**Zeta Wilson:** Alright, welcome, and thank you for attending this afternoon. My name is Zeta Wilson, and I’m the Project Manager for Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum unit F-10 at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Just before I start this presentation about Aboriginal perspectives in the Victorian curriculum, the humanities in the secondary setting, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues who will be assisting today. That’s the Manager of Victorian curriculum F-10 unit, Craig Smith, with his support today, and also, too...with his support today with the Q&A section, and Peter Fisher with the behind-the-scenes support for these webinars.

Also, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues, the curriculum managers, Gerry Martin and Leonie Brown, and the key stakeholder, Vaso Elefsiniotis from VAEAI, who will be co-delivering this afternoon.

Now, we also noticed too as regards to the sound quality. If you want to improve that, you may want to try click on the auto broadcast button, which is below your screen, and see whether that makes a difference. Also too, we’d like to inform you that this webinar is being recorded, and you’ll have access to the recording and the PowerPoint presentation, which will be published on the VCAA F-10. And for today, in this webinar, we’ll be managing the questions only through the chat. So if you look on the chat function, make sure you click ‘to all participants’, so then we’ll be able to see your questions. So, at the end of this session, we’ll allow the time to answer your questions as well.

So, before we begin, I would like to acknowledge country. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the many lands across Victoria on which each of you are living, learning and working from today. For me, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians are the Wadawurrung people and their ancestral lands that I’m speaking to you from today. When acknowledging country, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s spiritual and cultural connection to country. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and waterways over generations and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. And as we share of our knowledge and teaching and learning, may we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the nation, and hope that they will walk with us on our journey.

So, Aboriginal perspectives in the humanities. We’ll look at History, Civics & Citizenship, and Geography. I’ll just give you sort of a brief overview of the contents of the presentation. So, in it, I’ll just cover an overview of Aboriginal perspectives in the Victorian curriculum, and that’s just considering the cross-curriculum priorities, about learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the humanities. Also, again, briefly, in overview of Aboriginal perspectives in the humanities, I will consider some of the protocols and suitable resources for embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the humanities for secondary teachers in a localised and Victorian context.

The curriculum managers, they will provide an overview, consider their curriculum area, and the focus, as you can see today, is on History and Geography, Civics & Citizenship, and they’ll make that connection to the curriculum content, and also in a localised and Victorian context.

The key stakeholders – I just want to acknowledge the involvement from VACL. So, there’s an apology from Aunty Fay, but we have Vaso from VAEAI. She too will share her experience and knowledge and contribute in the Q&A section.

So, Aboriginal perspectives in the Victorian curriculum F-10 overview. As we know, to meet the diverse needs of all students, the Victorian curriculum F-10 provides an inclusive and flexible framework for all schools to develop their teaching and learning program. Now, learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is embedded across in the Victorian F-10. Now, because this occurs in different curriculum areas, we call it the cross-curriculum priorities. Now, the cross-curriculum priorities for learning about the histories or cultures of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples provides an opportunity for all students to deepen their knowledge and understanding about the oldest living culture. It is also important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the classroom to see their own cultural identity and their history reflected in their learning.

By engaging with the learning areas across 11 years of schooling - so, from Prep to Year 10 – students will build their ability to show their appreciation and understanding about why – why it’s important to show the respect and empathy towards the First Nation peoples.

Now, this deep learning over time can occur only because of the meaningful learning experiences that explore the shared viewpoints and perspectives from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when learning about the rich histories and cultures here in Australia.

To the next point, about a localised and Victorian context. So, one great starting point is the community-preferred education model. When it comes to learning about the history and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, start teaching your students in a localised and Victorian context. Now, what do I mean by that? First, think about where your school is situated, who are the traditional owners, then localise the content about the history and culture of the traditional owners to suit the local area, the community, and surrounding areas. Next, you can extend your teaching and learning program to incorporate the many Aboriginal groups across Victoria – then you’ll be providing a Victorian context. So, by following this community-preferred education model, you’ll be able to embed Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum with a focus on a localised and Victorian context. And of course, you can extend the students’ learning about the history and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

So, this table here that you see, what it does is just provides an overview of the number of content descriptions and elaborations that actually make those explicit references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures across the humanities for the secondary setting. So, if you notice in the middle, you’ll see that overall, History, 35, Geography, 30, Civics & Citizenship, 8. But in the secondary environment, you can see the breakdown of those numbers.

So, if you would like a summary of the curriculum content, and that’s learning about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, that is found on the VCAA website, in the section of Overview for Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

Now, as we know, History tells us so much about our past that can provide the historic and contemporary focus on...focus. And Geography, as we know, is about places, relationships between people and their environment, and Civics & Citizenship, you have the legal and political systems. And just to highlight some of those pivotal events in Australia, in particular, the 1967 referendum, civil rights, and those policies of segregation and assimilation.

Now, as these points on these slides just highlight, it’s just some of the topics you can be discussing with your students. So, the impact of colonisation. We know that actually had a devastating impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and yet, through all of that, you still see that ongoing relationship and spiritual connection to country and place, and how strong that is still for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

And then there was a time for a change, in the political scene, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with the civil rights movement, You have your protests, got your land rights, and then it just leads into where we are today, the resilience and self-determination.

So you have that opportunity to take your students on that journey and help them to see how time has changed the landscape of Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

So, there is a short summary of that. Now I’ll hand over to Gerry, who will talk about History.

**Gerry Martin:** Good afternoon, and welcome. It’s great to see so many people here. But I’m gonna change it up a little bit, because I see there’s a really great question that’s already in the chat box I think we should probably address before we move on. And I think it’s Christie says, “In terms of appropriate language, what is the best term to use – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders collectively, Aboriginals, Indigenous, First Nations, First Nations people?” and she’s really quite conscious. So, Zeta, maybe, do you want to address that question straight off the bat before we get into it? Or maybe Vaso, you might want to address it?

**Zeta Wilson:** Yep. So, you love language. So, the most preferred term is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. It’s... Yep. That seems to be the most common reference. Indigenous... I think the term is Commonwealth. You need to look at sometimes just the origins of words and that. So... Like I said, the most preferred is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, because then you are inclusive. First Nation peoples, often I think that... I think, on an international level, that term is used, and that...and more so in the art space, as well, too. But, collectively, if you... You’re safe to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. So Vaso, if you want to elaborate on that, that would be good. (CHUCKLES)

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** (CHUCKLES) No worries. I think you’ve just shown the best approach to take, which is to ask community members what they prefer. And Zeta is the expert, you know, in our current panel on this, and in her role in Aboriginal perspectives. You know, and in my experience, all I can add is really just to... Well, nothing really to add. I have noticed over the last 30 years as, you know, terminology shifts and preferences amongst community, definitely a preference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

When we’re often talking about, on the national level, we might use Indigenous. But, you know, it sort of depends on the context and the genre, really. I mean, we’re usually using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders when we’re talking nationally as well. More and more I notice First Nations coming in and I see that, you know, Zeta said, on the international level and in the arts, very much so. And I see that it perhaps has come from overseas, but there’s definitely...I can see also a real strong preference from younger people to use First Nations more and more. So watch this space.

And terminology is so much a part of self-determination and self-identity, so ask people in Victoria, we also have a tendency to use Koorie, and then there are others who prefer to be called by their actual language group name, rather than collective Koorie. Back to you.

**Gerry Martin:** Thank you, Zeta and Vaso, for that. Before I get into it, I would like to begin by acknowledging and paying my respects to the Kulin people, to the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet. I would like to also acknowledge their long tradition of learning, sharing knowledge, history and culture for over 60,000 years on this land. I’d like to pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present here today. Particularly, I’d like to acknowledge Zeta as well.

So, as I get into it, History is a very common place to explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Just give me one second to get control of the slide. But it’s also really important to remember that History is not the only place. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives should be found across all humanities areas, but also across all curriculum areas. And that’s a really important place...thing to remember, and it’s got an obvious home right here in the humanities place.

When looking at History, it’s really important as students are learning about the past, it requires them to engage with both the historical knowledge – the facts – also the narrative, and then apply those historical thinking concepts and skills in constructing history. So students really should be constructing their own understanding of the past, and that’s really, really quite pivotal in the study of History in the F-10 curriculum.

So, when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures through historical thinking concepts, sequencing and using historical sources and identity...sorry, identifying continuity and change, then applying these concepts really is fundamental in helping students construct that path, so it’s really quite important.

As we know, using historical sources are really the building blocks of history and historical thinking. So it really demands the students engage with a variety of historical perspectives from the time being studied, as well as engaging with historical interpretations from today. When using historical perspectives and historical interpretations, it’s vitally important to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as well as contemporary historians. So, their historical interpretation of the past is really quite pivotal.

In History levels 7 to 10, curriculum really demands that engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and their interpretations of the past as well. It’s also important that students have the opportunity to engage with those contested debates in Australian history, and, as we know, there are many contested debates in Australian history. So it’s really, really important, when we do engage with those contested and complex and difficult events and significant moments in our past, that we actually engage with those range of perspectives from the time, both from a European but also from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective.

As well, in thinking about the concept of continuity and change and cause and effect, it’s really quite important to understand that, you know, changes for some people in our community were significant, while changes may not have affected other parts of the community. So, at times, to understand that continuity and change was not happening to everyone at the same time. So, particularly, again, when engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, understanding sometimes change was dramatic for them, while change may not be as dramatic for them at different moments in time. So it’s, again, really, really important to think about the different perspectives and experiences of people at the time, and how the significant events were shaping their experience and their perspectives.

So, again, looking at levels 7 and 8, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, the nature of sources of evidence about ancient Australia and what they reveal about Australia’s past, such as the use of sources and the importance of conserving the remains of the ancient past, including heritage, culture and artefacts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. So, use of sources becomes a very important part of this.

Again, it’s important to remember, even...even though Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are not always explicit in the content of the content descriptors, the concept of perspectives compels us all to engage in a variety of perspectives, and that means engaging with not only European perspectives from overseas, but also the variety of perspectives within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. It’s also important to remember that those perspectives should not be treated as something separate, or a genre on their own, but actually, we should engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as part of the narrative. It should be entwined as we explore the history of Australia, right through since colonisation.

So, for example, when we talk about the perspectives of soldiers during World War I and World War II, there’s a real opportunity to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in these contexts as well, and there’s plenty of evidence of the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well during these moments in time.

So, what are historical perspectives? It’s about exploring the point of view, the attitudes, values and beliefs of people in the past. Often in history, we hear the white and privileged men’s voices and their perspectives from the time, so it’s really, really important to be conscious that we need to include these silent voices – the voices of women, the voices of children, different ethnic groups and, most importantly, the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices from the past.

So, again, when looking at perspectives, consider the thoughts and feelings and reasons for action of people at the time and how it’s different from...from different groups in society at the time.

Students consider the mindsets of historical actors, and the ways that context shapes the way they thought and acted during that time. And again, really, it’s important for students to critically challenge and corroborate sources to assess their reliability, and recognise that this source is from a European white man’s perspective, and start to think about, well, what are the other perspectives of that time, and how can we identify or find sources of evidence for their perspectives, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives?

Again, historians... There is an emerging wealth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander historians in our community today. People such as Bruce Pascoe’s Dark Emu getting a lot of great attention, but also things...people like Tyson Yunkaporta, and his book, Sand Talk, is really useful. So there’s lots of research now emerging from within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about their interpretation of the past and their views on contested history. So engage with that really rich information. So, interpretation’s been the work of historians, and how they use sources to construct an understanding of the past.

Also it’s important to remember that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the past shouldn’t be treated as something uniform. You know, just because you have one perspective of an Aboriginal person doesn’t necessarily mean it represents all of their perspectives. And that’s really, really important to remember, because there is a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s perspectives in the past, and this may result in the time that perspective’s taken from, the geographic location, language group, experience. So again, understanding the author of sources is really, really important.

Also in history, it’s important not to treat these perspectives as something separate or a genre on their own – rather, again, thinking about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective and interpretation as part of the whole narrative, not something separate to the narrative. Oh. Sorry.

And again, when thinking about the content at levels 7 and 8, and 9 and 10, it’s rich in content. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Cultures unit is actually unique to Victoria. No other jurisdiction has that unit within their curriculum. So that’s a really rich place to explore the rich history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civilisation here in Australia, before we get into looking at those popular ones of ancient Egypt and Greece and so on.

Similarly, at levels 9 and 10, looking at colonisation, settlement, the intended and unintended effects of settlement, is a really great opportunity to explore the perspectives of Aboriginal people during this time. And, of course, the rights and freedoms and exploring the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders’ demands for rights and freedoms, not only in Australia, but it’s also within a global context, and seeing how they feed each other.

So it’s really a great opportunity to explore, and the levels 7 to 10 curriculum provide lots of opportunity to explore those Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum, and engage in a variety of perspectives, and engage in a lot of that new research that encourages...from Aboriginal historians about their interpretation of the past, and to hear their voices.

That’s really a bit of a summary of the History curriculum, and opportunities to explore those perspectives. Now I’m gonna hand over to my colleague Leonie Brown.

**Leonie Brown:** Thank you very much, Gerry. I would first of all like to begin by acknowledging and paying my respects to the Kulin people, the traditional custodians of all of the lands on which we meet. I would like to acknowledge their long tradition of learning, sharing knowledge, history and culture for over 60,000 years, which provides such an important insight into the understanding of our peoples and our environment. I would like to pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples present here today. In particular I’d like to acknowledge my colleague Zeta Wilson.

I’m going to take you through a very quick walk through the 7-10 Geography curriculum. Although... Sorry. My apologies for a semitrailer backing in our driveway at the moment. (LAUGHS) So, back to this.

So, I’d like to kick off by looking at Years 7 and 8, and I’d like to choose a significant place in my local area, which is Lake Burrumbeet. And it’s a water body of significant spiritual, economic, cultural and aesthetic value for people today, but especially for those people...Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and it has a huge significance in the life of those people. So it’s a classic example of where you take a particular place in a surrounding space and look at the interconnection between all of those three. And that’s really what the Geography curriculum, the Victorian curriculum, is all about - place, space and interconnection between those. So, with Lake Burrumbeet, it was significant for the local Wathaurong people, because it was a great food source, and the very extensive kangaroo grasslands of the western volcanic plains were a really, really rich environment for these people to live. It’s very typical of a place that we may take for granted as being part of our natural area or our natural landscape, but it has significance for those people in particular, and it’s a great starting point if you look at that interconnection between place and space.

So, with the next aspect of the curriculum, I’d like to move into another area and look at, this time, 7 and 8, still looking at the unit to do with place and liveability. So, here, I’ve got two images of the mighty Maribyrnong River. The first one, if you just take away the CBD in the background but look at the concentration of this image here, it would indicate to you the significant place for those people. So it was a really important space for the people of the Wurundjeri tribe. It was a sheltered valley with fertile river flats, abundant food source, fresh water, and as well as the river being a really valuable travel and trade route. This photograph here is a more contemporary photograph, and for a large popu...area...sorry, a large number of people in the Melbourne population, this particular area of the Maribyrnong and the surrounds is significant. So... (AUDIO DROPS OUT) But that’s not to say that we shouldn’t actually recognise the importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the past. So it’s a classic way that you could actually enter that area or factors that influenced decisions about...people making about where they live, and the perception of the liveability of particular places. So again, place, space and interconnection is easily accessed through this particular example that I’m choosing.

A more high-priority one and one that you may choose to go with is looking at that very significant place of Uluru. And in 7 and 8, in landforms and landscapes, you could actually investigate the spiritual, cultural, aesthetic value of landscapes and landforms for people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. And if you would like to take on board the current sort of perspective, where those people’s attitudes and importance have been recognised significantly, where the actual management of that national park has taken back to those peoples, and it’s a classic example of how the significance to those people have been recognised through that management control, which is somewhat different to what it used to be not so long ago. But, nevertheless, a really positive move forward in that particular space.

We move on to 9 and 10 now, which is actually looking at biomes and food security. And a classic example of this, I’d like to actually take you to a rather recent developed resource that the VCAA has on their homepage. It’s in an interesting space, because it’s in the VCE ag hort support space, but it actually shows... I’ve done screenshots of a couple of images from that particular case study, and that case study is a fantastic story of the Gunditjmara people of south-western Victoria, where, some 6,000 years ago, they actually had an amazingly sophisticated eel trap aquaculture system and stone house sites, which indicate great diversity, whereby Aboriginal people were living in a semi-nomadic lifestyle and demonstrating a rich, extensive knowledge of that really complex environment. So that resource, which I’ve highlighted here on that link - and there’s some images from it – would support you if you wanted to take on board more exploration about the land and resource management strategies used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In that same 9 and 10 space, looking at environmental change and management, this time I’ve chosen an image of an important part of Victoria. That peak there is Victoria’s highest peak, Mount Bogong, and the surrounding area, the Victorian Alps. I’d like to actually use this particular space to demonstrate the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander techniques, where they used slow burn techniques, which are currently being adopted more and more so by management, in particular the Alps, in this place...sorry, in this space, to manage bushfires within the Alpine National Park. So it’s a real recognition of that incredible knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have of their environment, and it’s where those practices are now being practised in general management.

The next aspect of the curriculum is actually in the area of 9 and 10 still, but it’s geographies of human wellbeing. And this is where I wanted to share an example of where you can potentially use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in your curriculum. So, last week, it was a really important week in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ calendars, in that it was Indigenous Literacy Week. And the Indigenous Literacy Foundation is a wonderful example of a non-government organisation working very successfully to build capacity and improve human wellbeing in those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. So, in that sense, it’s a really good example to use a good news story for you to explore with your students. And something that we always find...I always find it’s important to actually go towards something that’s very positive that actually indicates that communities are being empowered.

So on that very positive note, I’d like to finish my presentation on the Geography curriculum, and hand back to my colleague Gerry, to go into Civics & Citizenship. Thank you.

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