

Reconciliation Seminar 10: Embedding Aboriginal Perspectives into Curriculum

Transcript from the Reconciliation Series 1 2022

• 0:03 – 0:36

So, hi guys. Welcome to seminar number 10. I'm AJ Williams. Before I start, I just would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land that I'm currently on. I'm here in I'm here in Balwyn, Kew on the land of the Wurundjeri people and I pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging. And I extend that to the lands that you are currently calling in from as well. If it's not Wurundjeri land, wherever you are, I acknowledge your Elders past and present and emerging, but also like we extend that to the lands where you may have grown up on, which may be somewhere completely different.

• 0:36 – 1:15

And I want to pay respect to your Elders too, that helped shape who you became today. So today's workshop is about embedding Aboriginal, perspectives into our curriculum. We've got two great speakers tonight. We've got Taylor Hampton, who will, just gives us a wave for a second. And we've got Shae Rotumah, who just give us a wave Shae, so it can come up on the screen. Yeah. cool, who are going to share with us, they're both, consultants that actually work, with early childhood services.

• 1:15 – 1:28

and they're also going to provide some tips, to start the process of and embedding, perspectives in curriculum. So I'm first going to just get, Taylor to introduce himself. So I'll throw over to Taylor,.

• 1:30 – 2:08

G'day guys. My name's Taylor, and before I do, I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are connected today. I'm on the land of the Ngiyampaa people, so I just wanted pay my respect those people and the Elders past present and emerging. My name's Taylor Hampton, I'm a proud Ngiyampaa / Wiradjuri man. I am, originally from West Wyalong, central from New South Wales currently living in, in Baranduda, as I said, as I'm Dhudhuroa country, I run a business called Birrang Culture Connections with my, fiancé where we go into preschools schools, in and around, my area.

• 2:08 – 2:19

and then recently a little bit further into New South Wales and a little bit into Vic as well, where we go into preschools and, deliver cultural workshops to the kids;

• 2:19 – 2:58

Very simplified, generalized information, activity, singing, painting, dancing, throwing boomerangs as well, returning boomerangs that I make and do a lot of fun with it. Kids absolutely have a blast. The teachers, the educators, really enjoy it. And one of the main things, and the main piece of feedback that I get from the educators is, they enjoy it because there's so much specific to actually deliver that stuff, because they are, as much as they want to deliver that, that work, they don't want to be disrespectful or they don't want to, seem, make it seem tokenistic or come across as insensitive.

• 2:58 – 3:21

So to have someone, that's able to deliver the work that they are, really passionate about, they, they grab it by the hand and then they really take it on board and, and listen as much as the kids listen. It's really, really good. I think that's, really about me, at start. That's it. Yeah. And then we'll yeah. Talk about a little bit further on.

• 3:21 – 3:23

Yep. Cool. Over to Shae.

• 3:27 – 4:02

Yeah, good day everybody. My name's Shae. I'm a Gunditjmarra Iwaidja man, from Southwest Victoria and from Croker Island up in the Northern Territory in, Arnhem Land. I do a fair bit of work in schools, primary schools, kindergartens, that sort of thing. Most recently have developed some resources with language for the Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly Community Health Service in Portland. There, run company called Gunditj Yarkeen Allammeen-ngan Cultural Enterprises. So we do a bit of everything, but mainly around, kids', country and culture that, that's my mantra.

• 4:02 – 4:20

So, having seven children of my own, I've got a fair bit of experience in, trying embed perspectives in, in their lives, and, taking into account people who are off country, people who have been stolen, and the generations that have followed that. So, bit of trauma there. We've all got to clean up. I'll try to fix up together. Thanks for that.

• 4:21 – 4:33

Cool. Thanks guys. I'm going to go back to a Taylor. Can you just give us a little understanding of what made you go into, the work that you actually do right now?

• 4:34 – 5:12

Yes, so as a kid, um, growing up, I didn't know much about my culture. The only thing I knew for me was that I was Aboriginal my dad lost a lot of his identity, a lot of his sense of self, not being allowed to speak his language, not being allowed to practice his culture, and he lost all of that so he wasn't able to teach me, my brothers, you know, I've got six brothers

and there wasn't a lot of cultural education in my home. You know, we went fishing, camping, spent time with cousins, but there wasn't a lot of cultural education behind that.

• 5:12 - 5:30

And going to the schools as a kid growing up, we had the teachers in the schools, seeing us as Aboriginal kids, as a statistic, as a tick-a-box of funding opportunity during those specific events.

• 5:31 - 6:04

There wasn't a lot of education prior to that or even after that so we still never got a lot as a kid. So when I moved away from West Wyalong, I did that on the purpose of I need to find myself personally, professionally, and most importantly, culturally. And I did that, moved to Albury and was able to introduce myself to the community I had had. Luckily I had cousins and I had family in Albury, so it was quite easy for me to be, recognized as a someone who was Aboriginal in the community.

• 6:04 - 6:25

And, so I was able to meet Elders, meet community members. I was working in, other Aboriginal organizations. And when I started this business with my fiancé, the whole idea around it was that I never got something like this as a kid.

• 6:25 - 6:58

So I saw that an absolute as an absolute need, especially in the area that I'm in, the gap that needed to be filled and I wanted to give back something to the kids that I never got. And that was cultural knowledge and education. And I'm not saying I'm an expert, I'm definitely not an expert, but what I know and what's been passed down to me, I want to share with the kids so that they can then do something that I never did, was to create their own pathway or, or start their own journey. And their cultural journey. And I hope that I'm doing that, at the moment.

• 6:58 - 7:08

And, it's something that, I find that's very passionate within me. And, especially sharing culture, the ones that are, you know, that are willing to listen and not seeing it as a tokenistic kind of thing.

• 7:08 - 7:41

And I'm visiting regular preschools and child childcare centres because they're want back so much because they, the kids love it. And the kids are asking me about, you know, I'll give you an example. We had a when I first started these workshops, it was on a, it was one time I was on a Thursday and, and one of the kids said, it's not Thursday anymore, it's Taylor day. Cuz they absolutely love it. And that's the moment they said, it's Thursday. They

say, Taylor's coming in, I'm only in there for an hour, hour and a half. But they are an hour and a half is specific for them to learn culture, even if they're Aboriginal or not.

- 7:41 – 7:49

Like it's there for that time for me to actually spend that time with them teaching very simplified, like I said, simplified, generalized information.

- 7:49 – 8:24

I like to pull my little breadcrumbs, give them that little, those little breadcrumbs so they can then start to follow their own path. And, that's something that I find that's, that that's really resonates well with me, because I never got that. So I wanna give that back to kids. So, yeah, it's funny, you know, and I'm even just about to publish a children's book. I dunno if you don't think I've even told you this, AJ, but, the part of that, these workshops actually the inspiration behind the book was because of that.

- 8:24 – 8:41

You know, we have kids that are fair skin, like myself, who are Aboriginal and some don't feel proud or feel like they can acknowledge their Aboriginality because a lot of the children's books these days still show as Aboriginal people, as dark-skinned.

- 8:41 – 9:11

And, as great, those books are unreal historically they're really good, to show how Aboriginal people lived and, and how they hunted and, and how they gathered, and how they spent time together as one. But there are a lot of Aboriginal kids that are fair-skinned, but they don't feel like they can identify because they don't look like the books. And so, whenever I went into a preschool, the first time I went into a preschool, one of the kids said, I've never met an Aboriginal person before. And I said, yes, you hope, you're meeting me. I'm Aboriginal, I'm very proud to be Aboriginal.

- 9:11 – 9:20

I talked about why I'm proud. I've spoke about all the stuff that I do as an Aboriginal person. And then a week later, the kid came back and said that, you know, they can feel proud.

- 9:20 – 9:52

Well, they can say that they are Aboriginal because I look just like Taylor. And so the inspiration to the book started from there. And so we've been able to get a really deadly artist, Seantelle Walsh, who's start who's got a business, Kardi K creations, who's just designed the Rugby Women's World Cup, guernsey, she's illustrated our book. And that book's idea was to show kids from all different mobs and we've got permissions and we've got acknowledgements from those, from those specific mobs are in this book.

- 9:53 – 10:30

But all the different kids have all different skin colors showing what the kids do in today's society, practicing culture. And I'm very excited, it's nearly ready to be published. So, you know, that can be a great resource. And I'm not just saying that cause it's not a book, but, a great resource for, you know, early childhood centres to, especially for the very young kids who want to learn what it means to be an Aboriginal person in today's society as, as a light-skinned Aboriginal person, dark skin, Aboriginal people as well.

• 10:30 - 11:04

But it's just a way to, for everyone to feel proud of, of the skin they're in and to say, you know, it's the, the skin colour doesn't define who you are as an Aboriginal person. It's who you are inside and, your family connection and, how you practice that in there. So that all that together is, is why I'm doing what I'm doing because it's just being able to share everything that's been passed down to me so I can pass that down to kids, so they can start, their own journey. The title of the book is called Our Mob as well, not ready yet, but it's, it's almost there.

• 11:05 - 11:18

Okay. I'll come back to you, Taylor, to ask more a bit about what you, what activities that you do. Yep. Over to Shae, what took you into, doing cultural immersion, cultural awareness.

• 11:19 - 11:52

Pretty much similar to Taylor. Growing up in Ballarat and off country from eight to 18, I remember when I was about 19 and moved home, I asked myself what made me Aboriginal apart from a little bit of colour and my skin and a bit of the bloody vein. So on in this journey from then to now 45. So I started a dance group a couple years later to build that identity. We'd been falsely given a totem that wasn't ours, had all these beliefs that were actually incorrect, so helped turn that around. So we had nine kids. I think we started in, what was it, '97, 9 kids.

• 11:52 - 12:11

We've had almost a hundred go through now. And now we have that second layer. Our children are dancing with us. And in regards to the light skin thing there, my third, fourth son is, blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair as, I remember living in Darwin and getting, walking around looking for him.

• 12:11 - 12:43

He was up the front counter and they said, well look, this guy's, this fellow's father. And they, I went up to pick him up and they said, mate, this can't be your son's. Yes, he started noticing it around four years old that you are dark, poppy's dark, and I'm not. So he gotta lift that up and, made it special for him. And I started calling him the Golden Gunditj so they stuck him to this day. Everywhere he goes, he gets the golden Gunditj so that's pretty

good. But, couple of things I've been doing recently, at the DWEC doing the, the playgroup stuff.

• 12:43 - 12:49

So trying to embed some culture into that. The first thing I'm trying to do is make people realize that it's not a ...

• 12:49 - 13:19

You can't take components of culture and stick it in somewhere. A lot of the DHS kids I work with as a mentor, they always wanna learn about culture, but it's a holistic thing. And with that, understanding that, place that we hold ourselves in a landscape as being no more than a grain of and or wombat, or a leaf on a tree, that we're all, we're all even, we're not the masters at the environment. That the word Gunditj means belonging too. So I'm a gunditj, I'm from Lake Condah, so that lake owns me. We don't own it, we belong to it.

• 13:20 - 13:38

So once we get that sort of straight, then uh, we sort of go from there, set that fundamental basis. But I found out, figured out later that, when I was going into the other schools and working with non-indigenous kids that had been growing up in the same area their entire lives, that they're part of this landscape now too.

• 13:38 - 14:10

As much as the foxes or, the rabbits, the windmills that we've got down near the Blue Gum plantation, they're all part of this country now. So they've all gotta, we've gotta find that balance again. So, the kids know their identity. I didn't start speaking language until I was 19 and a senior Song man, now, you know, as it turned out. My children all, I sung them lullabies when they're in their mum's bellies. So by the time they could talk, they could talk language. That's a win as far as I'm concerned, but we've still got a long way to go.

• 14:10 - 14:22

Living on the Tiwi islands for a couple years and seeing their bilingual education up there, the retention rates were awesome when they were learning in their own language and then back to English. Cuz once you learn English first, it's hard to learn anything else.

• 14:22 - 15:03

For some reason, the NT government decided to scrap that and retention went out the window. They couldn't get kids in classes. And, the other thing I've noticed is the kids that are off country, it's hard for a parent to teach their children their culture on someone else's land. So I just curated an exhibition down here that celebrated the diversity and showcased all the different mobs that we have living down here on country. And a lot of 'em for the first time in, you know, some of them have been there the entire lives, have never been able to express who they are. So I had someone from Minjerriabah, from Stradbroke Island who actually did their art on the back of a possum skin rug as an

amalgamation of their culture on, our sort medium was, that was pretty powerful, well received.

• 15:05 - 15:23

Cool. Thanks. I've got flop back over to Taylor for a minute. And, Taylor, what's, when you go into early childhood, services or when they contact you, what is it that they're actually asking for? Or do they know what they're asking for and, what do you offer?

• 15:24 - 16:00

So the way that we do it at the moment, for the new preschools and childcare centres, we just check, look, we've got a Facebook page. So we, we chuck our Facebook page up and our post up and, you know, if they would like us to come in, then click us a message, like a message on Facebook and send us your email address. And then we send through our information pack. So it's exactly what we offer, you know, you know, boomerang throwing, clap stick painting, boomerang painting, and singing, dancing, I think is another one.

• 16:00 - 16:12

So we offer a couple different of like, workshops but yeah, so once we, once they email us or message us, we email them an information pack, and if they're interested in the workshop that we offer, then they contact us back and say, you know what, you got available or, yes, we'd like to book you in. And then from there it's, you know, sending a quote and then booking it in and going from there. For the regular ones that we have, they just give me a call and, and call me up and say, Hey, you know, we are keen to get you back in what date do you have available? Whether you, the workshops that they do, they're not really worried about what kind of workshop it is, just as long as it's, I'm able to provide that engagement and that act just an any activity, cultural activity that the kids love. Because all the workshops I do, they're all engaging fun and hands on.

• 16:45 - 16:55

So the educators just want that, that hands-on, fun, engaging activity, that's all they're really interested in. The cultural stuff is just a, it's an extra, it's a bonus for them to, to learn.

• 16:55 - 17:31

So, and for, you know, something that I haven't been able, when I first started, there wasn't a lot of, I didn't really, have the experience working with kids. I was more working with young people through my, through my career. It's really more teenagers and a little bit older than I, than I usually work with. So to work with children like three to five and a little bit older, it was really difficult for me at the start. So luckily my fiancé works in childcare as well, so she was able to provide me with some knowledge on how to interact and how to, change and adapt the work that I'm doing to suit the age range.

• 17:32 - 18:06

And, you know, really notice the attention span of the kids because that can, that can change really quickly. So, you know, although our workshops go for, you know, we offer about an hour, they could be, could be less, could be more depending on the engagement, and the attention span, of the kids that we work with. But, it's more about the, new ones. They, message us, we send 'em what we offer, then they come back to us with what, what they would like. And then for the regular ones, they just message us as they come in.

• 18:07 - 18:21

Taylor, a question I've got is, do early childhood services know what they want? Or do they rely on you to actually go, Hey, we want something cultural, but we dunno where to start?

• 18:21 - 19:03

Yeah, yeah. It's that second one. It's that second one. They, they want that. Like they, they, I'll give you an example. Like today I was at, I was at a preschool today, this morning. And so it was a new one and in Albury, and she, that she wants to embed culture, she wants to do the work and she wants to be able to provide this service for the kids, but she's not sure how to do it, where to go to, who to talk to and not make it sound like I'm going to like, not make it sound so insensitive or inappropriate for a non-Aboriginal person to embed that culture.

• 19:03 - 19:33

So, you know, how do we go about that? What kind of things can we do to make sure that we're not being inappropriate to the Aboriginal community and the local Aboriginal community as well? So that when people come in for Aboriginal, they're gonna see that, you know, we are being authentic. And that's, you know, that's really what they want. They want to have that authenticity and they want to be able to say that we welcome Aboriginal people. So, but yeah, it's that second, they want to do it, but they're just not sure how to do it.

• 19:33 - 19:39

Quick question up on the screen there for Taylor is what areas do you visit your workshops and will you come to Melbourne?

• 19:40 - 20:16

I've had a few, people ask me, come to Melbourne. The only issue that I have is, or not issue, but barrier that I'm having is, I need to get that permission from local Elders to be able to go to, so at the moment, I go to places where I'm able to speak to Elders and the community and KESO and the ACG, making sure that I'm following that cultural protocol. And so there is, yeah, that question of cultural protocol around service. So I need to make sure that I get that permission from the Elders. Not just, you know, it's, I think that's for me as well, to follow, make sure that I'm doing the right thing.

• 20:16 – 20:46

So I go to, at the moment, Wangaratta, Wodonga Albury. I'm going to Temora, in New South Wales, Wagga, you know. But I haven't been to Melbourne yet to deliver any workshops, but, you know, that's something that I would like to do. But whether or not I need to make sure that I speak to the right people to follow those cultural protocols to make sure that I can do that on the country that I'm not on. So, you know, one day I hope, but at the moment, I can't get there yet.

• 20:48 – 20:57

Cool. Thank you. Jenny, I'll come back and answer your question in a minute, but I'm gonna throw it back over to Shae and go, what is it that you offer and.

• 21:29 – 21:41

Else, and seek permission from their parents or work with their parents to develop some basic stuff around what's going there? Uh, should I keep talking?

• 21:42 – 22:17

Okay. Uh, some basic stuff for them, mob. So I've developed a fair resource library over the years and then, yeah, just, methodically moved through, the principal's for us mob and to them mob. But again, same as, like Taylor said, attention spans are different. So the other thing I like to do is identify what they would probably term problem kids or kids that are a bit busy, and make them might little helper for the day, which they, they generally appreciate. So most of these kids with ADHD or any of those sorts of things, they just need something to do.

• 22:17 – 22:25

Once you find their interest, I think they're away. So they feel like they're pretty special when you give 'em, a gig for the day and, yeah, works pretty well.

• 22:26 – 22:45

Cool. Thanks., bit of a question to Taylor first, Taylor, what are some things that early childhood services can actually start, can do to start implementing cultural, perspectives into quick form? Yeah.

• 22:45 – 23:35

Look, I think one of the, one of the main things is, you know, embed into your everyday routine. Now don't know if you're doing it or not, but, you know, Acknowledgement of Country is a big one doing that at the start of your, start of your morning for you as soon as your kids walk up. You know, doing the country, making it obviously personal to the centre, to the area that you are on. If you know the area, make sure you acknowledge the area as well, Even, as far as language as well, if you know the, if you know the language or if you know someone that has a bit of knowledge around language of that, of your mob

or your mob that you're on, the land that you're on, embedding that, in the Acknowledgement, having, different places in different areas of your room that has language areas or this can be, you know, a language area or space that has a language.

• 23:35 – 24:08

So just making, having different spaces where you can have cultural or just like, I think, place mats, little bean bags really just something that they can just walk into something tactile they can play with as well, you know, those resources where you get the mats, the tablecloths, even artwork, on the walls, that they can see, you know, get local artists to do something, do a painting for them, that's specific to your, you know, to your centre.

• 24:08 – 24:32

That could be a great one. You know, reaching out to local organizations, I tell that to, all the centres that I go to around, any specific questions. I say reach out to your local Aboriginal organization. Local Elders, is a great one. See if they can get a representative to come in and talk about what they do and, and how they can, how they can help the centre, to even just get a local perspective.

• 24:32 – 25:12

That's a great one, even, you know, outside, have a specific area, a Yarning circle area, or a meeting place where they can sit down, have lunch, have totem poles or something where you can put together, kids can, you know, they can join in on making us, making it spec special to them. personal term as well, you know, this is the one that I, you know, I asked my fiancé tonight, she said that, what she likes about it, you know, you, you're reading the dream time stories when you're talking about a specific topic or a something that you can talk to.

• 25:12 – 25:32

So, you know, if you, a topic here is talking about, frogs read Tiddilak the frog, if it's talking about snakes, Rainbow Serpent, it's talking about, talking about kangaroos, you know, how the kangaroo got its pouch, how the kangaroo got its tail or birds, you know, how the parrots, how the parrot got its colour.

• 25:32 – 26:04

So, or how the birds got their colours. So if there's anything specific that, you're learning in your centre, make it have, see if there's a, a dream time storybook that's, that you can add into on that as well. Music and dance, listening to music, you know, from Aboriginal artists just playing in the background, Gurumul is a great one. That's very soothing and calming that you can just listen to these things in language and, you can just do that even during sleep time where it's just, you just, it's a beautiful thing. I'd like to play that every time we do our art programs or our workshops.

• 26:04 - 26:22

and even when you're making, your centre to feel welcome, having the Aboriginal touch of the flag is, is enough to know that, you're feeling that the Aboriginal people feel acknowledged, music and artwork or even just sort placements, clapping sticks, something you can just display, is a great way as well.

• 26:22 - 27:04

So there are a couple little things that I tell the educators how they can start by, you know, adding in that perspective and starting to embed that culture to make it seem like, that you can, you know, allow, the kids and their families. Cuz as AJ said, you know, it's, you're not, just bringing the kid in, you bringing the whole family. So when they pick up the child, you know, they're feeling welcome when they leave, they're feeling welcome. And, you know, even getting their perspective as well. How they asking them, asking the, you know, the family, what, do you do in your home that we can, help your child feel like they're, you know, they're feeling culturally welcome.

• 27:04 - 27:07

Yeah. Now, Taylor question was, who was the musician, the music artist?

• 27:08 - 27:13

Gurumul., I'll just double check how to spell his name, but.

• 27:15 - 27:28

While you do that, I'm gonna throw over to Shae. Shae, we do have a question that came up, which was, how do we reach out respectively each local organizations? Is there a best way to communicate that we would like to be in partnership with them somehow?

• 27:30 - 27:55

Well, in most cases there's as you mentioned there before, the KESO's and there's the, what do you call the early childhood mob as well, to get around. So that's probably a first port of call. But I think just that it's time now for this sort of stuff to take place. So I think the organization's pretty happy when they get a, get a request, or asked to come down and do something with the mob. So yeah, I think you, you'll be fine. Just trust yourself.

• 27:57 - 28:13

Shae, question; what strategies or techniques do you recommend early childhood services start to do to embed culture? To expand on what, what Taylor is saying.

• 28:15 - 28:51

Yep. I think, for me, like I said earlier, it was about, identify what they already do. But it's kind of easy for us in a way too. It's, I call it the numbers game. So there's one nation, there's 59 Klans, there's five languages, there's four types of country, there's six seasons, and you,

there's your curriculum right there. So during those three seasons of the year, sorry, the two seasons, two months of each season, there's something going on. So they've been, they're planted some trees and plants out the back that'll be flaring at certain times or they're used for the basket grass or whatnot. During the summer, try and get 'em out and come on, come out on country down to the coast and there's lots of things she can eat there.

• 28:51 – 28:55

And so my daughter, she's four and she'll tell people, not that one, this one over here, that sort of thing.

• 28:56 – 29:29

But it's already there. The basis, it just depends on whether, where the place is open as we are down here to include people in what we already do and then try and identify outside of that and showcase that person. So we've got, a lot of Stradbroke Island mob down here. We've got some Noongar, so respectfully asking their mob back to their country to, to send some resources through so we can highlight the fact that we do have this rich diversity of Aboriginal people living on, on Gunditjmara country. And that it's hard for some of the mobs to learn other people's stuff.

• 29:29 – 29:49

They're very, what would just say they don't, want it at the start, but when see how inclusive it is and what we're trying to achieve, they're okay. So at the kinder, where my daughter goes now in the November of the December before the next year, they invited me to come down to a Welcome to Country for all the new students that have become and all the new kids coming the next year.

• 29:50 – 30:20

I give 'em a short, cultural awareness session about, what's happened, you know, nothing too severe, obviously it's only kinder, but once the parents sort of understand a little bit more about what's happened to us, yeah, that, empathy and, understanding as per that video, AJ is, um, is, is really important. And repetition is the other one. So the book that we created recently and I did head, shoulders, knees, and toes in language. I wrote a lullaby in language, and did one other one we quite think of was what Now?

• 30:20 – 30:50

Now, but in the class I recorded it singing it cause everyone else didn't know the language or the words. So I recorded singing it with all the kids there. And then I send that to all the parents. So in two weeks it took before all of 'em could say it. And they're tongue twisters too, so, they were obviously giving it a go. And that, yeah, that repetition was I was recorded. They don't have to have a go of it in front of everybody else. Is that shame thing's

still a factor for a lot of mob too. So just gotta, yeah, pick your audience, pick the ones who are gonna be good on the day and, and just slowly bring the other ones into it.

• 30:52 – 30:52

Cool.

• 30:53 – 31:01

I'm gonna throw open to questions. I'm just gonna just check you any questions I've actually missed up here.

• 31:03 – 31:58

One thing that we have brought up in a couple of other workshops as well is that there are men, there are, I think Di put out to everyone else for, she's like, just checking whether it was to everybody or just to me. But there is a great language kit in Woi Wurrung language as well that maybe Nicholson is, has written for Wurrundjeri land. That doesn't mean that you should be automatically using any other lands as well. And my last conversation with Mandy as well is, was that there's been some organizations where, schools and some early childhood services that have been just using the book and mispronouncing words and not actually using it correctly without actually speaking to local language advisors to actually go, how do we actually pronounce some of this stuff?

• 31:58 – 32:28

Cause it's not read exactly phonetically as it's actually, sorry, it's not spoken as phonetically as it's written as well. So to please, if you are using some of those resources that you might actually want local people, just explain to you exactly the right pronunciation of what you're actually doing. So I'm gonna throw open to the audience group that is right here tonight. Any questions you've got for Shae or Taylor or both?

• 32:33 – 32:34

You must have some questions.

• 32:43 – 32:44

I have a question.

• 32:44 – 32:46

Yeah, sure. What's your question?

• 32:47 – 32:50

Hi, my name's Jackie. So I'm working now. I worked in Fitzroy last year and most of the children spoke English as a first language and their parents were really comfortable like talking about things at home. Like, these children were like familiar with the phrase like, sovereignty was never seated, you know, these four year olds are like comfortable with it.

But now I work in Hume and Craigieburn and the children are really like culturally diverse and there's a lot of language barriers.

• 33:30 – 34:15

And I've just been wondering about like, I guess kind of including a bit of like acknowledgement of the Wurundjeri culture and things like that alongside these children's home culture. Because I think sometimes they get, you know, confused looks from the children and they're kind of don't really know, this other thing that I'm talking about. Sometimes it can quite hard and I kind of wanted it to contextualize it with their cultures as well. And I just kind of sure if that's like respectful to be like, you know, I guess position it alongside their cultures, kind of how to present, indigenous culture alongside other cultures.

• 34:15 – 34:17

Shae, Taylor, either of you?

• 34:21 – 35:02

Taylor: That's a tough one. Yeah, look, I, think I can't speak on behalf of the mob cuz I'm not wick, but I think in terms of the young people that you are working with, the kids that you're working with, I think, I would try, I mean, I don't wanna put too many, you know, things in their heads and, you know, they may have a, different way of seeing what culture is to them compared to what the other kids that you were working with previously.

• 35:03 – 35:15

And so they, you know, they could have been brought up in a different way or in a different light. You know, they might not see that, you know, see the, those different terms or those words that you heard previously.

• 35:15 – 36:00

So that's probably why they're getting a bit confused as to, what those, statements mean. I think, you know, from the perspective of those kids, I think, you know, trying to figure out how, what their culture means to them rather than trying to put that into, you know, the, other culture, what you, the ones that people that you worked with before into, the work that you're doing now with these kids, finding out what they do to practice culture at home, finding out you know, what their family do, what they do in their community and then using that as a way to build that relationship and rapport with those kids.

• 36:00 – 36:06

I think that's probably the way that I would, I would go about it. I'm not sure about Shae, but,

• 36:07 – 36:09

Uh, I'll throw over to Shae. Shae. Yeah,.

• 36:10 – 36:44

Shae: Yeah, I'd probably try and look for, somethings a similarities between the cultures. So most, cultures have got things that we share in common. A lot of regards, what was it, two days ago I had to do an online, thing for, some pastoral care people, and I thought they meant pastorals in agriculture, but it was actually, six people who were becoming priestesses. So I talked about how we have, we have a heaven and hell, we have a God, we have this place that we could go to. We have, all these things were very similar and that's why our people like down this way.

• 36:44 – 36:58

I didn't mind, well not didn't mind, but we're able to swallow the Christianity when it came. And I think the other thing is we gotta remember that, like at that, younger age group, we're just setting 'em up to build up the knowledge base.

• 36:58 – 37:34

So I'm just using key words. Wurundjeri, you know, the bits and pieces that they, they'll remember. Because education is always put in the same context as traditional life. It's, a rights of passage. You only get that extra bit of knowledge when you've learned the other stuff first. So to start out small, once the ones they seem to, retained the bits and pieces that you're trying to, embed with them, then you can move on to something a little bit more, a bit harder to understand I guess. But at that age then, you know, it's all sensory and, and going from one thing to an next day, don't lose their, lose their attention.

• 37:36 – 38:10

Thank you. Yeah, I have been quite, I like to be honest with the children, but been quite nervous to mention the concept of stolen land and try to explain that to children, a lot of them, whom are refugees. And that's, yeah, that's a challenge I wasn't really prepared for when I explained that. I think it would definitely be mis probably misconstrued by some of the children, trying to explain, because a lot of them have just come from other lands to Australia. So I think, focusing on similarities first, especially in the context of, refugee children would be really helpful.

• 38:10 – 38:11

Thank you.

• 38:12 – 38:23

Thank you. Any other questions you've got now's your chance to ask?

• 38:32 – 39:07

I do have a question that's come through to me privately. It says, can you AJ can these guys, I presume you mean that Shae and Taylor come on to land that's not theirs without permission, and do we need to get the permission? I think the issue is, and I'll answer this first, is that, if you do invite them, they actually are Aboriginal consultants. So you and Aboriginal run their own businesses. Part of their cultural protocol would be to get that, approval from the Elders of that particular land.

• 39:08 – 39:30

Shae's nodding in agreement and Taylor is nodding in agreement as well. So they would be able, they would be able to do that. No problem. Any other questions on the email, on the, on the chat, but a couple, private to me, both of them, Taylor and, and Shae, you've done really well.

• 39:30 – 40:01

Thank you for sharing that. What's coming through to me? Do we need to always consult with Aboriginal Elders? I'll throw over to Shae and, and, and Taylor in one second to answer this for, where they are. What I do know from, I work here in on the Bunurong and Wurundjeri areas, and the local Elders are actually going, we are exhausted. We don't need to be consulted on every, every single thing.

• 40:01 – 40:28

Please stop. All of a sudden the Reconciliation Action Plans are actually going, you need to talk to Elders, you need to talk to Elders. And our Elders down here actually going, so we don't need to talk to every single childcare service around. There are consultants and people that are admired in community and consultants that actually have recognition from the Traditional Owners to actually speak, and work on land.

• 40:29 – 40:59

And I think it's really important to understand too, and I've said this in other workshops that we done, is that if you are seeking support from, and if you think that you need to seek, seek support from Elders of the community, think about what you're actually asking. Are you asking for an endorsement to do something? Are you asking permission to do something? Are you asking for advice or support, or do you need their, do you need to learn something from them?

• 40:59 – 41:31

Because that consultation is very, very different, if that makes sense. And the Elders are actually saying, we don't have time to go to every single, early childhood centre around our particular areas to provide this support and information. Reconciliation Victoria, has now got a point of call that, can't remember her name, Joe, who actually screens some of the information that you can actually send, look, we, we are thinking embedding this, what's your idea?

• 41:31 – 42:04

So they can give some support, but they're actually also going back to Reconciliation Australia under the Narrangunnawali structure to actually say, please do not just say, go over contact Elders because Elders, are stretched, they're tired, they're exhausted, and part of this stuff can be done by other people who have been endorsed and supported by Traditional Owners. Shae or Taylor, do you wanna add anything to that or.

• 42:04 – 42:41

Where you are? Yeah, I'll just jump in real quick there. I think a lot of people get confused between having to ask Elders' stuff when they're actually just looking for authority to start what they're doing. And the authority can come from, as you just said, AJ, from, from the organizations, from service providers. yeah, it depends what you're after, having an Elder in a room brings a presence, brings that past into that room. That's a, that's a big thing for if young people to sort of understand. But yeah, that thing about tired and, they owners are few and far between, and the ones who have connections back to missions and things like that are even less so.

• 42:41 – 42:50

So we try to protect them as much as possible. They've done their work, they've built the organizations. They've put the tent embassy up, they've done all that sort of stuff, and then they've opened the door for us to walk through it.

• 42:50 – 43:17

I think it's important that, yeah, we'll give 'em that time to rest and put 'em up on that pedestal, fluff their pillows and ask 'em if they want a drink of water or whatever it is, and, give them the golden years to them, what they should have. You know, they've done the hard stuff. So yeah, sometimes it's, sometimes you put children or anybody in front of an Elder, they love that chat, so if you get the right one, no dramas, they'll talk all day. But, yeah, there's a lot of tired bodies out there, that's for sure.

• 43:17 – 43:20

Taylor, anything you want to add from me?

• 43:20 – 43:55

No, look, I've got permission from, from Elders in my community to perform the workshops that I do. So, you know, if it's, I think when, you know, it is if they want a guest speaker or, or if they, you know, even someone want to perform a or hold a, you know, a ceremony or something, you know, whether where there needs to, you know, where they would like a Welcome to Country, you know, maybe the time, but you know, when it, when it comes to, you know, as, as Shae says, you know, you that that authority or you know, anything to make sure that you, you're performing or doing something culturally appropriate.

• 43:56 – 44:11

You do have other significant people in the community that are able to answer that. That have, you know, already consulted with Elders and, and already doing the work, that, that you are wanting to do anyway. So, yeah, I agree with both of you guys. Yeah.

• 44:11 – 44:44

Yeah. So I think the tip would be that, if before you engage with a particular consultant, actually do a bit of research and ask them those questions like, do you have Traditional Owner support? And can they be able to demonstrate that? ,Not, and I'm not saying this is the, the, the way to do it, but I know that on my website I've got Aunty Di, Wurundjeri Elder supporting my work, and she says it clearly on there, the Bunurong Lands Council have got a representative that say, we support AJ doing that work.

• 44:44 – 45:11

And anytime I write proposals and it's on Wurundjeri or Bunurong land, I refer to those particular, YouTube or show those particular, videos so you can actually, so organizations can see that the support is actually already kind of there. So it's about doing the research about who is the most appropriate person, and if they don't, that's a question you can ask about how will you get that support?

• 45:11 – 46:00

And if they dunno how to do that, that's one of the first issues, that's a first red flag to actually go, well, if they're saying that they can do this and they don't have that endorsement or support, then that would be a bit of a, a barrier. Is it a problem that the Narragunnawali RAP process is organizing a welcome to country as a required action? I can't expect afford this unless it's a special event. Well, this is where I'm gonna say something first. This is where you can be quite creative. Why don't you think about asking one of the Elders to actually maybe record a Welcome to Country that you can actually use and you pay that Elder to do that recording with permission that you use it for a certain period of time, they record it, then you've paid them as a one-off.

• 46:00 – 46:26

But then you can use that for a period of maybe two, two or three years. And then after that, that agreement ceases, which means you wouldn't need to necessarily pay the cause. We do know that you, you know, a lot of services wouldn't be able to pay, for a welcome the country all the time. But that's just one way of looking outside the box. Shae, Taylor, anything else you can think of to answer that particular question?

• 46:29 – 47:02

Yeah, the whole Acknowledgement thing's sort of half new-ish, I guess. So for, me personally if there's a wage that goes with it or a payment to be made, I'll sort of go and ask people who I know might need that. I do a lot of that stuff for free. I think, it's an honour

to be able to Welcome people to country or do, I don't necessarily do Acknowledgements cause it is my country that I'm welcoming people to. So do the Australian citizenship ceremonies and things like down here. Yeah, it's a, it's a tricky one because if you overdo it, it does become tokenistic, I believe.

• 47:02 – 47:14

So it's gotta be sort of, yeah, tailored for the event. If it's something hard, like a RAP launch or, you know, and an opening of a new set of something, yet the Elders love that sort of stuff.

• 47:14 – 47:46

I actually did a flag raising today at the Narrawong primary school. They got their new Torres Strait Islander flag and couldn't get anybody. They tried to get an Elder who was me dad's older sister, and she wasn't able to get back to 'em, but she had a change of phones in between. So I took my Torres Strait spear, Torres Strait drum, and a big turtle shell I've got from Cairns, explained the bits and pieces I know about the Torres Strait mob. And then right at the end, my auntie turns up, so I ended up just holding the umbrella for her in the rain, you know, while she took the, took the glory of raising the flag. But, I felt very proud to hold that umbrella over her.

• 47:46 – 47:58

So I think there's, yeah, again, it's sources for cost and the community you're in. We're all at different places, so it's all new ground for us, all of it. It's very sensitive, but, trust for instincts, I guess is what I'm saying.

• 47:59 – 48:32

Taylor, I've got a question here. I've got something to say before, but, I've throw it straight at you. Do you, can you imagine a time when early childhood services have the Uluru Statement of the Heart on display, like New Zealand early childhood settings, have a treaty of Waitangi. I just wanna make an announcement before I throw over to you that not all Aboriginal people support, the Uluru statement of the heart and to check with either the Traditional Owners or, families, whether or not that would be offensive before keeping it up, Taylor.

• 48:33 – 49:05

Yeah, yeah. Look, in the last few years since I've done this business, I haven't seen any, the statement at all, hanging up. And that could be for, for any other reason. But I will just say that one of the main reasons is because, the centres, haven't been, you know, learning a lot about culture. And that goes to the question at the top from Nicole, where it's asking, about their own personal journey of their, understanding Aboriginal ways.

• 49:05 – 49:34

I don't think that the, the centres, have enough knowledge on what that means and what kind of stuff that they could do to, you know, to start their own cultural journey in terms of the centre's cultural journey. I think there's just not enough education as to display a lot of those kind of political statements, to make sure that, you know, we all want to be inclusive.

• 49:34 - 50:04

And I think in that, that AJ said, not a lot of people, not everyone, in terms of Aboriginal people would be in support of the Uluru statement, but I think it's just about, yeah, I, haven't seen it in the, in the centres that I've worked in. Um, but again, it's, I think that's also about the lack of education and the around the knowledge and not on their fault, but it's just that they hadn't felt comfortable enough to seek it out, I think cause they didn't wanna make it be culturally inappropriate.

• 50:05 - 50:34

Can you add something to that real quick? Yeah. We had a similar question not long ago, and what we decided there do is add the UN conventions for children instead and put that up there. So there's a whole list of things, around children that's pertinent to everybody, black, white, or brindle. So I think that Uluru the statements kind of different in that regard, but, yeah, I think the UN conventions for children is much more pertinent in this space.

• 50:37 - 50:52

Before we do go, cause it's getting time, any final questions for either Taylor or Shae? going once? Going twice. Okay. Shae, any final comments?

• 50:54 - 50:59

I think I've said it a couple times. Just trust your instincts, if you're unsure, ask and, good luck.

• 51:00 - 51:01

Cool. Taylor?

• 51:02 - 51:33

Yeah, look, yeah, agree with Shae. Absolutely. I think the, one of the biggest things that, that I talk about, not just in this business that I do, but you know, my work, my day-to-day job as well, is don't just assume that all Aboriginal people know Aboriginal history or, a lot of the stuff. Don't just assume that we all practice the same cultural traditions and the best ways to know that is just to ask, ask the question, how they like to be identified, what kind of stuff they like to do in their own family with their family traditions, if they do.

• 51:33 - 51:40

And how you can embed there and, you know, incorporate that into your work practice as well. I think that's, yeah, the biggest one as well.

• 51:41 – 52:17

Thanks guys. Just to let you all know, this is, this is the 10th of the 12th, series. All the previous recordings of the previous nine are all up on AGECS, the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies, website under the reconciliation page. Next month we've got, the wonderful Kerry Arabeena coming to actually talk to us about the first 1000 days and embedding Torres Strait Islander perspectives into curriculum, which will be very interesting.

• 52:19 – 52:53

As always, I've really enjoyed, the conversations both Taylor and Shae were able to actually, bring to us tonight. I can see guys, you probably can see the feedback coming through going, thank you. Thank you very much for what, what you've actually done. And always great food for thought. These workshops are designed to start conversations. They're not about actually, always providing all the answers, but they're actually providing more questions than answers, which is actually great.

• 52:55 – 53:25

I just wanted to say thank you to AGECS again for putting this workshop on. And, I will actually throw out, because throw out this out to people, I wasn't going to, but I will at the end. I've been really lucky this last, week. I, for people that do know me, I moderate the, these sessions I've just been awarded the, Swinburne alumni impact award for Swinburne University.

• 53:26 – 54:04

And this week, on Thursday night, if you tune into the Victoria University alumni, apparently I'm up for an award in there as well. Victoria University goes, they're not sure if ever anyone's been nominated for two different universities in the same year, but, I'm really quite honoured to be able to, do workshops like this and to be able to show some sort of social impact of what we actually do and what I actually do. Everything I do for community, everything I do for my family and for my children and my grandchildren.

• 54:04 – 54:18

So they can look back and actually go, yep, my dad and my granddad actually did this. So guys, I wanna say, can we please give a good round of applause? Take your microphones off. Take your mute off. So we want to hear it, we want to hear some claps for.