



**DEAKIN**  
UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

**INSTITUTE OF  
KOORIE EDUCATION**





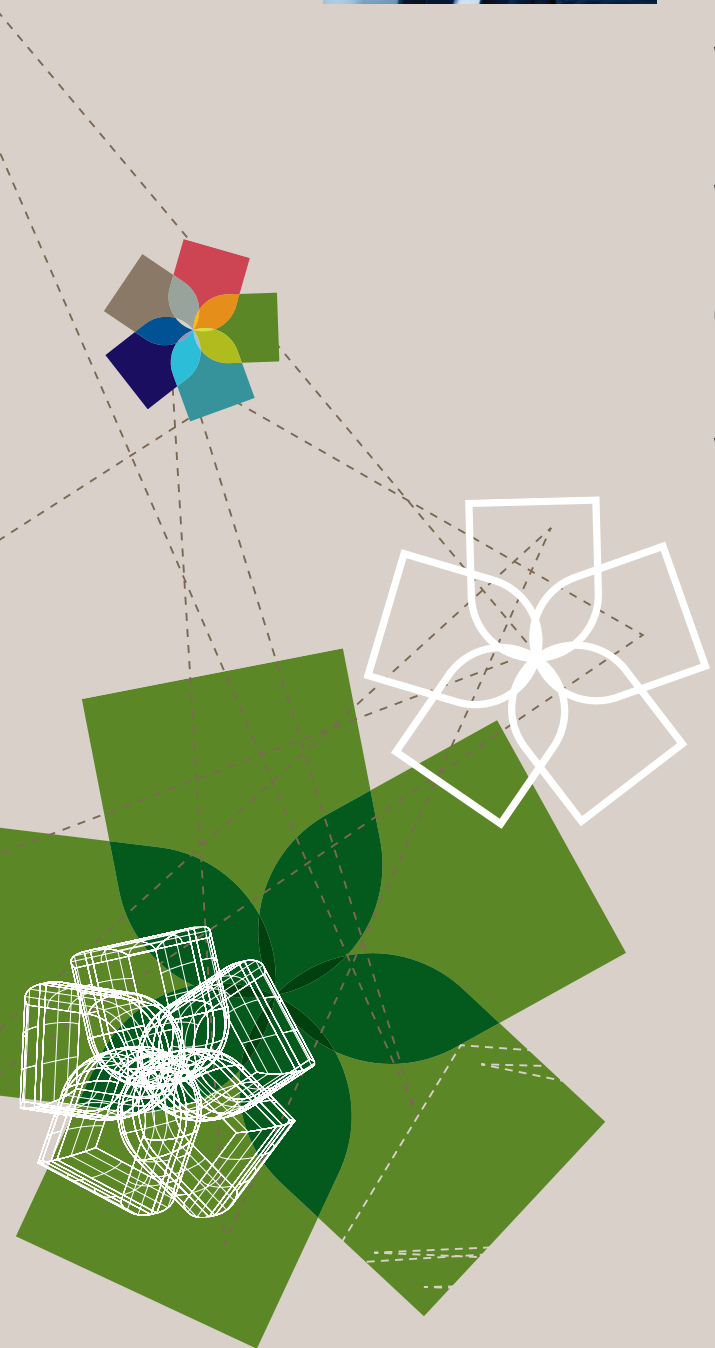
Deakin University's Institute of Koorie Education is a wonderful success story.

It provides tertiary education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from all parts of Australia and boasts the largest number of Indigenous students of any Victorian university. Students are represented across all Deakin's Faculties from undergraduate through to PhD level.

With its outstanding reputation for flexible, community-based delivery – and a growing research profile – Deakin is very proud of the Institute of Koorie Education and the contribution it has made to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education for more than 20 years.

**Professor Sally Walker**

Vice-Chancellor  
Deakin University



# INTRODUCTION

Deakin University is committed to making a significant contribution to equity and access in higher education. One of the University's core commitments is to provide opportunities for individuals and groups to participate and succeed in higher education – particularly those who might not otherwise enjoy the benefits that flow from such participation. It is well known that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to be under-represented in the Australian higher education sector.

Deakin University seeks to redress this imbalance by offering an innovative and practical approach to the provision of educational services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Through its Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin has established itself as an exemplary provider of higher education and educational services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students throughout Australia.





## FOREWORD BY CHAIR OF THE INSTITUTE OF KOORIE EDUCATION BOARD GERALDINE ATKINSON

Geraldine Atkinson is a Bangerang/Wiradjuri woman and has been involved in Koorie education since 1976, when she was employed as an Aboriginal Teacher Aide.

Ms Atkinson has worked extensively in the Victorian Aboriginal community in all sectors of education, from early childhood, schools, TAFE and tertiary institutions. She has also been involved in Aboriginal community controlled organisations and services.

Ms Atkinson has been a member of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) since its inception. She has served as the VAEAI Adult Education Specialist Representative and because of her extensive background in TAFE, as the TAFE Specialist Representative. Ms Atkinson has been President of VAEAI since 1999.

As President, Ms Atkinson has been instrumental in negotiating and formalising the Wurreeker Strategy, launched in 2000, in partnership with the Hon. Lynne Kosky, Minister of Education and Training; and Yalca: Koorie Education Policy, co-launched with the Hon. Steve Bracks, former Premier of Victoria, in 2001. Ms Atkinson represents VAEAI on a number of national and state committees as well as maintaining her involvement at local levels.

Ms Atkinson has been a member of the Institute of Koorie Education's Board since 1996. She has been Chair of the Institute's board since June 1999.

'Since its inception Deakin University has been offering community-based tertiary programs for the Koorie community,' Ms Atkinson says.

'A large number of Victorian Koorie community members obtain qualifications through the Institute's programs. Graduates work within

our communities in areas such as education, law, and nursing. People who have completed the cultural heritage program have gained a qualification which has enabled them to become decision makers. The Institute has not only benefited Victorian Aboriginal communities but other Aboriginal communities nationally. I know when I go interstate I meet people who have studied through the Institute and they tell me just how much it has been a benefit to their communities.

'I think that without the Institute of Koorie Education a lot of people within our communities would not have had the opportunity to get a degree. It has not only provided what the community requires but it has also been very supportive. The way that it has structured student travel and accommodation at the residence has been very good. Students attending the Institute always have people to talk to. It provides support and in particular the Institute provides good quality teaching. I think that is what has helped provide success in Koorie education. It has always listened to what communities run past them. It has always tried to meet the needs of the community, particularly in talking to the hierarchy within the University. I must say we have been really fortunate over the years to have had good Vice-Chancellors who have taken what the Koorie communities say to heart and have always provided that support.

'VAEAI has worked hard with Deakin over the years in developing a community model that is entirely different from most University models. Deakin can be proud of its programs, graduate outcomes and its relationships with the community.'

# INSTITUTE OF KOORIE EDUCATION DIRECTOR PROFESSOR WENDY BRABHAM

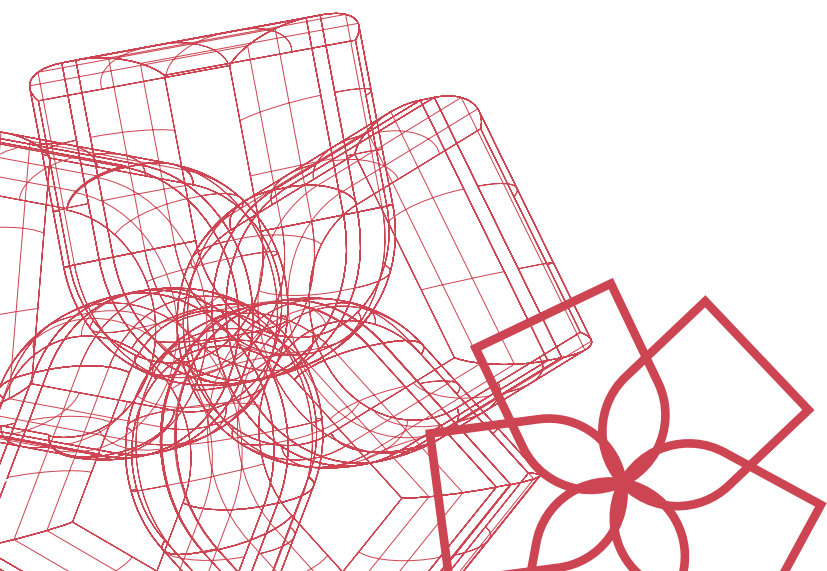


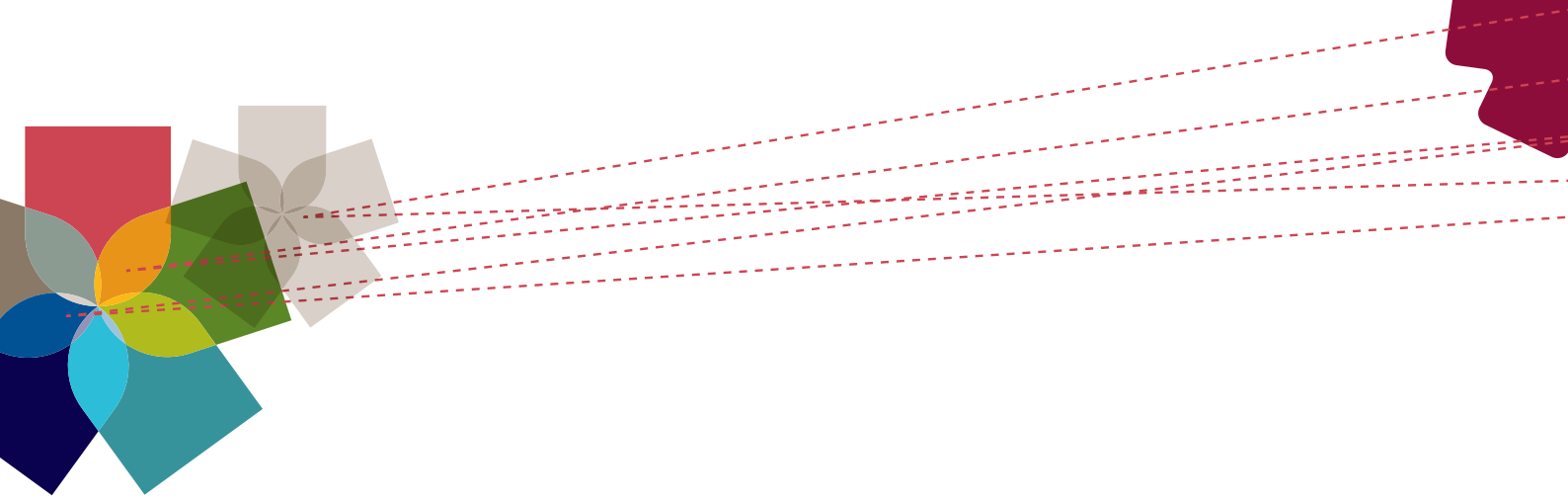
Professor Wendy Brabham, a Werrghia and Wamba Wamba woman, has been the Director of the Institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University since 1991. In this role she has actively sought to ensure a wide range of higher education opportunities are made available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Victoria and throughout Australia.

The Institute of Koorie Education together with Community Elders, community members, the University's Senior Executive and colleagues from throughout the University, has achieved significant milestones. This includes the implementation of 21 Faculty owned undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in community-based mode of delivery and a broad number of projects. Most recently Professor Brabham has been working with colleagues from the Deakin School of Medicine and peers in a number of Australian universities to plan and develop a community model for the training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students.

Professor Brabham and Institute staff have also been involved in a wide range of research projects in collaboration with Community Elders, community members, colleagues from throughout Deakin University and institutional partners.

Professor Brabham is involved in a broad range of professional activities including serving the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) in the executive role of Treasurer. She is also a member of the Higher Education Sub Committee of VAEAI, Deakin University Planning and Resources Committee, Deakin University Academic Board and a range of program steering/project committees.





## INSTITUTE HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The ethos of the Institute of Koorie Education is reflected in the discrete space it occupies within Deakin University. The vigour of the space is informed and strengthened through the cultural links the Institute has established with Aboriginal organisations and reinforced through the cultural knowledge students bring with them from their communities.

The Institute grew out of the work that began in 1986 when two programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were offered through Deakin University's Faculty of Education at the Geelong Campus at Waurin Ponds. The Koorie Teacher Education Program (KTEP), a Victorian community-based program in teacher training for mature-aged Koories, addressed the need for Indigenous teachers in Australian schools.

The Deakin-Bachelor Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (D-BATE), a final year program offered through Bachelor College in the Northern Territory, met the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who were otherwise unable to complete full teacher training.

From these early beginnings the Institute now addresses the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students wishing to engage in a broad range of professions through the delivery

of courses in Arts and Education, Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, Business and Law and Science and Technology.

In 2005, the Institute was commended by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in its Deakin University Audit Report. The commendation states: 'AUQA commends Deakin University's Institute of Koorie Education for the community-based learning model that is successfully providing Indigenous students with access to higher education'. The AUQA Report went on to describe the Institute's community-based delivery model as an 'exemplar for Australia'.

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and Deakin University have worked in partnership for 20 years. This partnership is expressed through a formal Higher Education Agreement signed by the two parties. This agreement articulates the joint management principles which govern the delivery of Koorie education at Deakin. The form of provision and the growth in the types of educational services delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by the Institute have been jointly determined by Deakin and the Koorie community of Victoria.

# INSTITUTE OF KOORIE EDUCATION MILESTONES

1985	Discussions between Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC), Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative and Deakin University regarding the establishment of a Koorie Teacher Education Program.
1986	Koorie Teacher Education Program begins.
1987	Special Entry (Aborigines) – The School of Education’s Academic Board approves special entry requirements, used by the Aboriginal Advisory Selection Committee.
1988	Commonwealth Government provides funding to establish more programs for Koorie students. The Koorie Humanities Access Program offered through the Faculty of Arts as an alternative to teacher education.
1989	First graduates from the Koorie Teacher Education Program.
1990	First Koorie students enrolled in Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Commerce.
1991	Institute of Koorie Education officially proclaimed. Wendy Brabham appointed as Institute director. The Koorie Art Program commences.
1992	Establishment of the Institute of Koorie Education Board. Higher Education Agreement signed between the University and VAEAI. Pilot program of the Prison Education Program in response to the Royal Commission Report into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations. First Koorie graduates in Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts.
1993	Institute of Koorie Education officially opened on 9 March. First Koorie students enrolled in Bachelor of Laws program and Graduate Diploma of Aquaculture.
1994	Graduate Certificate in Environment and Heritage Interpretation commences. Bachelor of Social Work introduced.
1995	Bachelor of Applied Science (Health Promotion) introduced. First Koorie Bachelor of Commerce graduate.
1996	Introduction of the women’s studies major within the Bachelor of Arts. Introduction of the Bachelor of Arts (police studies) program.
1997	Pilot program of the Mt Isa Nursing Education Project.
1998	Indigenous Australian Education Delivery review concludes that the community-based mode of delivery is essential to the continuing successful outcomes for Indigenous Australian students.
1999	Dr Aunty Mary Atkinson retires as Chair of the Institute’s Board and Chair of VAEAI. Geraldine Atkinson appointed new Chairperson. Victorian community Elder Aunty Iris Lovette-Gardiner graduates with a Master of Science.
2000	Institute receives an Australian University Institutional Teaching Award. The Institute’s first law students graduate.
2001	The Kitjarra Student Study/Residency centre opens.
2002	Bachelor of Nursing available in community-based mode.
2003	The Institute’s first student to complete honours in law.
2004	Law student mentoring scheme with practicing barristers launched.
2005	Wurreker Award nomination. Institute student wins Alfred Deakin Medal.
2007	Dr Shane Williams and Dr Veronica Dr Arbon graduate with doctoral degrees from the Faculty of Education.
2008	Two Chairs in Indigenous Knowledge Systems commence.

# COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL

A differentiating factor in Deakin's approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student education is its commitment to a community-based model. This involves a combination of on- and off-campus teaching designed to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to study without being removed from their communities for substantial periods of time. The model benefits a critical mass of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and is founded on a holistic approach to Indigenous education.

Deakin has the most extensive range of community-based programs of all universities in Australia and is committed to continuing to provide accredited Faculty degrees across many fields of study that respond to identified professional community needs.

Courses taught in community-based mode are available only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. After completing the one or two week-long intensives, students return to their own communities where they are supported through a number of responsive teaching and learning strategies. These include family and community support, community-based supplementary tutoring, teleconferences, community visits by teaching staff and communication technology resources.

The model is a practical expression of cultural respect as the University's conventional pedagogies, curricula and administrative practices have been reworked using Koorie advice and Koorie staff.

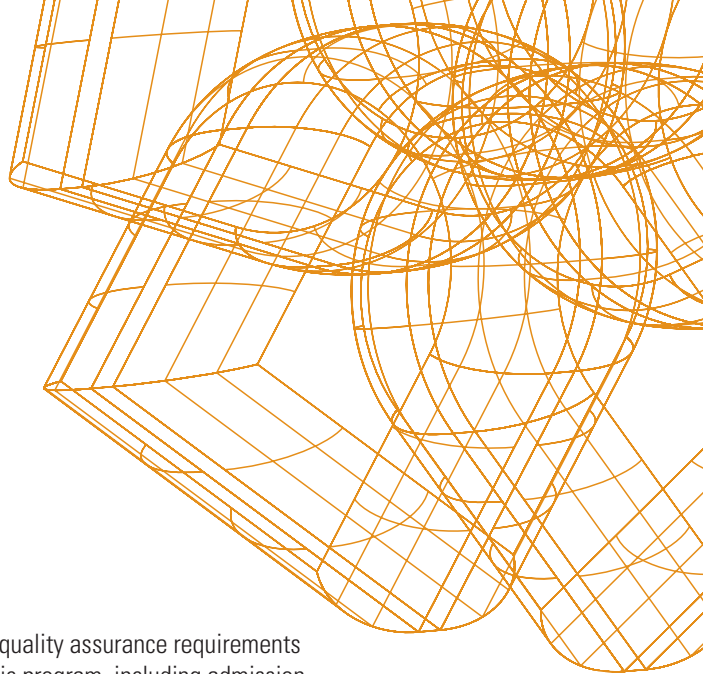
The programs – while located within the mainstream intellectual life of the University – enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their communities to participate in the University's courses on cultural terms that are defined by community.

The most fundamental aspect of community-based learning is that students have access to subjects and courses offered by the University while maintaining regular contact with family and community.

This has proved to successfully overcome the issue of isolation – geographic, cultural, personal – that has hindered other attempts to improve rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student participation and completion of higher education courses.

Community-based learning is based on the following general principles:

- » a respect for Indigenous cultures and Indigenous knowledge systems;
- » an acceptance of the general aim of Indigenous communities for self-determination and empowerment;
- » an emphasis on inclusiveness, success and quality; and
- » responsiveness to students' needs, and sensitivity to the possible impact of non-educational factors on educational achievement.



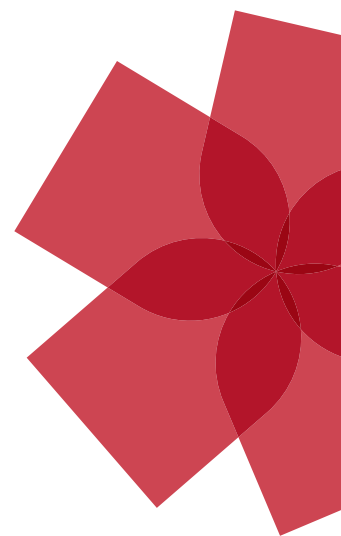
Teaching and student-support strategies are integrated through the development of an Indigenous focus within the curriculum and a focus on group learning processes. Typically, these involve facilitating students' travel and accommodation to attend intensive periods of block study which are structured in ways that maximise experiential learning and allow students to maintain ongoing links with their communities.

Key features of Deakin University's community-based learning model involve:

- » working in partnership with Indigenous communities and relevant stakeholders to identify and plan an educational program to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- » adapting existing degree programs through a collaborative process with Indigenous representatives, community stakeholders and academic staff that addresses students' cultural and learning needs and integrates student support;

- » satisfying the quality assurance requirements of the academic program, including admission requirements, selection criteria, course content and assessment;
- » developing a strategic management framework to encapsulate culturally inclusive practices in curriculum development, staffing, student learning and support; and
- » providing formal mechanisms to continuously review teaching content and methodologies and student support services.

By altering the way educational courses are delivered, and addressing the non-educational needs that impact on a student's ability to succeed, the Institute of Koorie Education has demonstrated exceptional student outcomes.



**'When I first came I thought this is a very spiritual place in the sense that it is grounded and based, it has its roots in the earth of the Koorie people of this place. It is spiritually based and has other areas of spirituality about it as well, very powerful, very strong ... It has that resonating about it, around it, through it and down into the ground, and I give thanks to the local Koorie people for making it available to us all.'**

**Jacqueline Johnson, Community Elder**

# STAFF PROFILES



Dr Veronica Arbon

## **Dr Veronica Arbon**

*Chair Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Institute of Koorie Education*

Professor Veronica Arbon, the Inaugural Chair in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, commenced with the Institute in June 2008. Professor Arbon has already made a significant contribution to the Institute's research area.

An Arabana woman, Professor Arbon won the 2006 Deakin University Faculty of Education Doctoral Thesis Award for her innovative thesis about Indigenous knowledge systems. Professor Arbon explained that her thesis, titled 'Thirnda Ngurkarnda Ityrnda: Ontologies in Indigenous Tertiary Education', is about 'Being, knowing and doing as Arabana, as Aboriginal people in tertiary education'.



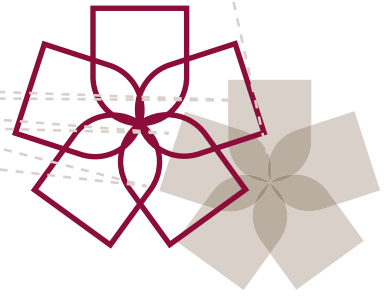
Alison Haggar and Brenda Brodie

## **Alison Haggar and Brenda Brodie**

Alison Haggar has been a lecturer with the Institute of Koorie Education since 1989 and Brenda Brodie has been a lecturer since 1992. Ms Brodie and Ms Haggar are members of the Faculty of Arts and Education course team and teach in the Bachelor of Arts degree. As long standing and respected lecturers of the Institute they have shared knowledge and mentored other academic staff. They have developed numerous relationships with current students and past graduates centred on each student's educational and life journey. They are often thanked by graduates during community graduation celebrations.

Ms Brodie and Ms Haggar have formed effective partnerships of engagement across the Faculty. As Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal lecturers at the Institute, their working relationships with each other and their students are prime examples of the effective partnerships of true engagement between Deakin University and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia. These relationships underpin the day to day business of the Institute of Koorie Education.

All Faculty course teams at the Institute have Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal lecturers who work in partnership with the Faculties to provide world class teaching and learning, which is respectful of Western and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems.



# KOORIE COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES

At the highest level, Deakin University works in consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporation (VAEAI ) to develop relevant and appropriate programs that are responsive to the professional needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Five Aboriginal people nominated by the VAEAI serve on the Board of the Institute of Koorie Education to guide the Institute's community, academic, administrative and financial affairs.

The dedicated services of the Koorie Elders of the Victorian Koorie communities have contributed enormously to the achievements of the Institute of Koorie Education. These Elders act as mentors and teachers to both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous academic staff of the Institute.

The avenues for Elder guidance and advice are principally through the Board of the Institute augmented by direct involvement in degree programs and community graduations as Speaking Counsel, and as advisers in community-oriented research projects.

The input of these Elders has assisted the Institute's translation of the University's degree courses into community-based Indigenous higher education programs with a sound and rigorous Indigenous knowledge-base. The Elders have become joint-authorities with the University's academic staff on the content and direction of higher education programs which are respectful of Indigenous knowledge systems.

The Institute has a total of 31 staff, 13 of whom are Indigenous. More than 75 per cent of these Indigenous staff members hold continuing appointments and on average have been with the Institute for 7.5 years. In particular, two academic staff members have worked with the Institute for 15 and 11 years respectively.

## GRADUATE PROFILES



Valda Murray

### **Valda Murray**

*Bachelor of Nursing (Pre-registration), 2008*

My name is Valda Murray. I'm a Yorta Yorta woman, and that's my mother's country. My father's country is Wamba Wamba. I've worked in health for a number of years. I come from Wiradjeri country at the moment, which is Albury. I've worked in health for a number of years in a mainstream setting at Albury Community Health. At the moment I'm an Aboriginal diabetes worker. I find it's really, really important for Aboriginal people to have opportunities in tertiary education.

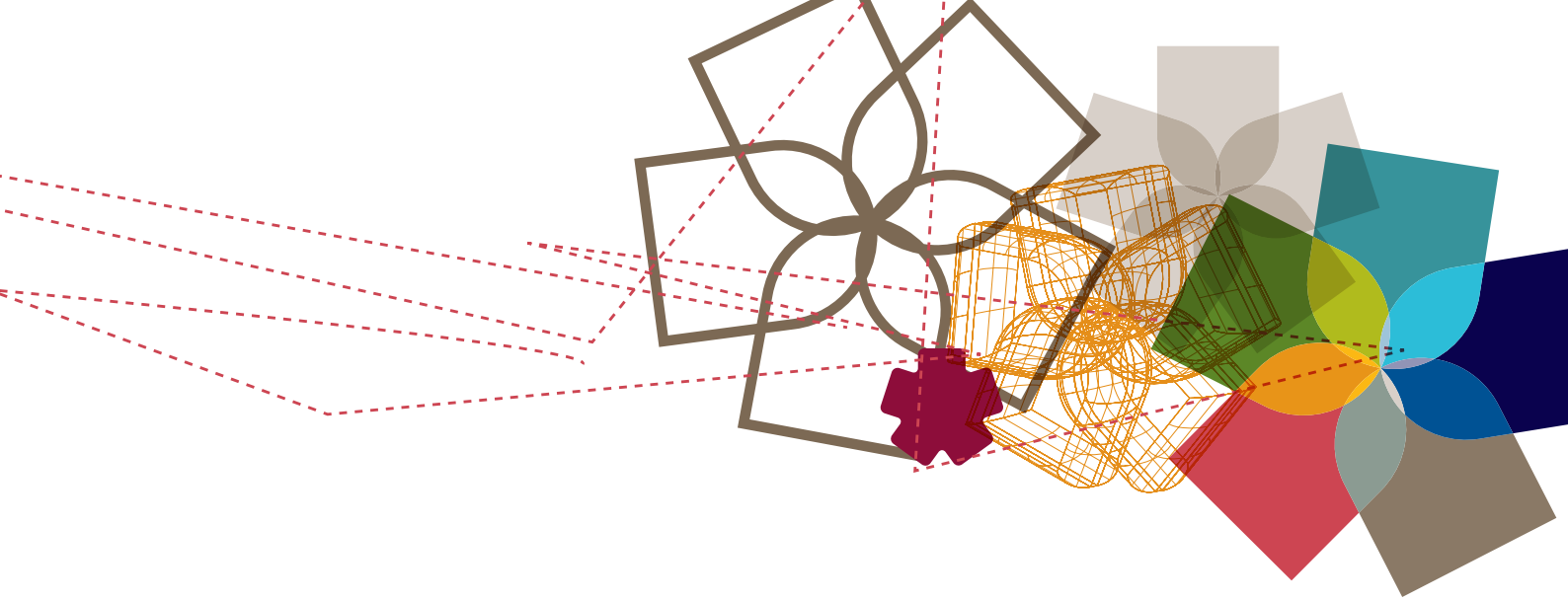


Caroline Blake

### **Caroline Blake**

*Bachelor of Nursing (Pre-registration), 2008*

My name is Caroline Blake. I'm a Kakadu and Cloncurry woman but I've been living in Melbourne for the past four years. I find the Institute a very special spiritual place, especially as I don't have my family down here. Where I come from there's a large Aboriginal community and I lost a lot when I first moved down here, but I gained it when I started here at the Institute. I get to meet a lot of people from all over Australia but mainly a lot of people that I'm related to.



## GROWTH OF THE INSTITUTE

Since it was established, enrolments in the Institute of Koorie Education have grown steadily. From the initial 18 in 1986, enrolments have grown to exceed 400 each year for the past five years. Representing every Australian state and territory, the Institute supports the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education program in Victoria and is the third largest in Australia.

It offers 15 undergraduate courses and seven postgraduate courses and also supports students in all discipline areas undertaking higher degrees by research.

The Institute continues to build an enviable reputation in the tertiary education sector. More than 500 students have graduated and enjoy superior employment outcomes and the performance measure of access and participation is twice the state average.

Its continued success is demonstrated in expanding opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by increasing enrolments and by building on successful programs with the addition of new disciplines in response to community requirements. The Institute's leadership role is highlighted in sharing best practice by piloting programs in collaboration with Indigenous communities and other education and government bodies that meet community needs, and expanding the knowledge base and resources available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SCHOLARSHIPS

There are a number of scholarships made available to students enrolled through the Institute of Koorie Education. In 2008 these included 34 Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarships, 34 Indigenous Access Scholarships, 115 Deakin Indigenous Scholarships (to off-set the 25 per cent difference between HECS base rate and premium rate) offered to all first year students beginning in Trimester 1 and Trimester 2, and two Dr Aunty Mary Atkinson Scholarships.

All students enrolled in their final 8 credit points of study are provided with Pratt Foundation Scholarships which covers the full cost of all HECS/HELP liabilities.

All Victorian based students enrolled in the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education are in receipt of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development scholarships.

A number of other students have secured the Department of Human Services Intrainships and Centrelink and Rotary scholarships. These scholarships make vital contributions to ensuring students have the ability to complete their studies.

## FUTURE VISION

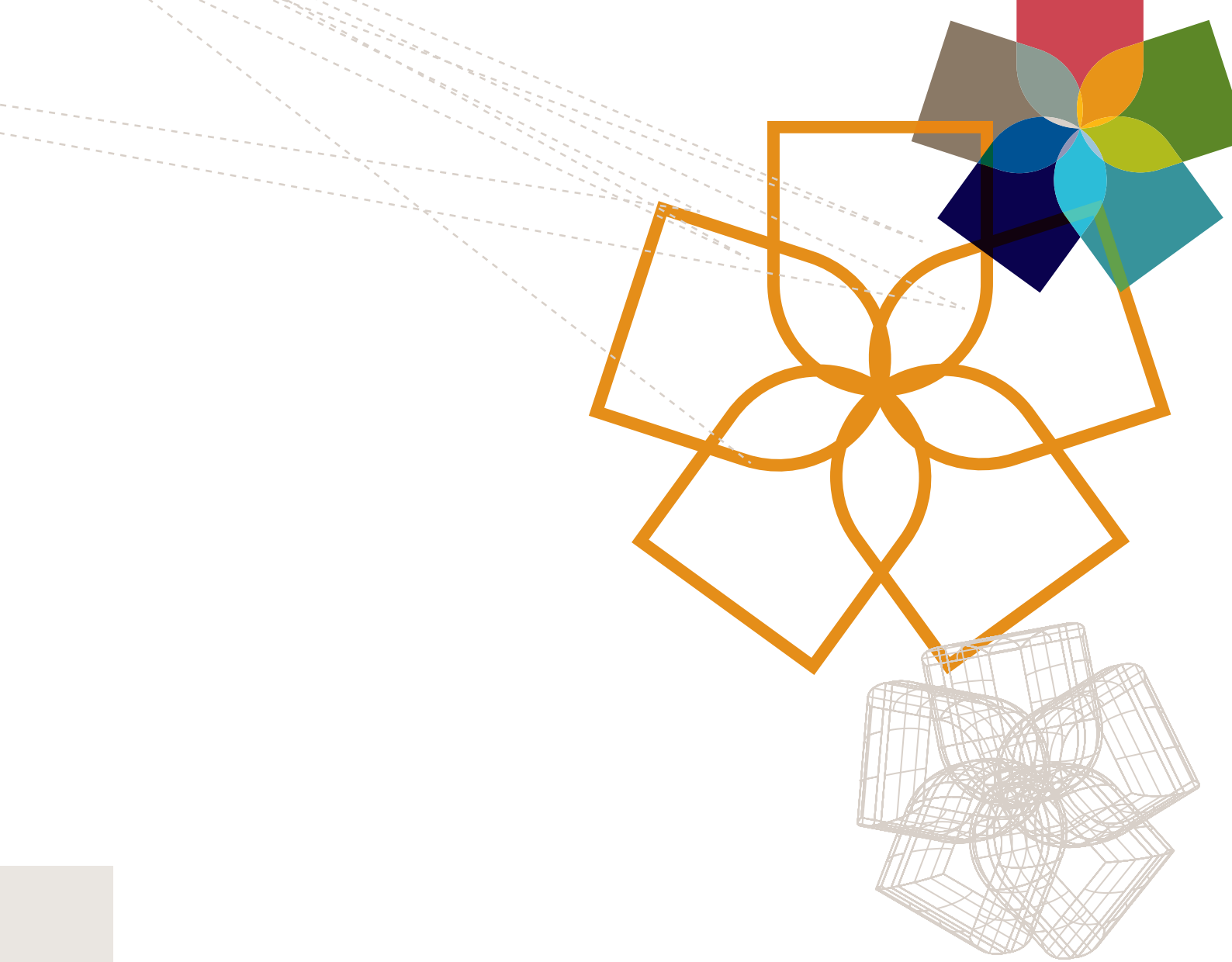
Access to education makes a profound difference to people's lives. It is the key to enhancing earning capacity, health and wellbeing not just for individuals but for communities. The work of Deakin's Institute of Koorie Education provides some of the most powerful examples of the life-changing impact of education upon individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as well as on their communities.

The Institute currently has more than 400 new and continuing students enrolled, which is expected to grow to 600 in the next five years.

There is a need to refurbish and extend the Institute of Koorie Education building at the Geelong Campus at Waurn Ponds. The present building is not large enough for current operations, it cannot cater for

growth and it is not of an acceptable standard to house the Institute's teaching and learning, research and administrative activities.

The University sees the provision of more appropriate academic premises for the Institute as a priority. The Institute has requested a refurbishment and extension of its existing academic building, which has strong cultural connections with Aboriginal communities. The total cost of this project is estimated to be \$12.75 million. The University has committed \$2 million and the Federal Government has committed \$1 million, with the remaining \$9.75 million to be sourced from the philanthropic and government sectors.



**‘As an Aboriginal person, if you are looking at what Deakin has to offer the community and certainly our future leaders in our community, I think the community-based approach is something that is in tune with our people.’**

**VAEAI Representative –  
Institute of Koorie Education Board  
Delsie Lillyst**



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Published by Deakin University June 2009. While the information published in this brochure was accurate at the time of publication, Deakin University reserves the right to alter, amend or delete any information published here.

Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code 00113B

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