

Welcome to the fifth Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated Newsletter.

New Staff

We would like to welcome our new staff members Troy Brickell TAFE Project Officer, and our new Wurreker Brokers Kathy Travis (South West) and Alice Hughes (Central Gippsland).

Early Childhood Unit

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Koorie Early Childhood Education Program Review

In 2001 the Department of Human services (DHS) and the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) agreed to review the Koorie Early Childhood Education Program (KECEP).

The aim of the Review was to ensure that DHS met the funding requirements of DEST particularly in relation to the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program and to address the ongoing concern in relation to the low participation rates of Koorie children in preschool programs.

The Minister has now signed the final Report and an Implementation Plan is being developed to address the Review Recommendations.

Best Start

Giving Aboriginal Children (0-8) the Best Start in Life is a Research Project managed by a partnership of Koorie Peak Organisations, VACCHO, VACSAL, VACCA and VAEAI. The final Report will incorporate a Status report by Professor Colin Bourke and the results of community consultations in the Mildura, Echuca, Metropolitan, Heywood/Portland and Bairnsdale/Lakes Entrance/Lake Tyers regions. The findings will seek to ensure the maximum positive impact of Best Start initiatives within Aboriginal communities. The process for the selection of two Aboriginal Demonstration sites will soon begin.

Broadband Redevelopment

The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services appointed *Community Link Australia* to review the Broadband. "The aim of the redevelopment is to tidy it up and make it work better for families and services", says Community Link. Funding for the MACS, the Playgroups, the Innovative Services, the Early Childhood Unit comes from the Broadband. The final Report is due in the second week of September.

In Service Training

This year In Service training is being provided by the Child Care Services Training Consortium, on which VAEAI sits in an advisory capacity. Staff at all six MACS have participated in the first round of training conducted at : Robinvale MACS, for Robinvale, Echuca and Shepparton services, Marysville for Yappera, Morwell for Gunai Lidj, Lakes Tyers for Bung Yarnda. Staff who attended have expressed high satisfaction with the training provided; a second round will start soon.

VAEAI PRESCHOOL FORUMS

The Early Childhood Unit held a series of four forums on Preschool Participation. They were held at the Aboriginal Advancement League, the Ballarat & District Aboriginal Co-operative, Swan Hill KODE and the Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative. The participants come up with a list of strategies to increase Preschool participation of Koorie children. These recommendations have been presented to the Department of Human Services.

**XXIV World Congress of OMEP
MEP—World Organisation for Early Childhood: 0–8 Years**

**One World: Many Childhoods
Strengthening Early Childhood International Links**

21–24 July 2004, Carlton Crest, Melbourne, Australia

A wonderful and unique opportunity to share our concern for early childhood from across the world; our perspectives, our passions, our power and purpose will give us an unparalleled experience as we foreground our work on behalf of young children.

Congress Themes:

- Children in Difficult Circumstances
- Indigenous children's needs and services
- Innovations in Service Delivery
- Child Health and Social Services

Schools Unit

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Since the last newsletter the Schools unit has been busy in a number of activities including the 2003 Croc Festival, Alfred Felton Mentor Program, conferences, school visits, and educational meetings and forums around the state.

Michael Harrison has returned into the Schools Unit working together with Kylie Belling, who is also working in the Policy & Research Unit.

Croc Festival

The Croc Festival was again a huge success for the Swan Hill region with over 45 schools and 2000 children attending.

The Croc Fest held in September, consisted of educational and sporting activities throughout the day as well as future employment and study information areas including TAFE & University stalls, through to culturally relevant activities, such as Story telling, artifacts information, face painting, and Koorie dancing.



VAEAI Staff & Family at Croc Festival 2003 Swan Hill

Over the two nights participating schools performed amazingly choreographed musical routines to packed crowds on the Swan Hill Oval, that were both culturally relevant and entertaining, ending with a spectacular fireworks display on the last night. Performing schools

were rewarded with plaques for their performances that were presented to them by Jimmy Little. The Croc Festival was a huge success from all accounts, and with the production to be held in Swan Hill again next year the event will only grow stronger.

Alfred Felton Scholarship Mentor Program Residential

The Alfred Felton Scholarship Mentor Program Residential this year took place in October. Koorie students from years 9–12 are eligible for the scholarship ranging from \$250–\$750 per year to encourage our children to continue to achieve at school. The Mentor Program essentially allows for recipients from around the state come together to share educational experiences, through motivational speakers and LAECG and regional support mechanisms.



2003 Alfred Felton Recipients



Kristen Bell, Jess Lovett-Murray, Vera Harold, Aunty Laura Bell, Allira Harold

The two day in-service was a great success with 26 scholarship recipients in attendance. Activities over the two days included regional settings, Guest speakers (Richard Franklin, Esme Bamblett, Sport and Recreation Victoria)

Aunty Laura Bell presented the children with certificates at the conclusion of the program.

VCE Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation Pathway Consulting with the Victorian Indigenous Languages Regions

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) has revised and broadened the study design of the Australian Indigenous Languages VCE study piloted at Worowa Independent Aboriginal College. Consultation with the Victorian Indigenous Communities took place during May 2003, with a positive response from each Victorian language region.

Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation Pathway allows for schools to target one or more of Victoria's Indigenous languages for study within the VCE, in consultation with members of the local language community.

The target language will be taught using the reclamation method. This method is best for reviving a language where few or no community members speak their language

fluently but where some words remain in everyday speech.

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority in collaboration with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) held meetings to canvas views with Indigenous communities and key stakeholders about the viability of the study design and their willingness to allow their language to be taught at VCE level.

LAECG's, Koorie Education Development Officers and KODE Schools were contacted and participated in the consultation. Around 120 people attended the meetings and presentations were also made to a variety of groups such as the Koori Early Childhood Officers briefings and the KEDO's conference.



Farewell to Brokers

Many thanks to our outgoing brokers for those regions Sue Lovett and Nicole Briggs for all of their excellent hard work.

State Training awards

The State Training Awards were held recently at Crown Casinos Palladium Ballroom. Koories took out two awards.

ATSIC Outstanding Student of the Year Award—Koorie

Winner:

Corey Murray—Certificate IV—Health Nursing—Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE



Corey, who has just completed his Certificate IV in Health Nursing at the Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE, works as a nurse at the Goulburn Valley Base Hospital, where he is one of the few male nurses on the staff.

Formerly an Aboriginal educator at Mooroopna Secondary College, he had always wanted to do nursing but in the past "I didn't think I was smart enough."

Corey is interested in mental health nursing and hopes to apply for a position in the hospital's mental health section.

Other Finalists were:

Barry Firebrace—Certificate IV in Sport and Recreation—Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE

William Hannah-Rodgers—Certificate IV in Frontline Management—Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

Marcus Clarke—Certificate II in Australian Land Conservation and Restoration—South West Institute of TAFE

Marcus Clarke also received a special commendation from the Minister of Education

ACPET Innovative Training Award

Winner



Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL) and RMIT.

Koorie Community Leadership Program

Developed in consultation with a wide range of Aboriginal leaders and community members over a period of eight months, the Koorie Community Leadership Program is a forum for current and emerging Koorie leaders to share ideas, experience and skills in the challenges facing the Koorie community.

Participants examine 'big picture' issues in Aboriginal Affairs and have the opportunity to develop a range of skills in leadership, policy development, management and communication.

Delivering the best of both Indigenous and western knowledge, the program is immersed in contemporary Aboriginal culture, reinforcing community identity and promoting positive self-esteem.

Other Finalists were:

Australian Institute of Public Safety—Occupational Violence Training Initiative

Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE and Victoria Police—The Victoria Police IT Training Initiative

Victorian Adult Learners Week Awards

The Victorian Adult Learners Week Awards were held recently at the Melbourne Zoo. For the first time these awards included an Outstanding Koorie Learner Award

Victorian Adult Learners Week Awards— Outstanding Koorie Learner Award

Winner:

Kelly Faldon

Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation

A desire to raise awareness of indigenous organizations led Kelly Faldon to an adult education course at Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporations.

Songlines supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to develop their musical talents and assists with employment and training opportunities in the music industry. "I thought it would be good to get the Indigenous voice across on radio because it's such a powerful medium—but I didn't think I had the skills." she said.

As it turns out, Kelly did have the skills and after completing a Certificate 111 in Broadcasting (Radio) at

Songlines, she went on to co-host a segment on Victorians First Indigenous radio station 3KND 1503 am. The segment not only informs Indigenous people about what services are available to them, it is a vehicle for Indigenous organization to promote their programs" Kelly said the songlines course was essential to gaining the broadcast knowledge she needed to present the program.

Kelly also encourages adults from the Indigenous communities to further their job and social opportunities undertaking various studies at NMIT.

Rotary Club of Swan Hill

Trainee/Apprentice of the Year Award

Winner:

Erin Fenton

Erin is a Trainee Flora, Fauna and Forests Officer. She is responsible for the wildlife shelter liaison and has a role in Forest Management including domestic firewood. Reserve, Pest Plant and Animal control and Indigenous Site Management. Erin's youthful enthusiasm, coupled with her desire to learn, produces an excellent work ethic.



Geoff Carson Chief Executive Officer of Murray Mallee Training Company, Erin Fenton and Murray Rohde, Senior Flora and Fauna Officer of the Department of Sustainability and Environment.



Earlier this year VAEAI held a very sad going away party for Irene Morris. Irene and Family have decided to move to Canada. Irene is still employed at VAEAI as Finance Manager and is contactable through the VAEAI office. VAEAI staff and Management would like to wish Irene and her family all the best for their time in Canada.

VAEAI Newsletters

VAEAI Newsletters can be downloaded from the VAEAI Website at www.vaeai.org.au

Dates of Interest

AEU Seminar, Hobart Tasmania, 15th January 2004

The VAEAI Office will be closed from the 23rd December 2003 and will re-open on the 5th January 2004.

**THE VAEAI MANAGEMENT & STAFF
WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A
SAFE AND MERRY CHRISTMAS**



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Education and land go hand in hand