November 2010

An action area contact near you:

Robert Biggs
Robinvale Secondary
Sheila White, Horsham College
Gary Fletcher, Mooroopna SC
Neil Pryor, Benalla
John O'Meara, Yea Secondary College
Darrellyn Boucher, Cockatoo Primary
Roger Gale, Ballarat Secondary College
Doug Vickers, Bairnsdale West Primary
Leigh McLaren, Corio Primary Geelong
Fiona McKenzie, Nth Geelong SC
Angelique Den Brinker, The Grange P-12 College
Hoppers Crossing
Leonie Fitzgerald, Dandenong Sth. Primary
Sue Reiffel
Bundarra Primary Portland
Mary Pendergast
Warrnambool College
Jenny Manual
Wilmot Rd. Primary Shepparton
Lyn Keating
Drouin Primary
Jenny Mason
Mornington SC
Alison Byron
Kalianna School Bendigo
Dennis Norton
Mildura Senior College
Rick Tudor
Trinity Grammar
Judith Rivers
Our Lady of the Way, Reservoir
Anthony Rodaughan, Kurnai College, Morwell

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This Newsletter contains some snippets of some great activity that has occurred over recent months.

Our partnership with the Wannik strategy in 2010 has been positive and productive with a number of schools engaging in a wide range of activities from Early Years through to Transitions and Pathways to Employment and further education. Planning has occurred with the Dare to Lead team involving the Wannik Branch, regional teams including the Koorie Education Coordinators – KECS, and Koorie Engagement Support Officers – KESOs. We look forward to building on this team approach in 2011.

Steff Armstrong – our Indigenous Early Years and Literacy Consultant has taken up a position as the Indigenous Liaison Officer with ACER and we wish her well in this new role. Steff has been vitally involved for a number of years with the Victorian Dare to Lead activity and has provided much sound advice and practical support to school leaders, community, staff and students across Australia. Steff still maintains her contact and her invaluable advice.

As we plan for 2011, it is timely for you to contact us to let us know if there is any support that we can provide to your school or Network of schools. Professional Development time is precious and if you have some dates that we can plan with you it will be good to place them in the diary as soon as possible. PD can be tailored around the needs of your school and community and cover a wide range of focuses in the area of leadership and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Contact us:

Robert Miller – Victorian State Coordinator
Mobile: 0422 394966

Cliff Downey – shared role as Victorian State Coordinator
and School Corporate Partnerships coordinator
Mobile: 0423 029281
On July 16th kindergarten teachers from the Mildura area came together to discuss improving three areas of Aboriginal Education: enrolment and attendance, literacy and numeracy, and involving parents and community. The workshop was run in partnership with *Dare to Lead*, DEEWR, DEECD, Mildura City Council, Department of Justice and ‘Best Start’. A range of improvement strategies resulting from the workshop will be shared. *Dare to Lead* Coordinator Simon Fewings is collating this and working with preschools Action Area contact Kylie Loverage and Matt Holland Mildura DEEWR manager to plan further professional development. Kylie is producing a framed copy of the attached photo from the workshop for each kinder with the tag line “We are committed to Koori Early Childhood education”

Melrose Primary school staff participated in a *Dare to Lead* workshop on July 26th run by Cliff Downey and KESO’s Rosie Shultz and Diane Tattersall. The focus was improving student and family engagement.

On July 30th, Principal networks in the Shepparton area discussed ways to help staff understand Koorie cultural identity and the importance of this for student classroom engagement and improved learning outcomes. Working with Debra Kiley, Hume Region Koorie Education Coordinator, Dare to Lead will offer a Pathways and Transitions workshop in Shepparton in term four.
Wathaurong Koorie Kinda Kit wins Award

The Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative and the Mingo Waloom Aboriginal Best Start won the award for their Koorie Kinda Kit as the best project in DEECD Early Years demonstrating “Partnerships with Families and Communities”

As the introduction at the Awards night said “The Mingo Waloom Koori Kinda Kit project is a great example of what can be achieved through a respectful partnership between Aboriginal community members and broader community organisations applying the practice principles and outcomes of The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Introducing concepts like culture, place and belonging into a mainstream kindergarten can be challenging. For an Aboriginal family and child starting Kindergarten, the experience can feel overwhelming.

The aim was to reinforce a sense of identity and pride for Aboriginal children whilst giving kindergarten teachers the tools, information and knowledge to give them confidence to share their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and make kindergartens more culturally respectful and welcoming.

The kit includes an acknowledgment to country plaque, local aboriginal storybooks, cultural activities, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags, language posters, traditional games, a teachers resource DVD and much more!

A voucher in the kit for a free cultural session with Uncle Dave Tournier also ensures the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative is able to build links with up to 75 kindergartens.

Two Wathaurong women Corrina O’Toole and Kerrie Black both worked tirelessly to develop the kit and the contents of the kit, along with the teachers resource DVD. Kerrie Black is a local artist and she designed the activity books and much more! Uncle Dave provided language and shared knowledge with us to develop the books and language cards.

As soon as a family arrives at the kinda they will see Aboriginal plants in the garden, a welcome to country plaque at the front door, and to then enter the kinda and see posters, books and cultural activities in the kinder setting makes the child and family feel culturally safe and welcomed.

Important people Corrina mentioned in her acceptance speech were, Kerrie Black, Aunty May, Uncle Dave, Milla Milla Playgroup, Kylie Edwards, Geelong Kindergarten Association, Marg Bourke, COGG, and all the Deadly children in the Wathaurong community and all the members of the Best Start Learning working group.
BOOK REVIEW

The People of Budj Bim

Gib Wettenhall has written a book *The People of Budj Bim* in collaboration with the Gunditjmara people, which brings to life the amazing story about their traditional eel aquaculture systems and associated stone house settlements. Described by Fiona Capp in *The Age* as "clearly written, enlightening... an excellent teaching tool (and) a must-read for anyone who wants the full picture on the history of the Western District."

In 2004, Budj Bim became the first Indigenous landscape to gain National Heritage listing. Four years later, the Gunditjmara people won native title to much of Budj Bim’s heartland. This year, the traditional weir damming Lake Condah was rebuilt and the lake – previously drained to serve settler agriculture – was reborn again this spring.

Recent carbon dating suggests that an Indigenous fishtrap system in south-west Victoria is an incredible 6,700 years in age, making it among the oldest in the world.

Gib Wettenhall is the author or editor of a number of Indigenous publications commissioned by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, including a companion Indigenous history book *The People of Gariwerd* and *William Barak: Bridge builder of the Kulin*. He edited *Daughter of Two Worlds* by Gunditjmara descendant Dawn Lee; and was the ghost writer of Indigenous Paralympian basketballer, Kevin Coombs’s book *A Fortunate Accident*. 

*The People of Budj Bim* was published by Em Press. It is written in plain English, fully illustrated and retails for $25. Thirty to forty percent of bookshop and online sales go back to the Gunditjmara community. For online sales and a list of participating bookshops, visit www.empressspublishing.com.au