



Koorie Heritage Trust Inc
'Gnokan Danna Murra Kor-ki'

Strategic Plan 2017-20

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Terminology

While the term Koorie is commonly used to describe Aboriginal people of Southeast Australia, we have used the term Aboriginal in parts of the report to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in Victoria.

1. WHO WE ARE

Aboriginal Victoria is a population of approximately 50,000. Half live in the Melbourne metropolitan area and the other in regional/rural Victoria. We are predominately young with at least 50% of our population less than 25 years of age. We are well networked, both through traditional methods (the Indigenous grapevine) and contemporary methods (particularly social media such as facebook, twitter etc). Our community is made up of people who are not only Victorian in origin, but also from interstate – Victoria has a net immigration, not emigration, of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Of those who are Victorian in origin (i.e. whose traditional lands are within Victoria) many, if not most of us, do not live 'on country'. For the bulk of our population, our connection to traditional identity, while physically removed, is none-the-less undiminished, and indeed an important part of our 21st Century life. While the centre of identity for most of us is our current place-based location, the heart of our identity is the traditional/spiritual identity of the lands of our ancestors.

Our Vision: To live in a society where Aboriginal culture and history are a fundamental part of Victorian life

Our Purpose: To promote, support and celebrate the continuing journey of the Aboriginal people of South Eastern Australia.

Our Motto: Gnokan Danna Murra Kor-ki – *Give Me your Hand my Friend*

Our Values: Respect, Honesty, Reciprocity, Curiosity

Our Centre: Provides a unique environment rich in culture, heritage and history which welcomes and encourages Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to come together in the spirit of learning and reconciliation.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are an Aboriginal owned and managed not-for-profit organisation. We celebrated our 30th anniversary in 2015. We are justifiably proud of our journey and what we have achieved. While we acknowledge the inherited disadvantages in our communities, we are optimistic about the future including what it means to be an Aboriginal Victorian in 2016 and beyond; being aspirational and ambitious while not losing the core values of our individual and collective Aboriginal identity.

We enter this period of our strategic planning as a bold and adventurous 21st century organisation offering an inclusive and welcoming place for all peoples; a space that promotes, supports and celebrates the continuing contemporary journey of our Aboriginal Victorian communities informed by a 60,000-year-old collective history. By 2020, we aim to be the foremost Aboriginal owned and managed art and culture organisation in Australia. We will be known for meaningful and genuine community engagement that is authentic and responsive to the needs and aspirations of Victorian Aboriginals. Our innovative programming and services, strategic partnerships, and the way we connect to our stakeholders will be valued. We will be continually reinventing and expanding what is contemporary Aboriginal Victorian creative expression.

We will be a knowledge bank and vital community resource; a physical and virtual place for sharing, learning, collaborating and creating, demonstrated by our commitment to fostering connections and engagement through incubating and supporting the artistic evolution of Aboriginal Victoria. By nurturing our creative talent, we will secure a dynamic and exciting experience for all Victorians that promote and celebrate the oldest continuing culture in the world.

As a platform and springboard for Aboriginal artists, we will be the catalyst for life changing experiences, fostering and supporting genuine creative pathways as well as enabling unique opportunities through active advocacy.

Backed by our skills, and expertise that include cultural knowledge, community and corporate networks, collection management, and curatorial, education and research experience, we will offer a unique range of programs and services in line with our vision and purpose. We will be a place for everyone; a unique space in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people experience, learn, connect and reconnect with the rich, living culture, heritage and histories of Aboriginal Victoria.

Anticipating and embracing advances in digital technology, we will also provide best practice client service delivery, and continue to innovate and transition the development and delivery of our services. We will build on our successes to deliver outstanding opportunities on a state, national and international level. Acknowledging that our young people are part of the broader generation of digital natives, we will also embrace technology to record the memories of our elders to benefit present and future generations.

Our key Strategic Objectives to Strengthen, Promote, Extend and Develop, underpins all that we do in order to facilitate the participation of the Victorian Aboriginal communities in our programs and services, and promote cultural exchange between Aboriginal communities and all Victorians.

3. CONTEXT

Respected Koorie elder Uncle Jim Berg, the late Ron Castan AM QC and Ron Merkel QC established the Koorie Heritage Trust in 1985. We were registered as an incorporated association in 1992. As reflected in the profile of our original founders, our current staff and Board represent reconciliation in action with both Koorie and non-Koorie people working to meet our Vision and Purpose and acting in ways that reflect our Values.

Our business success is reflected in the following awards:

- Winner Small Agency, Sir Rupert Hamer Records Management Awards for Innovation & Excellence in Records Management, 2003
- Reconciliation Australia's Inaugural Winner, National Indigenous Governance Award, 2005
- 11th Annual AIMIA Awards, Best Learning Awards, 2005
- Victorian Tourism Awards, Indigenous Tourism, 2005, 2006 and 2007
- Wurreker Awards, Community Based Employer, 2006
- Regional Arts Victoria, RAVE Awards, Indigenous Arts Award, 2009
- Diversity@Work Employment and Inclusion Award, 2011

We are also proud to have obtained and continue to hold Museums Australia accreditation.

In 2015, we relocated to the Yarra Building at Federation Square, bringing Koorie peoples, communities and culture from the literal and figurative fringes to a place at the centre of a contemporary metropolitan city. Working closely with Lyons Architecture and Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria to design our new exhibition and collection stores, galleries and display areas, offices, retail, public meeting rooms and other gathering spaces, our relocation has resulted in our visitation numbers more than doubling and a much greater public profile. We are a place of pride for our Koorie communities as visitors, clients and stakeholders.

In September 2015, we celebrated another milestone in our history, our 30th birthday, which coincided with the launch of our new premises. This was a significant milestone in the organisation's history as well as the history of Aboriginal Victoria. We are the oldest community owned and run Aboriginal arts and cultural centre in Australia. Our new state-of-the-art facility contributes to Melbourne as the city of creativity and innovation and, particularly, the cultural diversity of its creative industries, whilst at the same time ensuring that Koorie art and culture remain front and centre of Victoria's cultural, artistic and creative landscape.

4. OUR BUSINESS

We are committed to promoting, supporting and celebrating the continuing journey of our Victorian Aboriginal communities through our programs and services that are nationally unique.

- Collections Program – we have the only collection in Australia dedicated to the Aboriginal culture of South-Eastern Australia (numbering nearly 95,000 items including cultural artefacts and objects, contemporary sculpture, paintings, prints, photographs and a reference library). The Collections are significant, extensive and irreplaceable, and comprise pre-contact, historic and contemporary items from south-eastern Australia. The Collections provide a tangible link to connect the community to the past and assist in the ongoing building of Aboriginal culture in Victoria.
- Koorie Family History Service Program – we offer a family history service for Koorie members of the stolen generation that is a national leader in the field of Aboriginal genealogy and family history research.
- Oral History Program – our oral History program has been running since 1987 with the intention of capturing knowledge and stories of culture on behalf of the Koorie community. The Program includes a collection that encompasses some 1600 audio and visual recordings of Koorie people from across the state.
- Exhibitions and Public Program – at the Trust, we facilitate the sharing of Aboriginal art and support emerging and established Aboriginal artists through an extensive exhibitions with a key focus on our Victorian Aboriginal artists. Many exhibitions are accompanied by public programs and targeted workshops teaching specific arts and cultural skills.
- Education Program – our education programs include tours of the Trust, cultural walks along the Birrarung (Yarra River), and professional development sessions for teachers. Our Indigenous Cross-Cultural Awareness Training program (ICCAT) is offered within the framework of professional development to major Federal, State and Local Government departments as well as to the public and to the corporate sector.
- shop KOORIE – our retail outlet, shop KOORIE, stocks products that are designed and/or crafted by our Victorian Aboriginal communities. Buying from us, you know that you are

purchasing an authentic South East Australian Aboriginal designed and/or crafted product. shop KOORIE is also an integrated part of our educational experience. It is another opportunity enabling our visitors to learn of the uniqueness of Aboriginal Victorians, our cultures and communities through art, craft and design. shop KOORIE also makes a significant contribution to improving the outcomes of our Aboriginal communities by developing and improving the knowledge, understanding, appreciation and practice of Indigenous arts and design.

In addition to the income earning activities arising from shop KOORIE and our fee-for-service Education Programs, our rooms and spaces are also available for hire by external organisations for meetings and other group events and functions. Surrounded by the largest collection of Koorie art and artefacts in Australia and overlooking the Birrarung on one side and Federation Square on the other, our spaces promote and support the diversity of Aboriginal peoples of South East Australia and celebrate our strong and continuing contemporary culture grounded in a 60,000 year old history

We also offer a Friends of the Trust program through our Moogji Club. Moogji means “special friend”, and our Moogji Club Friends help to raise awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity of Aboriginal culture and contribute to the broader goal of reconciliation for all Australians.

5. STRATEGIC GOALS

Our Strategic Goals from 2017 - 2020 are to:

1. **STRENGTHEN** our relationships with Victorian Aboriginal communities
2. **PROMOTE** and celebrate our continuing living Victorian Aboriginal culture
3. **EXTEND** our reach and enhance our Visitors' experience
4. **DEVELOP** our people and capabilities

Whilst *the first three goals* guide how we interface with our communities, the public and external stakeholders, the fourth goal relates to our internal organisational capacity. This includes not only our people but also our revenue base, which underpins our goals and objectives enabling us to focus on best practice delivery of our programs and services.

6. SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: **STRENGTHEN** our relationships with Victorian Aboriginal communities

Strategies	Outcomes
Develop a community engagement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Elders' Council to guide cultural integrity across the Trust's programs, services and operations • Annual consultations with rural and regional communities to ensure the Trust is relevant and reflective of community aspirations
Strengthen our connection to Koorie organisations throughout Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koorie organisations use our spaces • Koorie organisations' staff and members are stakeholders, clients, visitors and friends
Improve community access to our collections, exhibitions and public programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members supported on-site • Innovative technological framework implemented to support on-line exhibitions, oral histories, events and projects • A regional/outreach exhibition program is delivered
Provide an outlet for the creative expression of Aboriginal Victorians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shop KOORIE recognised as the leading outlet for Victorian Aboriginal arts, craft and design

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: PROMOTE and celebrate our continuing living Victorian Aboriginal culture

Strategies	Outcomes
Create a vibrant cultural hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and vibrant education, exhibition, collection and retail experiences (real and virtual) • Adopt new mediums for supporting and promoting Aboriginal Victorian art and crafts e.g. film, photography, interactive exhibitions and public program activities • Special community events are held annually e.g. workshops and Koorie Krismas, to bring community and the broader community together in celebration of Victorian Aboriginal art and culture
Deliver culturally strong programs, services and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition programs are representative of Victorian Aboriginal artists • Our Victorian Aboriginal Oral History Collection is inclusive of the diverse Victorian Aboriginal communities and the experiences and knowledge of our Elders • Community members and organisations utilise and value our Koorie Family History Service • Innovative public programs are delivered to raise awareness and educate stakeholders and visitors about Aboriginal history and culture
Maintain the integrity of the Trust’s collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified gaps in our collections are addressed through targeted acquisitions • Our Oral History Collection is grown strategically with a focus on contemporary Elders from a broad range of language groups • We are recognised for best practice in collection preservation and management
Provide advocacy for Victorian Aboriginal art and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our cultural knowledge, expertise and connections with Aboriginal artists, art and culture organisations and communities is sought after and valued by all stakeholders • We are a strong advocate for the recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal art and culture in Victoria

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: EXTEND OUR REACH AND ENHANCE our Visitors' experience

Strategies	Outcomes
Develop engagement strategies relevant to the diverse current and future audiences of the Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted engagement and promotional activities implemented to increase the number of visitors to the Trust: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aboriginal community (Elders, youth, rural, urban) ○ Tourists (Victorian, Interstate, International) ○ Schools/ educational institutions ○ Corporates ○ Philanthropists ○ Other • Grow the Moogji Club Friends group
Develop innovative modes of delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology to enhance the impact of our programs and services • Real-time on-line exhibitions and events are delivered to increase access to the Trust • Visitors are provided with holistic experiences through the integration of exhibitions, collections, tours, education programs, oral histories, merchandise and special projects
Make our diverse and unique collections more visible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital and printed publications on exhibitions, collections and other programs, eg curriculum • The Trust's website is accessible, easy to navigate, and interactive • An App to assist visitors access and understand our collections is developed
Deliver innovative, collaborative, diverse and culturally strong programs and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership projects with other Koorie and Arts organisations are developed • Public programs developed as a means of connecting with and to our Victorian Aboriginal communities and passing on cultural knowledge

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: DEVELOP our people and capabilities

Strategies	Outcomes
Foster a flexible, diverse, skilled cohesive workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increase in the number of Aboriginal staff employed in the Trust, particularly in leadership roles • A succession plan for key positions is developed • Pathways into and out of the Trust are clear and supported (e.g. internships, mentoring, voluntary positions)
Ensure the Trust's facilities meet the aspirations of its stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust is able to expand/ extend its space to meet the emerging expectations of community, artists, Friends, visitors and users of its programs and services
Establish partnerships and collaborations to deliver on our strategic goals and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships and sponsorship arrangements in place to secure future funding • Collaborations established to assist in the delivery of exhibitions, events, public program and education activities
Ensure a culture of Board excellence and best practice management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert Advisory Committees to the Board are established • Risks are managed effectively • We are recognised for best practice in organisational governance • Growth in sponsorship and donations • Robust financial management and reporting systems

7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

We will continually monitor and measure our success against our strategic goals. By 2020 we will:

- Have strengthened our connection to all of our key stakeholders, particularly Victoria's Aboriginal community
- Be the place to go for an authentic, high quality and memorable experience of the cultural richness of South-Eastern Australia
- Be recognised and respected as a pre-eminent Australian Aboriginal organisation and a source of cultural knowledge, expertise and advice on South-Eastern Aboriginal Australia
- Be making a significant contribution to Melbourne's vibrant artistic, creative and cultural landscape
- Have meaningful and relevant partnerships which increase our reach and accessibility
- Be a valued source of advocacy and guidance on increasing the Aboriginal footprint on Victoria's physical environment and infrastructure