National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Conference

‘Student and Teacher Engagement’
what makes the difference in improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?
Geraldine Atkinson is a Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman who has devoted her career to expanding the possibilities available to Koorie people through education. For over 30 years Geraldine has been a significant presence in the Koorie and wider Victorian community, beginning as a Teacher’s Aide in 1976 to her current role as President of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) since 1999.

Geraldine’s role as a Teacher’s Aide was a first step towards extensive involvement in Koorie education across all sectors from early childhood to tertiary education. As a result of this position, Geraldine became involved with VAEAI at the time of its inception in 1976.

Through VAEAI Geraldine was able to gain broad experience within Koorie Education, initially serving as the Adult Education and TAFE Specialist Representative. Geraldine is an innovator who played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Minimbah Adult Education Program, which provided Koorie people with an opportunity to take a new direction through training. Geraldine was insistent that the program must be structured to provide pathways to employment, and it was successful in achieving this aim. The program has now been absorbed into the Goulburn/Ovens Institute of TAFE, of which Geraldine is a member of Council.

Geraldine has also made a significant impact in the area of Early Childhood. The Lidje MACS child care centre near Shepparton was established in 1986 through a collaborative effort of which Geraldine was a leader. The centre was established out of the recognition that many Koorie children were disadvantaged as a result of their lack of attendance in early years’ programs. It provides a range of services designed to give children the best start during their formative years, including long day care, occasional care, playgroups, vocational care, after school care, day stay, emergency care as required and community education programs.

As a recognised leader in Koorie education, Geraldine became President of VAEAI in 1999, and has been re-elected every year since. As President, Geraldine has been able to contribute her expertise to key policies and strategies that have shaped Koorie education and have yielded significant improvement in outcomes.

As President of VAEAI, Geraldine has also been instrumental in negotiating and formalising the Wurreker strategy, launched in 2000 as a joint initiative of VAEAI and the then Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment (now the Office of Training and Tertiary Education). The equal partnership between the Koorie community and OTTE ensures that training delivery and support services value the aspirations of individual Koorie students and enable Koorie communities to have a say in their training and employment future.

In October 2001, former Premier Steve Bracks, with Geraldine Atkinson, launched the renewed partnership in education and training, Yalca. Yalca, meaning Yellow Box gum in the Yorta Yorta language, supports a birth-to-death philosophy of education, placing the Koorie student at the centre of education policy and decision making, and acknowledges that local Koorie communities are best able to determine local education and training needs. In addition, Yalca acknowledges the need for, and provides the framework to develop and implement, collaborative initiatives and strategies across departments and agencies for the benefit of the Koorie community.
Geraldine also represents VAEAI on a number of National and State Committees while maintaining her involvement at the regional and local level. Currently Geraldine is a member of the following boards and committees:

- Chairperson – Lulla’s Children and family Centre
- Deputy Chairperson – Goulburn Valley Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
- President – Black Eagles Basketball Club
- Chairperson- Cummeragunja Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Deputy Chair – Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Co-Chairperson – Wannik Project Board
- Member – Premier’s Aboriginal Advisory Council
- Member – Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council
- Director – Aborigines Advancement League

In addition, Geraldine is the national Indigenous Education Consultative Body (IECB) representative to the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). Geraldine represents IECBs on the MCEECDYA reference group on Indigenous education and has an important role to play in contributing her direct experience of what works in community combined with her extensive policy knowledge. Geraldine regards this ability to act as link between policy and community as her principal function. As a community leader Geraldine has worked hard to ensure that real progress is made for Koorie people. Geraldine has always regarded education as being the best instrument of progress.

9.30am  Keynote – Brian Giles-Browne

Title: Listening to the Voices

From the collected data of 425 Collegial School Snapshots this presentation will share the Voices of nearly 3000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their teachers. Just what is it that students see as the qualities of “engagement”? What do teachers see as the qualities of “engagement” and the qualities of a good learner? What are the critical factors in “successful” engagement and how do we measure this? How do school leaders “lead and manage” successful engagement in schools? What role does the community have to play? What role do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff play in supporting, developing and maintaining this engagement?

This keynote will be an interactive exploration of the theme with data evidenced input from students and teachers.

Brian is the National Schools Coordinator for Dare to Lead, his role has allowed him to work in all states and territories and all geo locations across the country. His work is centred around the development, implementation and evaluation of Dare to Lead resources, tools and workshop products. Brian has been working for Dare to Lead as a seconded NSW Primary Principal since 2005 to the start of this year when he moved across as a full time employee of Principals Australia. His Principalships included Moruya PS, Coonamble PS and Riverstone PS. Brian chaired the NSWPPA Aboriginal Education Reference Group, sat on the Director Generals Advisory Group for Aboriginal Education and was the recipient of the NSW PPA’s Excellence in Aboriginal Education Leadership award. He represented the PPA on the Review of Aboriginal Education in NSW.
10.15am Concurrent Workshop 1

a) Rokeby Primary School, TAS - Greg Phair and Tracey Johnston

Rokeby Primary was one of the winning schools of the 2010 Dare to Lead National Excellence in Leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Awards. Their journey to reach this award will be articulated in this presentation.

b) Cairns West State School, QLD - Mike Hansen and Matthew Thompson

Cairns West State School’s “Academic Success Guarantee” is a program that, in partnership with parents, begins to deliver the right to better life chances. After its first year in 2009, there was a 700% increase in benchmark achievement in Year 1 and over the last two years across the school benchmark achievement rose from 32% of students to 53%. The Academic Success Guarantee is a signed agreement between parents and the school, which states that:

‘Cairns West State School is committed to ensuring students who attend 95% or more of the school year will meet or beat their year level benchmarks. In partnership with parents we are committed to doing whatever it takes at school to individually case manage those students who do not meet these year level benchmarks’.

Michael Hansen

Michael commenced teaching in 1990 at Cairns State High School. Between 1994 and August 2001 he was a teacher and Head of Department at Kowanyama State School. From 2001 – 2003 He fulfilled a variety of roles at Western Cape College in Weipa including Head of Community Engagement, Attendance and Retention and Head of Napranum Campus – Western Cape College. In 2004 Michael was appointed to Doomadgee State School as Principal where he spent four years in that role. In 2006, Michael was appointed as Director Government Coordination – Doomadgee and successfully coordinated Government service delivery on behalf of the Government Champions and the Queensland Government, that lead to the Queensland Government signing a Local Indigenous Partnership Agreement with the Doomadgee community. In 2008 Michael was appointed as principal at Cairns West State School, a Low SES Partnership School, where the main focus has been engaging parents and community to develop real partnerships with the school, case management of all students and removing distractions from teachers, allowing them to focus on explicit teaching and learning. This has led to significant improvement in student performance.

Matthew Thompson

Matthew has been Deputy Principal at Cairns West State School from 2007 – present. He is currently completing his Masters of Business Administration and from 2008 – 2009 as part of his role has developed and led the implementation of an Academic Success Guarantee which had a dramatic impact on student performance and schooling at Cairns West. He has a focus on high expectations and a strong data analysis approach to improving performance.
c) Footprints in Time, ACT - Fiona Skelton

What do young Indigenous students say they like about school to Indigenous interviewers?....

- ‘playing and drawing; investigations: that’s where we find stuff around the classroom, play with it and then write about it; monkey bars and I like to sit up there and then jump off; Learning about Aboriginals.’

In 2008 Footprints in Time: The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) started following a group of Indigenous babies and a group of Indigenous children aged around 4 years from sites across Australia. Each year the parents or carers of more than 1500 children are visited by Indigenous interviewers to talk about their child’s health, well-being and education and their own health, well-being and family lives. With parent or guardian permission, questionnaires are sent to the teachers and carers of the children to add to the story of each child’s life. Data from the first two waves of LSIC is now publicly available to approved researchers.

The study is designed to explore how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children develop resilience, what helps to improve their well-being and future, and to recognise links between early childhood experiences and later life outcomes. This presentation will introduce the study and discuss some of the preliminary findings, such as the aspirations of parents and children, the strengths of the study children that teachers identify, how far teachers predict a child will go in their education and the kinds of Indigenous-specific activities and training available within their schools.

Fiona Skelton has worked on the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children since its initial funding in 2003. This has involved community consultations, study design, Steering and Design Committee support, community trials in the Torres Strait, conducting qualitative pilots and training interviewers. She currently manages the content development and piloting for the various waves of the study and has managed to work in every site in Footprints in Time, if not every location. Fiona has a Bachelor of Social Science, three fabulous children aged 11, 14 and 16, and is half way through a Master of Social Research at the Australian National University.

11.00am  Morning Tea
**Principals Australia - Dare to Lead**

‘Student and Teacher Engagement’ Conference

11.30am  Concurrent Workshop 2

**a) Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives (EATSIPS): Curriculum into the Classroom, QLD - Elizabeth King and Erin McDonald**

EATSIPS in education is about creating Cultural Spaces of learning - shifting school systems thinking from dominant non-Indigenous ways of working to recognising Indigenous method and process. The EATSIPS team is made up of dynamic educators who work with school clusters in local regions to embed Indigenous perspectives across four main action areas of school: personal professional accountability; organisational environment; community engagement and curriculum and pedagogy. EATSIPS officers located in regions across Queensland are tasked with assisting and developing schools to embed Indigenous perspectives. EATSIPS in Queensland is made up of three core processes:-: the EATSIPS document; the EATSIPS Officers assisting implementation and EATSIPS Online. ISSU CSQ is tasked with delivering and administering EATSIPS on the ground and through our work we are generating powerful stories and case studies of shift and change. EATSIPS is about creating safe, culturally sound spaces for learning and the work of the EATSIPS teams goes along way to achieving this. This workshop will demonstrate how and why school spaces need to embrace Indigenous methods.

**Elizabeth King**

I am a proud Kalkadoon\Waanyi woman, Kalkadoon from my mother and Waanyi from my father. I was fifth born into a large family, the only daughter in a crew of seven boys. With my mother and father parts of families with six children and ten children respectfully. Our country is from hot and dry North West Queensland and over into the Northern Territory around the Nicholson river. We are all now scattered throughout Australia, particularly in Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

I currently live in Logan, Brisbane, Yugambeh country but still have strong connections to place and family back in Mt Isa. I am a very proud mother of three children who live in Brisbane. I began my teaching career as a Primary school teacher over 14 years ago. My Bachelor of Education was gained through James Cook University and my first appointment was at the Weir State School in Townsville. I then came to Brisbane and worked in various schools across the Logan area. Most recently I took up the position of Principal Project Officer Embedding Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander perspectives in schools, for the South East Region which covers Logan, Beaudesert, Gold Coast and Redlands state primary and secondary schools, a total of 166 schools. I have also worked in other government departments like Abstudy and the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Unit as a Field Officer. I am absolutely passionate and committed to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander issues especially in education.
Erin McDonald

I was born in Brisbane and grew up in Acacia Ridge. My mum’s parents are from the Gurrang Gurrang people in Bundaberg and my dad’s parents are from the Torres Straits, Mer and Thursday Islands. The majority of my schooling was in Acacia Ridge and I still have connection with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

I started teaching in 1995 at East Brisbane State School then went to Coominya State School for four years then started teaching at Richlands East State School in Inala. During this time in Inala, I became a member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In 2005, I started working as an Education Officer (Special Duties) then a Senior Education Officer at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Learning and Engagement Centre at Inala. At the beginning of last year, I was employed as an Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in Schools Principal Project Officer for the Metropolitan Region based in Ipswich. Also, I am the secretary of the Inala Wangarra, which is a local community engagement organisation in Inala.

b) Braddock Public School & Nepean Community Neighbourhood Service, NSW - Loraine Gentleman and Joy Impionbato

Nepean Community Neighbourhood Services (NCNS) is a community-based, non-profit organization. NCNS staff work in early intervention and prevention models building resilient individuals, families and communities; all of their projects reflect this framework. A program that NCNS is particularly proud of is the Making Tracks project which works with Aboriginal young people in schools, building their resilience and connection with their own education and future.

The Making Tracks project targets Aboriginal students at the earliest opportunity possible to assist them and their families to connect/re-connect and re-engage with their education. The program aims to support and provide resources for students, parents, caregivers and school staff in Aboriginal Identity, culture and reconciliation. Making Tracks has been in place at Braddock Primary for several years. Since 2009 Braddock PS has experienced a gradual increase in Aboriginal parent/caregiver participation in aspects of their children’s education.

This workshop will trace the origins of Making Tracks, its implementation at Braddock PS, how it has evolved and the impact the project has had on the whole school community.
c) Welcome to Walbanga Country: Engaging students at Batemans Bay High School, NSW - Ben Barry, Neil Reaper and Henry Stewart

At Batemans Bay High School we have an Indigenous population of 100 students out of a total school population of 770 students. In 2010 our school was given a grant of money to improve the engagement and learning outcomes of Indigenous students at our school. We believe our experience in running, experimenting and evaluating these programs has been very insightful and we would like to share our successes, experiences, wisdom and data with other schools and educators to help them with their journey to improve engagement and educational outcomes for indigenous students.

The programs we will be discussing include our Aboriginal Education team set-up, Indigenous tutoring, peer tutoring, mentoring, Personal Learning Plans, school Indigenous bush tucker garden, NAIDOC week events and celebrations, getting the indigenous community involved, attendance plans, excursions, sporting and cultural events. The presentation of our programs will be very specific, engaging, integrate the latest technology and deliver perspectives from the students, community, parents and teachers.

We truly believe by providing the framework of our programs to other educators they will be able to use it in their own context successfully.

Mr Ben Barry: Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT)
benjamin.barry@det.nsw.edu.au

Ben has been teaching for 10 years at a number of schools including Braidwood Central School, Ulladulla High School and is currently the Highly Accomplished Teacher at Batemans Bay High School. Ben has been very proactive in raising the profile of indigenous students at all his schools with an emphasis on developing and implementing indigenous perspectives across the curriculum; understanding, being empathetic and promoting the indigenous culture; enhancing the involvement of the indigenous community and organisations; building of requisite skills; and engaging indigenous students with all aspects of school life and learning. Ben believes in empowering indigenous students to build relationships and engage in meaningful learning.

Mr Neil Reaper: Deputy Principal
neil.reaper@det.nsw.edu.au

Neil was educated in the Riverina and his first teaching appointment was Wilcannia Central School. Neil has also taught at Grenfell and spent 17 years at Broken Hill High School (two of which were at Broken Hill District Office as the District Curriculum/ Training and Development coordinator). Neil is currently Deputy Principal at Batemans Bay High school and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the school’s ‘Low Socio Economic Reform Schools’ National Partnership agenda. Neil has had a long association with Aboriginal Education and is very proactive in supporting the personal and educational needs of Aboriginal students and communities. Neil believes that both traditional cultural education and school education are important in providing all Aboriginal students and communities with the best possible choices in life.
Mr Henry Stewart: Indigenous Community Engagement Officer (CEO)
henry.stewart@det.nsw.edu.au

Henry is a proud Walbanga man. Batemans Bay is his country. He completed his HSC in 1997 at Batemans Bay High School and was the first member in his family to do so. Batemans Bay High School is and always has been a very important place for him as his grandmother was the elder who actually gave permission for the school to be built on the Aboriginal land. Since leaving high school Henry has successfully achieved his Horticultural Certificate while working at Wilmont Primary School in Shepparton. In 2007, Henry returned to Batemans Bay and started work at Batemans High School as a Teacher’s Aid and Aboriginal Education Officer. Currently he is employed as a Community Engagement Officer at Batemans Bay High School. In this position he is heavily involved with local organisations, both indigenous and non-Indigenous. Henry utilises his cultural background and local knowledge when working with students and teachers. Henry's personal vision for his community is to see greater HSC retention and success.

12.15pm Concurrent Workshop 3

a) Acacia Hill School Alice Springs - Mark Killen

This presentation will focus upon the needs of early intervention children who are Indigenous and may have a disability. These students have been identified as special needs either due to a defined disability or as a result of their impoverished background. Through the Federal Government Intervention, a large number of young Indigenous children have been identified as eligible for pre-school yet were not ready to access traditional pre-school programs. This lack of readiness was demonstrated through poor social skills, language barriers, immaturity in self-help and poor personal hygiene. Children often had very poor on-task behaviour or were over-stimulated by typical pre-school environs, lacking an ability to focus on the learning tasks. Our approach has been to explicitly teach these skills to lay a foundation for learning.

We aspire to raise awareness with agencies and family in an ongoing attempt to further develop capacity in the NT system. We have recently begun discussions with a local Indigenous organization to assist with their programming and staff development. Our student data has shown excellent results thus far with three Indigenous students going onto mainstream settings and two more to graduate at the end of 2011. We utilise a functional curriculum (linked to the NT Curriculum Framework) focussing learning on the domains of communication, motor skills, socialization, self care, literacy/numeracy. Each student is placed on a Educational Adjustment Plan which links goals to effective teaching strategies and ways of measuring success.

Mark Killen

I am the principal of Acacia Hill School, which is located in Alice Springs. This is the only special school in Central Australia servicing a huge geographical need and diverse range of disability. Students are aged in range from 2.5 to 20 years of age with an indigenous population of 70+. I have been in the territory for over 2 years and have found the change from being a principal in Victoria (11+ years) as a rewarding and stimulating challenge. I recently completed my Masters in Educational Leadership through Monash University focussing upon the mental health needs of young primary aged children.
b) Catholic College Wodonga - Shinead Kilroy

Our school has created a reciprocal immersion experience with Xavier College, Nguiu, Bathurst Island. The arrangement is in its formative years but so far involves students being selected from both schools to be immersed into the community of the other school. Catholic College students intending to go must write a written application outlining the reasons they want to be part of the experience. Those selected from their written application are then interviewed with the principal and the Indigenous coordinator. The twelve selected students for the trip then have three group sessions before they go prepare them for the experience. While on the island students go to set classes in both the primary and secondary schools. They assist with reading, writing, numeracy and as broad and far ranging as hair and beauty and learning to swim.

After school, students completely immerse themselves in the culture by helping out in the local community. This can be from helping in the local shop to serving afternoon tea, or playing football and going hunting with their new-made friends. One of the program’s aims is to allow Tiwi students exposure to another way of living. This exposure is then reinforced by the Xavier College students’ visit to our school. They come and stay at our school, go to our classes and we give them a tour of our world. In a sense it acts as a mentoring program. The students make real and lasting friendships and it acts as a vehicle for bridging the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.

Shinead Kilroy

My name is Shinead Kilroy and I am the Indigenous Co-ordinator at Catholic College Wodonga. One of our school’s missions is to create awareness of Indigenous culture and promote the richness of the way they live. Our school is committed to inclusion and honouring the traditional owners of the land in our area.

c) Hume Public School, NSW: Raising Engagement, Participation and Expectation - Russell Graham

Hume Public School is on a journey of raising engagement, participation, expectation and performance of the entire school community. This workshop will explore and discuss some of the programs and planning that has been implemented to improve Indigenous student learning outcomes in this diverse regional primary school.

Every Child Every Chance Every Day

Hume Public School has embraced this message to strive towards creating an environment that increases student engagement, behaviour, expectation, performance and attendance, increases staff stability and develops a growing sense of community engagement and ownership.
Russell Graham

Russell Graham has been principal of Hume Public School, Albury NSW since 2008. Russell works with an outstanding team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff who operate innovative programs that make a difference for Indigenous children and wider community of their school.

Russell is the Riverina PPA Representative on the Aboriginal Education Reference Group and a Dare to Lead contact for the Albury area.

1.45pm  Concurrent Workshop 4

a) Oxford University Press presents Yarning Strong - Lee Walker

The new school resource “Yarning Strong” will be previewed. The teacher/student resources will be demonstrated along with digital media.

b) The Class Movies Project - Phillip Lewis

An in-depth look at the Class Movies Project and how it could relate to the engagement of our students

c) Hear and Learn Pty. Ltd. - David Dowling

AUDITORY ENGAGEMENT AND THE RELEVANCE OF OPTIMISING THE HEARING HEALTH OF CLASSROOMS - AN EXPLANATION OF ASSISTIVE AUDITORY TECHNOLOGY

We know of the challenges to best practice engagement of students caused by otitis media, competing background noise in classrooms and voice fatigue of teachers but auditory technology to help with these factors is not well understood. It has evolved and this workshop will explain how. David Downing will explain how new classroom sound enhancement technology - sometimes known as soundfield – is a strategy to optimise listening conditions. It is more cost effective, easily adopted by teachers and more pedagogically effective than before. It will be explain how threats like poor reliability associated with FM technology, the peril of complex installation, and the sometimes-cumbersome and complex nature of previous generations of technology, have been removed.

New technology has prompted renewed faith in a strategy to optimise listening conditions in learning spaces. There are now solutions embracing new speaker technology allowing better speech intelligibility usually without installation. This is technology that has been adopted in every classroom in the Kimberley, and in scores of urban, rural and remote schools with Indigenous students. We also need to consider emerging auditory stimuli associated to portable technology like Ipads, ipods, computers and the like. The experiences of teachers and students will be shared with attendees of this workshop.
David Downing

Inspired by many years of international professional music production and performance experience, in 2005 David Downing started Hear and Learn in partnership with a teacher of more than 20 years experience. An Australian company, Hear and Learn operates Australia wide and is solely devoted to the science of optimising listening conditions in learning spaces by advising on and supplying assistive auditory technology to improve engagement and therefore literacy and numeracy outcomes.

2.15pm Concurrent Workshop 5

a) John Willcock College, WA - Julie Campbell

The provision of secondary education in Geraldton is problematic for a number of reasons - not the least being that despite a long community consultation, the present model as enacted was not the choice of the local community. After the dismantling of the two Year 8-12 campuses, a middle school (Year 8/9 cohort) and a senior campus (Years 10-12) have been established. In short, despite the fact that this is a regional city, there is no Government secondary school alternative, hence no choice for parents.

Given the model described above, there are two transition points within Government secondary education in Geraldton, and this is problematic for a number of our students. The College has an Indigenous student population of about 30% of the total cohort, and like many other schools, attendance has been an issue. The formation of a Midwest Football Academy and a Midwest Netball Academy have been useful to work with Aboriginal families in our community. In addition, to ensure a successful transition to Geraldton Senior College and to improve the attendance rates of the most marginalised and under-represented cohort - the Year 9 Indigenous female students - the College has been able to develop an innovative program based on the Curriculum Council's General Life Skills course; we have called the program SHINE (Students Hairdressing Integrating Education). This program has been in operation for four terms and has seen amazing improvements in attendance and engagement for Year 9 Indigenous female students.

Julie Campbell

At the time of my appointment, I was the third person in 12 months to undertake the Principal role. The complex nature of this school makes it a dynamic but challenging arena in which to work. I have been Principal at John Willcock College – middle school in regional Midwest of WA since 2008, came to the position after having worked in all sectors of primary and secondary education in WA, including a School of the Air and a District High School and as a Curriculum Consultant for Midwest Education District 2004-2006. I graduated from University of WA with Bachelor Jurisprudence and Bachelor of Laws and completed post graduate qualifications with WACAE and Murdoch University.
b) Mount Austin High School, NSW - Wendy Dennis

MAKET (Mount Austin Koori Education Team) was established at Mount Austin High School toward the end of 2003 to recognise and acknowledge Indigenous students who were making positive choices. Our school community needed to focus on those students attending school making positive choices, wearing their school uniform, working to the best of their ability and demonstrating good behaviour both in the classroom and in the playground. Our aim is for more students to attain their School Certificate, HSC and to continue with their tertiary education thus improving their employment options and in the longer term 'Closing the Gap'.

With 30% of our students Indigenous, MAKET has become a strong student leadership group within our school and a role model across the region. Students have conducted workshops at SRC regional conference, the National Mind Matters Conference in 2007, the National Aboriginal Studies Conferences in Newcastle and Hobart, The Lake Mungo Science festivals and have organised and conducted assemblies to acknowledge important events for Aboriginal people. The importance of education is maintained through career workshops, university information sessions, study days, mentoring, student leadership groups and guest speakers.

MAKET students who are undertaking tertiary education act as mentors to the group and community Elders are mentors to the senior students. MAKET has given students of Mount Austin High School many opportunities to develop their self esteem, improve their cultural knowledge, develop and showcase their talents, push themselves beyond their comfort zone and to embrace the importance of education and reach for the stars.

c) Wannik Dance Academies, VIC - Scott Burton, Patricia Fox and Janelle Kelly

The Wannik Dance Academies are an initiative of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) designed to provide an educational program based around Dance for female Koorie students in Years 7 - 10. Commencing in 2010 the Academies operate at Ballarat, Eaglehawk and Mooroorupna Secondary Colleges and cater for approximately 60 students across the three schools. The program uses dance as the vehicle to build the confidence and self esteem of the students whilst providing them with opportunities to work with professionals from a range of areas within the performing arts. The Wannik Dance Academy is currently funded by the Wannik Unit (DEECD) and the Sporting Chance Program (DEEWR). The presentation will discuss the structure of the Dance Academy program and ways in which the school engages its students. Guests will hear from students involved in the Academy and will watch a performance by some of the students.

Scott Burton

I have been teaching in the Victorian Education system for last 7 years with a focus on Physical and Health Education. In 2010 I was appointed to the role of Wannik Dance Academy Leader which was a pilot program aimed at Indigenous girls from Years 7 -10. In previous roles I have worked in private schools in Melbourne and taught in other countries including England and Canada.
3.00pm Concurrent Workshop 6

a) Good teachers - a first step to student engagement - Jan Larcombe

Through the Collegial Snapshot Process in Tasmania, Year 5-12 students from 45 Tasmanian schools have provided first hand information about the qualities they believe good teachers possess.

Following on from the Keynote this morning this practical workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to explore this data in conjunction with current research, and discuss implications for their individual contexts.

Jan Larcombe

Jan is the Tasmanian Dare to Lead State Coordinator. She was the Tasmanian Principals Association President and has worked extensively as a school leader across Tasmania. She has established a strong network of schools across Tasmania working to improve outcomes for Aboriginal students through strong connections to community and country.

b) Association of Independent Schools, SA - Carolyn Fortune

My latest publication “Successful Outcomes Positive Experiences, Working with Indigenous Students and Families” highlights effective practice at the whole-school, individual classroom and boarding house level and showcases some highly-successful schools.

The workshop will focus on the resource and assist participants to develop strategies that will create successful learning situations within the classroom and whole-school settings. The main strategies will include developing positive and effective relationships with students, families and communities; how to ensure the curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of students; successful engagement of otherwise disengaged students and how these strategies can lead to successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Carolyn Fortune

I have been working as the Indigenous Education Advisor at the Association of Independent Schools of SA for the past 6 years. Before that I spent 27 years teaching in both Independent and Government schools in South Australia, Queensland and Victoria in metropolitan and country areas. I have worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities in primary and high school settings. During my time at AISSA, I have been supporting principals, teachers and support staff who work with Aboriginal students and families through professional learning activities, including cultural and academic workshops and individual program development. I have produced four publications which highlight successful practices across the Independent sector. I also facilitate a Careers Pathways project for secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending Independent schools.
Principals Australia - *Dare to Lead*

‘Student and Teacher Engagement’ Conference

c) Grafton South High School, NSW - Margaret Skeel

This presentation will discuss a number of initiatives that have been successful at South Grafton High School, including:

- The revamping of the SLIKK program to make it much more successful at engaging our Indigenous leaders and giving them more opportunities to lead, both in the school and in the community;
- the creation of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre on school grounds that gives us a place for students to meet and where we can promote and celebrate local Indigenous culture;
- the creation of a Gumbaynggirr language program as part of our LOTE syllabus which is going to be taught to all Year Sevens will promote a greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture in all our students;
- the development of our cultural dance team, Guja Murra, which performs at the school, in the community and at regional and State events to promote Indigenous culture;
- the successes of the Norta Norta program to assist our Indigenous students from Years 7 to 12 to increase their educational outcomes, in conjunction with other school-wide programs in literacy, numeracy and student support;
- the use of the DEEWR PaCE program to engage parents and community members;
- efforts to involve all faculties in promoting Indigenous knowledge, including teaching a bush tucker unit in the cooking classes, teaching Indigenous games in PDHPE, incorporating Aboriginal history in HSIE and the local Aboriginal language in the LOTE faculty;
- other developing programs, including the creation of a Dreaming Track and Bush Tucker Gardens at the school.

Margaret Skeel

*I am a biologist-turned-teacher and I have been teaching science in high schools since 1998. In 2009 I became the Norta Norta Tutor at my high school and now work full time one-on-one helping our senior Indigenous students with their assignments. In addition I have been the SLIKK coordinator for 6 years (Student Leadership is for Koori Kids) and this year I became the Aboriginal Students Advisor. This is a new position at our school, which has 135 Indigenous students out of a school population of 1000. I believe this is a unique position in NSW and is an indication of our commitment to Indigenous education. In this position, I assist all Indigenous students from Years 7 to 12 with welfare and educational issues.*