

Koorie perspectives in Curriculum Bulletin: March-April 2017

Since the start of the 2017 school year, we have seen the introduction of the new [Victorian Curriculum](#) across all Government and Catholic Schools in Victoria. Within the Victorian Curriculum, as in the national Australian Curriculum, learning about Aboriginal histories and cultures is a cross-curriculum priority, contained in mandatory *Content Descriptions*, or suggested through *elaborations*. What this means is that across most Learning Areas in the Curriculum, such as Geography, History, English and the Arts, from Foundation level to Year 10, there are particular points in the Victorian Curriculum focused on Aboriginal perspectives and these are shown through *mandated Content Descriptions*, or provided as an opportunity for learning through an **elaboration** of the Content Description.

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) has produced a guide summarising the 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 a copy of the VCAA's: [Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures](#).

Aboriginal people are the best equipped and the most appropriate people to teach Indigenous knowledge. Wherever possible you should seek to involve your local Koorie community in education programs that involve Indigenous perspectives. For some guidance about working with your local Koorie community to enrich your teaching program, see VAEAI's [Protocols for Koorie Education in Primary and Secondary Schools](#).

In this bulletin, we've added Victorian Curriculum links. Select the code and it will take you directly to the Victorian Curriculum site with additional elaborations.

Keep an eye out for the imminent release of a new online resource: the **Coranderrk – Minutes of Evidence Teacher Resource Package**, which will be available on [FUSE](#) (*currently password protected*), particularly designed for Years 9 and 10 History and Civics and Citizenship, and entirely applicable elsewhere across the curriculum. The Project itself focuses on the Coranderrk Reserve near Melbourne, the 1881 Parliamentary Inquiry into sub-standard conditions at Coranderrk, and more broadly missions and reserves in Victoria and across Australia.

March

With the weather starting to cool off in many parts of Victoria, explore Koorie seasons in your region, such as the 6-8 seasons of the Wurundjeri and learn about how seasonal change is signalled through plants, animals and other signs such as in the night sky.



Emu formation in the Milky Way signalling the time to collect emu eggs (April-June)

Where possible, invite knowledgeable Koorie cultural educators into the classroom to discuss further.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCGGK067](#) Weather and seasons and the ways in which different cultural groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, describe them: *Geography F-2*

[VCMMG118](#) Name and order months and seasons: *Mathematics L2*

[VCHHK060](#) How the present, past and future are signified by terms indicating and describing time: *History F-2*

Learn about significant foods, animals and plants for Victorian Koories such as the staple murrnong (yam daisy) for the Kulin, eel farming practices of the Gunditjmara, and possum skin cloaks for warmth, comfort and much more.



[Watch the video](#) with Boon Wurrung Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs who discusses how to gather and hunt for food with respect to seasons and ongoing life, and discuss traditional sustainable practices with your students.

With your students and based on research, re-design an alternative seasonal calendar for your region, highlighting key changes in the natural environment - be creative in naming.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCGGK137](#) Land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve food security over time: *Geography 9-10: Biomes and food security*

Phenology is the science of the timing of natural cycles. Discuss with students how rising temperatures and shifting weather patterns due to climate change might cause these cycles to move. Record changes in wildlife or plants on [Climate Watch](#), a resource where you can help scientists understand what's happening with the behaviours of common species of birds, insects and plants. Go nature spotting using the Koorie seasons calendar as a guide for the wildlife and plants you might see. Museum Victoria has a succinct [guide](#) on the flora and fauna found in the Kulin nation.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCCSU058](#) Different living things have different life cycles and depend on each other and the environment to survive: *Science 3-4*

Find out more about Indigenous seasons in other Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, using the Bureau of Meteorology's [Indigenous Weather Knowledge](#) website. This project aims to record 50,000 years of weather observation, knowledge of weather phenomena, weather patterns and long-term environmental changes by Indigenous Australians.

The 21st March is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Did you know that in 1938, prior to WWII, an Aboriginal delegation headed by Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, protested against the treatment of Jewish People in Germany and tried to hand a resolution to the German consul-general condemning the Nazis' persecution of Jewish people? At the time, the German consul-general refused to see the Aboriginal delegation, which had walked into town from William Cooper's home in Melbourne's west. For more, read the transcript or listen to the [PM report](#) from the anniversary of this unique protest against ethnic discrimination and persecution.

1965 Freedom Rides

One lesson we can all draw from the Freedom Ride is the importance of speaking out against injustice, challenging oppression and discrimination, and doing it now.

Ann Curthoys, honorary professor, author, and original freedom-rider



In February 1965 a group of Sydney University students called "Students for Aboriginal Rights" (SAFA), led by Aboriginal students Charles Perkins and Gary Williams, began a trip that would change Australian history. Their journey was both an attempt to emulate the US Civil Rights Movement action in the early 1960s, and designed to expose the racist underbelly of Australian society in rural NSW. The book "Freedom Ride: a freedom rider remembers" by Ann Curthoys, relives the experience of the Freedom Ride, drawing largely upon a diary written during the journey and the recollections of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who were involved. Contemporary media reports as well as secondary accounts supplement the story, drawing attention to the impact of the ride and highlighting the ways in which the events have been remembered.

See:

<http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/images/history/1960s/freedom/frdx.html>

Learn about the 1965 NSW [Freedom Rides](#) against prejudice and racial discrimination by exploring the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' (AIATSIS). [AIATSIS' site](#) includes the diaries of freedom-rider Ann Curthoys, a photographic exhibition and a great reading list which includes a list of sources, news articles and external websites about the 1965 Freedom Ride. Your first stop for information could be the curated online exhibition, *The 1965 Freedom Ride*, which brings together primary sources from students that took part in this landmark event with newspaper coverage from the time.

Watch the 2015 anniversary of the Freedom Rides film on [Living Black](#) about the Freedom Rides. Discuss how things were then and how the freedom riders feel about that time, and their historic action. Alternatively, students, especially primary school students might prefer to watch the [BTN](#) program on the Freedom Rides 50th anniversary and discuss similarly.

Why were students compelled to take this action? What do these types of actions achieve?

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: Australia as a nation*

[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.

Elaborations: investigating the role of Charles Perkins in the Freedom Ride of 1965 and the efficacy of television in bringing the struggle: History 9-10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present)

[VCHHK153](#) Effects of the US civil rights movement and its influence on Australia for rights and freedoms to national attention: *History 9-10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present)*

[VCHHK156](#) Continuity and change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in securing and achieving civil rights and freedoms in Australia: *History 9-10: Rights and freedoms (1945 – the present)*

The 30th March is the tenth **anniversary of Native Title recognition for the Gunditjmarra** of SW Victoria.

On the 30th March 2007, Gunditjmarra People in south-western Victoria won an 11-year legal battle for native title rights over 140,000 hectares of crown land. Celebrations were held on Gunditjmarra country to celebrate a Native Title Consent Determination – a Determination that was reached through the consent of all parties, rather than through litigation. Celebrations were held at the base of the volcanic mountain Budj Bim, also known as Mount Eccles National Park, and followed a special hearing of the Federal Court of Australia on Country.

With older students [research](#) the Gunditjmarra battle for Native Title recognition.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCECU014](#) Explore the contested meaning of concepts including freedom, justice, and rights and responsibilities, and the extent they are and should be valued by different individuals and groups: *Ethical Capability: 7 and 8: Understanding Concepts*

With your students research Gunditjmarra, Country, people, history and culture. If able, invite Gunditjmarra community members to come to the class or school and speak about Gunditjmarra, by contacting the Warrnambool or Heywood [LAECGs](#) or the [Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Corporation](#).

Lake Condah, extremely significant to Gunditjmarra People, is an Indigenous Protected Area. Visit or learn about Victorian Indigenous Protected Areas ([IPA](#)) in Victoria, such as Kurtonitj or Lake Condah in the South-west of Victoria. Watch the [video](#) with Gunditjmarra Elder Ken Saunders about Museum Victoria's Bush Blitz program, involving Gunditjmarra Traditional Owners to survey biodiversity in Indigenous Protected Areas and investigate the program and some of the flora and fauna surveyed. Where else is Bush Blitz Working?

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCGGK137](#) Land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve food security over time: *Geography 9 – 10: Biomes and food security*

[VCHHK105](#) How physical or geographical features influenced the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' communities, foundational stories and land management practices: *History 7 - 8: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures*

[VCHHK078](#) The diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the significant ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the effects on their daily lives: *History 3 – 4: First contacts*

Research the lives of Gunditjmarra Elders and community members who have been strong advocates for their communities such as Indigenous Honour Roll inductees Edna Brown and William Rawlings; the [Lovett Brothers](#); [Laura Bell](#); and Young Australian of the Year state finalist, Gunditjmarra and Wemba Wemba descendant [Benson Saulo](#); world famous singer Archie Roach; playwright, author and musician Richard Frankland; and first commissioned army Aboriginal Officer Reginald Saunders for starters.

Victorian Curriculum:

[VCHHC084](#) Describe perspectives and identify ideas, beliefs and values of people and groups in the past: *History 5 and 6: Historical concepts and skills*



Woven eel trap

April

ANZAC Day on the 25th April is also the time to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service to this nation.

"When my uncle came back from serving in Korea he couldn't even get a beer in a pub let alone a pension, and he wasn't permitted to become a citizen until 1968"

John Kinsella, nephew of Australia's most famous Aboriginal soldier, Captain Reg Saunders MBE

Over 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders fought for Australia in World War I despite profound barriers to enlisting.

Explore Indigenous Australians' war service. The [Australian War Memorial](#) site has a variety of online resources (see below). Download or [purchase](#) the Department of Veteran Affairs' (DVA) Indigenous Service Publications for [Primary](#) and [Secondary](#) schools for background information and suggested inquiry activities. *(The secondary schools publication is currently out of print and unavailable for purchase, however it is available for [download](#) from DVA).*

[Contact](#) the Australian War Museum to borrow *Memorial Box 03: Too Dark for the Light Horse*. This site also takes you to online resources and Australian Curriculum links. Using the Australian War Memorial's online databases, [investigate](#) the war service of Aboriginal servicemen and women.

Watch Bush TV's [Untold Stories](#) about WW1 Aboriginal service men and research the lives of Victorian Koories such as Brabuwoolooong private Harry Thorpe. Why were there such barriers and how did some overcome them? Watch a range of videos such as Living Black's [Unidentified Soldier](#), [Indigenous Servicemen through the Years](#) and ABC Message Stick's [ANZAC](#), and discuss issues of equality, identity, recognition and life after service raised.

Consider participating in the Shrine of Remembrance [Poster Competition](#) highlighting the participation of Aboriginal service men and women as a class or whole-school activity.



Did you know that Gunditjmara man Reginald (Reg) Saunders was the first Aboriginal person to be commissioned as an Officer in the Australian Army?

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 and 4: Community, remembrance and celebrations*

[VCHHK142](#) Effects of World War I, with a particular emphasis on the changes and continuities brought to the Australian home front and society: *History 9 and 10: Australia at war (1914 – 1945): World War I*

[VCHHK148](#) Effects of World War II, with a particular emphasis on the changes and continuities brought to the Australian home front and society: *History 9 and 10: Australia at war (1914 – 1945): World War II*

For more Koorie Perspectives see the 2017 VAEAI [Koorie Education Calendar](#).



Produced by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

Any enquiries, feedback and suggestions welcomed by contacting VAEAI on (03) 94810800 or emailing vaeai@vaeai.org.au.