

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MLC

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education



Friday, 17 September 2021

SECURING THE FUTURE OF ENDANGERED ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

The Victorian Government is supporting a new team of specialist teachers to help revive language on country and in classrooms across Victoria as part of the preservation of endangered Aboriginal languages.

The nine Aboriginal Language Teachers are the inaugural graduates of the Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language course at Swinburne University of Technology, funded by the Government to promote and support Koorie culture and tradition in Victoria.

The pilot course was developed with Aboriginal groups and led by linguistic expert and Taungurung Elder Aunty Lee Healy who equipped the teachers with the culturally informed skills to teach and preserve five languages in schools, kindergartens and Aboriginal communities.

Among the graduates is Wadawurrung woman Corrina Eccles who advocates for the connectedness of language to people, place and country and will teach Wadawurrung people at Moolap Primary School.

To inspire more Victorians to use Aboriginal languages, new Certificate II and III in Learning an Australian First Nations Language courses will be offered free to Koorie students under a *Victorian Budget 2021/22* investment of more than \$2.7 million over four years.

The revival and preservation of language is part of the *Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026*, promoting Koorie culture and tradition in Victoria and supporting reconciliation and social justice reforms.

Since 2014, the Government has made a record \$3.2 billion investment to rebuild TAFE and support universities and higher education to ensure Victorians have access to high quality education and rewarding career pathways.

Quote attributable to Minister for Training and Skills Gayle Tierney

"This course is an important part of our plan to provide better opportunities to Aboriginal learners – and will have a ripple effect in the community by promoting language, culture and traditions."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"We want to amplify the voices of Aboriginal Victorians and enhance the understanding of Aboriginal culture in everything we do – and part of that is ensuring endangered languages are revived and preserved."

Quote attributable to Swinburne University of Technology A/Pro-VC and Chief Executive VET Andrew Kong

"Swinburne University of Technology is proud to support the vital project of preserving the languages of our First Peoples – these graduating students will bring their rich knowledge and expertise to furthering this urgent task."

Quote attributable to linguistic expert and Taungurung Elder Aunty Lee Healy

"It is important for the next generation to be able to teach their Aboriginal language on Country where it belongs and where it will always be a living language like it was for our ancestors long ago."