

Wannik

Learning Together -
Journey to Our Future

**Education Strategy for
Koorie Students**

VICTORIA 2008

A Victorian
Government
initiative



Published by the Koorie Education Strategy Branch
System Policy and Research Division
Office for Policy, Research and Innovation
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Melbourne
Published February 2008

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Authorised by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria 3002.

Also published on <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

ISBN 978-0-7594-0495-3

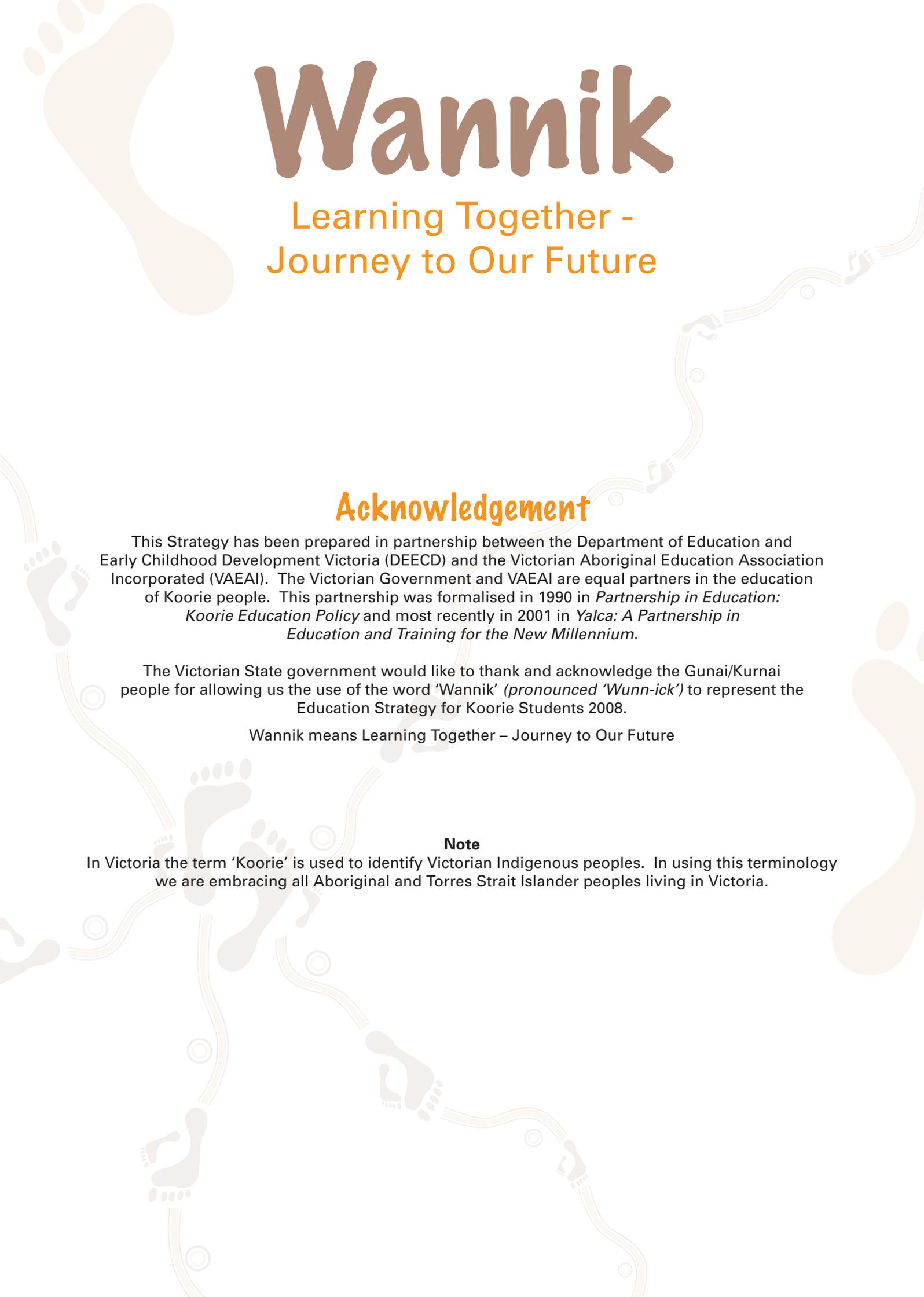
Designed by Reanna Bono, Deadly Design, Melbourne

Photography by Wayne Quilliam Photography

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Acknowledgement

This Strategy has been prepared in partnership between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Victoria (DEECD) and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI). The Victorian Government and VAEAI are equal partners in the education of Koorie people. This partnership was formalised in 1990 in *Partnership in Education: Koorie Education Policy* and most recently in 2001 in *Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium*.

The Victorian State government would like to thank and acknowledge the Gunai/Kurnai people for allowing us the use of the word 'Wannik' (*pronounced 'Wunn-ick'*) to represent the Education Strategy for Koorie Students 2008.

Wannik means Learning Together – Journey to Our Future

Note

In Victoria the term 'Koorie' is used to identify Victorian Indigenous peoples. In using this terminology we are embracing all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Victoria.



Minister's Foreword

The Victorian Government's commitment to education has achieved significant improvement in student outcomes and school performance across the Victorian education system.

However, the educational needs of Koorie young people have not been adequately recognised within the context of our reform agenda. As a result, and despite significant investment, Koorie students have not fared as well as they should. Quite simply, our key strategies are not working, and in some instances have actually had the effect of isolating Koorie students from broader school reforms.

Ensuring every Koorie child has the opportunities that a high-quality school education can deliver will therefore require a whole new approach. *Wannik* provides such an approach. It represents a renewed level of commitment from the Victorian Government to ensure that every Koorie child receives a first class education in Victoria's government schools.

Fundamental to *Wannik* is the fostering of a new culture of high expectations for Koorie students, and systemic reform across government schools to deliver the best possible education to meet these expectations. These reforms include an increased emphasis on accountability at the school, regional and system levels, strong leadership, and better engagement with Koorie parents and the community. We will work in partnership with Koorie parents and the community to create an education system that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity.

Our education system must provide for all Victorians. The Victorian Government, together with VAEAI and Victoria's Koorie community, is no longer prepared to accept anything less than excellence in the educational opportunities provided to Victoria's Koorie young people.

I am confident that in the spirit of *Wannik*, the Victorian education system and the Koorie community can achieve great things for Victoria's Koorie young people.

I commend this strategy to you, and look forward to working with all parts of the Victorian community as part of a new era of education in Victoria.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bronwyn Pike MP

Minister for Education



Introduction

Early childhood development and high-quality school education are key determinants of choice and opportunity for young people throughout their lives. We know that students who stay on at school and complete Year 12 are much more likely to undertake additional education and training. In turn, they will have more, and better, employment options. Increased education is also linked to a range of other social benefits, including better living conditions, better nutrition, lower rates of imprisonment, and a longer and healthier life. We know the first four years of a child's life are critical for development. That is why the Government has invested in programs to help Koorie children get off to the best start at school.

In *Victoria's Plan to Improve Outcomes in Early Childhood* the Victorian Government highlighted the need for targeted measures to ensure that Koorie children get the best possible start in life. Local initiatives which are culturally appropriate are essential if we are to both increase kindergarten participation rates and improve the quality of vital early years services for Koorie children. In the 2007/08 State Budget, the Victorian Government allocated \$11.5 million over four years for initiatives to improve the participation of Koorie children and families in early childhood and educational services, and to conduct a Child Health Survey to guide future directions. The early childhood initiatives are currently being implemented, based on the following strategies:

- Free access to kindergarten for three and four-year-old Koorie children with a health care card.
- Building service capacity in areas of low supply of kindergarten places for three-year-olds.
- Strengthening the capacity of all kindergartens to provide culturally inclusive kindergarten programs that respect and value Koorie culture.
- Building a more skilled workforce by increasing the number of Koorie Kindergarten Teachers in Aboriginal Children's Services.
- Providing opportunities for Koorie parents to become active participants in their children's early learning and development.
- Developing high quality information products that are culturally appropriate that promote the importance of the early years.
- Putting in place strategies that facilitate transition pathways for young Koorie children into kindergarten and school so that children and families are better supported at this critical time of change.

Building on the Government's work in early childhood, during 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development conducted the most comprehensive review of education provision for Koorie students ever undertaken in Victoria. On the basis of the outcomes of this Review, *Wannik* has been developed in close partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

The analysis of data, programs and strategies as part of the review confirmed that the Victorian education system must do better in addressing the disadvantage experienced by many Koorie students and provide them with greater opportunities to succeed in life. The Strategy recognises that an increased level of commitment and action is required from both within and outside the education sector. It sets out in detail the steps the Victorian Government will take to improve educational outcomes for Koorie children, in conjunction with Koorie parents and the Koorie community.

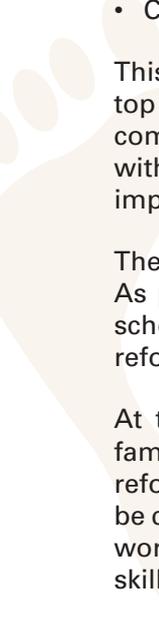


Fundamental to this Strategy is the improvement of outcomes for Koorie students across the whole of Victoria's government school system. This will be done by:

- Repositioning the education of Koorie students within all of our schools through strong leadership that creates a culture of high expectations and individualised learning for Koorie students.
- Underpinning this approach with explicit accountability mechanisms for improvement in outcomes for Koorie students across all levels of the school education system.
- Creating an environment that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity through practice and curriculum.
- Reinforcing the responsibility of all government schools to meet the needs of all students, by moving away from strategies designed around inadequacies in the general approach.

This Strategy will support the individual learning needs of Koorie students, through:

- Intensive literacy and numeracy programs for students achieving below expected levels.
- Additional support and incentives for top students, to provide encouragement to excel.
- The development of leadership opportunities for Koorie students in secondary schools.
- Celebration of Koorie culture and identity in all schools for all students.



This Strategy ensures that the relationship between schools and Koorie parents will be given top priority across the system. Schools will also be required to work in partnership with Koorie communities to develop an understanding of Koorie culture and the interpersonal relationship with that culture. The Strategy will be responsive to community needs at the local level – it will be implemented in partnership with, rather than for, the community.

The success of *Wannik* will rely most heavily on the skills and capabilities of the education workforce. As part of repositioning the education of Koorie students within the government school system, school leaders and teachers will be given substantial professional support and development to lead reform in this area.

At the same time, the Koorie support workforce, which already plays a vital role in engaging families and supporting Koorie young people in early childhood and through their schooling, will be reformed and expanded. Roles and responsibilities of early childhood and school-level workers will be clarified to ensure that Koorie children are supported through key transition points, and all Koorie workers will be provided with professional development opportunities to give them the appropriate skills to implement the reform agenda.

Many Victorian schools are already highly innovative in creating strategies to improve outcomes for their Koorie students with involvement from their Koorie community. This Strategy includes funding that allows schools and regions to be innovative and responsive to local needs, based on those approaches that have been shown to work on the ground.

The success of *Wannik* will be judged in large part on the perception of Koorie parents that their children are valued equally alongside other children within the classroom, that they as parents are welcomed and respected within their school community, and that they are confident that their children are receiving the best education possible.

Of course, the ultimate measure of success will be the individual outcomes of each Koorie student in Victoria.



Where we started – building a case for reform

The broader school reform agenda is not reaching Koorie students

Over the last four years the *Blueprint for Government Schools* has driven a multifaceted approach to improve outcomes in student learning, student engagement and wellbeing, and student pathways and transitions. This has included initiatives such as the School Accountability and Improvement Framework, the investment in leadership and teacher capacity, and the introduction of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

Within this broader reform, the needs of Koorie young people in many instances have not been adequately addressed within our school system. A consequence of this is that the full strength of the Government's reform program has not had a significant impact on the outcomes for these young people.

Current performance data indicates that at a state wide level the current approach to education for Koorie students has failed to make significant inroads in addressing disadvantage experienced by many of them.

Our challenge is to improve the education outcomes for Koorie students within the broader reform program, and to ensure a culturally inclusive education system so that the needs of Koorie students do not become invisible or lost within the wider system.



The Koorie student population is highly dispersed and growing

In the last decade, the population of Koorie young people in Victoria aged between 5 and 19 years grew by about 50% to 10,700 people. At the same time, the number of Koorie students rose by 89% to over 8,500 people.

However, despite this growth, Koorie students make up only 0.9% of the student population in Victoria, the lowest proportion of any state or territory.

The vast majority of Koorie students (89%) are in government schools, of which two-thirds have at least one Koorie student enrolled. However, in 2007 only 72 schools had 20 or more Koorie students, with 200 schools having 10 or more. These 72 schools account for 35% of all Koorie students.

This pattern of enrolment – one of high dispersion, but with pockets of high concentration – creates some unique policy and program challenges.

We're investing but not achieving the results

On top of what Koorie students attract in funding through the Department's per capita student allocation, a total of \$15.3 million in specific funding is currently provided for a number of initiatives. This includes the largest and second largest allocation of specific funding:

- \$5.6 million for the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE)
- \$3.7 million for the Koorie Support Workforce

Other initiatives funded include:

- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- Koorie Student Allocation
- Regional Action Research projects
- Commonwealth Whole Of School Intervention program
- Commonwealth In-Class Tuition Assistance Scheme

Performance of Koorie students is behind that of non-Koorie students

While Koorie students generally perform better than Indigenous students in other states, they remain substantially behind other students and other cohorts with similar socioeconomic profiles.

Their performance against key measures such as participation, attendance, literacy, numeracy, retention and completion remains poor.





Some Koorie students may not be participating

It is possible that not all school-age Koorie children are participating in school. Over 700 students identified as Koorie by the Australian Bureau of Statistics cannot be found within our schools.

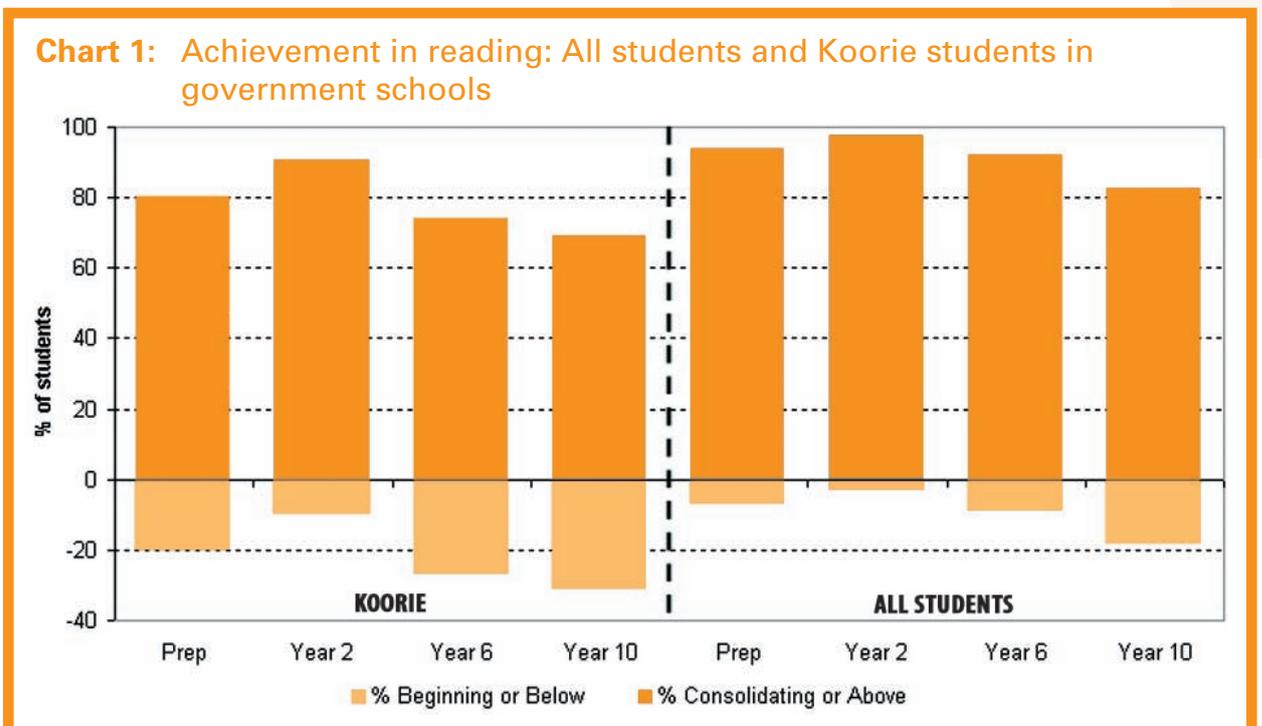
While it is possible that some students have not identified as Koorie, or that data systems have failed to identify them as such, it may also be that some school-aged Koorie children are not enrolled in school.

Koorie students entering Prep are under-prepared

Koorie students enter Prep with lower reading skills compared to other students, but do show significant improvement by Year 2. In fact, the achievement gap between Koorie and other students in government schools decreases substantially between Prep and Year 2.

Many Koorie students do not meet expected standards in reading and maths

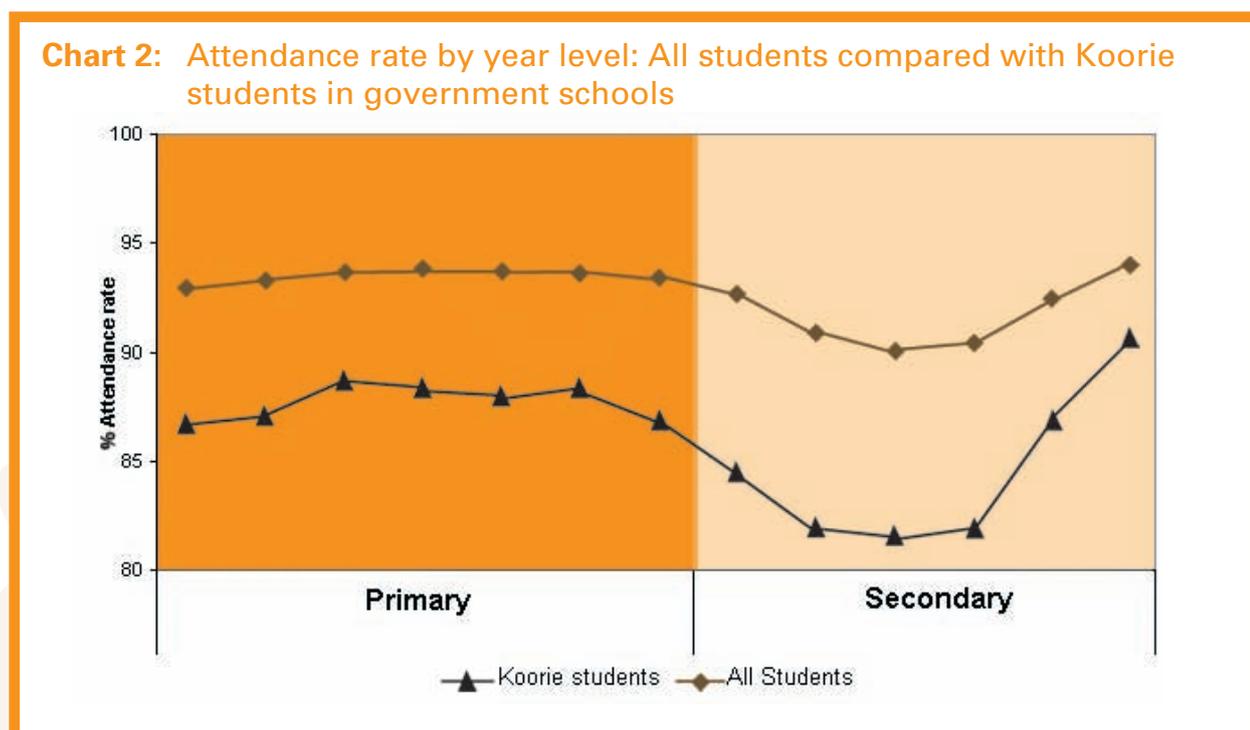
Koorie students do well in meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks compared with Indigenous students in other states. However, the percentage of Koorie students failing to achieve the expected levels is higher than the percentage for other students, and this gap increases over the years (see Chart 1).



Attendance declines at the secondary level

In general, attendance at school is stable throughout the primary years, but declines at secondary level. This pattern is common across all students in government schools.

Koorie students have a lower level of attendance than all students across all year levels. On average, by Year 9, Koorie students are missing from school about one day a week (see Chart 2).



Koorie students are more likely to be early school leavers

At present, 16% of Koorie students leave school between Years 9 and 10, 22% leave between Years 10 and 11, and 41% leave between Years 11 and 12. The rates for non-Koorie students are 3%, 5% and 18% respectively.

Since 1999, the number of Koorie students doing post-compulsory study in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) steadily increased to 603 students in 2005, but declined to 530 in 2006. One quarter of these students were enrolled in VCAL.

Out of 127 eligible Koorie students, 107 completed VCE in 2006 – a completion rate of 84.3%, compared to 96.7% for other students.





What we have done – using research and consultation to shape reform

The most comprehensive review ever undertaken

In 2007, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development conducted the most comprehensive review of our approach to education for Koorie students ever undertaken in Victoria.

The review process was driven by the terms of reference listed below, which were developed in conjunction with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), and endorsed by the Ministerial Taskforce for Aboriginal Affairs:

1. An assessment of the educational progress of Koorie students against an agreed set of indicators and an analysis of the reasons for any differential between the outcomes of Koorie and other students.
2. Consideration of the adequacy of existing educational support programs, including general and dedicated programs for Koorie students, and their value in achieving good educational outcomes.
3. An analysis of the roles and capacities of the various parts of the educational workforce to improve the educational performance of students.
4. An examination of contemporary examples of best practice in improving outcomes for Indigenous students in other jurisdictions within Australia and internationally.
5. An examination of how other government agencies involved with Koorie communities and families currently interact to support educational opportunities and the actions they can take to better support improved outcomes.
6. An analysis of the existing pathways between school and TAFE, university and employment, as well as a review of the effectiveness of current arrangements in providing workforce skills to Koorie students.
7. Consideration of the support structures available across government that may assist teachers, schools, communities and families to advance outcomes for Koorie students.
8. The development of a long-term reform strategy that takes into account best practice and state and federal government policies and objectives of Koorie communities, as well as any short-term practical measures that will improve educational outcomes.



The review had four major elements

There were four main elements to the review process:

1. A review of *Indigenous Education Strategies: Supporting Indigenous Students through School* assessed what is required to support Koorie students to excel, with particular consideration given to the roles and functions of the education workforce, including the Koorie Support Workforce. The consultant reviewer was Professor Peter Buckskin, Dean, David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research, University of South Australia.
2. A review of *Culturally Inclusive Education* assessed the effectiveness of dedicated provision, or separate Aboriginal schools, as a strategy for improving outcomes for Koorie students. Its particular focus was the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE), a government school for Koorie students. The consultant reviewer was Dr Chris Sarra from the Queensland Centre for Indigenous Leadership, Queensland University.
3. A series of research, analysis and evaluation projects designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Indigenous education, and advice on what strategies have the greatest impact in improving outcomes in the Australian and international contexts.
4. A series of consultation processes designed to gain as much information as possible about 'what works' at a practical level in improving outcomes for Koorie students. This included school site visits, roundtable discussions, and a Principals' Forum and consultation with education experts. This stage also included inter-departmental consultation to identify whole-of-government approaches to improving outcomes for Koorie students.

Key findings that emerged from the review

In summary, the review found that:

- There is insufficient focus on education outcomes for Koorie students and a failure to make the education system, at all levels, explicitly accountable for improvement in outcomes for Koorie students.
- Improving outcomes will require specific approaches that target the individual needs of Koorie students within the context of the Victorian Government's school education reform program.
- Low expectations of Koorie students negatively affect students' learning.
- Victoria is well behind other states in recognising the cultural identity of our Koorie population within a curriculum framework.
- Engagement between school staff, parents and community is poor and undervalued.





- The Koorie support workforce requires improved professional development and support, and the roles and responsibilities of these workers need to be realigned within a regional structure.
- No conclusions can be drawn on dedicated provision in the form of separate Aboriginal schools as a strategy to provide high-quality educational outcomes.
- The Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) has not provided acceptable education outcomes.
- Pre-school education is vital to address the gap between the 'school readiness' of Koorie and other students.
- Issues from outside of school significantly impact on education outcomes.



What we propose to do – a strategy for improvement

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is charged with providing high-quality education that raises achievement, reduces disparity and leads to opportunities for all Victorians. This Strategy reasserts this responsibility with a new focus on Koorie students.

We know that improving education outcomes for Koorie students requires a comprehensive and holistic approach. We also recognise and acknowledge that significant improvement will take time. Therefore to deliver the improved outcomes we desire, we will use the best and most effective strategies from Victoria's education reform program, and work with those agencies within the Koorie community and across government best able to lift life chances and opportunities in Koorie communities.

By placing Koorie students at the centre of the Government's school reform program, this Strategy maximises opportunities for Koorie students to reap the benefits of a revitalised Victorian government school sector. It also includes an uncompromising focus on accountability at the school, region and system level for improving education outcomes for each and every Koorie student.

This Strategy offers a comprehensive package of actions, based on the findings that emerged from the review process and builds on the success of existing school reform projects.

We will reform the government school system's education of Koorie students by

- Working within the existing accountability framework to ensure that all principals, teachers and departmental officers are directly responsible for the achievement of improvement targets for each Koorie student and for Koorie students overall.
- Requiring school principals with Koorie students enrolled at their school to undertake professional development in developing a culturally inclusive school in partnership with their Koorie community.
- Delivering extensive cultural awareness training to teachers and support staff in Victorian schools in partnership with the Koorie community.
- Requiring full implementation of the students-at-risk mapping tool in schools with Koorie students enrolled to enhance school understanding and use of learning and engagement data.
- Developing a professional learning package in partnership with universities and the Koorie community that supports pre-service and in-service training for teachers in the history and contemporary culture of Victoria's Koorie community.
- Ensuring teaching practices and student pathways opportunities are informed by high expectations for Koorie learners.





- Working with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.
- Working with the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) school council and the community on the findings from the review of *Culturally Inclusive Education*, to ensure that students receive a high-quality education into the future.

We will support greater student engagement by

- Requiring all government schools to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each Koorie student in a partnership between teacher, student, parent or caregiver and Koorie support worker. Each plan will cover key transition points from pre-school to school, primary to secondary and compulsory to post-compulsory education

- Expanding the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Koorie students at risk of disengaging from school.



- Maintaining flexible funding arrangements to support regions and schools to build on the many effective programs already delivering improvements in attendance and engagement, such as breakfast programs, transport, clubs and community meeting spaces

- Expanding the Koorie-specific version of the *It's Not OK to Be Away* attendance strategy.

- Developing ready-for-school or pre-school Koorie programs in collaboration with Early Childhood Field Officers in all areas where there are high numbers of Koorie families.

- Developing Youth Transition Support Initiatives in locations where there is a high concentration of disengaged Koorie young people.

- Developing innovative learning tools and programs through the use of technology that builds community and student engagement.



We will provide more literacy and numeracy support by

- Providing accelerated literacy and numeracy support based on best-practice models to Koorie students who are behind expected levels of achievement.
- Employing additional literacy specialists to work in schools with high numbers of Koorie students, building on the already successful Literacy Improvement Teams Initiative.
- Providing seeding grants to all regions to innovate and share effective practice in literacy and numeracy.
- Developing literacy programs that recognise the importance of 'code switching' between Koorie English and Standard Australian English.

We will provide support and encouragement for high-achieving students by

- Providing scholarships for high-performing Koorie students to assist them with the costs of continued study.
- Allocating places for high-achieving Koorie students in Victoria's selective entry government schools.
- Providing mentoring programs to support students with the pressures of higher level study.
- Implementing a residential leadership and cultural identity program modelled on the Alpine School program targeting Koorie students from Year 9 onwards.

We will expand and develop the Koorie support workforce by

- Employing more Koorie support staff, and integrating the Koorie support workforce with regional support staff and functions linked to the Department's broader early childhood and school improvement strategy, including the coordination of developing Koorie education plans and pathway plans for students.
- Redesigning the roles and responsibilities of the Koorie support workforce to ensure high level support for individual Koorie students and families, with a particular focus on school-family engagement.
- Providing internships and scholarships to increase the number of Koorie teachers.
- Developing a professional learning package that supports the specific induction and professional learning needs of Koorie workers.
- Including Koorie-focused scholarships, for example the Graduate Certificate in Career Development, along with mentoring and coaching, short-term industry placement, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) familiarisation.





We will renew our focus on parental engagement by

- Developing school community partnership agreements in schools that have Koorie students enrolled.
- Requiring principals and teachers to work to remove barriers to Koorie parents' engagement in school.
- Investigating and developing initiatives that improve the literacy and numeracy of Koorie parents, to enable them to support their children through school.
- Working with Koorie parents and community to build their confidence in the school system.



We will share responsibility appropriately across government by

- Identifying the issues from outside the school gate that significantly impact on student education outcomes and participation.
- Continuing to develop programs that assist and support Koorie youth who have been placed on, or are at risk of being placed on, Youth Justice supervised orders.
- Maintaining support for Koorie organisations that are Adult Community Education (ACE) providers and registered training organisations, with appropriate evaluation to ensure programs are effective.



What success will look like

This Strategy is designed to ensure Victoria's Koorie students reap the full benefits of the Victorian government's reform agenda in education. A detailed action plan for its implementation is provided in the Appendix.

At a more general level, as a Koorie student, a parent of a Koorie child, or member of the broader Koorie community, you can expect to participate in ongoing changes and improvement in the educational outcomes for Koorie youth. This will occur through the commitment and leadership of our principals and teachers in each and every school of the Government education system working in partnership with the Koorie community.

As a Koorie student you can expect to:

- be attending school on a regular basis, and be offered support if you cannot attend for some reason.
- be valued within the classroom by your teachers and classmates.
- receive individual support if you are not making progress in English or maths.
- have individual support to excel to ensure your continued success.
- be involved in developing your education and pathway plan to achieve your future goals.
- engage with your culture in day-to-day school work and activities.
- have the opportunity to attend a residential leadership and cultural program during your secondary years.
- have scholarship opportunities on offer for further study.
- have the opportunity to engage in VCE, VET or VCAL, to have access to your chosen future educational or employment pathway.





As a parent you can expect to:

- feel welcomed and respected within your school community.
- feel assured that your child is valued within the classroom.
- have ongoing discussions with your school regarding your child's education and future aspirations.
- have your child's aspirations realised and supported by the school community.
- have your cultural heritage acknowledged and celebrated in the school and in the curriculum.

As a member of the community you can expect that:

- you will be recognised as a valued member of the broader school community with valuable contributions to make.
- you will be involved in discussions with the school to develop a school-community partnership agreement.
- your culture will be celebrated and respected by the broader school community.
- English and maths will improve for all Koorie students.
- attendance at school will improve for all Koorie students.
- schools will not use expulsions and suspensions as a first option for Koorie students.
- all Koorie students from Year 9 onwards will have the opportunity to participate in a residential cultural identity and leadership program.
- there will be an increase in students successfully moving through the different years of schooling; particularly from pre-school to primary, primary to secondary, from Years 10 to 11, Years 11 to 12 and from school to higher education, training or employment.
- there will be an increase in the number of Koorie students completing Year 12 or other education pathways.
- Koorie parents will be expressing higher levels of satisfaction with the Victorian government school system and its capacity to meet the education needs of their children.



As a principal you can expect to:

- be reporting on the educational outcomes of your Koorie students every year.
- be supported to develop a culturally inclusive school.
- be involved in partnership agreements with the community on the education of your Koorie students.
- be supported to continue to run effective programs that have been shown to meet the specific needs of Koorie students.
- ensure that an individual education plan is developed for each Koorie student in discussion with their parent or caregiver.

As a teacher you can expect to:

- be developing a coordinated individual education plan for each of your Koorie students in discussion with their parent or caregiver.
- be supported to gain a greater understanding of Koorie culture.
- be provided with professional learning opportunities for delivering a culturally inclusive curriculum.
- be provided with professional learning opportunities to assist you to support Koorie students when education progress is not occurring.



What we propose to do – a strategy for improvement

Reform the government school system's education of Koorie students

APPENDIX

Action
<p>Work within the existing accountability framework to ensure principals, teachers and departmental officers are directly responsible for the achievement of improved targets for each Koorie student and for Koorie students overall through strategic plans, Annual Implementation Plans and performance plans.</p>
<p>Require school principals with Koorie students enrolled at their school to undertake professional development in consultation with their Koorie community and VAEAI in order to develop a culturally inclusive school.</p>
<p>Develop in partnership with VAEAI cultural awareness training for teachers and support staff in Victorian schools. This will be delivered in partnership with the Koorie community.</p>
<p>Increase and encourage participation by Victorian schools in the national <i>What Works</i> program to improve Koorie learning outcomes and community engagement.</p>
<p>Increase and encourage participation by Victorian schools and regions in the <i>Dare to Lead</i> program</p>
<p>Require full implementation of the students at risk mapping tool in schools with Koorie students enrolled to enhance school understanding and use of learning and engagement data.</p>
<p>Develop a professional learning package in partnership with universities and VAEAI that supports pre-service and in-service training for teachers in the history and contemporary culture of Victoria's Koorie community.</p>
<p>Develop and implement a professional learning package for teachers that reflects the professional teaching standards informed by high expectations for Koorie learners.</p>
<p>In conjunction with VAEAI, work with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum within the Victorian Essential Learning Standards .</p>
<p>Work with the Victorian College of Koorie Education (VCOKE) school council and community on the findings from the review of <i>Culturally Inclusive Education</i> to ensure that students receive a high-quality education into the future.</p>
<p>Develop and implement a strategy to ensure that suspensions and expulsions for Koorie students are used as a last resort.</p>

Support greater student engagement

Action
Require all government schools to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every Koorie student in their school. The school will develop this in partnership with the student, their parent or caregiver and a Koorie support worker. Each plan will cover key transition points (pre-school to school; primary to secondary; compulsory to post-compulsory) and will be linked to the Managed Individual Pathways initiative.
Expand the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Koorie students at risk of disengaging from school.
Maintain flexible funding arrangements to support regions and schools to build on the many effective programs already delivering improvements in attendance and engagement, such as breakfast programs, transport, clubs and community meeting spaces.
Expand the Koorie-specific version of the <i>It's Not OK to Be Away</i> attendance strategy.
Develop ready-for-school or pre-school Koorie programs in collaboration with Early Childhood Field Officers in all areas where there are high numbers of Koorie families.
Develop Youth Transition Support Initiatives in locations where there is a high concentration of disengaged Koorie young people.
Develop innovative learning tools and programs through the use of technology that builds community and student engagement.

Provide more literacy and numeracy support

Action
Provide accelerated literacy and numeracy support to Koorie students who are behind expected levels of achievement.
Employ additional literacy specialists to work in schools with high numbers of Koorie students, building on the already successful Literacy Improvement Teams Initiative.
Provide seeding grants to all regions to innovate and share effective practice in literacy and numeracy.
Develop literacy programs in conjunction with VAEAL that recognise the importance of 'code switching' between Koorie English and Standard Australian English.

Support and encouragement for high-achieving students

Action
Provide scholarships for high-performing Koorie students to assist them with the costs of continued study.
Allocate places for high-achieving Koorie students in Victoria's selective entry government schools.
Provide mentoring programs to support students with the pressures of higher level study.
Implement a residential leadership and cultural identity program in conjunction with VAEAL modelled on the Alpine School program targeting Koorie students from Year 9 onwards.

Expand and develop the Koorie support workforce

Action
Employ more Koorie support staff and integrate the Koorie support workforce with regional support staff and functions linked to the Department's broader early childhood and school improvement strategy, including the coordination of developing education plans and pathway plans for Koorie students.
Redesign the roles and responsibilities of the Koorie support workforce to ensure high-level support for individual Koorie students and families, with a particular focus on school-family engagement.
Provide internships and scholarships to increase the number of Koorie teachers.
Develop a professional learning package that supports the specific induction and professional learning needs of Koorie workers.
Include Koorie-focused scholarships, for example by undertaking the Graduate Certificate in Career Development, along with mentoring and coaching, short-term industry placement, and VET familiarisation.

Renew our focus on parental engagement

Action
<i>Develop</i> school community partnership agreements in schools with Koorie students enrolled.
<i>Investigate and develop</i> initiatives that improve the literacy and numeracy of Koorie parents, to assist them to support their children through school.
In conjunction with VAEAI, <i>work</i> with parents and community to build their confidence in the school system.

Share responsibility appropriately across government

Action
<i>Identify</i> the issues from outside the school gate that significantly impact on student education outcomes and participation.
Continue to <i>develop</i> programs that assist and support Koorie youth who have been placed on, or are at risk of being placed on, Youth Justice supervised orders.
<i>Maintain support</i> for Koorie organisations that are ACE providers and registered training organisations, with appropriate evaluation to ensure programs are effective.
<i>Undertake</i> further work with other agencies to identify school-aged Koorie students who are not attending school and support them to engage in the education environment.

