**Zeta Wilson:** Alright, so, welcome, everybody, and thank you for attending this afternoon to the first in this series of eight webinars, Making Visible Aboriginal Perspectives in the Victorian Curriculum F-10 and the role and service of key stakeholders in education. My name is Zeta Wilson, and I’m the project officer for Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum unit F-10 at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and I’ll be hosting your webinar this afternoon.

Also, I would like to acknowledge the key stakeholders who will be presenting this afternoon – Aunty Fay Muir from VACL, Vaso Elefsiniotis from VAEAI, Zack Haddock from KOD.

And also, too, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues who will be assisting today – the manager of Victorian Curriculum F-10 unit, Craig Smith with his support for the Q&A section, and Peter Fisher with the behind-the-scenes support for these webinars.

Now... I would like to now introduce... Do we have Stephen, our CEO of VCAA? Stephen Gniel, who will open up this presentation with an acknowledgement of country and say a few words? Yes? No? If not, I’ll hand over to...

**Peter Fisher:** Sorry...sorry, Zeta. Stephen hasn’t managed to join us today.

**Zeta Wilson:** Alright, thank you. Alright. Craig, would you like to do an acknowledgement?

**Craig Smith:** Yes, I would. Thank you, Zeta, and good afternoon, everyone. Before we begin our session today, which is the first of eight webinars the VCAA, VAEAI, VACL and the Department of Education and Training are co-hosting, I’d like to acknowledge country.

We’re all joining today’s session from across Victoria, and I’d like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the many lands across Victoria on which each of you are living, learning and working from today. For myself and those of us in the metropolitan area, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Kulin Nations. The Wurundjeri call this Naarm. We call this Melbourne. In acknowledging country, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ spiritual and cultural connection to country. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and waterways over generations and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. As we share our knowledge in teaching and learning, may we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation, and hope they will walk with us on our journey.

I throw back over to you, Zeta.

**Zeta Wilson:** Alright. Thank you, Craig. So, before I begin too, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that I’m meeting on today, the Wathaurong people, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

So, today, in this webinar, we’ll be managing questions only through a chat function. So, at the end of the session, depending upon time, we’ll answer your questions. If you have any specific questions pertaining to one of the key stakeholders, please, you can put your questions into the chat box.

Also, too, I would just like to inform you – thank you, Peter – that this presentation is being recorded and that the files as recorded will be made available once they have been edited. Alright. Next. Thank you. I’m trying to click. Three.

**Peter Fisher:** Hey, Zeta...

**Zeta Wilson:** Peter, can you...?

**Peter Fisher:** I’ll drive for you.

**Zeta Wilson:** Thank you. I couldn’t find the click. Thank you. Alright. Next one, please. Alright. Go back, Peter. Is there one back? Or go forward? OK. Go forward again. Yep. Alright. This one.

So, when you’re glancing at these words, what are you thinking? Maybe, what’s the connection? Would you connect these words to the first people of Australia as being the first engineers, mathematicians, inventors, scientists? And how would you tell that narrative to your students? And for your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in your classroom, how can you engage with them to learn about their ancestors who, in the past, had the ability and skill to create, build, live off and care for the land for many thousands of years, and how history has now changed the shape and practice all their culture today? And for today, how can you support your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in your classroom or your schools to make that connection, and to strive to follow in their footsteps of their ancestors to learn about how they, too, can become mathematicians, scientists, designers and innovators? So, the next slide, Peter.

Alright, so, the overview. I’m just going to talk quickly about the contents of this presentation. In it, we’ll cover an overview of Aboriginal perspectives in the Victorian curriculum and we’ll be considering the cross-curriculum priorities about learning about the history and the cultures of Aboriginal people, and also, too, what would be a good starting point for teachers to embed Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum. And the key stakeholders will explain about their roles and service in education and to community. And finally, just a brief overview about the upcoming series of webinars for teachers in the primary setting. Alright. Next slide, Peter, please.

Alright. So, one way, of course, is by making visible Aboriginal perspectives across the Victorian curriculum, so that’s why now we will consider the Victorian curriculum in the overview. So, to meet the diverse needs of all students, the Victorian curriculum F-10 provides an inclusive and flexible framework for schools to develop their teaching and learning program. Learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is embedded across the Victorian F-10. Because it occurs in the different curriculum areas, we call it the cross-curriculum priority.

Now, the cross-curriculum priority for learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people provides the opportunity for all students to deepen their knowledge and understanding about the oldest living culture. It’s also important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the classroom to see their own cultural identity and their history reflected in their learning. By engaging with the learning across 11 years of schooling – so, from Prep to year 10 – students will build their ability to show their appreciation and understanding about why it’s important to show their respect and empathy towards the First Nation peoples. Now, this deep learning over time can only occur because of the meaningful learning experiences that can be explored by sharing the viewpoints and perspectives about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and learning about the rich histories and the cultures in Australia.

So, as a teacher, how can you support your students to see the world from an Aboriginal person’s point of view? One thing I will say, just briefly, is to invite members of your local Aboriginal community to tell their stories, as they will share with your students the many real-life experiences and viewpoints about their connection to country, place, identity, reflecting the rich cultural diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. Alright. Next slide, please, Peter.

So, this table here that you can see just provides an overview of the number of content descriptions and elaborations across the curriculum areas that actually make reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ histories and cultures and also, too, plus the contents where the elaborations make that explicit reference about the histories and cultures.

Now, if you would like to have the table, the table summary of this, you’ll find that table summary for learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people found on the VCAA website, in the section Overview and it’ll be under Cross-Curriculum Priority section.

So, what does the number on the table tell you about the curriculum areas that has the most Aboriginal-mandated content? As you can clearly identify here, the first is across...the first, of course, is the Victorian Aboriginal language – that has 94 – and then you can see the humanities, and then the arts. So, doesn’t it make sense, then, with these series of webinars, that we will look at the humanities, the arts and the Victorian Aboriginal languages.

So, where to begin, to make visible Aboriginal perspectives across the F-10 curriculum? Let’s consider at some pointers of where to start. So, that’ll be the next slide, thanks, Peter.

So, where to start? Alright, here’s some suggestions. The first point is the about localised and Victorian content. So, this is one great way. It’s the preferred learning model when it comes to learning about the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Start teaching your students in a localised and Victorian context. Now, I’m sure some of you are doing this already. But what do I mean? Firstly, just think about where your school is situated. Who are the traditional owners? Localise the content about the history and culture of the traditional owners to suit the local area, the community and surrounding areas.

Now, moving on from the localised content, and you can extend your teaching and learning program to incorporate, now, the many Aboriginal groups across Victoria. So, there, you’ll be providing the Victorian context. So, next in following this preferred learning model, you’ll be able to embed Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum with a focus on a localised and Victorian context.

And, of course, you can extend the students’ learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander across Australia. Now, the histories and cultures. Have you ever said, “I don’t know much about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, so how can I teach it to my students?” Well, here, I’m going to make a reference to a blog about, Can I Teach About Aboriginal culture? by Lisa Daly. She actually makes a clear distinction between Aboriginal culture and teaching ABOUT Aboriginal culture.

And this is what she mentions – “It’s not appropriate for non-Aboriginal persons to teach Aboriginal culture, that is the traditional or sacred knowledge and systems belonging to Aboriginal people.” So, here, I’m just going to say, in this little section, this is the best thing that you can do, is consult with the Aboriginal people who have the cultural knowledge, ‘cause they will make the connection, and also, for you to make the connection with the local traditional owners in your area and develop the engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from your local community or surrounding area. So, that’ll be a good starting point.

But, also, “It is appropriate...” she goes on to say, “It’s appropriate, however, that for non-Aboriginal persons to teach about Indigenous Australia, its history and its people in much a way a teacher of non-German heritage might teach about German, its history and its peoples.” And then she took about where the onus lies. And she says, “As teachers, the onus lies with us to learn about the Aboriginal Australia in just the same way we inform ourselves about any other subjects we teach,” and why.

And then she brings out that, “Most Australian primary teachers wouldn’t consider themselves mathematicians, and yet we teach maths. Most of us are not scientists, and yet we teach science.” So, “To teach about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, we don’t need we don’t need to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, we simply need to understand, appreciate, and know how to access appropriate content so that you can present it to your students, through the valuable learning opportunities that you can provide.”

So, can I say, briefly, that across the learning areas and the key concept about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will relate to the spiritual connections to country, place, cultural identity and how the historical context of Australia has changed the shape of the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from traditional to contemporary practice. OK, Peter, next slide, please.

Alright. Quickly, and very short, we’re looking at Aboriginal perspectives in STEM, the humanities, arts and languages. The things that you can see here highlighted on this slide just shows how interrelated topics can be taught across the curriculum as thematic units of work, and to make that connection and learning about the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. So, that’s what, briefly, I’m just highlighting and, hopefully, over the series of webinars, we’ll be able to bring some of those examples out. Alright? Next slide.

Alright. The role of the key stakeholders in education. So, what is the role of the key stakeholders and some of the policies that govern their work practice in education and the community space? Firstly, let’s consider the educational context of education in Victoria. And Zack will explain about the Marrung Aboriginal education plan and the priority actions, followed by the Aboriginal peak body, the voice for Aboriginal education in Victoria, VAEAI, and the importance of traditional owners to support the teaching and learning of Victorian Aboriginal languages, VACL So it’s my pleasure to hand over to Zack Haddock, who will tell us about the Koorie Outcome Division. Thank you, Zack.

**Zack Haddock:** Thank you, Zeta. Before I begin, I too would like to acknowledge that I’m meeting you all on traditional lands that are not mine. As a Yorta Yorta man, I live and breathe and work on Gunaikurnai country at the moment, and when not in isolation, I’m working in the Kulin Nation, in the central office.

And I’m here to talk to you very briefly today – if I can be brief, which, for those who know me, is a difficulty – about what the Koorie Outcomes Division does and about Marrung, the Aboriginal education plan, that is the Victorian Department of Education and Training’s plan for improving Aboriginal education. Next slide, please, Peter.

Thank you. So, to talk a little bit about the importance of Aboriginal education and, in particular, having a state-wide plan, I need to talk a little bit about the demographics. I won’t go into too much detail – there’s a lot of writing on this slide show, and you’ll all receive a copy of it afterwards – but what I what I do want to stress and labour is that we are the largest and most dispersed Aboriginal community in the country, here in Victoria and, in fact, as of last year, we had an Aboriginal enrolment in more than 88% of our Victorian government schools. What that means for us as a society and as a sector is that Aboriginal education is going to be something that we’re all going to come across, and it’s going to something that we all need to be aware of, not just for the Koorie students that you will have in your school, but also for the broader community as well, as they learn about our culture, which is, in essence, their history.

Of significant note that I want people to pay a little bit of attention to is the fact that there are over 600 schools this year that have less than six Koorie enrolments in them. And I want you to pay attention to that, because it’s really important for those students that we don’t put them in an environment where they’re socially and culturally isolated. They don’t have the benefit of having 60 or 70 other Koorie students within the school, yet their culture and their history and their story and identity are of equal importance and often overlooked in amongst this when we consider how we define need and how we define priorities for Aboriginal education. Thank you, Peter.

So, to talk briefly about Marrung, the Aboriginal education plan, it was developed with community during 2015, and launched in 2016 with the intent to ensure that the Education State is realised for all of our Koorie learners as well as our mainstream learners. It’s the very first plan that has a long-term vision, and is 10 years, rather than the traditional three-year plans that we’ve had previously. And it’s integrated for the first time across all three of our sectors, so, from early childhood into schools, and then into higher education and skills. Yep. Yeah? Thank you.

Marrung is being implemented and was developed in line with the whole of Victorian government’s commitment to the Aboriginal self-determination framework. The framework commits to allowing the transfer of position, power and resources to Aboriginal people, to better decide what’s right for us, and to work in partnership with the Victorian government. And it aligns quite nicely with the treaty conversations and the treaty assembly that has recently been established. The intent of it is that Aboriginal people have a voice to be heard and an aspiration for ourselves and what we do, and that that voice and that aspiration should be recognised and respected in all of our sectors, and we should be working together to make sure that it’s achievable. Next slide, please, Peter.

Marrung was developed in partnership, and is still being implemented in partnership, with our key stakeholder, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated. And I won’t labour this too long, because we’ve got the lovely Vaso who’s going to follow me and provide you with a little bit more information, but this slide here shows you where the local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups are situated, that are the constituent units of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, or VAEAI, as we call it, and are a really good go-to resource for helping schools engage with the local community. Next one, sorry, Peter.

So, Marrung’s actions have been split up into a number of different factors. There are sector-specific ones, which are on the next slide, but here are some overarching key enablers that we’ve decided would significantly improve the career outcomes of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

And I also want to just point out while I can, and go off script, which I shouldn’t do, but point out that the Marrung Aboriginal education plan is not a plan that’s going to focus totally on deficit and closing the gap. What we have are some very aspirational targets that look at excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners. And it’s a key part of some of the initiatives that we do have, and it’s a key part, I think, in how we need to move forward as a broader society.

So, we’ve positioned the key enablers in line with the FISO... (COUGHS) Pardon me. ..and in particular the positive climate for learning and development, community engagement in learning and development, and the most important one, I believe, as an enabler is a culture of professional leadership. And if we can go to the next slide, sorry, Peter.

So, as I mentioned, there are three sectors that we look after. The school-specific sector is the excellence in teaching, learning and development. And what we want is Koorie students to be fully engaged throughout their schooling years and to gain the knowledge and skills to excel at Year 12 or its equivalent, and to be those future leaders for us, which has never become more important than it is now, as Victoria very, very speedily proceeds towards a treaty negotiation. It’s important for us as a system and important for you as leaders and as teachers that we are ensuring that we enable our Koorie voices to grow and develop and to have the skills and capacity when they leave our schooling sector to be the captains of industry and the leaders that we need who will help us negotiate a treaty into the future. Thank you, Peter.

So, a couple of our priority initiatives that are part of Marrung. I’m hoping that quite a large number of you are familiar with Cultural Understanding and Safety Training. And I do know that there are some people in the room with you today, and some colleagues of mine, which it’s lovely to see, who have facilitated that in quite a large number of schools. This professional development is for all government school staff, and it’s the beginning...it’s intended to be the beginning of a deeper conversation that you and your school will have with your local community about Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum and about how to make sure that you’re building an environment that’s inclusive of all.

The Victorian Aboriginal languages. We are increasing the number of Koorie language programs in schools and kindergartens, as well as doing some accredited training in learning and teaching endangered Aboriginal languages, so that we can build a skilled workforce of Koorie language instruction.

A pet of mine is the Koorie Academy of Excellence. And I say it’s a pet of mine because it’s one of the very few initiatives that I’ve been so excited by that focuses predominantly on student excellence. It’s a culturally strong program that supports students to grow in their aspirations and increase their career passion and knowledge and pursue their desired post-school pathway.

We have a large number of early childhood initiatives, including the Koorie Families as First Educators, recognising the important role of parents and carers in being the first educators of their children.

And Wirnalung Ganai, which is really important for our Aboriginal staff, is our department’s Aboriginal inclusion plan. It’s very important for us as a system that, if we are asking our schools and asking you as teachers and learners to be more inclusive that we model that as well, and we have a large workforce out there, the Koorie Engagement Support Officers, the KECs and the Koorie Education Managers – the KECs, sorry, which are the Koorie Education Coordinators, who lead this work on the ground and in your schools for us. And it’s really important that we as a system are inclusive of their needs and inclusive of Aboriginal community and provide a workplace that helps them to develop and be strong as they can.

And of course, we’ve got increasing Koorie participation in VET, in reforming the Koorie Vocational Education and Training workforce to work closely with training organisations to improve supports for Koorie learners as well. Peter?

This slide’s really important, and I’m not going to go into too much detail on it, only to draw your attention to the fact that the governance structure is not hierarchical in this image, and it’s quite deliberately not hierarchical. We have a range of governance structures that hold us accountable as a system and holds the implementation of Marrung strong, and they range from the Marrung Central Governance Committee, which is the large one that happens in town, the Regional Partnership Forums, the Koorie Education Roundtables, and the LAECG meetings, and all of those avenues for getting feedback through are equally important, and are not hierarchical in any sense of the word.

So, I just wanted to draw your attention to this. This is quite an innovative way for the department to view something that we as a community have always held quite dear, and that’s the voices on the ground are as equally important, and are, in fact, quite often more so, than bureaucrats like myself who sit in central office. Thank you, Peter.

And I mentioned this earlier, but I can’t...as a former Koorie educator, Koorie Engagement Support Officer, Koorie Education Coordinator and Koorie Education Manager, I can’t go past without mentioning the important work that our Koorie Education Workforce does to ensure that inclusion in outcomes of core business at the regional service level. We have 120 positions state-wide that we call the Koorie Education Workforce, and they are comprised of nine Koorie Education Coordinators, who provide leadership and management to the Koorie Engagement Support Officers, and 110.8 full-time-equivalent Koorie Engagement Support Officers. The Koorie Engagement Support Officers are an integral part of how we view that we’re going to make a significant systemic difference to how we support Koorie students.

They are not the go-to people who are going to fix absolutely everything that has a Koorie element in it for your school or for your classroom. Their primary function is to build the system’s capability so that we can do it together and that we don’t rely on an Aboriginal person to solve an issue just because it has an Aboriginal person in it. And they do an enormous amount of work under some really tough circumstances, and we know that we don’t have enough of them, so it’s really important that, when you do reach out to the Koorie Engagement Support Officers or the KECs, you are mindful that there are very few of them compared to the number of schools that we have that have Koorie enrolments, and that you do take the opportunity to use them as a system reform agent and building your own and your school and system’s capability.

And then we’ve got four Koorie Education Managers, who provide some expert leadership and development... Sorry. And guide region-wide implementation of Marrung and of Wirnalung Ganai within the region. Thank you, Peter.

And look at that – I am actually running on schedule for once. We come to my division, the Koorie Outcomes Division. In partnership with VAEAI, we lead the strategic agenda for Aboriginal education in early childhood training and in schools, and we do that by building partnerships with the community, working with groups across the department and other education stakeholders to ensure Koorie outcomes are first and foremost in people’s minds. We work across other groups within the department and we have an enormous presence in the intergov stuff, looking after whole of government Aboriginal affairs.

We’re a very small division. So, my division is made up of an executive director – myself – and then I have two managers. The two managers are Janette Kennedy and Karla Books. Karla’s unit, the Strategy and Reporting Unit, monitors and reports on the implementation, planning and governance of Marrung, and coordinates our engagement with the cross-government Aboriginal affairs initiatives and bodies. And Janette Kennedy of the Participation, Transitions and Inclusion Unit has a significant role in the development and implementation of the targeted initiatives, some of which we spoke about in the slide earlier.

We work very closely with your Schools and Regional Services Group and we have a very, very close working relationship with the Koorie Education Workforce, and hold them in very high regard, actually. Next slide, please.

And that’s the end of my ramble. Thank you very much for paying attention and listening to me. And if you have any queries, my details and my division’s details will be provided later. But for now, can I please introduce you to Vaso Elefsiniotis, who will talk to you about the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated.

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