



OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION

Keeping Koorie Kids in an Education of their Choice

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2021

Celebrating 20 years of supporting Aboriginal children in education

Opening The Doors Foundation (OTDF) will celebrate its twentieth birthday on 4 August! Over the past 20 years the Foundation has supported over 3,000 Aboriginal students in schools around Victoria with over 10,000 grants worth in total more than \$6 million.

To celebrate, the Foundation will be launching a short film profiling some of the families who have been supported by the Foundation and the students' journeys since school. As you know we love to share these stories with you all! Keep an eye out for news about the launch of our 20th anniversary short film.



Opening the Doors in 2021

In 2021 the Foundation has supported educational necessities of more than 820 students from more than 200 schools. The Foundation would like to acknowledge our students' proud and resilient families, who continue to work to support them and make the best decisions for their futures.



"We are extremely grateful for the support OTDF has provided our son, Kobi George throughout his secondary education. In 2020, Kobi completed Year 12. He has since commenced a double degree studying Civil Engineering (Honours) and Architectural Design. This pathway would not have been possible for Kobi without the ongoing and generous support of OTDF."

Kobi hopes to one day be in the position to return the favour and become a regular donor.



Stories From Our Families

Have a look at the newest page on our website called Stories From Our Families. On this page you'll find stories from families who we currently work with or who we have worked with in the past. You'll find the impressive achievements of our students, different obstacles they have faced and how the Foundation has been a part of their journey.

The Opening The Doors Foundation acknowledges the traditional owners of ancestral lands across Australia. We respect Elders past and present and local Aboriginal custodians.

This material may contain images of members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities who have entered the Dreaming. They are used with the greatest respect and appreciation.

How we practice self-determination for our families

As an Aboriginal community organisation, it is essential that OTDF operates at all levels within the principles of self-determination. Over the past few years we have implemented several changes in the grant process, such as moving from cheque to electronic payments, discontinuing the need for parents to provide quotes, developing an online application form, and building further partnerships with schools and Koori educators where this supports families.

During the 2021 grant round the Foundation introduced a direct finance phone number so that families and schools could contact the Finance Officer directly, if required, once their grant had been approved and progressed to the payment stage.

By reducing paperwork and working with community we are now able to receive, approve and pay grants within two weeks. This is not an easy target to meet, especially during the first part of the grant period when we may receive 100 plus applications a day. In support of families in 2021, the Foundation worked with 265 retailers, each with differing protocols for working with the Foundation and families.

As we plan for the 2022 school year, we are taking feedback from families, schools and others who help with the process to ensure that we continue to practice self-determination for our families.

Women's Stories



Women's Stories by Clara Rizzi includes interviews with seven women who have dedicated much of their lives to Aboriginal education. Among these women are OTDF co-founder and Chairperson, Aunty Vicki Clark, and Aunty Elizabeth Pike who was extensively involved with the Foundation in its infancy. Proceeds from book sales are being donated to Opening The Doors Foundation and Joseph's Corner. To purchase a copy, contact Clara at clarariz@bigpond.com

Clara is a long time supporter of the Foundation. We appreciate her commitment to the Foundation and to educating her community about the important stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We honour Dr Kevin Messer

One of the founding members of the Foundation, Dr Kevin Messer, passed away earlier this year. The Foundation would like to pay tribute to Kevin and his lifelong commitment to supporting the Aboriginal community. We honour his contributions to the Foundation, as he helped us to expand with his thoughtful and considered input in our early stages. Our thoughts and prayers are with Kevin's wife and former Trustee, Carol, and his family.

Thank You

Thank you to the many supporters who have donated to the Foundation over the past 20 years, and to those who continue to do so. We are very grateful to the schools and parishes who continue to fundraise through a range of activities including trivia nights, casual clothes days, craft fairs and awareness raising initiatives.

If you or your workplace, parish or school would like to support the Foundation please contact us at enquiries@openingthedoors.org.au or 9443 9070.

We would particularly like to acknowledge these partners:



Anthony Costa Foundation

Anthony Costa Foundation



Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation



The Ross Trust



The Tobin Brothers Foundation



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