Goolum Goolum Early Years

Term 3 2026

Welcome to our Term 3 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
- Updated 2026 VAEAI Calendar
- Shirley Pearl & her Bush Friends at Dimboola Primary School Kindergarten
- Truth Telling in Early Education Spaces
- More from the CELA site
- Girrin Playgroup Update / Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
- Gariwerd Seasons
- Early years engagement program at VAEAI
- Updated Flyers:
  - Girrin Playgroup
  - Early Years flyer which shows all the different services we offer in our Early Years space at Goolum
- **Please note:** Last term we shared the latest version of the VAEAI publication titled "Koorie Early Years: Best practice and protocols" The link was recently updated and you can now find it here.

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Dates of Significance

- **September-November** PETYAN (Spring) - Season of wildflowers according to Gariwerd seasons

- **October 30** - Passing of the Statewide Treaty Bill 2025

- **November 11** - Remembrance Day

-Anniversary of the passing of the Aborigines Protection Act 1869

- **November 21** - Anniversary of the Long Walk to Canberra 2004

- **December 3** - Eureka Day 1854

- **December 5** - Anniversary of Ebenezer Mission Reserve handover 2013

- **December 10** - World Human Rights Day

-Lionel Rose inducted into the Sport Australian Hall of Fame 1985

- **December 13** - Anniversary of the first successful Native Title settlement in Victoria - for the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Peoples (2005)

- **December 24** - Christmas Eve!

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

Welcome to the end of Term 3! It has been lovely to catch up with so many of you via network meetings, visits and online meetings. If our team has not visited your service yet, please reach out as we have availability in term 4. You can always reach out via phone or email if you have a question but don't need us to visit.
I recently visited the VAEAI website and found the events calendar had been updated for 2026. You will find it here: **VAEAI-Koorie-Education-Calendar-2026.pdf**
If you're wanting more options for educating yourself about Australia's history both pre and post Colonialism, then this is a great place to start! The calendar is an amazing resource. It's inclusion of factual, historical and Truth Telling resources is incredible. You will find resources around language, special days in history such as the National Apology and Australia's first Indigenous opera.

There are a number of links to Creation Stories from across Australia, including this one from the Bangerang people of the Murray–Goulburn region and the Wamba Wemba people of north-west Victoria. Remember to pull out your AITSIS map and show children where the stories have come from. And please remember that you can learn about some of our own regions Creation Stories by accessing Goolum Goolum's website.

Please read on to learn about how the Dimboola Primary School Kindergarten have been using the AITSIS map and Koorie Curriculum resources to embed First Nations perspectives in their program.



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Shirley Pearl and her Bush Friends at Dimboola Primary School Kindergarten

This year at Dimboola Primary School Kindergarten we have utilised Jessica Staines (Koori Curriculum), Shirley Pearl and Her Bush Friends letters. With each letter, children are taken on an adventure with Shirley and her family where they meet Australian animal bush friends and be introduced to different aspects of Aboriginal culture. Through the adventures of Shirley, children have gained a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture and developed a sense of respect and appreciation for the land and its Traditional Owners.

The children have embraced the letters, and we have been able to extend the themes into the room, in direct teaching, and play based experiences. One of the first letters talked about Willy Wag Tails, as the gossip birds, and how they are always around watching and looking. This led into learning about our local birds, and we created a feather book, where we collected feathers and children could bring feathers into the classroom to share with their friends. We also had a bird small world where children began to learn about the birds, and what they looked like, children could also modify the environment to create their own stories and scenes. We did discuss how often we didn't see a lot of Willy Wag tails in the area, however coincidentally, as if they were listening to us Willy Wag Tails began appearing at kinder, and on the school oval. The children showed great delight identifying Willy Wag Tails and closely watching their unique tail movements.





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Dimboola Primary School Kindergarten

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The Shirley Pearl letters have also helped to give meaning to our AIATSIS map that we have on the wall. Shirley Pearl lives on Darkinjung Country which is on the mid NSW coast. We have shown this to the children on the map, and then where we live on Wotjobaluk County. Shirley Pearl has gone on many different adventures across Australia with her mother, including South Australia, Darwin and Far North Queensland, which has led to further conversations around the different locations, climates, and animals that live in the different parts of Australia.

Overall we have found this a great resource to embed Aboriginal perspectives into our classroom, whilst also making it meaningful to the children. It has led to so many different discussions and learning moments. It has also been great to help make connections with our newly started bush kinder program. We were a little tentative at the start to implement the program due to the resource not being local to the region, however we have been able to apply Shirley Pearls experiences to our own with what we are doing e.g. gardening, caring for Country and acknowledging the Traditional Owners of our land.







A huge thank you to Laura, Margaret and Kate for sharing their work. And thank you to Laura for making time to write this up for the newsletter.

Truth telling in early education spaces

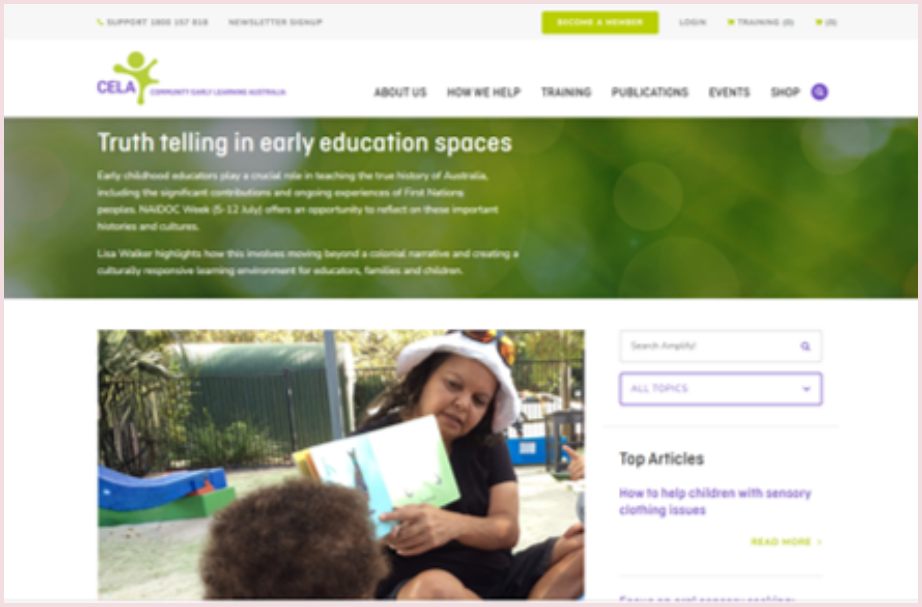
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We continue to scour the internet in search of resources to support you all in your work towards embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into your services and programming. Last term we shared links to the Koori Curriculum Blog page. There you will find many free blog entries that will inform, educate and inspire the work that you do.
This terms resource comes from the Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) site. You can learn more about CELA here. Some of our team subscribe to their e-newsletter and this was most recent 'gem' they shared:

Truth telling in early education spaces

"Early childhood educators play a crucial role in teaching the true history of Australia, including the significant contributions and ongoing experiences of First Nations peoples. NAIDOC Week (5-12 July) offers an opportunity to reflect on these important histories and cultures.
Lisa Walker highlights how this involves moving beyond a colonial narrative and creating a culturally responsive learning environment for educators, families and children".

Whilst the article was written for NAIDOC week, its content is relevant at any time. Click on the heading above or the image to the right to be taken to the article on the CELA site. You can use the search bar on the CELA site to find more articles. See some examples on the next page...



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More from the CELA site

There are many other articles on the CELA site. Here is a small selection:

- Walking side by side: A First Nations call to check in and stand up - This powerful reflection from Lisa Walker invites readers to pause, listen and consider the lived realities of First Nations peoples in Australia today. It explores the ongoing impacts of systemic inequality, while calling on individuals and services to show up with empathy, cultural responsiveness and genuine connection. With practical guidance for educators, the article encourages us to walk side by side to support meaningful change for all children.
- Embedding First Nations perspectives throughout the year - The early education calendar is filled with special dates, from Clean Up Australia Day to Science Week to NAIDOC week, offering opportunities to incorporate First Nations perspectives and enhance cultural understanding. Early education Indigenous resource specialist Deborah Hoger shares why this is important and gives practical examples for including First Nations perspectives during five dates on the early childhood calendar.
- Exploring Aboriginal music in the classroom - Looking for ways to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures into your classroom in a meaningful way? First Nations early education resource specialist Deborah Hoger explores how music can connect children with culture, history and identity. From clapsticks and yidaki to contemporary artists like Mitch Tambo and Troy Cassar-Daley, Deborah shares practical ideas and resources to help educators embed music into everyday learning.
- How to be a true ally to First Nations educators, children and families - In early education and care spaces, genuine allies help create environments where First Nations educators, families and children feel safe, valued and respected. In this article, CELA Cultural Consultant Lisa Walker reflects on what true allyship looks like, how it differs from surface gestures, and the vital role leaders play in fostering it.
- Mother language day: Bringing First Nations languages to life in ECEC settings - International Mother Language Day highlights the importance of linguistic diversity. This day provides a special opportunity to focus on preserving and celebrating First Nations languages, especially in early learning settings. Early education Indigenous resource specialist and proud Dunghutti woman Deborah Hoger explores the topic

Girrin Playgroup

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This term has been a very busy one for our Early Years team and playgroup.

Matt, Meishy and Tazo planned many different activities such as Aborginal and Torres Strait Islander flag pasting, science activities, a visit from our Goolum Goolum Speech Pathologist Sarah Davey, Book Week art & craft, Indigenous Literacy Day, Father's Day and R U Ok? Day.

We also celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day on August 4.
We organised a visit from 'Little Wombats' - a cultural program ran by Wotjobaluk man Cameron Morrall and his partner.
Cameron showed the children some Aboriginal artefacts such as tools, weapons, emu eggs, possum and kangaroo skins. He also played the didgeridoo and taught the children animal calling sounds and some Wergaia language.
He then finished up with some creative activities and fun games!

We can't believe how quick this year is going!
We hope you all had a great term 3 and are all ready for a big/ fun term 4! :)





Gariwerd Seasons
Petyan

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We are now in one of my most favourite seasons of the year - **Petyan** (Spring - September to November).

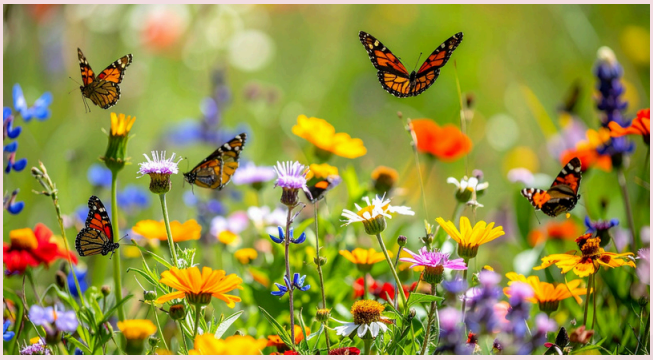
Petyan is one of the six seasons from Gariwerd. It is known as “Late Spring” - the season of wildlife and wildflowers.
We can expect to see wild weather, warmer days, the bush bursting into life and the emu constellation can be seen in the night sky.

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#bom-anchor-list__item-larneuk-season-of-nesting-birds





Early Years Engagment Program (EYEP)

Let us help you on your journey toward embedding Koorie perspectives!

What is EYEP?

VAEAI's Early Years Engagement Program (EYEP) supports Victorian Kindergarten's to embed Koorie perspectives.
VAEAI's EYEP helps Early Childhood leaders, teachers, and educators across Victoria strengthen their understanding and practices for embedding Koorie perspectives —whether or not First Nations children attend their service.

How can we help?

We have 8 Early Years Engagement Facilitators (EYEFs) located across the state who support services to:

- Connect with local Aboriginal Communities
- Find culturally appropriate resources and services
- Take purposeful steps toward embedding Koorie perspectives

start your journey!

FREE FOR ALL VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS SERVICES!

connect with us!

VICTORIA State Government

Girrin Playgroup 2026!



Call or text our Early Years Team on 0460 431 066 if you would like some further information!

Please note: Info regarding changes can be found on our Early Years Facebook page

Horsham

<u>Every THURSDAY</u> of the school term

10.00am-12.00pm

at the **Dalki Guli Hub**

(new Goolum building)

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their family, from Birth to Kinder Age

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Goolum Goolum Early Years

Early Years Manager
Michelle Cameron

Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start Facilitator
Tori Power

wayipungitj and Playgroup Facilitators
Phoebe Tucker, Meishy Newell, Matthew Cockerall and Tyson King



Early Years
It takes a community to help raise a child. Find out more about the programs and services we provide to support children and families during the early years.

Girrin Playgroup

Girrin is a Koorie supported playgroup for families with children aged from birth to 6 years (before school age). Koorie Supported Playgroups provide culturally appropriate and informed support to prioritise cultural strength and connection. Playgroup supports children's wellbeing and development through interactions and strengthens parenting skills and confidence.

Horsham:

Every Thursday of the school term, 10am – 12pm
Dalki Guli Hub, 36 Hamilton Street Horsham (New Goolum building)

bupup balak wayipungang

'bupup balak wayipungang' means 'helping/supporting the young kids' in Dja Dja Wurrung language. 'wayipungitj' means 'supporters of children.'

The wayipungitj's role is:

- Supporting the access and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in culturally inclusive and supportive kindergarten programs.
- Working collaboratively with the local Koorie community to build culturally inclusive kindergarten programs.
- Providing guidance and support to staff of funded kindergarten services at all levels to increase their capacity to ensure their service is culturally inclusive and welcoming, and working collaboratively to ensure cultural perspectives are embedded in the educational program.
- Building upon and strengthening trusting relationships between families and funded kindergarten services by making information available to families and communities that enhances and grows Early Years participation

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Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start program

The Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start program has a formal partnership which includes the Best Start facilitator, Aboriginal community, local agencies and service providers. The partnership agrees to work collaboratively using an improvement science approach to address barriers to participation in Kindergarten and early years services for all Aboriginal children.

The facilitator works with all early years services to plan, deliver and monitor evidence-based strategies to improve outcomes for children. The facilitator then shares with the partnership whether the service has made an improvement. These cycles of planning, delivery and monitoring continue throughout the year, so many small changes are made within kindergarten services.

Toy Library

Goolum's Toy Library offers families the opportunity to borrow toys to take home and play with for 3-4 weeks at a time, then return them and borrow new toys.

Our Toy Library is for children birth to 12 years and there is no fee to join.

The Toy Library operates on the same day as playgroup in Horsham. If you are interested in borrowing toys, please speak with the playgroup facilitators.
For Stawell's Toy Library, please reach out to our Goolum staff at the Stawell Hub, or call them on 03 5381 6350.

The toy categories include:

- Art and craft
- Baby and toddler
- Construction
- Imaginative play
- Inclusion and development
- Language and literacy
- Outdoor and active
- Games and puzzles
- STEM

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