdown), 'Delivery mode' (dropdown), and 'Strength of evidence' (dropdown). At the bottom of the filters are buttons for 'Apply search filters' and 'Clear search filters'.