

**Welcome to the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated Newsletter.**

## **New Staff**

VAEAI would like to welcome new staff Vanessa Wilson Research and Policy Project officer, Robert Miller Schools Project Officer, Jason Tiddums Receptionist, Deon Davis Manager of the Wurreker Unit, Robert Britten Goulburn Valley Broker, Suraya Bin Talib Central Highlands Wimmera Broker and Sandra Stewart Murray Valley Broker. Danni Hamilton has been moved from Fitzroy Office as Lionel's Executive Assistant to the Office Manager of the Wurreker Unit.

## **Policy and Research Unit**

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This year the Research Unit will be working on a number of new projects.

### **Transition to primary schooling for Indigenous children in Victoria (draft title only)**

The Premiers Drug Prevention Council (DHS) has approached VAEAI with a proposal to carry out a research project around the early years / early intervention and the role of education. This project will be a joint effort between the Research Unit, the Early Childhood Unit and the Schools Unit.

The aim of the project is to improve the participation and educational outcomes for Koorie children in primary education, with particular emphasis on Preparatory students.

The Research will concentrate on:

- Identifying rates of regular absenteeism and literacy & numeracy rates among Koorie primary level students.
- Identifying factors contributing to absenteeism and low literacy & numeracy rates, including:
  - Transition from preschool to primary level
  - School factors such as learning styles and cultural differences
  - Family and community disadvantage
- Identifying strategies to address issues with emphasis on building existing initiatives.

This Project will begin shortly and the research team will be conducting community consultations in the near future.

### **VQA Research Projects**

We are supporting the Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) with two research proposals.

#### **1. Koorie Experiences of Qualifications Pathways in VET: Obstacles or Opportunities?**

This project aims to track and document the pathways of Koorie students through VET; their experiences of pathways planning and course advice services, access to credit transfer and RPL; and the extent to which the VET qualifications system has supported the achievement of their learning goals to date.

Research is being conducted by Melbourne University on behalf of VAEAI and the VQA.

The VAEAI Research and TAFE units are providing an advisory and support role, and are members of the Research Working Group.

#### **2. Development of a more comprehensive arrangement for units, learning resources and other support materials in Indigenous studies for use in post compulsory education and training programs.**

This project will develop a catalogue of Indigenous studies units / qualifications and associated support materials, to act as a resource for the provision of Indigenous studies from secondary to AQF level 6.

The VAEAI Research, Schools and TAFE units will provide an advisory and support role on this project.



## OMEF 2004

In July 2004 OMEF celebrated its International Congress on preschool. VAEAI was represented on the Planning and Marketing Committees by Aunty Rose Bamblett, ECH Specialist Representative and Roland Finette, ECH coordinator.

More than 900 delegates packed the Carlton Crest over the 4 days. VAEAI, thanks to a contribution from the State Department, was well represented by the President Geraldine Atkinson, the Vice President Laura Bell, Aunty Melva Johnson and Aunty Rose.



Aunty Laura Bell, Sally Goold, Aunty Rose Bamblett and Aunty Melva Johnson



Opposition Leader Mark Latham & Geraldine Atkinson

Doreen Garvey Wandin, Wurundjeri Elder, in a moving speech, welcomed a packed auditorium to country and officially opened the Congress. She was well complemented by Robert Bamblett and his One Fire Dance Group who gave an awesome display of their talents. They set the tone for the whole Congress and will be remembered. Robert himself was to show his versatility when he performed as a didgeridoo player during the International Evening.

Terry Garwood was the Moderator for the Forum on Indigenous Children's Needs and Services and on the panel representing the Australian Indigenous communities was Dr Sally Goold, OAM. Other speakers in the concurrent sessions included Geraldine Atkinson, Merle Bamblett, Joanne Atkinson and Muriel Cadd.

On Monday morning Jacinda Brown and Roland Finette led a group of delegates on an Educational tour to Yappera, the Aborigines Advancement League and Glenroy KODE. It was an enriching experience for the delegates and a fitting conclusion to a very successful Congress.

## Family and Community Services (FaCS)

The "Broadband", now known as the Child Care Support Program", (CCSP) funds the MACS, the Playgroups as well as the ECH Unit.

For Indigenous services in the 2004 Budget, the Commonwealth announced:

- Funding to establish new services in Indigenous communities;
- The development of an Indigenous Child Care strategy;
- Exploring the potential for a Quality assurance system for Indigenous child care services; and
- Over 420 million in the Child Care Support program to support Indigenous Child Care

The Prime Minister previously announced under the *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy* funding to SNAICC for the development of a National Indigenous Children's and Family Resource Centre.

## The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children

### Footprints in Time

The study will focus on the links between early childhood experiences and later life outcomes for from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It is hoped that following children over time (7 years) will help identify what helps children grow up strong and achieve positive outcomes. 4000 children (1000 from remote areas) will be chosen: 2000 babies aged less than 12 months and 2000 four to five year olds.

### Farewells

The Schools unit has said goodbye to Kylie Belling, who has gone onto a new role at Ilbijeri Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Co-op and Michael Harrison who has taken up the Koorie Education Development Officer Position in the Northern Metropolitan area.



## Alfred Felton Mentoring Program

The Alfred Felton Bequest was held at the Rydges on the 13th-15th of October. Thirty children from around the state were in attendance for the event and it was well received by all involved. LAECG's, KEDO's, KE's, and KSLO's transported the children to the 2 day event and with all Koorie Education workers actively involved throughout the program.

This year we decided to focus more on 'pathways' for these students. Koorie workers from Ballarat University, Deakin University (IKE), Melbourne University, and Northern TAFE made fantastic presentations on what each institute had to offer.

Regional workshops were conducted by the KEDO's to see what each region had to offer for students.

## Crocfest 2004 - Swan Hill

VAEAI attended the Crocfest for 2004 which was held in Swan Hill from the 14th - 16th of September. This year a record number of 3,000 students registered from 86 schools. The Crocfest is becoming very popular and it targets participants between the age of 9-18 years from primary and secondary schools, non government and government.

## Youth Forums 2005

Early in 2005, we will be targeting youth with low and no attendance at school, within the primary and secondary years. Our focus will be to find the reasons for why these kids have trouble attending school.

We will then utilize this information to provide the right services for the education of our communities.

The forums will begin in February 2005, and will be in all the towns on the VAEAI regions map.

For Further information call VAEAI Schools & Youth unit: 9416 3833, ask for Robert or Lowana.

The TAFE unit has said goodbye to Thelma Austin Project Officer at Wurreker who has moved to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Sheree Lowe Wimmera Broker who has returned to studies, Julie Hodgkins Goulburn Valley Broker, Olive Walsh Murray Valley Wurreker Broker and Troy Brickell TAFE Project Officer have all said good bye to us recently.



## Wurreker Statewide

The first Wurreker - Pathways and Partnerships to the Future Conference was held in Melbourne, from 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2004.

The Wurreker - Pathways and Partnerships to the Future Conference was a huge success with a wide range of experts from Education and Training.

Delegates were provided with an opportunity to hear the latest in policy thinking and practical examples of how partnerships and pathways can work and provide better outcomes for Koorie people.

The delegates were specifically interested in and committed to improving the outcomes of Koories participating in education and training. The Conference created unique promotional and relationship building opportunities.

## Wurreker Statewide Awards

Ms Lynne Kosky MP Minister for Education and Training in partnership with Ms Geraldine Atkinson President of VAEAI launched the Wurreker Awards.

The Awards recognised and celebrated the achievements under the Wurreker Strategy. Awards were presented to individuals, training providers and employers who are able to demonstrate achievements in training and employment partnerships and pathways.

The Wurreker Newsletter will provide more information on the Wurreker Conference. If you would like a copy contact the Namalaata Office on 9486 1599.



The Hon. Lynne Kosky MP, Minister for Education and Training and Geraldine Atkinson, President, VAEAI



## Ballarat & District Aboriginal Co-operative 25th Anniversary

### **VAEAI Newsletters**

VAEAI Newsletters can be downloaded from the  
VAEAI Website at [www.vaeai.org.au](http://www.vaeai.org.au)

### **Dates of Interest**

From Boys to Fine Men Conference – April, 2005

The VAEAI Office will be closed from the 24th December 2004 and will re-open on the 4th January 2005.



*Geraldine Atkinson, President, VAEAI*

**THE VAEAI MANAGEMENT AND STAFF WOULD  
LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR**



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*Education and land go hand in hand*