

in this issue >>>

Welcome back...

Key dates 2012

VAEAI unit updates

LAECGs

School financial support

Website update

VAEAI Staff contacts



issue
one
2012

...a quarterly update on Koorie education & training in Victoria

VAEAI newsletter



key dates >>>

Term dates and public holidays in 2012!

2 February: Term 1 begins

12 March: Labour Day

30 March: Term 1 ends

6 April: Good Friday

9 April: Easter Monday

16 April: Term 2 begins

25 April: ANZAC day

11 June: Queen's Birthday

29 June: Term 2 ends

16 July: Term 3 begins

21 September: Term 3 ends

8 October: Term 4 begins

6 November: Melbourne Cup Day

21 December: Term 4 ends

VAEAI website

Our website is currently being updated and will go live later this year!

The new and improved website will keep you up to date on VAEAI programs and events, and provide you with general information about Koorie education and training in Victoria. You will be able to access VAEAI documents, including our newsletters, as well as links to external documents and websites.

In the meantime, please contact us via email or telephone for any information.

Welcome...

...to VAEAI's community newsletter!

VAEAI's community newsletter is back in 2012! Our newsletter will bring you all the latest on Koorie education and training in Victoria every 3 months – so look out for it!

First of all, the VAEAI Community would like to wish you a belated Happy New Year! We hope your 2012 has gotten off to a good start, especially in your involvement with education and training!

At VAEAI, we've started the year off running – organising a calendar full of programs, events, and research projects to make sure Koorie education and training in Victoria works for you!

Our newsletter will provide you with all the up to date information on Koorie education and training in Victoria. Every 3 months, in March, June, September and December, you will see a new VAEAI Community newsletter floating around your school, training provider, email inbox, child's school bag and our website – so keep an eye out!

Our newsletter will provide you with all the up to date information on Koorie education and training in Victoria

In these newsletters you can expect to find information on Koorie education, how VAEAI works, what we are doing in the early years, schools and VET sectors.

You can also find information about education and training in your local area, and we will provide you with details about your Local Education Consultative Groups, Regional Wurreker Brokers, and who to contact with your questions.

Most importantly, this newsletter provides us all with the opportunity to share our stories about Koorie education and training in Victoria. We hope you enjoy reading this first edition for 2012, and would love to hear any feedback and suggestions you might have. You can find all of our contact details at the back of this newsletter!

The VAEAI team

Wurreker update

Central Gippsland Broker

Naomi Murphy is the new VAEAI Central Gippsland Wurreker Regional Broker. Naomi is a Waka Waka woman originally from Queensland but has been living in Traralgon, Gippsland on and off for the last 17 years where she has been an active member of the community.

Naomi (pictured right) had previously worked as the KLO with the Gipps TAFE Koorie Unit and VACCA.



Darwin NATSIEC

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Conference (NATSIEC) was held in Darwin in October last year.

A joint workshop presentation was delivered by VAEAI Wurreker Manager, Neville Atkinson,



Farewell Roland & Lorraine

After 11 years of service to VAEAI, and many years working with MACs through the Department of Education, Roland retired in December 2011. He will be missed by VAEAI management, staff and services. Roland, we wish you and Nadege (pictured above) all the happiness in the world.

We also wish the best of luck to Lorraine, who after 10 years of dedication to VAEAI has gone on to study Business Administration at NMITE.

and Skills Victoria, Equity Program Manager, Katrina Woodland (pictured right). The presentation provided key information on the Wurreker Strategy and key government programs and initiatives in relation to Koorie VET.

VET Fee Changes

In 2012 there are changes to the fees and funding structure under the Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) that applies to government funded training and further education providers:

- No minimum fee level or maximum fee caps apply
- Apprenticeship fees and rates align with Traineeship fees and rates
- Weightings for seven industry sectors have been adjusted
- New arrangements for concession fees apply

This is a change from 2011, where under the Victorian Governments Indigenous Completions Initiative Koorie students eligible for the Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) were levied at the minimum tuition fee amount. With the removal of minimum fee caps all Koorie students



will pay up to the relevant concession tuition fee for all course categories. For further information go to

<http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/get-training/fees/changes-to-vet-fee-and-funding-arrangements-for-2012>

Learning Communities Project

In 2012 RMIT and the Fitzroy Stars Football Club have collaborated to develop the Skills Victoria funded project *Learning Communities: An Indigenous Partnership Model*.

RMIT will target accredited training courses - Certificate III in Dental Assisting (traineeship) and Certificate III Mechanical Engineering (apprenticeship) - to Koorie students and the Fitzroy Stars will assist with student recruitment, provide mentoring and cultural activities for RMIT staff.

For further information contact RMIT on 1800 054 885 or ngarara@rmit.edu.au or the Fitzroy Stars fitzroystarsfc@bigpond.com.au.

For more information please contact VAEAI's TAFE unit or your region's Wurreker Broker

Early years update

Free Kinder for 3&4 Year-olds

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children are entitled to receive 10.45 hours of free Kindergarten, under the *Victoria's Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood* reform.

New Programs for Early Years Workforce

Child Care workers and early childhood educators will have greater opportunities to gain or upgrade their qualifications this year through funding of \$126.6 million over four years being provided by the Commonwealth Government.

The funding will provide an additional 1,500 university between 2009 and 2011 in an effort to better train and retrain the early years workforce.

For more information please contact VAEAI's Early Childhood Unit

In Home Support/Home Based Learning Programs

The In Home Support (IHS) Program helps Koorie families to build on their parenting strengths. There are 6 sites currently running the program: Shepparton, Swan Hill, Mildura, Geelong, Bairnsdale and Melbourne.

Three of these sites also run the Home Based Learning Program, which is an extension of the IHS for parents and families of children 3-5 years.

Children and Family Centres

Through the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, two Children and Family Centres (CFC) have been established in Bairnsdale and Whittlesea.

Bubub Wilam in Thomastown is now taking enrolments and the official opening will be held in March 2012.

Bairnsdale works on Dala Woolo are in progress.

Wannik update

Focus Schools

There are 129 identified focus schools in Victoria, which have enrollments of 10 or more Koorie students. Four Victorian schools have been identified as Next Steps Initiative (NSI) schools, Mildura Primary School, Swan Hill Primary School, Thornbury Primary School and Lakes

Entrance Secondary College. VAEAI has been working closely with these schools to develop their NSI plans, which set out how these schools will direct their additional funding to the four target areas of Literacy, Numeracy, Attendance and Parent & Community Connectedness.

School-Community Partnership Agreements

School-Community Partnership Agreements (SCPA) are facilitated through the VAEAI Koorie Parental and Community Engagement Program (KPaCE), with the support of the State and Federal Departments of Education (DEECD and DEEWR). The aim is to increase school responsiveness to Koorie student needs and aspirations, and to provide a safe and supportive education for these students in order to both enhance and improve student outcomes.

In 2011, VAEAI proudly facilitated three SCPAs with Reservoir High School (pictured right), Swan Hill Primary School (pictured below) and Gowrie St Primary School in Shepparton, and their respective local Koorie communities.

In 2012 VAEAI will be working to broker several more of these important partnerships, as well as ensuring current SCPAs continue to benefit students, schools and communities.



New PaCE Officer

VAEAI has successfully secured funding for a PaCE Officer to work across the Murray Valley, Loddon Campaspe and Goulburn Valley regions. The position is for 12 months and will focus on engaging and supporting the Koorie community in their children's education through a greater awareness of strategies outlined in the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan.

For more information on Wannik please contact VAEAI's Schools Unit



LAECGs

VAEAI's local advisory arrangements are solidly embedded in local communities through Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECGs). The 33 LAECGs in Victoria each have a seat on the VAEAI Committee of Management (CoM) and play a significant role in providing the important links between Koorie communities and education institutions.

The role of the LAECGs includes provision of advice on all education and training matters that affect Koorie students, and advocacy for Koorie students and their families in relation to education matters and representation at all levels. LAECGs are the vehicle through which parents and community members can have a say and are the first point of contact for all Koorie education or training matters at the local level.

To find out details of your LAECG, just contact VAEAI

ask us >>>

Q: How do I access educational financial support for my child?

A: Koorie students are eligible for financial assistance to support their schooling. The three main kinds of financial support you can access for your child are Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), School Start Bonus (SSB) and Education Tax Refund (ETR). The EMA provides families on a low income with financial assistance to support their child's education up to the age of 16. The allowance is paid in two installments in March and August. The SSB is available for students in Prep and Year 7. It is a one-off payment of \$300 to assist in purchasing uniforms, school bags and books. To receive EMA and/or SSB benefits you will need to complete an application form, which you can request from your school or download from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/financial/ema/documents.htm>. You need to submit your completed application to your child's school. The Education Tax Refund helps eligible families and independent students meet the costs of primary and secondary school education. Eligible applicants can get half the cost off some education expenses, including computers, educational software, textbooks and stationary, reimbursed to them up to a set amount. If you get Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A, you probably are eligible for the ETR. For more information go to <http://www.educationtaxrefund.gov.au/>.

Got a question for us?

If you have a question about Koorie education and training it's likely that you're not the only one! Send us your questions for publishing in our newsletter and you could be helping many people in your Community find an answer. Also feel free to share with us your thoughts and experiences related to Koorie education and training, just email vaeai@vaeai.org.au or write to us at PO Box 113, Northcote 3070.



policy & research unit >>>

Vaso@vaeai.org.au
Katie@vaeai.org.au

Policy & research update

After saying farewell to our Policy & Research Manager Matilda Darvall last year, the unit is planning a busy year ahead.

In the first half of 2012 we will be working on two key research projects. The first will investigate the role and effects of 'code switching' (switching between Koorie English and Standard Australian English) in Koorie students education. We need to determine how big a role it plays for our student and how we can better account for the effects of code switching from an assessment and learning development perspective.

The second research project will look into parental literacy levels and the link, if any, with parental school engagement. Included in this research will be recommendations on programs that the community feels will work best to improve adult literacy.

These research projects will involve online surveys and focus groups, and we would love to hear your thoughts and experiences in these areas.

In addition, we continue to work on operationalising our *Framework for Embedding Koorie Cultures, Histories and Perspective in Victorian Schools*, which was released in final draft format in December 2011. The next stage in this important project is to form working groups made up of topic area experts from our Committee of Management (CoM). We are hoping to initiate these working groups at our next CoM meeting on the 19th – 20th of March.

For more information or if you would like to be involved in our research projects please contact VAEAI's Policy & Research unit

coming soon >>>

in the june issue

Our next newsletter will be available in June 2012 and will have even more information on what's happening in the early years, school and VET sectors, as well as updates on the Wannik and Wurreker strategies, language program and policy & research developments at VAEAI!



our staff...

Lionel Bamblett	General Manager
Megan Giles	Executive Assistant
Lowana Moore	Programs Manager
Neville Atkinson	Wurreker Manager
Kim Powell	Early Years Manager
Anjee-Lee Solomon	HR Manager
Vaso Elefsiniotis	Policy & Research
Katie Brickwood	Policy & Research
Mary Booth	Finance/Payroll
Wanda Wellington	Business Support

Wurreker Brokers

Rob Britten	Metropolitan
Barry Fary	Loddon Campaspe
Peter Lovett	Central Highlands Wimmera
Naomi Murphy	Central Gippsland
Vicki Atkinson	Goulburn Valley
Lowell Hunter	South Western
Jennifer Mitchell	Murray Valley
Nicole Hood	East Gippsland



Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

144 Westbourne Grove, Northcote 3070 Ph: (03) 9481 0800 Fax: (03) 9481 4072
PO Box 113, Northcote 3070 Email: vaeai@vaeai.org.au
Registration No: A3874 ABN: 44 429 269 156