**Aunty Fay Muir:** So, it’s up to question and answers now.

**Zeta Wilson:** So, we’ll hand that over to Craig for the Q&A. There we go, Craig.

**Craig Smith:** Thank you, Zeta. I’d invite anyone to put any questions or comments, including... Quite often, teachers are incredibly generous and like to share resources that they’ve found useful. Please feel free to put them in the chat box.

We’ve got sort of three questions there at the moment. I feel they’ve sort of been answered in part, but I’m happy to sort of go back, perhaps, to the first one, which is from Maryanne, who writes, “What qualifications do you need to teach in Aboriginal languages?” And I’ll throw that open to the panel.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** OK. Well, first of all, we’re trying to get our teachers to...teachers trained up with their language courses at the moment. And we’ve got 11 students in there. So, it’s really, you know, up to your traditional owners who can teach the language, but I’m sure they will say that they’d like their own people to teach language first.

**Craig Smith:** Um... Sorry.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** I was just going to add to Aunty Fay. So, it’s a shifting landscape with qualifications. The Cert IV is a new course in Victoria, and hasn’t been a prerequisite, and is still not a prerequisite. The most important qualification has been community...has been traditional owner endorsement. So... And that’s where Aunty Fay’s saying that the preferred teacher and, in fact, the ones that mostly get approval – although there are exceptions – are those that represent the traditional...that are from the traditional owner group, because they’re talking about their own language and culture. So it’s often been a community person, often without...non-teacher qualified. In that sort of a model, a teacher is often in the classroom because of their VIT registration and duty of care. But other times, in other programs, it is a qualified teacher who delivers that program, and that allows classroom teachers to have planning time. So, it depends on the model.

**Craig Smith:** And Sarah, could I invite you to elaborate a little further on...you know, perhaps Vaso too, in terms of hints and tips of establishing a language program...a Victorian Aboriginal Language program in a school.

**Sarah Glatz:** Sure. Thanks, Craig. And Fay and Vaso, jump in if there are things you want to say as I go along as well. I think... Yeah. I think you need to establish contact with... Work out even who your traditional owners are. I think that’s probably the first port of call. And if that hasn’t come through clearly, you need to get in touch with your LACG, if you haven’t got parents, or you don’t know who those traditional owners are, who can help you find the right people who know what the language of the country is.

And once you’ve got that and those connections established, I think, as I said before, you need to be patient. This isn’t something that’s going to happen just overnight. It’s not like...I’ve been a French and German teacher for years. I can’t just access in 24/7 resources online, and potentially a whole lot of teachers. It’s something that will be such a worthwhile thing to do. It’s really worth going on this journey. But it is a long, slow and steady journey. And it’s something that, unlike most other things, especially from the principal down, you’re used to being able to dictate the terms. You make a decision, maybe with your school council, maybe with your teachers, about what to do. Whereas this has to be done very gently, very cautiously, particularly given the historical background.

You need to join up with your local community in a genuine, respectful way, and get to know them, invite them in, if they’re not already part of your school. Look at the days that can be celebrated as first steps to starting.

We’ve just been running this... Well, Zeta’s organised this great webinar series of perspectives. Get your teachers involved in thinking how they can do that before you start doing language, because it is more tricky, and make sure that all those connections are really, really strong for the time when it’s ready, when the time is right to start.

And so I think, yeah, it’s also worth getting in touch. It’s more the curriculum style, the nitty gritty of how you put it into the classroom. That’s probably my area, and I think Fay’s fabulous on answering questions about language, and she’s had many years of experience across this state in so many different areas that she can give you really solid advice on what to do with that. And Vaso’s working at the forefront of education, looking after Koorie kids, but also languages across the state. So, all three of us around. If you have got questions, please make sure that you email us.

Have you guys got some more things? I think I’ve forgotten a few things along the way.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** I think you’ve said it pretty well, Sarah. I just want to remind all the participants that Sarah showed earlier in her slides the 10 steps to getting started, and that’s sort of more details...a lot of the...where to find information about or what the protocols are to starting a language program in a school, or an early...in particular schools. Similar protocols exist around early childhood services, but we can, as agencies and organisations, advise around that. But, yeah, go to the website, the dedicated section on how to get started, and it sort of explains a lot of that.

Aunty Fay, you were going to say something?

**Aunty Fay Muir:** No, I wasn’t. (LAUGHS)

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** (LAUGHS)

**Sarah Glatz:** But I do think one of the things is also the language team. Once you’ve made that decision, no-one person could do this all by themselves. So you need to work out what your strengths are. If you’re got a classroom teacher who’s VIT registered who can speak the language, that means you probably need fewer people, but you will need resources, and often those will need to be created with...you know, again, that will take time.

I’ve just been advising a group, I’m sure they won’t mind me saying that, down in Gunditjmara country, this time it’s not Peek Wurrung, which is more near Warrnambool, it’s Dhauwurd Wurrung, which is over Portland way. So there’ll be eight primary schools in the Portland area who will be starting to teach a language next year. And they have, every step of the way, developed this with their traditional owners’ approval, and input and KESOs and language people. They’re starting slowly with the perspectives across the curriculum, but it’s a very, very exciting project. And so I think, yeah, just work out who your resources are and put everyone together and come together and start discussing that and planning as well.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Just one thing I’d like to remind everybody – that not all Aboriginal groups have got dictionaries. We’re still working on our dictionary. It takes a long time to put our language together into a book. And also, resources – there’s not many resources out there either to do with different language groups, so just be aware of that. And that’s where, you know, you can talk with your traditional owners and see, you know, if they can come in and talk to the kids, and the kids could start designing their own little resource pack for their school for the language as well.

**Sarah Glatz:** And back on the whole thing of languages that Zeta had said earlier on, when she and I went into schools, and I know the others said this as well, in a school that may not be teaching Aboriginal language, but they’ve had permission to use words like ‘welcome’ or things like that, putting those in your reception signs around the school, they’re very clear signs to anyone coming in that it’s a welcoming place, that you’re interested not only in supporting your Koorie students in the school – because you may not have many, or any – but that you are serious about engaging with the Aboriginal community around you and, I guess, as part of the reconciliation process as well.

**Craig Smith:** Thanks for that, Sarah. Before I ask our experts, I just want to draw people’s attention to the chat box. There’s some contact details there that Nola has very generously popped in. And this is particularly pertinent for anyone watching in the Woomera or Grampian schools. It’s a contact to one of the land councils for that region.

Next question is from Vicki. Vicki asks, “It’s OK to learn language from where you live when you belong...?” or, rather, “you’re on different Aboriginal country?”

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Again, you’ve gotta go through those protocols. And if you get permission to learn the language from where you come from, that’s fine. But you’ve also got to ask, if you’re in a school in Victoria and you’re teaching, you want to teach your language, you need to go to the traditional owners and ask permission, if that’s OK or not.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** If I can add, as Sarah explained, and Aunty Fay, and Zeta, with the teaching of Aboriginal languages – and I suppose I’ll say this having been involved for many years – it is very different. And it is...it’s an exciting...it’s really, really exciting, and it’s really, really important. But it’s also very different – different landscape to other languages and other languages in education. We’re working with revival languages, reclamation languages, languages where there are huge gaps in knowledge, particularly in Victoria. And we need to tread that...as exciting as it is, we also tread very carefully. So, some of the discourse, what we talk about is with the Aboriginal languages education, we’re teaching about languages, and we’re teaching about languages and culture. The, you know, people...students aren’t going to come out as fluent speakers, but...because community needs to catch up first.

There were serious policies and practices that forbade people from speaking language. So there is still a lot of grief and mourning around that. And it’s really important to understand that this is... As much as education, language in education, can certainly – and I believe this strongly – stimulate language growth and involvement and language awareness, we need to be always bringing community along and involved. So, you know, there’s often the question, “Well, can I learn? Why can’t I learn?” It is always seems... That’s what I have...what I’ve seen. It is about engaging with community. And when you’re seen to have a genuine relationship, whether it’s as an individual or a school, then people are very happy to share what they know, or to take you on that. When it’s like, “Well, I have a right,” without the responsibility, then it’s more appropriation. So...and it’s not good. So that’s why we say these are delicate relationships that need building and need nourishing.

And then you’ve got a fantastic program. And when you have language programs that are really well supported by their community, like, it looks like what’s going on in Portland at the moment, so much excitement, and in particular, schools that have their principal’s support behind them, they work really, really strongly.

So, yeah, I just wanted to add that about the historical context, and also that this is a part of language reclamation and revival, and we really need to be ensuring that community comes along on that journey. You know, they’re nice words, we say ‘journey’ all the time, but it is a journey. And then there is greater support from community. And to be...as Aunty Fay says, to be patient and that no sometimes means no. And to find if there are other ways to incorporate language and culture in your school if the traditional owners in the local community have said, “No, not at this time.” But there might be other avenues, which is about inviting that expertise in to share little bits at a time.

We’ve gone all quiet.

**Craig Smith:** Yeah. No, thank you. It’s just a little laggy, I’m afraid. Turning the microphone on and off. Thank you for that from the panel. And I hope they goes some of the way to answering questions put by Kirstie, Sheila and Maryanne as well. If not, please feel free to add a second clause to question in the chat box, and we’ll get to it in a moment.

Question from Gail. Gail asks, “If we have a student who identifies as Yorta Yorta and wants to learn her language, is there a workshop available?” She’s living on Bungaree land.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** At the moment, there...there is up in Yorta Yorta country, but...I don’t see... That’s where the connection with the elders comes in. If that student, or the parent of that student, can get in contact with the elders from Yorta Yorta and ask them is that OK for the language to be taught to their...say, their daughter, would be fine.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** If the student is a primary school student, the school might be able to – and if this one particular student is keen – talk to the school, Gowrie Street Primary School in Shepparton, that teaches at the moment. They may be doing online learning, but they might be able to somehow incorporate that student into...into their language program somehow. That was always the big vision when these school programs happened, that you might have...because you’ve got such a diverse community in Victoria, Koorie popula...and particularly in Melbourne, so many from all over Victoria, Koories, and elsewhere – that you might have a Yorta Yorta-Bangerang student sitting in the middle of Melbourne able to link up with that language program happening on Yorta Yorta-Bangerang country. So, with this sort of technology, anything is possible. It’s up to schools to discuss that and liaise. That’s another way as well.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Yeah.

**Craig Smith:** Sorry. There is... It’s a bit like I’m on the other side of the moon. There’s a 10-second, you know, lag between hitting the microphone and anything happening, so bear with us. We’re all trying to do our best.

There is... It’s more of a comment, really, from Sharon Lee, and it goes back to what you were just saying a moment ago, Vaso. Sharon Lee writes, “My mob have an app. Weragee...”

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Wiradjuri.

**Sarah Glatz:** Wiradjuri.

**Craig Smith:** Thank you. “It was developed by our Uncle Stan Grant and Aunty Flo Grant. But please get permission before teaching it.” Would the panel like to discuss a little further, you know, how does one... You find resources online, you find some interesting apps and so on. How do you translate it back into the country where your school actually sits?

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Do you want to go, Sarah?

**Sarah Glatz:** No, I think you should, Fay, because you can talk about the VACL apps and using them correctly, maybe as a start, and then Vaso and I can chime in.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** OK, fine. Yes, VACL have some language apps that they’ve worked on – there’s the Wemba Wemba, the Wiradjuri app, I think there’s a Yorta Yorta one, and there’s a couple more. So, these are all done with children speaking the language, and they’ve been recorded, so that you can hear the way the language is spoken. And that’s a good way of learning the language. So if you look up on the VACL website, you can find those.

**Sarah Glatz:** I think Vaso, you should talk about it, because you’re the queen of resources as well.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** (CHUCKLES) I was just going to say, I think that...just to add to what Aunty Fay said, that when apps are being made, they’re generally then in the public domain. So there is an understanding that people will engage with those resources. And it’s wonderful, the work that’s going across the border with Wiradjuri languages and the apps, and the work that happened in Victoria with language apps.

So, as with anything to do with Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum, including languages, we always say it’s about context. So, if you’re going to use an app in your classroom, or promote it, you know, outside of a language program, then be aware that you’re using an app that’s in the public domain. But talk about where that language is from, and you have your visual displays and you try and communicate as best as possible, as we’ve talked about, the protocols with traditional owners from that country to say, “Look, you know, we’ve come across your app and we really like it.” Sometimes these apps can be really useful, tremendously, in the language program in...interstate, in Western Australia, Wadjarri language, that I’ve worked with for many years. Many years after the dictionary came out, there was an app produced, and I’d walk into schools when I went back a couple of years ago, and they might be doing 10 words a day, just for just general learning.

So, yeah, that’s all my bit on the resources. There are so few resources available. And that’s why, in the steps to getting started in any of the protocols around languages, Aboriginal languages, we really push the forming a language group around you, because you will be making...if you’re involved in the Aboriginal language teaching, you will be making resources from scratch. And that’s often the most creative part of it. Some incredible work, from very, very talented Aboriginal teachers and artists that come out. And, you know, really high quality resources, but you’re making them from scratch.

**Craig Smith:** There’s a question, really, from Dagmar. Dagmar writes – sorry, I’ll just bring it back up – “Many picture books now have some Aboriginal translations of some words in it. Can I say these words, although I’m not sure if I pronounce them right? These picture books are often not local as well.”

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Well, you can use those, if it’s out there in the wider domain. So you can use those ones that are there. It’s just, you know, you’ve got to get your tongue around the pronunciations, which is really hard.

**Sarah Glatz:** And I think...I just popped up...Melbourne Uni’s got a website, which has actually got all sorts of sounds that are common sounds across Australia. They may not be in your local language. So, again, you need to check with your local mob, but it’s a really good place to start if you wanting to pronounce things correctly, because some of the sounds aren’t at all like English. And it’s, obviously, really tricky, because it was always an oral language, it wasn’t written down. And so when things got written down, it was mainly by settlers who came from various Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. So they might have been Welsh or Scottish or, you know, various English dialects, then through to the French and the Germans – there were lots of German explorers who wrote things down. So, often... I remember Aunty Lee Healy was saying the other day, there are, I don’t know, maybe a hundred and something ways of spelling Taungurung, which is also pronounced now differently when she went researching her language. So I think you need to be a bit patient too, because it’s not...we’re often used to having, this is the one correct way of spelling something. Always check locally, but it’s a process of discovery in some cases.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** And just remember that our languages are changing...evolving all the time as well. So, for new words, it’s really important to understand that as well.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** With the reading of storybooks that include language, it’s the same message around context – so, always explain to your...learn where the language is coming from and explain that to your learners. You can always put maps in the classroom and use them as visual displays. Many of the storybooks might have a bit of a pronunciation guide at the back. Don’t be too ashamed...too shy to say to the kids, “I don’t know if I’m pronouncing this properly.” You know, kids love it when the teacher makes mistakes anyway. (CHUCKLES)

Don’t assume that Aboriginal people in your network, in your parent group, or in your meetings can read it. It may be their language, it may be not. They may not have had exposure to reading language written in their language, because these languages were oral language. So, you always...just always, always, always context. It’s good to include other books, because you’ve got kids in your classroom that come from all over Australia, and it’s all about being inclusive as well. Get to know who your kids are.

There are some fantastic new books in Victoria. So keep in mind...so Aunty Fay...Murphy? I’ve got Murphy in my head. Aunty Joy Murphy. Couple of great books, including the latest one, Birrarung. But Aunty Fay here on the panel has got some fantastic books, with Magabala publishers, around respect. There’s Yorta Yorta sign language, trilingual book. So there are some coming out, Victorian books. And you can jump on VAEAI’s website – For The Love Of Reading feature highlights some of the language books, or Victorian books by Victorian authors. So, that’s my bit. (CHUCKLES)

**Craig Smith:** Thank you. Jeanette’s looking for some assistance. Jeanette writes, “I’m looking for Indigenous stories that have been written in original language, although not necessarily translated into English. Are there many stories of this sort, or many approved by elders?”

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** Yep, language centres right across Australia produce language books in language, storybooks. It’s about finding those language centres. And in Victoria, Fay, we have...

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Yeah, yeah. Look, there’s so many up in the north of Australia. But the kids do...they do the artwork, and the elders put the language to those stories. So it’s beautiful to see those books being produced up north.

**Sarah Glatz:** Now, I’d suggest, if you have an idea, if you’re someone from community listening to this, approach the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. Because I’ve seen some of the books Aunty Fay was just talking about up north, produced up in Yolngu area, and the kids are so proud. They illustrate them and help write them in language. So maybe it’s time for Victoria to have a book produced down here.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** There are programs that have been running. Sharing Stories Foundation has been working with schools across Victoria for the last few years to produce books through a digitising project. So, they’ve gone to schools that already have a language program and worked with those students to tell stories and digitise those stories. So there’s also, you know, in-house publishing, which is where, often, the language team might end up making something. But the Sharing Stories series, at the moment they’re working with Swan Hill North Primary School, and translating some stories with the Koorie workforce there, and Aunty Steph Charles for Wemba Wemba. With the Koorie workforce, Sonia Kropinyeri, the KESO there. So, yeah, keep an eye out for those digitised stories as well.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** There are some books by the Latjilatji people. Storybooks for kids. And that’s from up around Robinvale.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** Yep.

**Sarah Glatz:** And Peter Fisher’s just reminded us of the Nyernila resource, which is really good. It’s got little stories from different places around Victoria. That’s downloaded. It’s written in the chat – N-Y-E-R-N-I-L-A.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** (CORRECTS PRONUNCIATION) Nyernila.

**Sarah Glatz:** Nyernila.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Yep.

**Sarah Glatz:** Thanks.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** It’s OK.

**Craig Smith:** Thank you. Jeanette, I trust our panel’s given you a number of leads to follow up in terms of your query.

Just looking... We’ve only got time for one more question. There is one question I haven’t asked yet, because it feels like it has been answered earlier. But, given it has come up again, this is from Sheila, and it’s a question we often get asked, which is, “How do I contact my local elders?” So, please feel free to repeat advice that was given earlier.

**Aunty Fay Muir:** First of all, if you’ve got Aboriginal children within your classrooms, ask them who the elders are within their community, and they will put you in touch. Otherwise, you can come through VACL, and we’ll put you in contact with the elders of the area that you’re in.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** And on top of that, schools have also at your disposal your Koori Education Workforce...

**Aunty Fay Muir:** Yep.

**Vaso Elefsiniotis:** ...who do a terrific job, and shout out to any of you out there participating today. (CHUCKLES) And also your LAECGs, your Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. So, together with these parties can help get in touch with community, to help support language learning activities in your schools and early childhood services.

**Craig Smith:** OK, I’m conscious of time. We are going to throw up a slide with contact details. And for anyone who’s looking to follow up on some of the conversations that we’ve had today, please feel free to get in touch with the various members of our panel, starting with Zeta, thank you. Zeta, I’ll pass the microphone over to you.

**Zeta Wilson:** Alright. Thank you, Craig. So, I just want to finish off. Peter, if you just want to show the next slide, The next slide is... I just want to say thank you to the panellists in delivering today’s presentation.

As you can see here, this is the second lot of...series of webinars this week, and it’s focused on secondary setting. Tomorrow’s webinar will be...the focus will be on the arts. And if you haven’t registered otherwise, please do. And as you can see, the other webinar there for Wednesday, humanities, and we finish off on Thursday with STEM.

So, thank you for attending today’s session.

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