

{Embrace}

1st Anniversary Issue



One For All

...06

How your service can embrace Aboriginal Australia

...14

ACECQA on inclusion and the revised NQS

...09&16

Real stories from inspirational Victorian services



What an amazing year!

From the excitement of new beginnings in July 2016 to the day-to-day running of busy offices in Melbourne, Mildura and many other places in-between, the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA) has hit the ground running. No small feat but one made easier by our passionate team of Inclusion Professionals whose commitment to services and their families is having far-reaching positive impacts.

To be part of such a big journey is an extraordinary feeling. And it is big now – thanks to the thousands of Victorian services we're supporting with practical strategies, mentoring and free resources. This commitment to the inclusion of all children in education and care is making a real difference to countless families across the state, and we couldn't be prouder.

In this special anniversary issue of *Embrace*, we're celebrating Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. We've spotlighted two truly inspirational services – Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten and Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder – who are getting creative when it comes to acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. Our VIA partner, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, shares some top tips for services who are only just beginning to explore Indigenous culture and perspectives. And ACECQA explains why the upcoming changes to the National Quality Framework are an ideal opportunity to make curriculum decisions that promote access, inclusion and participation for all children.

Again, thank you to you. Keep spreading the word, keep doing whatever it is that gets you juiced up every day. And stay in touch. We love hearing about what you're doing to build a more inclusive education and care sector. And who knows – your service may even be featured in the next edition of *Embrace*...

The future is exciting and we all have an important role to play!

Julie Price and Karen Scobell
VIA Program Managers
Community Child Care Association



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The Victorian Inclusion Agency acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of this nation and the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We recognise their continuing connection to culture, land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

VIA Contributors

We would like to thank the following people for their contribution to this edition of *Embrace*:

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The Year That Was

STATS

800+

items available for loan from the Specialist Equipment Library



86%
of Victorian services supported

110+
free resources for educators on the VIA website

50+

Inclusion Professionals across Victoria

'Diversity looks, sounds and feels different in many contexts and it is important that we continue to find ways of learning about this'

– Nadia and Ali, Leapkids

'We are excited about the prospect of as many mainstream Victorian ECEC services as possible becoming places where Koorie children, their families and the community feel acknowledged, welcome and included'

– Matilda Darvall, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated – VIA Partner



EXPOS

540+
participants

6 Inclusion
Expos
across
Victoria

92%

of participants said
they were likely
or very likely to
implement their
learning into their
service



*'Recommend for
all staff to attend
the next expo'*

– Josh Hanna,
Taylors Lakes Primary School
OSHC

*'I have been able to
network well with
a local Indigenous
group, which was
very insightful'*

– Andy Littler,
Ride Avenue Pre-School

*'The presenters
were so
knowledgeable
and explained with
detail'*

– Ayako Mikuriya,
Moonee Valley Council

**What a
year!**



Sorry to have
missed out?
We're planning
more expos for
early 2018!



How to Embrace Aboriginal Australia at Your Service

{
ELLIE WATERS AND MATILDA DARVALL
Project Officers
Victorian Aboriginal Education
Association Incorporated – VIA Partner
}





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When it comes to being inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture, one of the most common questions the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) hears asked by early childhood educators is, 'How do I start?' Many educators have expressed to us their fear of appearing 'tokenistic' when implementing Koorie-related activities in isolation. We would like to offer some advice to allay this fear.



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STEP 1

The first step is self-reflection. There are some important questions for you and your colleagues to consider when committing to becoming Koorie inclusive. These include 'What do I feel?', 'What do I know?', 'What do I want to/ need to know?' and 'What are my own cultural biases?' Be prepared to do some research, enrol in cultural awareness programs and learn about Koorie cultural norms and protocols.

STEP 2

The second step in meaningfully embedding Koorie perspectives is to know and understand your local Koorie community. Utilising Aboriginal language maps can help you identify which Aboriginal tribal/language/nation group is in your local area. This means that when you design learning programs, you can implement cultural activities that are as locally relevant as possible. Also, once you know whose land your service operates on, you can put up an acknowledgement plaque to pay tribute and respect to the Traditional Owners. In fact, whenever you talk about any aspect of Aboriginality, you should try to identify where it is located and for whom it holds significance so that the experiences of children at your service are as contextualised and authentic as possible.

VAEAI can be your first point of contact for connecting with your Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG). VAEAI advocates for community involvement, which is why LAECGs are so important. LAECGs are voluntary bodies made up of a broad range of local Koorie community members, who dedicate their time to improving the education opportunities for Koorie people in their local communities. However, when engaging with Koorie people, remember not to expect that they will necessarily know or want to talk about their cultural backgrounds, and be respectful of this.

Many kindergarten educators visited by VAEAI have expressed interest in inviting Elders into their services to talk with children and perform cultural ceremonies, such as Welcome to Country. Get in touch with your LAECG to connect with Elders and other community representatives. Contact local Aboriginal organisations such as cooperatives, as well as the Department of Education and Training (DET), to link up with your local Koorie Preschool Assistant (KPSA) or Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO). These workers can help support Koorie kids in mainstream services and offer advice on culturally appropriate activities. Be mindful that it takes time to build relationships, so start small and practice patience.

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1. Lakeview Kindergarten & Childcare
2, 3 & 4. Nara Community Early Learning Centre

STEP 3

The third step is to resource your service. This is to ensure it is culturally inviting on a daily basis, not just for special occasions, like NAIDOC Week or Reconciliation Week, so that Koorie children and their families can experience a sense of belonging that is embedded and continuous. We know from discussions with Koorie families that they are more likely to approach a service and identify as Koorie if they see some visible form of culture on the buildings. Don't look only to traditionally based resources and ideas, because while these are important, children need to learn about the present day and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have evolved over time. Ideas for resourcing include:

- Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- Exhibiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork
- Displaying age-appropriate information about significant events such as Sorry Day, NAIDOC Week and National Reconciliation Week
- Using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander musical instruments and playing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music for children to listen and dance to
- Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colours and language in classroom decorations
- Making puppets and dolls with differing skin colours and clothing (traditional and contemporary) to prompt discussions around identity
- Creating opportunities for bush kinder so that Indigenous knowledge of plants, animals and environments can be explored
- Using beads and sand so children can recreate symbols and learn to represent language
- Reading books with themes relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and perspectives, as well as to reconciliation (you can engage children in Aboriginal creation stories, such as Tiddalick the Frog, by acting out various parts and having discussions about different beliefs).

STEP 4

The fourth step is to make a commitment to honour the differences among the children enrolled at your service. Don't have the attitude of 'treating all children the same', regardless of cultural background. They are not the same. Some of their differences can be seen, but many cannot – for example, the way they think about culture, the way they interact and their ideas of family and kinship. Children need to be respected as individuals and see themselves reflected in the classroom and education program. If you are fortunate enough to have Koorie children attending your service, you can ask their families what they would like to see in the program or in the physical learning environment. After all, they know their children best and it will make the families feel valued to be asked and viewed as having something to contribute. Remember though, it is important to celebrate Aboriginal people and culture even if there aren't any Koorie children currently enrolled in your service, as non-Koorie children need to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and perspectives.

Finally, try not to become someone whose motto is, 'I didn't know where to start, so I didn't start'. VAEAI recently asked some of the Koorie early childhood educators who work in the Multifunctional Aboriginal Childcare Services (MACS) across Victoria what advice they would give to mainstream early childhood educators who want to be Koorie inclusive. This is what they said:

- 'You only know what you know, so unless you ask questions, you're not going to find out about what you don't yet understand'
- 'Be honest and open – if you want to know, you need to educate yourself – it's your responsibility to do so'
- 'Getting to know people in your local Koorie community is so important. Invite them into your service and ask if they'd be willing to share some of what they know with the children'
- 'Be prepared to take time and not rush'
- 'You will never get it right all of the time. We are all subjective beings and we view the world through our own lenses, but we can learn from people who know what they're doing'
- '“Best practice” is often intangible. It's about providing a welcoming environment, having inclusive attitudes, and building respectful relationships'
- 'Don't be afraid – just have a go!'

Resources

AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia www.aiatsis.gov.au > Explore > AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia





Embedding Aboriginal Culture and Perspectives – Our Journey at Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder

{ COLLETTE NICHOLLS
Director
Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder }



At Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder here in Grovedale, we have spent the last two years on an Aboriginal culture and perspectives journey.

I started as the kinder teacher here at the centre and, having moved previously from the UK, had very little knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage in Australia. I was keen to find out more and ensure that I embedded what I learnt into my kinder program.

I started to research, asking to attend training or workshops that came up where I could learn more. It was essential for me personally that whatever I introduced into my program was not tokenistic but was something that could be embedded throughout the whole centre.

One of the first things we did was contact our local MP, Sarah Henderson, and ask if she would be able to give us the three flags that are key to Australia – the Australian flag, the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag. She did this willingly and actually presented them to the kinder children, explaining the meaning of each part of each flag. We proudly hung these in the reception area of our centre.

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At this point, we started to receive enquiries from Aboriginal families in our local community wanting to place their children into our centre. This really highlighted to me the importance of acknowledging and embedding Aboriginal culture and perspectives into our everyday practices.

I was keen to introduce bush kinder into my kinder program. We are really lucky with where our early learning centre is situated – we have Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre about two kilometres away from us on a public bus route.

The Aboriginal centre has space and land containing native plants and animals and is steeped in Indigenous culture. I contacted them to see if they would allow us to run our bush kinder program from there. They were more than happy to accommodate us and so our first connections were made.

Following on from this, I was keen for my kinder friends to learn about and include an Acknowledgment of Country each day into their morning group time. I invited a representative from Narana to come in and do an incursion with the children and speak to them about the Acknowledgement of Country and Dreamtime stories as well as other things related to her culture.

After the incursion we then started to introduce the Acknowledgement of Country to our group time – using simple language we talked to the children about the first people who lived on the land in Australia and how the white people had arrived and were not very nice to them and how we were learning to say sorry and thank them for the land that we now live on and come to kinder on. The children soon grasped the idea and now, 18 months on, this is embedded into our daily kinder program.



From our initial start in the kinder room, and then moving from the kinder room to director at the service, I was able to start to get the other rooms and staff on board. I approached a staff member and asked if she would be willing to take on the role of Aboriginal Culture Person. The idea of the role was to look at our resources at the centre and see how they were being used, as well as support other staff members to implement more Aboriginal culture and perspectives into their rooms. The role currently has not moved on any further than this but did enable the staff member and me to attend a really useful local training session. This role will continue to evolve as our journey continues.

Currently, our kinder children attend bush kinder weekly at Narana, we say the Acknowledgement of Country daily in two of our rooms (soon to be three), we display our flags and the Acknowledgement of Country in our reception area, staff have all been given a t-shirt with the Aboriginal flag on the front which we wore every day throughout NAIDOC Week and we have decided as a staff team as part of our inclusion at the centre that we will wear our t-shirts at least once a month.

NAIDOC Week this year was a real culmination of all the work that has taken place on our journey over the last two years. The kinder room co-educator set up some amazing experiences for the children to be involved in and learn about their heritage.

We currently have six Aboriginal families attending the service and this number is growing. We feel as a service that our Aboriginal culture and perspectives journey is still ongoing but in two years we have come so far!



About Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder

Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder is located in Grovedale, one of Geelong's larger residential suburbs. Follow [@torquayroadelc](#) on Facebook to watch videos of bush kinder and learn more about the service's ties to the local community.

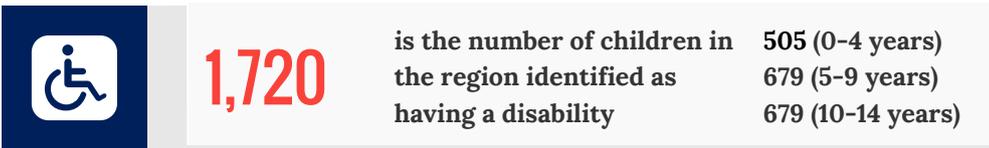
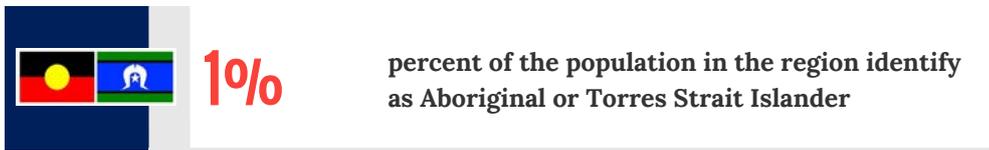


Torquay Road Early Learning & Kinder is located in Region 1 – check out the infographics on p. 12 and 13 to find out more about the area!

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VIA Region 1

Ararat, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Geelong, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliff, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack



SEIFA (Socio-Economic Index for Areas) is a decile ranking from 1 to 10 and is designed to compare the relative socio-economic characteristics of areas in Australia at a given point in time. A lower rank indicates that an area is relatively disadvantaged compared to an area with a higher rank. The figures presented here were collected from the ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing.

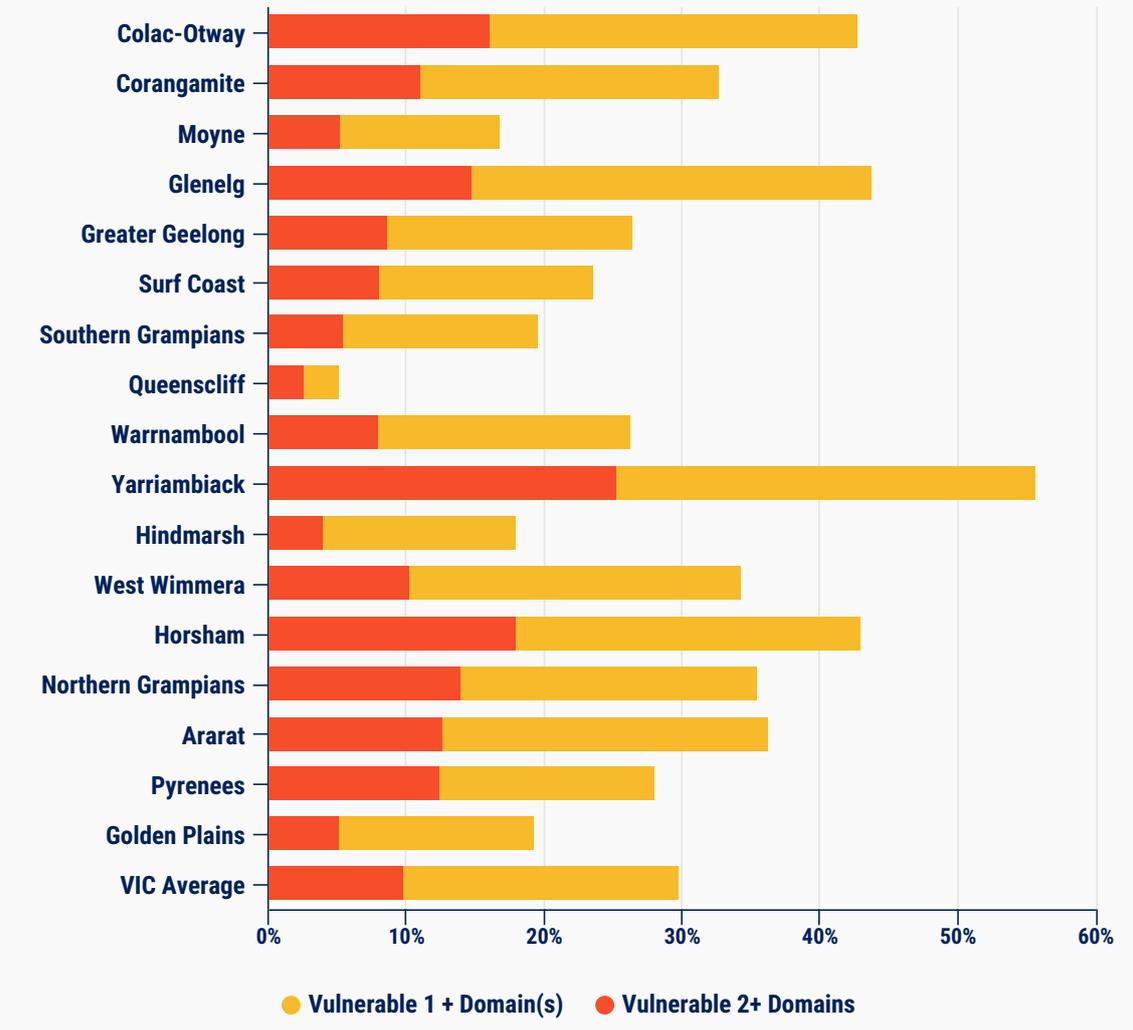
1

VIA Region 1

Ararat, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Geelong, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliff, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Warrnambool, Wyndham, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack



AEDC Vulnerable Domains



The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is a national measure of children’s development, as they enter their first year of full-time school. It looks at five domains which are closely linked to child health, education and social outcomes. Results are reported as percentage of children who are considered to be ‘developmentally on track’, ‘developmentally at risk’ and ‘developmentally vulnerable’ on each of the 5 domains. This graph shows the percentage of children who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain(s) and developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains and compared to the Victorian average.

Inclusion and the Revised NQS



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority™

The National Quality Framework (NQF) has been – and will continue to be – a powerful driver for achieving inclusion through the guiding principles of equity, inclusion and diversity. Inclusive service delivery and practice are both important aspects of the National Quality Standard (NQS).

Comparison of Inclusion in the Current and Revised NQS

Current NQS		Revised NQS		
Standard/element	Descriptor	Standard/element	Concept	Descriptor
Quality Area 3 – Physical environment				
3.1	The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.	3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.	3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child .
3.2	The environment is inclusive , promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.	3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive , promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.	3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
		3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities				
6.3	The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.	6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion , learning and wellbeing.
6.3.3	Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated.	6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.





Wording in the revised NQS continues to emphasise access, support, participation and engagement of every child, particularly evident in the revised Elements 3.1.1, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. The reference to 'every child' is intentional and consistent with the view of all children as successful, competent and capable learners.

Quality Area 6 continues to have a strong focus on collaborative partnerships and the importance of these partnerships in achieving best outcomes for all children and families. Standard 6.2 now places emphasis on enhancing children's 'inclusion' through collaborative partnerships. Element 6.2.2 acknowledges the significance of partnerships in making curriculum decisions that promote access, inclusion and participation of all children.

In establishing collaborative partnerships, services can build a shared approach to inclusion and enhance the effectiveness of their pedagogy. Analysing data about their community is one way services can develop community partnerships that provide targeted support to children and families.

The provision of high-quality inclusive education and care is an ongoing journey. Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) and Strategic Inclusion Plans (SIPs) can help inform effective self-assessment and create a climate for continuous improvement. Used together, they can assist

in identifying and addressing structural or systematic barriers that may prevent children or families from accessing and participating in a service. Services may also consider aligning other formal planning and service documents including Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs), individual development plans, the service philosophy and policies.

The upcoming changes to the NQF may be the ideal opportunity to inspire ongoing self-assessment and a continuing commitment to improvement that promotes meaningful and active inclusion for all children and families.

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Where can I access more information?

- **Changes to the National Quality Framework**
www.acecqa.gov.au > NQF Changes
- **Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs)**
www.acecqa.gov.au > Quality Improvement Plan
- **Inclusion Development Fund Manager – Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)**
www.idfm.org.au > Strategic Inclusion Plan
- **Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)**
www.aedc.gov.au

Inclusion in Action – The Road to Reconciliation at Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten Service



At Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten Service, the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures has become closely woven into everyday practices and learning experiences. We spoke to Director Veronica Morales about the service's journey towards reconciliation.

Where did the journey begin?

For the past three years, we have invited Aunty Di, a Wurundjeri Elder, to perform a smoking ceremony at our service. Aunty Di has a strong connection with Fifth Avenue as her grandchildren attended our service many years ago.

For many of our families who are newly arrived to the country, this is the first contact they have with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history. Therefore, through our program, we aim to educate not only the children but their families as well.



Your service has developed and implemented a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Why was this important and what has the process been like?

Our service believes respecting, valuing and authentically acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, histories and achievements is fundamental to Australia's reconciliation journey and shared pride.

To strengthen our reconciliation journey, we have joined the *Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning* platform to create our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The development of our RAP was something that really just reinforced what our service commits to doing in order to promote reconciliation. Forming working groups has helped to identify our strengths and to create goals for the future that further our reconciliation journey.



How has your service been exploring Indigenous culture and reconciliation?

For us, it is important to mark days of national significance and explain their meaning in simple terms to the children.

For National Sorry Day this year, we made t-shirts, sat around the fire pit and sang an Aboriginal lullaby song while playing clap sticks that were painted by the children.

During National Reconciliation Week, the kinder children ventured by bus and train to Federation Square. We first visited the Koorie Heritage Trust where we saw Koorie art and artefacts. We then visited Birrarung Marr which means 'riverbank' in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people, the original Indigenous inhabitants of the Melbourne area. We also got to see the Birrarung Wilam installation, which celebrates the diversity of Victoria's Indigenous culture by interpreting stories through public artwork. The children also gathered around the semicircle of metal shields, which represents each of the five groups of the Kulin Nation. Our last stop was to the Federation Bells, which rung out different compositions for the children to dance to.

Every year we celebrate NAIDOC Week at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne as it allows the children to experience Aboriginal culture firsthand. This year, the children had a fantastic day painting clap sticks, planting native plants, writing down wishes and hanging them on a wishing tree, going for a bus ride around the garden whilst learning about Australian native plants and watching traditional Aboriginal dance and hip-hop groups. For the first time, we also joined Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) in Dandenong to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Last year, on Indigenous Literacy Day, we visited Cranbourne Library where Aunty Fay exposed the children to a variety of Boon wurrung songs and dances. She then read them *Welcome to Country* by Aunty Joy Murphy.

We have also been exploring Indigenous traditions. In 2015 our kindergarten teacher went to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Conference in Melbourne where she learnt about Wayapa, an Indigenous wellness and connection practice. We have since organised a Wayapa session at our service where the children had the chance to connect to the earth through deep breathing, narrative meditation and movement.

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How have Indigenous perspectives been embedded at your service?

Education is embedded into everyday learning through language and symbols. In honour of the Indigenous ground the service stands upon, each room is named after an Australian animal in the Boon wurrung language. All the rooms provide children with a variety of experiences that display and acknowledge Aboriginal culture.

We use resources from the SNAICC website, Yarn Strong Sista and *Narragunnawali*. The younger children listen to Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu's songs at sleep time. The children dance to the rhythm of the clap sticks. They paint with ochre, they use lots of natural materials for their art. Every morning the kindergarten children also say an Acknowledgment of Country and make promises to look after different aspects of the land.

Your service presented at the VIA Inclusion Expo in Dandenong. What was that experience like?

When we were invited to do the presentation and talk about how our service was embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history in our learning framework, it was challenging to put everything together and explain exactly how we did it. Reflecting on our journey and practice gave us the opportunity to really value what we are doing. Sharing the journey with other early childhood educators made us very proud. Being an inspiration for other services is a big responsibility, but we are convinced that the more people open their mind and learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history, more progress towards reconciliation can be made.

What would you say to services looking to begin their journey towards reconciliation?

Do not be afraid. At the beginning, you never know if you are right or wrong, if you are being respectful or tokenistic and this is why it is so important to do research, research and more research. Find out who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which the early learning service stands, look for information about them (language, symbols, etc.) and contact local Aboriginal people. If the first attempt does not work, keep insisting, but in the meantime join the *Narragunnawali* platform. They have so many resources that people can implement at their service. Understand what values you want to pass on to the future generation such as taking care of the land, people and animals, and provide children with the opportunity to do so. Lastly, participate in every event possible happening in your local area.





What's ahead for Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten Service?

We believe through building positive relationships and cooperative partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we will continue to strengthen essential knowledge and understanding to create environments and programs that support the wellbeing, education and care of all children accessing our service.

We will continue to support and mentor others wherever we can. An important indicator for us, and a measure of whether we are on the right track, has been the responses and development of our children and families over time. Our children have developed an openness and responsiveness to learning more, and a strong sense of belonging and inclusion, which will only flourish in the following years of learning.

Resources

Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning www.reconciliation.org.au > Narragunnawali



Children's Acknowledgement of Country

'We at Fifth Avenue Kindergarten would like to say thank you to the Kulin Nation for letting us share your land. We promise to look after it, the animals and the people too.'



About Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten Service

Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten Service is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation in Dandenong that has been operating since 1986. Follow [@fifthaveckindergartenservice](https://www.facebook.com/fifthaveckindergartenservice) on Facebook to watch the children's Acknowledgment of Country and learn more about the service's journey towards reconciliation.



Fifth Avenue Child Care and Kindergarten Service is located in Region 9. Want to learn more about the people in your own community? Visit www.viac.com.au > **Resources + Forms > Inclusion Professional Tools** to get the infographic for your region and find out what types of families might come knocking on your door!





Celebrating NAIDOC Week 2017

{ CAITLIN MASON
Senior Inclusion Professional
KU Children's Services –
VIA Consortium Member }



NAIDOC Week events are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Celebrated by Australians from all walks of life, there are always plenty of opportunities to connect with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This year, our Inclusion Professionals embraced the chance to take part in NAIDOC celebrations in their local areas. Here are a few highlights:





Region 3, Wodonga

Our Region 3 team was invited to morning tea at Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation where there was a colourful cake decorated with the Aboriginal flag. They also attended the Eddie Kneebone *Bones of Contention* exhibition at the Wodonga Library where they helped construct a rainbow serpent to be hung in pride of place.

Region 6, Preston

Our Inclusion Professionals from Melbourne's northern suburbs attended a Darebin flag raising ceremony at Mantra Bell City in Preston. The ceremony was well attended and Inclusion Professionals had the chance to hear from Aboriginal Contact Officer Stuart McFarlane, Mayor of Darebin Kim Le Cerf and members of the Aborigines Advancement League Inc.

Region 8, Cheltenham

Region 8 Inclusion Professionals gathered at the Royal Botanic Gardens for Koolin Ngargee, a family celebration day, where they received a Welcome to Country by Aunty Fay Muir and participated in a smoking ceremony. This was followed by some wonderful activities in the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden, including storytelling with Aunty Fay and Uncle Ron Murray, painting boomerangs and drinking lemon myrtle tea.

Region 9, Cranbourne

Our busy Region 9 team attended several events over the week including Koolin-ik ba kirrip-buluk (Family and Friends) at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. This fun day included a smoking ceremony, storytelling, art and craft activities and a BBQ, as well as an opportunity to explore the award-winning native gardens.

The team also attended the first ever flag raising ceremony at Nairm Marr Djambana Inc. in Frankston. They topped off their event-packed calendar with a BBQ at the Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Open Day and by collaborating with the Aboriginal Action Group.

VAEAI

As well as reflections from our Inclusion Professionals, we're also lucky to report on the experiences of Ellie Waters, VAEAI Project Officer, as she participated in her first NAIDOC Week with the organisation:

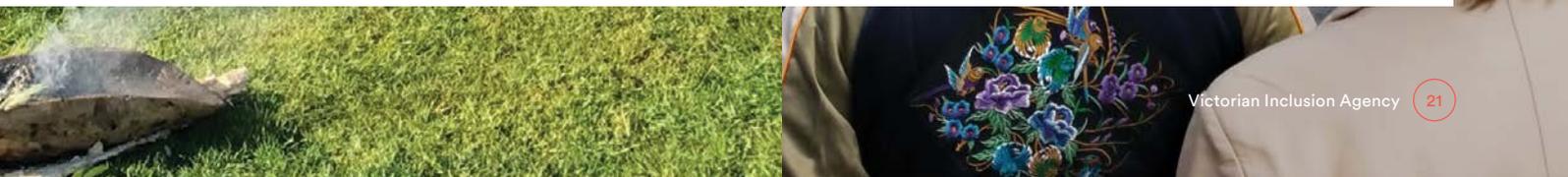
'One of my most special memories of NAIDOC was helping with the Elders lunch at the Aborigines Advancement League. Amidst serving food, I got to know Elders from across the state and beyond and it was special to hear their stories and strong connection to advancing Aboriginal people's rights. Witnessing the young Mr and Ms NAIDOC talk about their own work in strengthening Aboriginal youth communities was also great to see as the next generation is committed to continuing the work of their Elders, especially in maintaining their strong cultural identity.'

It was great to touch base with the Elders again at the Elders breakfast and then finish off the week with the famous NAIDOC march. It was an incredible sight to see so many people on the steps of Parliament voicing their cultural pride. Seeing families gathering and standing together particularly with signs promoting Aboriginal health initiatives established a positive atmosphere moving forward.'



Looking for opportunities to connect with your local Aboriginal community?

Contact your Inclusion Professional (1800 177 017) or head to the NAIDOC website for ideas on how to celebrate in 2018 (www.naidoc.org.au > About NAIDOC Week > Celebrating NAIDOC Week)



Introducing FKA Children's Services

{ FKA CHILDREN'S SERVICES }



FKA Children's Services (*fkaCS*), now in its 109th year, is a not-for-profit organisation which advocates for children's cultural and linguistic rights, providing support to all Victorian education and care services.

Our vision is for all children to have access to quality education and care services that recognise and value diversity where:

- Skilled staff incorporate multicultural perspectives in all programming
- The maintenance and development of languages other than English is promoted and children are supported to learn English as an additional language
- Children from all cultural backgrounds have equal opportunities to participate and achieve.

fkaCS support enhances educators' capacity in the provision of culturally competent pedagogy and the ability to engage meaningfully with children and families with whom there is no shared verbal language.

fkaCS has a team of experienced Pedagogy and Practice Consultants who are available to support teachers, educators and early childhood professionals. The support provided will depend on the specific needs of a service and may include:

- Professional development and learning
- Access to resources
- Coaching and mentoring
- Cultural capacity building, curriculum and English as an additional language (EAL) support and advice
- Onsite language support with a bilingual worker.

***fkaCS* and the VIA**

fkaCS is pleased to be providing mentoring and support to the VIA's Inclusion Professionals, as they work with services to include children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Likewise, the VIA is pleased that Inclusion Professionals are now able to access the expertise and deep cultural understanding that *fkaCS* brings to the sector.

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Community Child Care Association, KU Children's Services and Yooralla are working toward the vision that all Victorian children can meaningfully and actively participate in an education and care service of their family's choice in their community

www.viac.com.au

