

Collaborative Indigenous Strategy

Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Education Plan



The six secondary schools involved in the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Education Plan have come together to develop a Collaborative Indigenous Strategy, supporting the individual needs of local Koorie students, improving student knowledge, and targeting Aboriginal inclusion.

This is being done to achieve the vision of the state-wide Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026.

The Department of Education and Training acknowledges Victorian Traditional Owners and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and values the rich culture and history of the First Peoples of this land.

Learning Together (2020)


Artist: Trina Dalton-Oogjies
Waddawurrung woman

Story: This painting reflects a story of the Journey of learning together.

Bunjil our creator flying high in the sky and stars, overseeing every thing below.

From the hills to the water ways to the Central gathering (circle). Red in the centre of the gathering circle is the heart of community, family with the supports and the people learning sitting around together in a collaborative yarning to respectfully educate, support and to promote inclusive collaboration.

Footprints coming into the central gathering circle, represents continually working together to support families and children moving forward together to strengthen the improvement of educational outcomes for Aboriginal children.



What does this mean for local Koorie students?

This commitment means students will experience a culturally inclusive education, in an environment where they feel safe to stand strong in their identity. Aboriginal cultures and histories will be celebrated and learnt by the whole school community. Students will have more opportunities to connect with their culture and communities, and more pathways to achieve their aspirations.

What are the goals of the strategy?

The strategy will see Aboriginal culture and history not only celebrated but embedded in the six schools' curriculum. Koorie students will feel a sense of connection, be strong in their cultural identity and fully engaged in secondary education to reach their own goals. Koorie student voices will be heard, and their learning needs tailored to. Partnerships with local Aboriginal communities will be developed, and strengthened relationships will offer students greater pathways, development, and transition opportunities.

What's being delivered?

The six schools have worked with the Department's Koorie Education Workforce and students to plan successful delivery of the Collaborative Indigenous Strategy. Each school has appointed a First Nations Advocate, who is a key driver of the strategy and a mentor for Koorie students.

In Term 1, 2021, each of the six schools facilitated a yarning circle with their Koorie students, the local Koorie Engagement Support Officers and First Nations Advocates. Work is underway to implement student feedback on what they wanted to see happening in their schools, as well how they would like to connect with Aboriginal culture in the future. Yarning circles will now occur each term and aim to include a guest speaker for students to talk to and engage in cultural activities.

The Yarra Ranges Tech School has established a Koorie Student Program, which began in Term 2, 2021. The bespoke program is being co-designed by local Koorie students, who will visit the Tech School five times a term. They will complete workshops to solve real life problems, combining Aboriginal cultural practices with current and emerging technologies. Since its inception, the program has seen great success with 45 students (roughly a third of local Koorie students) enrolled for the Term 2 program. The program will be repeated in Term 4, 2021 and over the next two years for more students.

Koorie students and their needs will remain at the heart of all current and future work.



What is the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026?

Marrung is the Wemba Wemba word for the Murray Cypress pine tree, representing branches of education and knowledge. We thank the Wemba Wemba people for allowing the use of their language in the naming of this plan.

Marrung aims to ensure that all Koorie Victorians achieve their learning aspirations.

Marrung's vision is for Victoria to be a state where the rich and thriving culture, knowledge and experience of our First Nations peoples are celebrated by all Victorians; where our universal service systems are inclusive, responsive and respectful of Koorie people at every stage of their learning and development journey; and where every Koorie person achieves their potential, succeeds in life, and feels strong in their cultural identity.

What is the Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Education Plan?

The Lilydale District and Yarra Valley Education Plan began in 2017 as the Lilydale and Upper Yarra Education Plan when three secondary schools — Lilydale Heights College, Lilydale High School and Upper Yarra Secondary College — came together to revitalise secondary education across their communities and improve school infrastructure. In 2020, the plan expanded to build on current and future needs of a growing community with Healesville High School, Mooroolbark College and Yarra Hills Secondary College joining to deliver a shared goal of seeing greater educational outcomes for their students.

Throughout this document the term Koorie is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms Aboriginal, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous are retained in the names of programs and initiatives and, unless noted otherwise, are inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.