

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Acting Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health



Tuesday, 27 April 2021

SUPPORTING KOORIE KIDS TO SUCCEED

Koorie kids, families and organisations will lead our efforts to better support Koorie students, under a new co-design initiative announced by the Andrews Labor Government.

With funding of almost \$3.7 million, we're starting a state-wide consultation and co-design process that will deliver community-led changes in our schools, ensuring Aboriginal voices are at the heart of reform.

Reflecting the Labor Government's commitment to self-determination, this investment will support community organisations to build capability and preparedness to partner with our schools and see 45 Koorie Education Roundtables held across the state, ensuring Aboriginal Victorians have a voice on what's working and what's not working for Koorie students in our schools.

The funding will also resource Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Traditional Owner Groups to host community-led conversations on furthering self-determination in our schools and across our education system.

These findings will then be used to help our schools better support Koorie students. Reforms could include schools formally partnering with Koorie communities and organisations, including ACCOs, to overcome barriers to student engagement and learning, in addition to greater inclusion of Koorie culture in our classrooms.

Koorie students perform well in NAPLAN across most learning areas and year levels compared to Aboriginal students in other jurisdictions. For example, since 2015, the proportion of Koorie students achieving in the top two NAPLAN bands has improved in reading Year 3 and Year 5, and in numeracy in Year 3.

However, within Victoria, mean NAPLAN scores for Koorie students are substantially below those of their non-indigenous peers. At the same time, consistent community feedback has highlighted the need for schools to change approaches and processes that are at risk of 'mainstreaming' or sidelining Koorie students.

That's why this initiative will use the knowledge and capacity of local Koorie communities to develop best-practice models of support that meet the needs of students, while ensuring the community is a genuine partner in improving outcomes for Koorie kids.

This will build on successful existing Labor Government programs that support Koorie students, including the Koorie Literacy and Numeracy program, the Koorie Pre-School Assistants program, the Koorie Families as First Educators program, the Koorie Engagement Support Officer program, and the *Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"Every Victorian child deserves a great education. While we've taken huge steps in improving education outcomes for Koorie students, it's clear we need to do more."

"There's no one better to provide advice on how we can improve support for Koorie students, than their families, communities and Koorie kids themselves."

Quote attributable to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"We want to support our Koorie kids to succeed. That's why we want to hear from them, their families and communities about what works and what doesn't work in our schools."

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