Creating a sense of belonging

2021 Community Sector Education Forum
supported by the Department of Education and Training

Tuesday 19 October 2021, 9.00am – 2.00pm

Time	Activity	Speaker(s)
9.00am	Welcome to Country	Aunty Julieanne Axford Wurundjeri Tribe Council
9.05am	Welcome and VCOSS opening	Emma King, CEO, VCOSS
9.10am	Department of Education and Training address	Jenny Atta, Secretary, Department of Education and Training
9.15am	Minister Merlino's address	Deputy Premier, Minister for Education, Minister for Mental Health, The Hon. James Merlino MP
9.22am	Minister Tierney's address	Minister for Training and Skills, Minister for Higher Education, The Hon. Gayle Tierney MLC
9.29am	Minister Stitt's address	Minister for Early Childhood, Minister for Workplace Safety, Ingrid Stitt MP
9.36am	Q&A with the Ministers	Facilitated by Emma King, CEO, VCOSS
10:00am	Creating a sense of belonging – insights into good practice in education settings and reflections on what it takes	Dr Anne Kennedy, Early Childhood Consultant Emeritus Professor Robyn Broadbent, Victoria University
10:20am	Q&A with Dr Anne Kennedy and Emeritus Professor Robyn Broadbent	Facilitated by Emma King
10.40am	Break-out group discussion and reflection	

11.00am	Stretch break	
11:15am	Keynote address: Creating a sense of place	**Lionel Bamblett**, General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
11:35am	Q&A with Lionel Bamblett and colleagues from Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated	Facilitated by **Zack Haddock**, Executive Director, Koorie Outcomes Division, Department of Education and Training Panellists: • **Lionel Bamblett**, General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated • **Neville Atkinson**, Program Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated • **Ashlee Rodgers,** Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
12.00pm	Stretch break	
12.15pm	**Pathways to positive futures – creating belonging for children with disabilities and developmental delays in early childhood education and care.** This session will reflect on the importance of high-quality early childhood education for children with disabilities and developmental delay and discuss what a truly inclusive early childhood education system looks and feels like.	Facilitated by **Megan O'Connell**, Director, Advocacy, Early Learning Association Australia Panellists: • **Julie Price**, Executive Director, Community Child Care Association • **Karen Dimmock**, CEO, Association for Children with Disability • **Kim Little**, Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood Education, Department of Education and Training

12.45pm	**We're all in this together. How young people create community, foster belonging and contribute to positive wellbeing, mental health, education participation and attainment.** Scene setting by Department of Education and Training	**Stephen Fraser**, Deputy Secretary, School Education Programs and Support, Department of Education and Training
12.55pm	**Community Traineeship Pilot Program (CTPP) – Peer connections** Insights from trainees into how the CTPP model enables young people to build positive social relationships and deep connection with one another, and how this is driving up retention, engagement and attainment.	**Lyndsey Bateman**, Project Coordinator, Community Traineeship Pilot Program Facilitated by **Robbie Hendry**, Youth Worker, TaskForce Community Agency Panellists: • **Kapia Manukau,** Trainee graduate • **Marry Maposua,** Trainee graduate • **Thomas Edwards,** Trainee graduate
1.20pm	Stretch break	
1.25pm	**Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health – Youth Pride and Diversity Groups** Insights from LGBTIQ+ young people about their work to build inclusive environments for young LGBTIQ+ young people, including inclusive schools.	**Phillip Ripper**, CEO, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health **Mez Lanigan**, Senior WayOut Project Worker, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health **Rhani Dean-Talbett**, WayOut Health Promotion Worker, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Panellists: • **Brittany Tiernan,** Youth participant • **Zoe Bespalov,** Youth participant • **Ilke Sawyer,** Youth participant
1.55pm	Close	**Emma King**, CEO, VCOSS

Our speakers

Hon. James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier of Victoria
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health

Deputy Premier Merlino was elected to the Victorian Parliament as the Member for Monbulk in 2002. He has been the Minister for Education since 2014 and was sworn in as Minister for Mental Health in September 2020.

He is passionate about education and aims to help Victoria become 'The Education State'– giving every Victorian student the best possible opportunity to achieve their potential.

Hon. Gayle Tierney MLC

Minister for Training and Skills and
Minister for Higher Education

Gayle Tierney was appointed as Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections in November 2016. Following the 2018 Victorian State Election, Gayle was appointed as Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Higher Education.

Minister Tierney has undertaken significant reform to ensure that Victoria's training and skills sector is accessible and offers real training for real jobs. This includes *Free TAFE for Priority Courses* and additional investment to upgrade and rebuild Victorian TAFEs. She has also overseen the delivery of a new TAFE and training system in Victoria under *Skills First* reforms, as well as strengthening apprenticeships and traineeships, and helped boost participation.

Apart from being an advocate for regional infrastructure and employment, Gayle is also a strong supporter of environmental sustainability, gender representation, social inclusion and community development.

She was the first woman to become a State Secretary of the Vehicle Division of the traditionally male-dominated Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, serving in this role from 1993 to 2006, and also as the Federal President from 2000 to 2006. Gayle also served on the Executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) from 2000 to 2006.

Gayle's interests include reading, film, cooking, travel and helping out in her local community.

Ingrid Stitt MP

Minister for Early Childhood
Minister for Workplace Safety

Ingrid Stitt was elected to the Victorian Legislative Council at the 2018 state election representing the Western Metropolitan Region. She is the Minister for Workplace Safety and the Minister for Early Childhood in the Andrews Labor Government.

Ingrid is committed to making all Victorian workplaces safer and ensuring that every worker makes it home to their loved ones at the end of each day, in her role as Minister for Workplace Safety.

As Minister for Early Childhood, she is passionate about education as the great leveler and is proud to continue the Government's rollout of three-year-old kinder across Victoria.

Prior to entering Parliament, Ingrid devoted her working life to fighting for low paid workers across the private and community sectors. As Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Services Union between 2004 -2018, Ingrid advocated for secure and safe work for her members in some of Australia's largest private sector companies. Ingrid has lived in the West for over 20 years.

Jenny Atta

Secretary, Department of Education and Training

Jenny Atta has been the Secretary of the Department since March 2019. Jenny joined the Department in December 2015, as Deputy Secretary, Infrastructure and Finance Services Group.

In this role, she was responsible for the management and oversight of the Department's financial, procurement and information technology services, along with strategic advice and planning for state budget processes, and infrastructure policy and delivery across the education and training portfolio.

Jenny has many years' experience in senior public service leadership roles, notably at the Department of Treasury and Finance where she led the portfolio analysis function within Budget and Finance.

Emma King

CEO, Victorian Council of Social Service

Emma King joined the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) as Chief Executive Officer in 2013, providing a strong voice of leadership and advocacy on social justice issues for the community sector.

Emma was previously Chief Executive Officer of the Early Learning Association Australia (formerly Kindergarten Parents Victoria), the peak organisation representing parents and providers of early learning services in Victoria.

Emma also has an extensive background in the public sector and in workforce and education issues, having worked as a Victorian policy adviser, a teacher, and in a range of industrial and training roles at the Victorian Independent Education Union and the Finance Sector Union. Emma's qualifications include a Masters in Industrial and Employee Relations, a Graduate Diploma of Education and a Bachelor of Arts.

Emma represents VCOSS on a range of ministerial advisory groups and committees. She is also the Chair of the Future Social Service Institute, President of the Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre and Board Member of Mental Health Victoria.

Emma is a regular commentator on social affairs and justice issues.

Dr Anne Kennedy

Early Childhood Consultant

Anne Kennedy is a respected and experienced early childhood academic, researcher, teacher, advocate, consultant, facilitator and writer. Anne is a fellow of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne and a former chairperson and life member of Community Child Care Association, Victoria and a life member of FKA Children's Services, Victoria.

She was a member of the writing team that developed Australia's first national *Early Years Learning Framework* and has been actively involved in the development of national and state based resources and professional development programs for the early childhood sector.

Anne was appointed a Director of the Board of The Front Project in 2019.

Emeritus Professor Robyn Broadbent

Victoria University

Emeritus Professor Robyn Broadbent has spent over thirty years as a youth worker, educator, community activist and advocate. All of her work has been focussed on vulnerable young people with a strong focus on education as a key protective factor.

Robyn has worked internationally with the Commonwealth Youth Program for the past 16 years and currently chairs the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations. Her work with the Commonwealth has enabled her to continue to build youth work across the Commonwealth to the benefit of some of the most vulnerable young people in the globe.

Until recently Robyn chaired the Youth and Community Programs group at Victoria University of which she is now an Emeritus.

Robyn continues to mentor young women academics, partner with community organisations, teach, research, supervise and work with vulnerable young people with her therapy dog Banjo.

Lionel Bamblett

General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI)

Lionel Bamblett is the General Manager of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

A Wiradjuri/Yorta Yorta/Bangerang man, Lionel has been involved in Koorie education for over 30 years and was appointed the first General Manager of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated in 1985.

Lionel has provided advice to successive governments in Victoria on measures to improve education and training opportunities for Koorie people in Victoria, and has played a prominent role in promoting Indigenous education and training issues at a local, State and National level. He was a member of the National Aboriginal Reference Group which played a key role in the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) in 1989, which is still current today.

Lionel has seen VAEAI established as the peak body for Koorie education and training in Victoria, and as an equal partner with the Victorian Government in Koorie education and training since 1990 through the Partnership in Education: Koorie Education Policy and Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium in 2001. He has also overseen the development of the successful Wurreker strategy which formalised the equal partnership with the vocational education and training sector in Victoria in 2000, Wannik: Education Strategy for Koorie Students in 2008, and now Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026.

Zack Haddock

Executive Director, Koorie Outcomes Division, Department of Education and Training

Zack has extensive public sector leadership and management experience gained in Victorian Government and non-Government organisations.

During the last 16 years, he has supported the Victorian Education System to better support outcomes for Koorie children within the school, Early Childhood and Higher Education sectors.

Zack has filled the roles of Koorie Educator, Koorie Home School Liaison Officer, Koorie Education Support Officer, Koorie Education Coordinator and Koorie Education Manager and is the current Executive Director of Koorie Outcomes Division.

Zack is passionate about supporting educational outcomes of Koorie communities.

Neville Atkinson

Program Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI)

Neville is a Bangerang man originally from Shepparton. He has worked in Aboriginal education for the past nineteen years, where he has been employed in a variety of roles at the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

Neville is currently the Executive Manager, Programs and Policy, overseeing the work VAEAI does from the early years sector through to higher education, this work includes VAEAI's partnership with the Victorian government through the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan and the nine Victorian Universities through the Toorong Marnong Accord.

Ashlee Rodgers

Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI)

Ashlee Rodgers is a Yorta Yorta woman of the Morgan family and a proud mum of 2 children.

Ashlee has worked in the education field as Koori Liaison Officer for 9+ years with a focus on VET. Ashlee is also co-chair of the Ballarat LAECG and has also held the statewide co-chair role on the Marrung Regional Partnership Forum.

Megan O'Connell

Director, Advocacy, Early Learning Association Australia

Megan O'Connell is Director of Advocacy at Early Learning Association of Australia. Megan has been a leader in education policy and practice for 20 years, playing pivotal roles across government, not-for-profit and university sectors. She is committed to improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people and using data and evidence to highlight and address policy problems.

Following an extensive public service career, Megan's roles included a short lived academic career focused on the impact of the childcare subsidy on families' work-life balance, research manager for the 2015 AEDC census, Director of the Mitchell Institute driving important public policy research on the early years, Senior Associate Education Innovation at RMIT and Director of Megan O'Connell Consulting, providing education policy and research expertise across the early years and senior secondary education spaces.

Julie Price

Executive Director, Community Child Care Association

Julie started at CCC in mid-2016 to lead the establish and development of the Victorian Inclusion Agency. She has a long history of working for the not-for-profit sector. Her previous roles have given her a deep understanding of the community education and care sector, and current policy contexts. Julie set up and managed the Professional Support Coordinator Program Qld for the Health and Community Services Workforce Council. She worked as part of the leadership team for that organisation for nearly 10 years, managing workforce planning and development programs. Her other roles include four years as Director of Gowrie Qld's Training and Consultancy unit. Prior to 1990, she worked as an educator and director in child care centres and family day care.

Julie's vision is to build on the strong history of CCC as a leader and advocate for not-for-profit and community owned education and care services.

Karen Dimmock

CEO, Association for Children with Disability

Karen is the CEO of the Association for Children with Disability (ACD).

Karen has held a range of leadership roles in the not-for-profit sector, she has won the Premiers Award for Innovation in Volunteer Management and is currently a member of the Victorian Community Advisory Council on the NDIS. Karen has been a foster carer and permanent carer for 15 years.

Kim Little

Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood Education, Department of Education and Training

Kim is the lead Deputy Secretary for the implementation of the Victorian Government's ambitious Education State kindergarten reforms, including the introduction of universal three-year-old kindergarten in sessional and long day care settings, equity funding to support educationally disadvantaged kindergarten children to thrive, and successful programs to lift the quality of kindergarten-offering services.

All of this is done in close collaboration with Victoria's diverse and committed kindergarten sector of over 2,500 services – whether sessional or long day care based, and whether run by parents, the community sector, small business or large, local government or schools.

Kim's part of the department is also home to the critical work of the early childhood education and care regulator for Victoria, and the whole-of-Victorian government reform to create better information sharing to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Prior to this appointment, Kim was the Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Early Childhood Portfolio in her department. She has also worked in the Higher Education and Skills in that department, with a focus on tertiary education policy matters, including market design and intervention.

Before joining the Department of Education and Training, Kim worked in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet on education and social policy issues. Kim has also worked as a philosopher at Monash University and as a corporate lawyer.

Stephen Fraser

Deputy Secretary, School Education Programs and Support, Department of Education and Training

As Deputy Secretary, SEPS, Stephen leads policy and program development to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students, regardless of their background.

Stephen has extensive experience in education policy making and implementation. He has held a range of senior roles in Victoria, including Regional Director for the South Western Victoria Region and Executive Director for Implementation. He has also served as a seconded senior advisor to the Victorian Minister for Education and Deputy Premier.

Following a long history in the Victorian Public Service, Stephen spent time in the UK, as Deputy Chief Executive for the Education Endowment Foundation, an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family background and educational attainment through the generation and use of high-quality evidence about what works to improve outcomes for students experiencing disadvantage.

Stephen holds a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.

Lyndsey Bateman

Project Coordinator, Community Traineeship Pilot Program, Victorian Council of Social Service

Lyndsey (she/her) is the Project Cooordinator of the Community Traineeship Pilot Program (CTPP) at the Victorian Council of Social Service.

Lyndsey has worked with young people in the community services sector for over ten years and is committed to ensuring young people have the best access and opportunities to achieve great outcomes. As part of the CTPP, Lyndsey works with a broad range of stakeholders to support young people to remain engaged in education and employment.

She is a passionate advocate for young people and ensuring their voices remain heard.

Robbie Hendry

Youth Worker, TaskForce Community Agency

Robbie Hendry has been working in the community services sector for over 30 years. Robbie is the coordinator and youth worker for Community Traineeship Pilot Program (CTPP) with TaskForce Community Agency in the Dandenong LGA. Robbie started with the project from the very beginning in 2019, and last year was the recipient of Westfield Local Hero award in relation to his work with the CTPP.

Kapia Manukau

Trainee graduate

Kapia (she/they) completed their Community Services traineeship earlier this year as part of the Community Traineeship Pilot Program.

Kapia completed their traineeship at Eastern Community Legal Centre and is now working full time as an intake worker and receptionist. Kapia is also a committee member of the Community Services Alumni Group for graduated trainees.

Marry Maposua

Trainee graduate

Marry completed her traineeship in Community Services earlier this year as part of the Community Traineeship Pilot Program.

Marry completed her traineeship at Phoenix Specialised Youth & Disability Services where she is now working as a permanent member of the NDIS team. Marry is keen to bring the skills she has learnt from her traineeship back into her local community.

This year, Marry received a nomination for 'Trainee of the Year' as part of the Victorian Training Awards, as well as a becoming a finalist in the Greater Dandenong Youth Showcase awards.

Thomas Edwards

Trainee graduate

Thomas completed his Community Services traineeship as part of the Community Traineeship Pilot Program in May of this year. Thomas completed his traineeship through Interchange Outer East and is now working full time as a disability support worker, helping clients access the community, activities of daily living and in the process of creating a new basketball program for the agency.

Thomas is also a committee member of the Community Services Alumni Group for graduate trainees.

Phillip Ripper

CEO, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health

Phillip is passionate about social justice and building strong, health and connected communities. Phillip joined Sunbury Community Health as CEO in 2010.

Previously Phillip held executive roles with Plenty Valley Community Health (now the PV in DPV Health), Moreland Community Health (now Merri Health) and a brief stint as Interim CEO at Knox Community Health (now part of EACH). Phillip started his life in human services as an attendant care worker in Australia's first consumer controlled disability attendant care organisation. Phillip moved into disability advocacy with Action for Community Living, one of the State's leading disability rights organisations.

From there, Phillip worked with the Transport Accident Commission where he played a key role in transforming the Commission's approach to Life Time Care for people with disabilities acquired through transport accidents.

Mez Lanigan

Senior WayOut Project Worker, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health

Mez Lanigan (B.Ed/Dip of Counselling) she/her is the Senior WayOut project worker at Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health, and has been in the role since 2012.

She has worked across the community and education sector for over 30 years and is passionate about inclusion, diversity, working with young people and strengthening social connections within the LGBTIQA+ and broader community.

WayOut is one of the Victorian State Government DHS Health Equal Youth (HEY) partners, which support the rights, mental health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ young people in the Macedon Ranges and neighbouring shires.

Mez is living and working from home on Dja Dja Wurrung country.

Rhani Dean-Talbett

WayOut Health Promotion Worker, Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health

Rhani Dean-Talbett (BA/Grad Dip Health Promotion) she/her is the WayOut Health Promotion Worker at Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health.

Rhani has worked in WayOut for the past 2 years and has worked more broadly in the health and community sector for the past 15 years. Rhani works directly with LGBTIQA+ young people, co-facilitating social support groups in schools and community and with LGBTIQA+ community across the lifespan in joint projects and programs with internal and external partners.

Rhani also works on various advocacy projects focusing on increased inclusive and affirmative services in regional Victoria. Rhani is living and working from home on Dja Dja Wurrung country.

Brittany Tiernan

Youth participant

Brittany Tiernan is 20 years old and lives in Sunbury. She has been a member of WayOut's "House of Awesome" group for 2 years, and in that time has participated in events such as "Queers on the Catwalk" and Pride Camp.

Brittany is in her 3rd year of a Bachelor's degree in Education, with a focus on student welfare.

Zoe Bespalov

Youth participant

Zoe (she/her) is a 16 year old living and schooling in the Macedon Ranges, Victoria. As one of the area's friendly neighbourhood lesbians she is involved in school pride crews and queer book clubs, and in her off time, enjoys bedroom dancing, writing, and drawing pictures of gnomes.

She is not the biggest fan of balloons, large waves, or knuckles when they crack, but can deal with them if the situation calls for it. She attends Kyneton High School, and has plans to pursue a career in writing, education, or social work.

Ilke Sawyer

Youth participant

Ilke Sawyer (they/them) is a year ten student in the Macedon Ranges. They are part of both the LGBTQ+ and Autism communities and are happiest when they're singing or doing archery. Their current life goal is to finish walking the Larapinta Trail, and to own a broad sword.