

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

2009-2012 Strategic Plan

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VAEAI's Philosophy

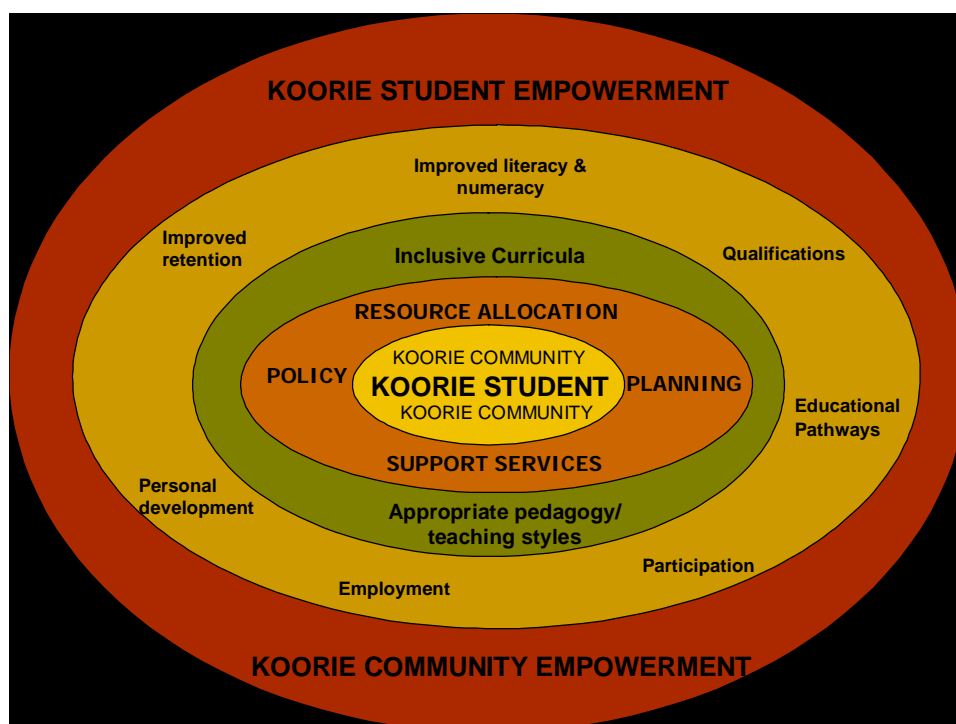
Education from Birth to Death

Since 1976 the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI) has acted as an advisory body and an advocate for the Victorian Koorie community. VAEAI have both represented and informed the Victorian Koorie community in all matters relating to education, from early childhood through to post-compulsory.

VAEAI's 30 year heritage in representing the Koorie community has been underpinned by the central belief that education is a birth to death process. VAEAI addresses the major education sectors of Early Childhood, Schools, and TAFE/Higher Education holistically, with the aim of seamlessly meeting the education and training needs of Koorie people at any age. VAEAI firmly believes that the best education outcomes for Koorie people result from communities working together, across all age groups, sharing experience and building upon cultural and educational knowledge.

The Student at the Centre

This is VAEAI's vision of empowerment for Koorie students and communities. The student is positioned in the centre, and is supported by structural mechanisms such as policy planning, support services and resource allocation. The diagram also demonstrates the positive outcomes that are a consequence of this approach.



VAEAI believes all education policy and strategies must be philosophically grounded in the idea that the student is at the centre. This perspective ensures that the integrity of education provision is maintained, whatever structural or organisational changes take place around the student.

VAEAI's strategies have resulted in significant progress for the Koorie community in all areas of education. If we wish to continue our successes in Koorie education and further develop community potential we must maintain a focus on the student as being at the centre for all education planning and decision making, providing all Koorie students with the support and services required to achieve the outcomes they desire.

VAEAI's Strategic Plan 2009-2012

VAEAI's Strategic Plan for 2009-2012 is a foundation document that will inform all Operational Plans developed by the organisation within the specified time period.

The Strategic Plan is structured to correspond with what VAEAI has identified as the three key functions of our organisation:

- 1** Engaging the Koorie Community to Actively Participate in Educational Decision Making
- 2** Advocating on Behalf of the Koorie Community at All Stages in the Education Pathway
- 3** Monitoring Policy Directions and Providing Policy Advice to all Key Stakeholders in the Education System

Engaging the Koorie Community to Actively Participate in Educational Decision Making

For VAEAI community engagement is the crucial first step in promoting better outcomes for Koorie people in education and training. VAEAI seeks to encourage Koorie community engagement both with the organization, principally through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs) and also at all levels of the education system.

VAEAI's organisational structure, with LAECGs based in 30 locations across the State of Victoria, is aligned with the philosophy of community engagement in a practical way. Statewide coverage has enabled VAEAI to be

responsive to a Koorie population that is highly dispersed, with some pockets of high concentration.

Through LAECGs VAEAI is able to provide information to the Koorie community on becoming involved in both the development and implementation of current education strategies and programs for Koorie students. LAECGs also direct community members to the best available resources and assess what is required when needs are not being met.

VAEAI encourages LAECGs to build and maintain a relationship with the Koorie Education Workforce and with education and training providers. VAEAI also supports its LAECGs in the development of their capacities and functions.

Advocating on Behalf of the Koorie Community at All Stages in the Education Pathway

VAEAI acts as an advocate by regularly consulting with Koorie communities across the State of Victoria to determine education and training needs. VAEAI monitors the efficacy of current policies and programs from a community perspective, drawing on the localised knowledge of LAECGs.

All LAECG members sit on VAEAI's Committee of Management. The Committee of Management is also comprised of Specialist Representatives for Early Childhood, Schools, TAFE and Higher Education, providing focused expertise at all stages in the education pathway. The Committee of Management meet regularly throughout the year to discuss the challenges Koorie students are facing and to evaluate the resources available to address these issues.

Monitoring Policy Directions and Providing Policy Advice to all Key Stakeholders in the Education System

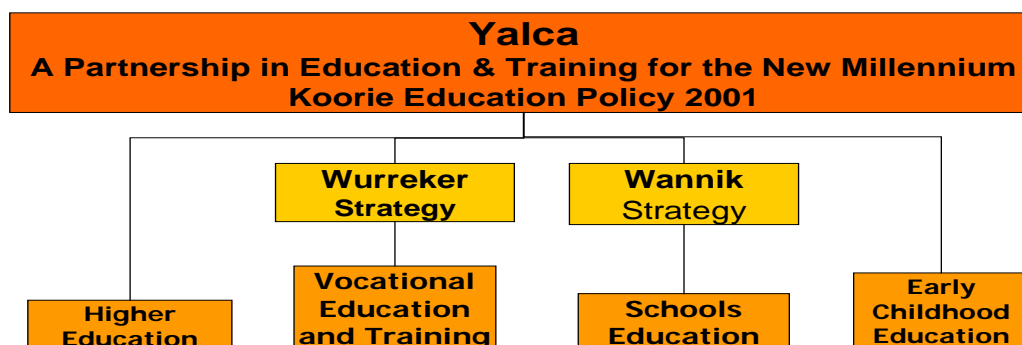
VAEAI is recognised as the peak Koorie education body in Victoria. It is representative of all Victorian Koorie communities and is recognised across the spectrum of education through a formal partnership with the State Government. VAEAI is responsible for monitoring current policy directions and providing policy advice on education and training to all key stakeholders, including state and federal government.

Through VAEAI the Victorian Koorie Community have maintained and strengthened a partnership arrangement with the Victorian State Government. This partnership was first formalised in 1990 under the *Partnership in Education: Koorie Education Policy*.

In October 2001 both the Victorian State Government and VAEAI recommitted to this partnership with the launch of *Yalca: Koorie Education Policy*. VAEAI is in a unique position as the only Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) in Australia that has in place a formalised partnership with its State Government.

As a result of this partnership VAEAI has been able to devise and implement State and Local level protocols that enable active involvement of Koorie people in education decision making. *Yalca* acknowledges that local Koorie communities, through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs), are best able to determine local education and training needs.

Yalca has served as a policy foundation for the development and implementation of strategies and programs that are currently being applied from early childhood through to post compulsory education and training.



Wurreker

Wurreker, launched in 2000, is the current joint strategy developed through VAEAI’s partnership with the Office of Tertiary Training and Education (OTTE), Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD). *Wurreker* acknowledges VAEAI as the peak body providing valid and accurate advice to Government on Koorie training requirements.

Wannik

The *Wannik* strategy was developed through the partnership between VAEAI and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). *Wannik*, launched in 2008, continues with the same philosophy of equal partnership with the Koorie community that is central to *Yalca* and *Wurreker*. The strategy clearly states that it will be “responsive to community

needs at the local level. It will be implemented in partnership with, rather than for, the community”.

Strategies

VAEAI have identified the key strategies for 2009-2012 that will enable our organisation to enact its three key functions. These strategies will be applied in planning for Early Childhood, Schools, TAFE and Higher Education.

1 Engaging the Koorie Community to Actively Participate in Educational Decision Making

- 1.1 Support and advise LAECGs on the development of their roles and functions
- 1.2 Assist LAECGs to convene local forums to discuss the needs of Koorie students.
- 1.3 Promote the benefits of education and training programs to students, parents and the wider Koorie community.
- 1.4 Assist parents and the wider Koorie community to develop strategies to engage Koorie students in education programs from early childhood through to schools and post-compulsory education.
- 1.5 Assist LAECGs with the development and updating of School Community Partnerships.
- 1.6 Support and advise LAECGs on building and maintaining relationships with the Koorie Education Workforce.
- 1.7 Support and advise LAECGs on building and maintaining relationships at all levels of the education and training system.

2 Advocating on Behalf of the Koorie Community at All Stages in the Education Pathway

- 2.1 Through the VAEAI Committee of Management monitor, review and evaluate the current trends in education and training and their impact on Koorie students, their families and communities.
- 2.2 Through the VAEAI Committee of Management identify the best means to address the challenges in education and training for Koorie students.

- 3 Monitoring Policy Directions and Providing Policy Advice to all Key Stakeholders in the Education System**
- 3.1** Work in partnership with State and Federal Departments to develop educational initiatives as identified within the key strategies for Koorie Education, including *Wannik* and *Wurreker*.
- 3.2** Working in partnership with State and Federal Departments to develop educational initiatives that assist with transition pathways from early childhood to school and school to post-compulsory education.
- 3.3** Ensure that education/training programs and polices are culturally inclusive by:
- a** consulting with providers of early childhood services to develop culturally sensitive programs and learning environments for Koorie children and families
 - b** consulting with school leaders, including Regional Directors and Principals, in order develop schools that recognise the right of Koorie students to celebrate their culture
 - c** consulting with training providers to develop culturally inclusive learning environments for Koorie students in post-compulsory education
 - d** advising on the development of professional learning packages for pre-service and in-service training of teachers and principals
 - e** advising curriculum assessment authorities on developing a culturally inclusive curriculum.
- 3.4** Promote and advise on the education and training needs of the Koorie community to all key stakeholders in the education system.
- 3.5** Report annually to State and Federal departments on the outcomes of implementing VAEAI's key strategies.

