



# OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION

*Keeping Koorie Kids in an Education of their Choice*

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

### CHAIR'S REPORT

This year has been a busy one, with celebrations of 20 years of supporting Aboriginal students in their education journeys while we continued to try and get back to normalcy by overcoming obstacles thrown up by COVID-19. I am grateful to our strong and generous supporters who have enabled us to support over 800 students this year. I also acknowledge the resilience and support of Aboriginal families, as well as the community support systems in place from Aboriginal organisations to school staff and many aunts, uncles and cousins - your endeavours have helped to make the Foundation's efforts effective and fostered our new emphasis on self-determination.

Last month we turned 20 years old - how incredible is that! When a few of us began this ambitious project two decades ago, I did not realise that we would have the opportunity to support THOUSANDS of Aboriginal families to attain the best education for their children. The Foundation's longevity would not be possible without all of you, our community, our supporters, who have walked with us on this long journey year after year.

On our birthday, we were honoured to share with you a new video featuring some of our amazing families and those who have helped us support the Victorian Aboriginal community. We faced some setbacks in its production with unexpected lockdowns stopping filming across Victoria. Luckily, some of our 'superstars' were able to participate online. Thank you to all the families and OTDF friends who agreed to be a part of the project.

Personally, I have followed the stories of our students for years and it was great to catch up with familiar faces through this initiative. I was so proud to sit down and yarn about what OTDF alumni have done since finishing school. Hearing from them about how the Foundation helped them to achieve some 'amazing heights' was precious and I cherished the occasions. Our group included alumnis Madi, who sung in Yorta Yorta language, and Jeda, who introduced the video, along with mother of three alumni and OTDF Trustee, Julie, and educator and Trustee, Shelley. It was heart-warming to see so many families who wanted to get involved and give back to OTDF. Their participation is a great example of the many ways that the Aboriginal community gives back and supports one another in providing better opportunities for our young ones. I would like to thank the Alfred Felton Bequest which funded this project and has allowed us to share our story through this film.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our journey so far, including over the past two years as we have faced particularly tough times. I am hopeful for the future of the Foundation. With the help of our networks, we hope to continue supporting self-determination in education for Aboriginal families in the years ahead.

Aunty Vicki Clark OAM



### OUR STUDENTS IN 2021

In 2021 OTDF supported 817 students from 195 schools across Victoria. Provision of student uniforms is the highest category of expenditure, followed by levies for school costs such as art, music, and sport.

Uniforms	\$224,622.87
Levies/Fees	\$163,711.02
Books	\$94,892.53
IT/Calculators	\$73,602.07
Shoes	\$19,621.99
Cultural Immersion	\$2,875
VET/CAL	\$772

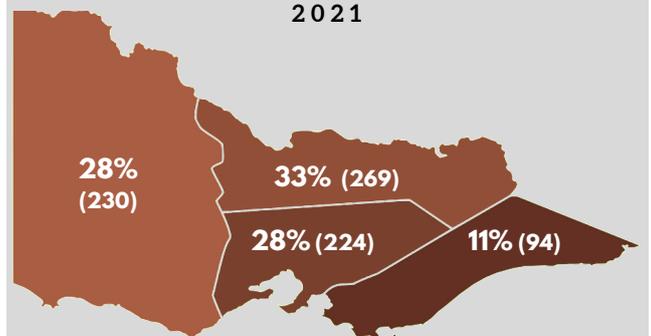
**TOTAL GRANTS:** \$578,747.47

**"We are very thankful for the Foundation's Grant. Without the grant there would be other things I would have to sacrifice for my children such as sports. I have 3 children attending Catholic schools, next year it is going to be a stretch for us particularly since I will have 2 in High school. My fees are going to be gigantic."**



You can find more stories from our families at <https://www.openingthedoors.org.au/stories-from-our-families>

### GEOGRAPHY OF STUDENTS 2021



- Melbourne
- Eastern Victoria
- Western Victoria
- Northern Victoria

The office of Opening The Doors Foundation is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nations. 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.

*"Indi has received her first golden honour award this year and we are all very proud, she has also won several '1st' ribbons at the school athletics carnival. The Foundation's grant is always so helpful, thank you!"*

## MILESTONES



**1991 - 2000**

### **The dream begins.**

Requests from families, visits, discussions about WHAT a Foundation might look like and HOW it could be developed.

Cathy Freeman wins gold in the women's 400m at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation is established. The first National Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998 following the 1997 HREOC report Bringing Them Home which recommended that a national day of observance be declared.



**2000**

More than 250,000 people walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge in support of Indigenous Australians.



**2001**

On the National Aboriginal Children's Day August 4th - Launch of the Foundation by Archbishop Hart at Australian Catholic University then named "Keeping Koorie Kids in Catholic Education".

**32 students supported with \$12,718.**



**2002**

11 October 'Walk Across our Paperbark' - a major fundraising Gala dinner with guest MC Ernie Dingo and entertainment by Liz Cavanagh Duo. Binnap Partners Support Group established to support the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry. Cabrini Health began supporting the Foundation

**51 students supported with \$19,301.**



**2003**

The Foundation changes name to the Opening The Doors. Opening the Doors Foundation's Trust Deed executed. The Foundation expanded to fund all Independent schools in Victoria.

**132 students supported with \$41,995.**



**2004**

### **Establishment of Annual Newsletter and Activity Report to keep donors informed of the progress of students and the Foundation.**

Three year partnership with St Vincent de Paul Society begins. Funding from Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund begins. Three year partnership with Rio Tinto Aboriginal Foundation begins. DGR Status granted. Website developed. Funding from Youth in Philanthropy begins. Funding continues until present day.

**195 students supported \$59,220.**

461 'Sorry Books' recording the thoughts of Australians on the unfolding history of the Stolen Generations are inscribed on the Australian Memory of the World Register, part of UNESCO's programme to protect and promote documentary material with significant historical value.



**2005**

13 year partnership with Portland House Foundation Begins. Promotional DVD produced and distributed - funded by Brotherhood of St Lawrence. Fundraising Gala Dinner held at the Melbourne Museum - 'Back to our Paperbark' hosted by guest MC Ernie Dingo and OTDF Trustee Mikael Smith and guest speaker, Richard Frankland Aboriginal art auctioneer David Somersby raising over \$50,000. The partnership with St Vincent de Paul Society will continue for the next 5 years. Partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence launched for next 3 years. Partnership with the Merrin/Grenet Foundation. Cultural Awareness Camp for Aboriginal students from the Sandhurst Diocese to Lake Mungo funded by - Telstra Foundation funded. New logo is revealed-design by Melissa Brickell -Yorta Yorta

**293 students supported with \$139,044.**

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd say Sorry in the Federal Parliament for the mistreatment of Indigenous Australians.



**2006**

Appreciation Gathering is held at Koorie Heritage Trust. 3 year partnership with Paul Newman's Own Foundation.

**308 students supported with \$136,763.**

Victoria is the first state to formally recognise the sacrifice and service of Aboriginal servicemen during the inaugural Honouring Victorian Indigenous Returned Service Men and Women Shrine of Remembrance Service. The service is held each year since.



**2007**

Inaugural Oration for OTDF was held as a fundraiser for OTDF. These event was the beginning of a 10-year fundraising partnership with Genazzano.

**334 students supported with \$163,746.**

Australia celebrates the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum. The Victorian government appoints an officer to sift through almost 100 years of records in state and Commonwealth archives to determine whether Victorian Aboriginal people are owed wages.



**2008**

Grant from Ethel May Woods Trust 1st Appreciation Gathering for supporters of the Foundation and Aboriginal organisations held at the Treacy Centre, Parkville. 'Connections' is run. Connections is a peer mentoring group that supported spirituality and identity exploration of Aboriginal youth Ballarat, Hamilton, Warrnambool, Colac, Ararat, Mildura and Swan Hill. The project was funded by Telstra and the Ballarat Catholic Education office.

**258 Students supported with \$103,589.**



**2009**

FIRE Carrier Project (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) launched by Mr Ian Hamm, former Executive Director of Aboriginal Affairs Vic, at Genazzano FCJ College, Kew at Reconciliation Breakfast. Partnership with Arnold Bloch Leibler begins as the law firm offers pro bono legal assistance. Aboriginal law professor Mick Dodson receives the 2009 Australian of the Year award for his lifetime commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people and helping to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

**411 students supported with \$207,134.**

Australia supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.



**2010**

The Curriculum Extension Program is established to support secondary students to enhance their cultural experience offered as part an extension to their learning. This meant students had the opportunity to travel to remote Aboriginal communities and visit other cultures around the world. Funded by the Merrin Foundation Funding from Eirene Lucas Foundation begins Birthday celebration at Genazzano FCJ College with guest speaker, Bruce Pascoe and silent auction.

**460 students supported with \$262,466.**



**2011**

Funding from Jack Brockhoff Foundation. 10th Birthday & Oration Celebration at Genazzano FCJ College with guest speaker, Anita Heiss. Partnership with the Killen Foundation begins. Trivia night at St Dominic's Parish

**524 students supported with \$288,000.**

Elders Aunty Joan Robinson and Aunty Elizabeth Pike was inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll.

 **2012**  
Funding from 6A Foundation begins. Birthday celebration at Genazzano FCJ College in honor of Aunty Betty Pike and Joan Robinson who were added to the Victorian honour roll delivered by Carol Messer

**600 students supported with \$339,000.**

Elder Eleanor Harding was inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll. Founding trustee John Arthur received the Order of Australia Medal.

 **2013**  
3 year partnership with St Vincent de Paul Society. Birthday celebration at Genazzano FCJ College with guest speaker, Stephanie Armstrong

**615 students supported with \$359,556.**

The Victorian Government appoints Aboriginal man Andrew Jackomos as Victoria's - and Australia's - first Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Youth.

 **2014**  
Harry and Agnes Bugden grant launched due to bequest from Harry Bugden to support education in music for Aboriginal students over the next five years. Partnership with The Eric and Elizabeth gross Foundation begins, supporting year 7 students to acquire uniform. Birthday celebration at Genazzano FCJ College with guest speaker, Grant Hansen.

**672 students supported with \$395,873.**

Founding trustee Vicki Clark becomes one of 100 most influential women in Social Enterprise/Not-For-Profit. AFL player Adam Goodes becomes Australian of the Year "for his leadership and advocacy in the fight against racism both on the sporting field and within society".

 **2015**  
Birthday celebration at Genazzano FCJ College Vicki Clark delivers the last oration.

**724 students supported with \$476,422**

 **2016**  
Genazzano FCJ College changes the fundraising focus to allow the FIRE Carriers to organise this was the start of their Trivia nights.

**740 students supported with \$527,178**

South Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory announces their intention to commence Treaty discussions with First Nation Peoples. Vicki Clark is appointed to the Victorian Aboriginal Treaty Working Group.

 **2017**  
**757 students supported with \$573,568**

The 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' is released following the 4-day First Nations National Constitutional Convention. Founding trustee Vicki Clark was inducted into the Victorian Honor Roll. The Australian National University returns the bones of Mungo Man, 40 years after their discovery. Greens' Lidia Thorpe Gunnai-Kurnai/Gunditjmara woman becomes the first Victorian Aboriginal woman to be elected to the Victorian parliament. Clinton Pryor meets with the Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and Governor General following the completion of his year-long Walk for Justice, from Perth to Canberra.

 **2018**  
Introduction of Family Partnership Program make applications easier for families that have been supported by the Foundation long term

**772 students supported with \$584,337**

Former trustee Cherie Waight was inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honor Roll  
Founding trustee Vicki Clark received the Order of Australia Medal  
The Aboriginal Treaty Working Group presented its final report on the design of the Aboriginal Representative Body (First Peoples Assembly).

 **2019**  
Partnership with Equity Trustees begins. Partnership with RMIT helps the Foundation to develop an online application form, which is more accessible to families. The Harry and Agnes Bugden grant Music grants finish after 5 years.

**815 students supported with \$690,411**

After a 17-year campaign, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape near Portland, a 6,600-year-old Aboriginal aquaculture site in south-west Victoria, is added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Older than the pyramids, the site proves that Aboriginal people-built channels and pools to harvest eels, and also permanent stone houses. The site is considered one of the largest and oldest aquaculture sites in the world and became the first Australian World Heritage site to be nominated exclusively for Aboriginal cultural values. Trustee Jason Kelly is elected to the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is established to deliver a framework towards Treaty. Yorta Yorta soprano Deborah Cheetham premieres Eumeralla, a War Requiem for Peace, a performance sung entirely in the reclaimed Gunditjmara language, and sold out weeks in advance. Victoria introduces the Custody Notification Service (CNS) that obliges police to contact the Aboriginal Legal Service after taking an Aboriginal person into custody.

*"In the past, when Rey was in Kinder and my youngest daughter was in High school, Opening the Doors Foundation helped my children a great deal, as I paid for attending the school and the financial assistance from the Foundation helped with books and uniforms. Opening the Doors Foundation made it possible for my kids to access and complete school.*

*I am now solely responsible for the children's school fees and this grant has helped me over the last few years, to keep some normalcy for my children, with them being able to stay in the same school. Single parenting is tough, and this grant has really helped."*

 **2020**  
COVID-19 - everyone working from home. Funding for students learning from home. CEP funds redirected to the needs of students working from home. Online application is launched.

**856 students supported with \$700,253**

Tens of thousands of Australians attend Black Lives Matter marches in cities across the country to protest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders deaths in custody and high rates of incarceration of First Nations Peoples. Ngaragu woman Ash Barty is named Young Australian of the Year 2020. She is recognised for inspiring many Aboriginal peoples not only in her role as a National Indigenous Tennis Ambassador for Tennis Australia or her sporting career but in her down-to-earth, kind-hearted personality and resilience. Archie Roach is inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 2020 Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) Music Awards. He also wins Best Male Artist and Best Adult Contemporary Album for Tell Me Why.

 **2021**  
The Governor of Victoria signed the letters patent, as required under the Inquiries Act 2014, to legally establish the Yoo-rook Justice Commission and set the Terms of Reference.

Aboriginal Victoria changes its name to "First Peoples-State Relations  
Shelley Ware is the latest to become a member of the board of trustees, joining Vicki Clark (Chairperson), John Arthur (Treasurer), Melissa Brickell, Dr Julie Andrews, Jason Kelly and Gabrielle McMullen  
The Foundation turns 20

**817 students supported with \$580,097**

# 20 YEARS OF SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

On 4 August 2021, Opening The Doors Foundation celebrated 20 years since our journey began. To acknowledge this momentous day, the Foundation launched a short film online where 256 people attended. Thank you to everyone who has watched the film and shared it with their networks. Thank you also for the many kind words and valued feedback. The Foundation was grateful to share our story with you, and the stories of some of our students, alumni and families.

If you have not had a chance to see the film, check it out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfg3jEYZQWM>



## OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS:



Equity Trustees



The Archbishop's Charitable Fund



Australian Black and White Stories

The Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation

The Merrin Foundation

The Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation

Binnap Partners

The Elizabeth and Eric Gross Foundation

Arnold Bloch Leibler

The Arthur Family

The Myers Family

The Perpetual Trust

The Guillaume Family

Fr Charles Balnaves

Opening The Doors Foundation is not government funded which means that it relies on donations to support Aboriginal education initiatives. Every donation, big or small, supports better opportunities for Aboriginal students. Help us to empower Aboriginal students to dream big!

To donate visit [www.openingthedoors.org.au](http://www.openingthedoors.org.au) or call 0401 487 414.

To volunteer for the Foundation email: [enquiries@openingthedoors.org.au](mailto:enquiries@openingthedoors.org.au)

## CHRISTMAS APPEAL

For the second year running, Opening The Doors Foundation will be selling its unique Christmas ornaments signed on the back by the Foundation. All ornaments are made locally from sustainable Australian timber. These ornaments are fantastic gifts to share with loved ones and beautiful ornaments to display over the festive season. Every dollar made from the sale of these ornaments will help the Foundation to continue supporting Aboriginal students in Victoria.

Thank you to everyone who bought Christmas ornaments last year. Your support was especially helpful after a financially challenging year in 2020.

As the Foundation relies entirely on donations and grants to support its educational programs, all funds raised from our Christmas ornaments will enable us to support more Aboriginal students in the future.

**Take a pledge to sell 12 ornaments at your school, workplace or community.** Help us share the festive spirit and by selling a Christmas Pack (pictured below). Each pack includes 12 ornaments.

To order Christmas ornaments or make a pledge, visit:

[www.openingthedoors.org.au/christmas](http://www.openingthedoors.org.au/christmas)



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