**Voices in Action**

Aboriginal young people of Victoria made their voices heard at the Koorie Youth Summit 2017. By listening to our voices and taking action, the Victorian Government can create lasting positive change.

**Guiding principles**

**Self-determination**

*"Self determination means true freedom without grief, tension and racism."* - Delegate

**Youth participation**

*"We'll see real change when young people drive the policies and practices that affect us."* – Delegate

**1. Connecting communities**

**Community spaces**

All communities need ways to connect. Aboriginal young people need access to cultural gathering spaces to develop strong identity and connection with their families. The Victorian Government must put families first by supporting communities to design and run spaces that:

a) Provide opportunities to connect with Elders, community and other young people for intergenerational learning and healing.

b) Learn, connect and practise culture (including clan-based knowledge) in all its forms.

c) Gather and share Elders’ stories and language.

d) Connect families and trace ancestors, particularly for members of the stolen generations and those in out of home care.

*“Culture fills the void of belonging and connects me with my spirit.”* - Delegate

**Community designed and controlled services**

Young people need services that understand their culture and communities. We call on the Victorian Government to support communities to help young people live happy, healthy lives by:

e) Empowering young people as active participants in services and community decision-making.

f) Truth telling about injustice, healing and Treaty with the Victorian Government.

g) Funding community controlled youth services including health, justice and care.

h) Building community cohesion by ending lateral and family violence.

i) Providing access to culturally safe services to every young person in Victoria including mentoring services with Elders.

*“Reaching out to each other like we do at the Koorie Youth Summit brings everyone together and makes*

*everyone realise and remember that we all in it together. We are the same and we can together move on and become better, stronger people.*" - Delegate

**2. An inclusive education state**

**The best education for everyone**

All Victorians should have access to education. Many Aboriginal children miss out on education because schools isolate and discriminate against their families, culture and communities. The Department of Education must create schools, teachers and practices that understand, respect and celebrate Aboriginal culture and community so children can achieve their dreams.

a) Train education providers to be culturally safe for Aboriginal young people, encourage cultural diversity and foster different ways of learning.

*“There’s so much ignorance and questioning it is easier for me not to identify [as Aboriginal].”* – Delegate

**An informed, welcoming Victoria**

All Victorians should feel safe and welcome in our state. Ignorance of Aboriginal culture in Victoria means that our society isolates and discriminates against Aboriginal young people. By choosing to educate our state about Aboriginal culture, communities and history, the Victorian Government can create a knowledgeable, welcoming and safe Victoria for Aboriginal young people. The Victorian Government must:

b) Embed Aboriginal culture, language and history (including genocide and ongoing injustices) in school

curricula and support schools to teach Aboriginal studies as a core subject across all year levels.

c) Support community programs to teach all Victorians the culture of the land on which they live.

*"What is being taught about my culture makes me feel angry and uncomfortable."* – Delegate

**3. Strength in diversity**

In order to thrive, we all need to be recognised and included for who we are. The Victorian Government and broader community must support Aboriginal young people to be at their best by celebrating and supporting their diversity through:

a) Promoting diverse representation of the Aboriginal community in media, politics, community and government.

b) Supporting Aboriginal-led media.

c) Supporting inclusive programs and celebrations of culture that recognise the strength and diversity of our Aboriginal community.

d) Funding culturally safe services to support young people's diverse identities, particularly those fighting discrimination in the form of ableism, sexism, transphobia and homophobia.

*“I think it’s important for us to change the perception that non-Indigenous people have of Indigenous people, to move it from something negative to positive. It’s time to celebrate it, share it and show them we're not what they think of us, we're so much more than that.”* – Delegate

The [Koorie Youth Summit](https://www.facebook.com/OurSummit18/) is an annual event run by the [Koorie Youth Council](http://koorieyouth.org.au/).

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