

The background of the poster is a photograph of a large crowd of people gathered outdoors. In the foreground, several young men are performing a traditional Indigenous Australian dance. They are wearing traditional black and white fringed loincloths and have intricate white and red body paint designs on their chests and arms. The crowd in the background is diverse in age and is watching the performance with interest. The overall atmosphere is festive and cultural.

**MELBOURNE  
FESTIVAL**

**08—25  
OCTOBER  
2015**

# TANDERRUM

## LEARNING RESOURCE PACK

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Melbourne Festival's free program of activities  
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**CREATIVE VICTORIA**

# TANDERRUM

## LEARNING RESOURCE PACK

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the study guide of the 2015 Melbourne Festival production of *TANDERRUM*. The activities included are related to the AusVELS domains as outlined below. These activities are sequential and teachers are encouraged to modify them to suit their own curriculum planning and the level of their students. Lesson suggestions for teachers are given within each activity and teachers are encouraged to extend and build on the stimulus provided as they see fit.

### AUSVELS LINKS TO CURRICULUM

- **Cross Curriculum Priorities:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History and Cultures
- **The Arts:** Creating and making, Exploring and responding
- **Civics and Citizenship:** Civic knowledge and understanding, Community engagement
- **Communication:** Listening, viewing and responding, Presenting
- **English:** Reading and viewing, Writing, Speaking and Listening
- **The Humanities—History:** Historical knowledge and understanding, Historical Skills
- **The Humanities—Geography:** Geographic knowledge and understanding, Geographical skills
- **Interpersonal Development:** Building social relationships, Working in Languages: Intercultural awareness and language awareness
- **Thinking Processes:** Reasoning, processing and inquiry, Creativity, Reflection, evaluation and metacognition

### MELBOURNE FESTIVAL

Melbourne Festival is one of Australia's flagship international arts festivals and one of the major multi-arts festivals of the world, in terms of quality of work, innovation of vision, and scale and breadth of program. Each Festival brings an unparalleled feast of dance, theatre, music, visual arts, multimedia and outdoor events from renowned and upcoming Australian and International companies and artists to Melbourne. Melbourne Festival is quintessentially Melbourne's festival – physically by reaching out into the topography and geography of the city itself, artistically by presenting Melbourne's finest artists in new works and international collaborations, and demographically by engaging with as many people of Melbourne as possible, giving them ownership of their annual international festival. The 2015 Melbourne Festival will take place between 08–25 October 2015.

### STATEMENT FROM ILBIJERRI THEATRE COMPANY

ILBIJERRI (pronounced 'il BIDGE er ree') is a Woiwurrung word meaning 'Coming Together for Ceremony'.

ILBIJERRI is Australia's leading and longest running Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Company.

We create challenging and inspiring theatre creatively controlled by Indigenous artists.

Our stories are provocative and affecting and give voice to our unique and diverse cultures.

ILBIJERRI tours its work to major cities, regional and remote locations across Australia, as well as internationally. We have commissioned 30 new Indigenous works and performed for more than 150,000 people.

We deliver an extensive program of artist development for new and emerging Indigenous writers, actors, directors and creatives.

Born from community, ILBIJERRI is a spearhead for the Australian Indigenous community in telling the stories of what it means to be Indigenous in Australia today from an Indigenous perspective. Our work possesses the power to reach out and remind audiences of every person's need for family, history and heritage.

Our collaborative relationships with communities and artists are at the heart of our creative process and all our work empowers and enriches our audiences.

Artistic Director  
**Rachael Maza**

Executive Producer  
**Simeon Moran**

Associate Producer  
**Lisa Parris**

Associate Producer  
**Julia Valentini**

Company Manager  
**Lauren Bok**

Development and  
Marketing Manager  
**Iain Finlayson**

Finance Manager  
**Jon Hawkes**

Education Manager  
**Kamarra Bell-Wykes**

Office Manager  
**Monica McDonald**

### STATEMENT FROM RACHAEL MAZA ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF ILBIJERRI THEATRE COMPANY

Culturally in TANDERRUM there is no Director—as it is The Elders of the five Kulin Nation who lead the ceremony and I answer to them and this is how it should be. It has been such an incredible honour to be able to work on TANDERRUM alongside the Elders of the Kulin Nation and their mobs on whose country I was born and now live. Knowing that these cultural ceremonies were disrupted by colonisation for over 150 years and that there is much healing to be done, this Ceremony is testament to the fact that the Kulin and their Culture are strong and alive.

I would like to applaud Josephine Ridge as Artistic Director of Melbourne Festival in her wisdom in deciding that TANDERRUM should open the Melbourne Festival. It sets an example to others in following protocols of Kulin Country; on entering country you must understand and accept the Lores of that place and its people, and only then can you be Welcomed and given permission to conduct your business. I would like to applaud Melbourne Festival for respecting and making possible this ceremony, ensuring that their national and international guests and artists are able to practice their song and dance on Kulin Country safely and with respect.

TANDERRUM celebrates the culturally rich and vibrant Aboriginal communities we have here in Melbourne. I'd also like to acknowledge and give thanks to the Elders, their emerging leaders, my incredible team at Ilbijerri including the key creatives: Jacob Boehme, Mariaa Randell, James Henry, Marie Clarke, Deline Briscoe, Emma Donovan, and to Josephine Ridge at Melbourne Festival for her vision and courage.



## STATEMENT FROM ELDERS OF THE KULIN NATION

Ceremony is a vital part of our culture, traditionally and still to this day. This Ceremony was practiced by the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wadawurrung people of the Central Kulin Nation. It has been done by our people since time immemorial. For thousands of generations we have had interrelations across the Kulin Nation and its vital we revitalize this ceremony for the benefit of our children and their children and the generations to come. We honour the countless ceremonies that our Ancestors danced during Tanderrum. As the world changes the ceremonies change too but TANDERRUM still means the same thing, it's to welcome people to Country and to keep them safe. When people accept the Lore of Bunjil they agree to learn our history and respect our culture.

### ELDERS

Wurundjeri Elders  
**Aunty Diane Kerr**  
**Aunty Irene Morris**  
Wadawurrung Elder  
**Uncle Bryon Powell**  
Taungurung Elders  
**Uncle Larry Walsh**  
**Aunty Bernadette Franklin**  
Boonwurrung Elders  
**Aunty Carolyn Briggs**  
**Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir**  
Dja Dja Wurrung Elders  
**Aunty Fay Carter**  
**Aunty Linda Ford**  
**Uncle Hurtle Atkinson**

### TANDERRUM CREDITS

Artistic Director  
**Jacob Boehme**  
Artistic Mentor  
**Rachael Maza**  
Choreography  
**Jacob Boehme**  
**Mariaa Randall**  
Composer  
**James Henry**  
Musical Direction  
**Deline Briscoe**  
**Emma Donovan**  
Visual Artist / Designer  
**Maree Clarke**  
Dramaturg  
**Kamarra Bell-Wykes**  
Stage Manager  
**Brock Brocklesby**  
Production Manager  
**Ilana Russell**

### DJIRRI DJIRRI

A Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung word for willie wagtail, the next generation of leaders who act as a messenger for the Elders

Wurundjeri	Boonwurrung
<b>Mandy Nicholson</b>	<b>Marbee Williams</b>
Wadawurrung	mentored by <b>Richie Hallal</b>
<b>Tammy Gilson</b>	Dja Dja Wurrung
Taungurung	<b>Wendy Berick</b>
<b>Angela Tenbuuren</b>	<b>Ricky Nelson</b>
<b>Hannah Morphy-Walsh</b>	<b>Trent Nelson</b>

## FOCUS ONE: TWO WAY STRONG

### OBJECTIVE:

- Develop understanding of the Kulin Nation and the diversity within Aboriginal Australian cultures
- Develop understanding of the vibrant and continuous living culture of the Kulin Nation
- Develop understanding of student's local cultures and histories, and how this connects to where they live
- Develop understanding of the significance of Tanderrum
- Develop understanding of cultural reclamation

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The Aboriginal people of Australia are part of the oldest continuous living culture in human history. Our Culture is based on custom, Lore and value systems based on spiritual connection, belonging, obligation and responsibility to care for the land, waterways, animals and their people. Each Aboriginal Nation possessed their own unique customs and practices based on the Lore of their Country. This ancient knowledge was passed on from generation to generation through oral tradition; language, dance, song, story and art. Colonisation and European settlement caused deep fractures to this complex and delicate system.

Due to the severity of cultural genocide in the southern parts of Australia there is a popular misconception that Aboriginal Culture in Victoria has been wiped out, but Aboriginal Culture cannot be lost because it lives inside us and in our Country. Aboriginal cultural knowledge is not a fixed concept that stays the same; as our world evolves, our Culture does to.

Our Culture is dynamic and strong and has evolved with the advancement of technology, using both traditional and modern methods to preserve, revive and share our knowledge.

Aboriginal people are sophisticated, adaptable and resilient as we are educated in both Aboriginal and Western knowledge allowing us to walk in two worlds; working and living in our own society and that of mainstream Australia. This is often referred to as being "Two-way strong" and allows us to use a combination of Aboriginal and Western platforms for cultural promotion; sacred site preservation (caring for Country), community language programs (recording/teaching/learning traditional languages), art, (dance, song, music, theatre, story and art) sport and community celebrations and most importantly Ceremony the key to community wellbeing both spiritually and physically.

These are all expressions of our cultural identity in both traditional and contemporary forms and are all a continuum of each other.

## ACTIVITY ONE: ABORIGINAL NATIONS

1. Ask the students if they know how many Aboriginal languages were spoken in Australia and if they know the Traditional Custodians in the area that they live.
2. Now Check out the language map of Victoria  
<http://www.vaclang.org.au/Resources/maps.html>
3. and this map of Aboriginal Nations across Australia  
<http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/default.htm>
  - a) Have you seen these maps before?
  - b) Where have you seen them?
  - c) What are they used for?
4. Now use the Aboriginal language maps and get students to identify their various Nations:
  - a) Where were they born?
  - b) Where do they currently live?
  - c) Where have they visited or holidayed?

As a whole class or in two groups, get students to share what they learned about their land.

For example:

*My name is Lia, I was born on Wurundjeri land and live in Boonwurrung country. My favourite place to visit is on the Murray River in Yorta Yorta country.*

You may also like to check out some more unit ideas at the link below.

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/alcv/sampleunits.aspx>

## ACTIVITY TWO: THE KULIN NATION

Use the Kulin Nation fact sheets in the next section and included websites to answer the questions below:

1. What language/s were/are spoken in that area?
2. What were the main food sources in that area?
3. What tools did they use? For example: Fishing nets, eel traps, spears, boomerangs etc.
4. What similarities and differences can you see between the Language Groups within the Kulin Nation?
5. What are the spiritual beliefs of each Kulin Nation Language Group?
6. What other significant information can you find about each Kulin Nation Language Group?
7. When did the Europeans arrive in the different Kulin Nation Language Group areas?
8. How were the local Aboriginal people at the time treated? Were there massacres, missions established, children taken?
9. How does the community celebrate their culture today? Are there any special events, landmarks, organisations? If so, can you list them?

### WURUNDJERI

#### Area of Victoria

"Wurundjeri [Woi wurrung] Country extends east to the Werribee River, north-west to Mount Macedon, east to Mount Baw Baw, north to the Great Dividing Range behind Healesville, south to Mordialloc Creek and resides on the northern boundaries of the great swamp lands of Koo Wee Rup and Carrum Carrum."

**Bill Nicholson Jnr**, 2012, Wurundjeri Traditional Owner.

**Language:** Woi Wurrung

**Key Elders:** Aunty Joy Murphy, Aunty Diane Kerr, Aunty Margaret Gardiner, Uncle Bill Nicholson, and Uncle Colin Hunter Jnr. These Elders represent the three family groups of Wurundjeri today, the Terrick's, Nevin's and Wandin's.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wurundjeri have lived in the area from time immemorial. The Wurundjeri camped regularly along the rivers and creeks of Melbourne, which they would visit according to season. In summer time when food supplies were plentiful along the waterways, clans would visit one another and host meetings and ceremonies. These were for trade, initiation, marriage exchange, to discuss and settle politics and also to have a feast and celebration in honour of the time of plenty.

Women were responsible for 90% of food collected, of which the staple were plants. All Wurundjeri women carried a long fire hardened digging stick known as a *wulunj*. They used their *wulunj* to dig up the *wuleli* (tuber) of the murnong or yam daisy. The Melbourne rivers and creeks supplied the Wurundjeri with an abundance of food such as *iuk* (eel), *duat* (fish), and *dulum* (duck). Women waded through the waterways with *bilang-bilang* (string bags) suspended around their neck, searching the bottom of the stream for *dirrap* (shellfish). *Boorrimul* (emu) and *marram* (kangaroo) were hunted in the surrounding grasslands. In the forests and hills, *walert* (possum) was also a staple source of food and clothing. The skins were sewn into a valuable waterproof *walert-gurn* (possum skin cloak). The *walert-gurn* was fastened at the shoulder and extended to the feet. Clan designs were incised with a mussel shell tool into the inner surfaces of the skins. The skins were sewn together with a bone needle and the sinew from a kangaroo tail. Wearing the fur side next to the body showed off the designs, which were highlighted with red ochre. Wearing it with the fur on the outside kept you dry as the fur made it waterproof. To protect and preserve the skins, they were daubed with animal fat, which was also mixed into the ochre as a fixative. Traditionally you are wrapped in one when you are born, it is worn through all the initiation ceremonies, you get married wearing one and you get buried with your cloak. Today with the resurgence of Wurundjeri ceremony and cloak making, they are still being used and form an integral part of Wurundjeri ceremonies.

**WURUNDJERRI TRIBE** <http://wurundjeri.com.au>

### BOON WURRUNG

#### Area of Victoria

The Boon Wurrung territory extended along the northern, eastern and southern shorelines of Port Phillip, the Mornington Peninsula, Western Port and its two main islands, and land to the south-east down to Wilsons Promontory.

**Language:** Boon Wurrung

**Key Elders:** Aunty Carolyn Briggs and Aunty Fay Muir

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Boon Wurrung are the traditional people and custodians of the lands from the Werribee River to Wilson Promontory.

The Boon Wurrung were an extended language-based family group, consisting of six clans: Yallukit Willam, Ngaruk Willam, Mayune Baluk, Boon Wurrung Balug, Yownegerra and the Yallock Balluk. They were part of the larger confederation or nation of the Kulin (the people).

The Boon Wurrung has a very strong and detailed oral history that recalled events estimated to be ten thousand years old. The descendants of the Boon Wurrung continue to live in the greater Melbourne area and take an active role in maintaining and protecting their cultural heritage.

The land of the Boon Wurrung was protected by Bunjil who travelled as an eagle, the waterways were protected by Waa who travelled as a crow. Looern, a demi-god of the Boon Wurrung protected Wamoon, the land we now call Wilson's Promontory.

**BOONWURRUNG FOUNDATION** <http://www.boonwurrung.org/>

## DJA DJA WURRUNG

### Area of Victoria

Extended from Mount Franklin and the towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo in the east, Boort in the north, Donald in the northwest, to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca marking the southwest boundary. Their territory encompassed the Bendigo and Clunes goldfields.

**Language:** Dja Dja Wurrung

**Key Elders:** Aunt Fay Carter and Aunt Linda Ford and Uncle Hurtle Atkinson.

The Dja Dja Wurrung believe that an Elder is a person that is held in high regard by their immediate and extended family and their peers. We afford those Elders the highest level of respect and acknowledge their unique contribution to our culture.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jaara means people of the Dja Dja Wurrung speaking language group.

Dja Dja Wurrung People have lived on our traditional lands and cared for our Country over many thousands of years. For us, Country is more than just the landscape, it is more than what is visible to the eye – it is a living entity, which holds the stories of creation and histories that cannot be erased.

Our dreaming stories of *Djandak* (Country) explain the creation of our lands and how Dja Dja Wurrung people evolved. Bunjil, the Eagle Hawk, is our creator and helps us to understand our connections to each other through his Lore. Mindi, the giant serpent, is his enforcer implementing the Lores and ceremonies that ensure the continuation of life.

Each place on our Country is known and valued, has a name and a song, and this is embedded in our landscape along with murrups – spirits imprinted on the water, birds, plants, animals, rocks, mountains and ancestral spirits. We continue to perform ceremonies to honour each of the spirits and our traditional rites, our Welcome to Country being one example.

The spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past and our traditions, and our stories instill an on-going respect for our Country. Our songs and stories tell us of how the world was and how it should be, and we feel a moral responsibility to care for our Country as it binds us to the past, present and future. Our ancestors looked after this Country and we are duty bound to look after it for the next generation

**DJA DJA WURRUNG CLANS ABORIGINAL COOPERATION**

<http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au/>

## WADAWURRUNG

### Area of Victoria

Wadawurrung land extends from the Werribee River to Aireys Inlet, across the Otways to Deans Marsh, along the Barwon River, north to Mt Mercer, south to Cressy, west to Mt Emu Creek, north to Lake Bolac, north along Fiery Creek to Mt Buangor and then along the ridgeline of the Great Dividing Range to the headwaters of the Werribee River and then along the Werribee to Port Phillip Bay.

**Language:** Wadawurrung

**Key Elders:** Aunt Violet McPherson, Aunt Marlene Gilson, Uncle Bryon Powell

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wadawurrung ranged over a wide area according to seasonal food sources, ceremonial obligations and trading relationships. The people conscientiously managed their land by building substantial houses, cultivating root vegetables and promoting grasslands by using controlled winter fire to promote the best conditions for plants and game while eliminating the risk of wildfire in summer.

They were particularly good at cultivating and harvesting Old Man Weed, which is a very effective healing plant used for curing colds and chest infections.

The Creation Stories and the spiritual places which can be found right across Wadawurrung land are testament to the way the people lived in harmony with the environment. This strong sense of spirituality and connection with the land enabled the Wadawurrung people to survive in a constantly changing landscape. They continue this tradition today.

**WADAWURRUNG CORPORATION** <http://www.wathcorp.com.au/>

## TAUNGURUNG

Country: The Taungurung people occupy much of central Victoria. Our Country encompasses the area between the upper reaches of the Goulburn River and its tributaries north of the Dividing Range. From the Campaspe River to Kilmore in the west, eastwards Mount Beauty and the Ovens River, Benalla in the North and south to the top of the Great Dividing Range, our boundaries with other Aboriginal tribes are respected in accordance with traditional Lores.

**Key Elders:** Uncle Larry Walsh, Aunt Vera Moser, Aunt Jean Williamson

**Language:** Daungwurrung

**Background Information:** The Taungurung people are closely affiliated with neighbouring tribes, through language, ceremonies and kinship ties. Taungurung are part of the Kulin Nation. The Kulin Nation mob also shares common dreamtime ancestors and creation stories, religious beliefs and economic and social relationships. The Taungurung people shared a common bond in moiety with the other tribes. Our world was divided into two moieties: Waang (Crow) and Bunjil (Wedge Tail Eagle). The nomadic nature of the Taungurung people enabled us to utilise the resources available in our vast Country. Our Ancestors had an intimate knowledge of their environment and were able to sustain the ecology of each region and exploit the food available.

Today: Taungurung people still live on Country and participate widely in the community as Cultural Heritage Advisors, Land Management Officers, artists and educationalists and are a ready source of knowledge of Taungurung people.

Taungurung people will continue to look after Country and welcome those who share a similar respect.

**TAUNGURUNG NEWS** <http://www.taungurung.net/>

## ACTIVITY THREE: TANDERRUM

Read the following statements about the significance of TANDERRUM and answer the questions below.

1. What does TANDERRUM mean for Kulin?
2. What ceremonies can you think of that are used in Western society?
3. Conduct research on the significance of Ceremony in Aboriginal society: What differences and similarities can you see between Aboriginal and Western ceremony?
4. What is the significance of this specific TANDERRUM anderrum being performed at the Melbourne Festival?
5. How does Tanderrum use Aboriginal and Western elements/ platforms to promote and strengthen Aboriginal culture?
6. What elements of Aboriginal Culture are present in TANDERRUM?
7. Why do you think the words Ceremony, Culture, Elders, Ancestors, Lore and Country are spelt with a capital letter?

### STATEMENT 1:

TANDERRUM (the Kulin Nation Ceremony) is a celebration of the ground we stand on and of the people whose Ancestors walked it before our time.

This powerful event brings together Elders from the five clans of the Eastern or Central Kulin: Wurundjeri, Boon Wurrung, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wadawurrung to celebrate their rich cultural heritage and formally open the 2015 Melbourne Festival. Through TANDERRUM, Melbourne Festival and its visitors acknowledge the Lore of Creator Spirit Bunjil and pay their respects to the vibrant and living culture of this land. When local and international artists pass through the smoke, they agree to follow the Lore of the land and pay their respect to its Custodians before receiving permission to perform song and dance on this land. This is the Lore of Bunjil that has existed from time immemorial.

### STATEMENT 2: FROM THE ELDERS OF THE KULIN NATION:

*In Aboriginal culture our Elders are treated with great respect as they are the keepers of our Cultural Knowledge and Lore and it is their role to guide and lead the younger generations.*

"Ceremony is a vital part of our culture, traditionally and still to this day. This Ceremony was practiced by the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and Wadawurrung people of the Central Kulin Nation. It has been done by our people since time immemorial. For thousands of generations we have had interrelations across the Kulin Nation and its vital we revitalize this ceremony for the benefit of our children and their children and the generations to come. We honor the countless ceremonies that our Ancestors danced and still dance to this day. As the world changes the Ceremonies change to but TANDERRUM still means the same thing, it's to Welcome people to Country and to keep them safe. When people accept the Lore of Bunjil they agree to learn our history and respect our Culture."

## ACTIVITY FOUR: LOCAL CULTURE

Choose one of the following cultural practices to research and answer the questions below—remember to keep it local by typing Victorian or Kulin Nation in front of your search term i.e. Kulin Nation Creation Stories or Victorian Aboriginal dance groups. Don't forget to use the Kulin Nation websites in activity one as well.

- Local Traditional dance groups
  - Cultural site management and preservation
  - Possum skin cloaks
  - Traditional weaving
  - Aboriginal art
  - Creation stories
1. How is this custom practiced prior to and after European arrival?
  2. What were and are the beliefs and uses for this practice?
  3. Who was it used by in the past and to this day? (Women, children, a different Language Groups or just one?)
  4. How has this practice evolved from prior to European arrival?
  5. Is there any use of modern technology in this practice today and in what way?

The following websites are a great place to start.

<http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture>

<http://www.visitvictoria.com/Things-to-do/Aboriginal-Victoria>

[http://www.vaeai.org.au/\\_uploads/\\_ckpg/files/Tuckerbag Indigenous Perspectives-II2013.pdf](http://www.vaeai.org.au/_uploads/_ckpg/files/Tuckerbag Indigenous Perspectives-II2013.pdf)

## ACTIVITY FIVE: ART AND CULTURAL CENTRES

Victorian Aboriginal art is unique and different to anywhere else in Australia. There are a number of rock art sites across Victoria as well centres dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Victoria's Aboriginal art practice.

Check out the website below to find a list of these centres and choose one to research and answer the questions below.

<http://www.visitvictoria.com/Things-to-do/Aboriginal-Victoria/Arts-and-culture>

1. Where is it and what is the name of the Traditional Owner Group where it's situated?
2. When was it established and by who?
3. What are the main functions of the Centre?
4. What cultural expressions does it feature and who are the Aboriginal Language Groups and artists that it showcases?
5. Does it offer any special programs?
6. In what way do you think the Centre contributes to cultural protection and promotion?

## ACTIVITY SIX: LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL) is the peak body of Victorian Aboriginal Languages and dedicated to retrieving, reviving and strengthening traditional language in Victorian schools and communities using both Aboriginal and Western knowledge. Explore the website and check out the all the great programs and resources before answering the questions below.

VACL <http://www.vaclang.org.au/>

1. When was VACL established?
2. How many languages are there across Victoria?
3. How many languages across Australia are no longer being spoken everyday?
4. Why is language important?
5. Which schools is VACL currently working with?
6. In what way does VACL use Western technology to revive language?
7. Are there any Kulin Language Groups that currently have language programs through VACL?

# FOCUS TWO:

# ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

# AND IDENTITY

## OBJECTIVES

- Develop an understanding of the complexity of identity
- Become aware of elements of Aboriginal identity and your own

## DISCUSSION POINT

Identity is the culmination of what we believe we are, what others think you are and what it means to belong to your community. Your individual identity is represented through a number of social, physical and cultural characteristics. As you have discovered in this learning resource the identity of Aboriginal people is made up of a range of both common and diverse elements such as cultural beliefs, artistic expression and historical experiences. These elements are interlinked with our individual experiences; complex kinship (family) systems, our language groups and the local and national Aboriginal communities. (It is important to note that although Aboriginal people have many shared experiences we are also unique and often share different views)

Just like Australia, the Aboriginal community is multi-cultural and many Aboriginal people have more than one ethnic background; this means that our physical appearance comes in a range of shapes, sizes and colours. Our Aboriginal identity is often still the strongest influence because of the strength of our connection to family, community, Culture, Ceremony and history. Members of the Stolen Generation often describe a feeling of belonging when they return to their Aboriginal community for the first time. This is testament to the strength of Cultural Identity.

## ACTIVITY ONE: COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Community is a major part of Aboriginal culture and identity and there are many events across Australia and Victoria when Aboriginal people come together to celebrate our shared heritage.

Choose one of the following to research:

- NAIDOC Week
- Reconciliation Week
- Survival Day
- Koorie Sports Carnivals
- Dreamtime at the G
- Mabo Day
- Boomerang Festival

Or choose your own from the calendar found here:

[http://www.vaeai.org.au/\\_uploads/\\_ckpg/files/VAEAI%20Koorie%20Education%20Calendar%202015%20%20171214.pdf](http://www.vaeai.org.au/_uploads/_ckpg/files/VAEAI%20Koorie%20Education%20Calendar%202015%20%20171214.pdf)

1. What is the event?
2. Where and when does it take place?
3. How long has it been operating?
4. What is the significance of the event?
5. What part does this event play in the evolution and promotion of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal identity?

## ACTIVITY TWO: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS

The establishment of organisations like the Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League are also a part of the Aboriginal community and identity. Many of these were started by members of the community in direct response to the social and political injustices Aboriginal people faced and were designed to establish Aboriginal self-determination, allowing Aboriginal people to run, access and benefit from their own organisations.

Choose one of the following to find more about.

- Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association (VACCA)
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
- Melbourne Aboriginal, Youth Sport and Rec (MAYSAR)
- 3KND
- Songlines
- ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

1. What is the name of the Aboriginal Language Group where it's situated?
2. When was it established and by who?
3. Was there a significant event/reason that led to it being set up?
4. What are its main services then and now?
5. In what way do you think the service contributes to the Aboriginal community?

## ACTIVITY THREE: WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU?

As a group, brainstorm the different elements of a person's identity and draw a mind map demonstrating where there may be linkages.

- **Consider personal/individual:** What kind of music do you like? Do you play sport? What do you look like? How do you express yourself?
- **Family:** How many siblings do you have? What activities do you do together? Where did you grow up?
- **Community:** School? Sports?
- **Cultural:** Where is your heritage from? Do you or anyone in your family speak another language? Do you have any special cultural celebrations? Do you have any cultural beliefs customs?
- How do people express their identity?  
As individuals and as a community?
- Why is a sense of identity so critical to human beings?
- What results when individual and cultural identity interact or collide? (Traditional beliefs versus Western upbringing/society)
- What impact do you think the history of European arrival has had on Aboriginal Australians?
- How can a person's sense of identity impact on their behavior?

Give students time for self-reflection about their identity. Ask students to identify elements of their identity that are important to them.

Get students to develop an art piece depicting their individual identity