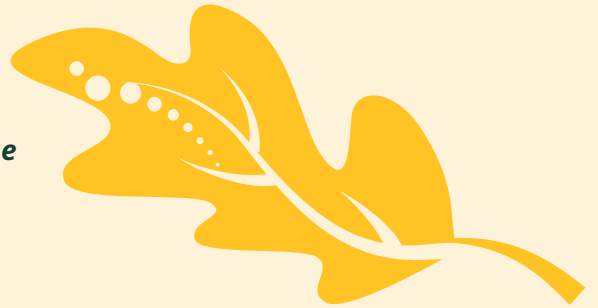




# Cultural Programs



*St Joseph's College is proud of its ongoing relationship with the local Aboriginal community and is actively committed to the promotion of dialogue and respect between all cultures.*

Our engagement with Indigenous education has been growing steadily over recent years. From the ways we acknowledge Country, to the stories and perspectives integrated into our classroom learning, we have been intentional in ensuring our students and staff understand and appreciate the depth of First Nations culture and history.

Our College initiatives in this space include:

- **Fire Carriers (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) group**, which is driven by staff and students to promote reconciliation
- **Reconciliation Walk**
- **Cultural awareness, immersion and mentoring programs** provided throughout the school year, assisting students to better understand their personal cultural story
- **Dharnya Rangers Program** - connects students with nature, Country and First Nations culture through hands-on learning alongside Yorta Yorta Elders, Rangers and Dharnya Centre staff.
- **First Nations Immersion Camp** - provides opportunities for our Koorie students to develop leadership skills and a deep and passionate understanding of their culture
- **All-Staff Indigenous Justice and Cultural Immersion Day** - reaffirms our shared responsibility as educators to create learning environments where truth-telling, respect and equity are lived each day



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## Indigenous Language Program Trial

In Semester 2, 2026 our Year 7 students will take part in a trial Indigenous Language Program, delivered as part of their Language classes.



This initiative reflects our College's enduring commitment to reconciliation and to honouring the rich cultural heritage of the Yorta Yorta people, on whose Country our College stands. Learning an Indigenous language is an act of deep respect, a bridge between cultures and an opportunity for our young people to develop a genuine understanding of the world's oldest living culture.

Students will be introduced to foundational elements of the local Indigenous language – including greetings, place names and words connected to the natural world. The program has been developed in close consultation with local Elders and community members, whose guidance and knowledge are central to its integrity and authenticity.

Alongside language learning, students will explore the stories, traditions and deep connection to Country that give the language its meaning and context. This holistic approach ensures that language is never taught in isolation, but always understood as a living, breathing expression of culture and identity.

This program aims to build empathy, deepen cultural understanding and nurture the kind of open-hearted curiosity that we hope will stay with our students long after they leave our College. It also aligns beautifully with our Brigidine values – particularly our call to act with justice, to welcome others with hospitality and to approach the world with wonder.



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## 2026 Cultural Program Highlights

- The wonderful work of our Arts Academy students and staff on the puppetry of Biambi's Serpent and Buka the Dingo, along with the production of a video for the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Yorta Yorta Creation Story
- The College Choir now including songs in Yorta Yorta language in their repertoire
- Our partnership with Campaspe Shire in planting native grasses with Aunty Denise Morgan
- Our partnership with the North Melbourne Football Club's Next Generation Academy designed to identify and develop young multicultural and Indigenous footballers
- Performances at the Ripple (Arts) Festival
- The growth of our multicultural group (supported by Carri Carter and Aunty Donna)
- The establishment of the Elders Advisory for the Aboriginal School Community Connector
- Continuation of Aboriginal History and Truth Telling with Thungutti expert Jimmy Kyle
- Information sharing from Treaty Victoria guest speakers
- Inclusion of student artwork and performances with the Foundry Art Space for NAIDOC Week



### Koorie Education Support Team

**Aunty Donna Walsh:** Koorie Education Worker

**Aunty Vicki Walker:** Aboriginal School Community Connector

#### Acknowledgement of Country

**We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Yorta Yorta people as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land on which our school is built. We also acknowledge our neighbouring communities Wemba Wemba and the Baraba Baraba people who have connections with St Joseph's College. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside Indigenous people for reconciliation and justice.**

