

Indigenous Career Education – How do you successfully fill the gaps?

Phoenix Community College

The Indigenous Careers program at Phoenix College in Ballarat, Victoria, is a good example of addressing individual student needs. The College accesses and engages with locally available programs and organisations. These include the state government education strategy, a local educators network, the regional multicultural council and a non-government mentoring program, to provide students with a variety of opportunities.

Phoenix P to 12 Community College is a provincial government school comprising two campuses in Sebastopol, a south western suburb of the City of Ballarat. Ballarat is a regional city located 140km west of Melbourne, Victoria. Phoenix College aims to support all students in their cultural beliefs through a careers program that respects, recognises and celebrates cultural identity through practice and curriculum and for Indigenous students through their Koorie community.

Visit: <http://www.phoenix.vic.edu.au>

What opportunities does the Indigenous Careers program access?

- the Wannik program, a Victorian Government education strategy for Koorie students
- the Central Highlands Koorie Educators Network (CHKEN)
- Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council
- Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)

The Wannik program, a Victorian Government education strategy for Koorie students

The College Career Development Practitioner, Ms Cheryl Kennedy said, “Phoenix College has been running a successful Indigenous Careers program over many years. We are involved in the Wannik program which sees individual education learning plans developed for all Koorie students”.

Wannik is a Victorian Government education strategy for Koorie students. It requires all government schools to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every Koorie student in P to 12. The development of IEPs is part of a school’s accountability process and the percentage of students with a plan is reported in the annual August census. IEPs are developed in partnership with the student, their parent/guardian and where necessary, a regional Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO).

The Individual Education Plan (IEP):

- covers key transition points (pre-school to school; primary to secondary, compulsory to post-compulsory)
- links to every Year 8 to 12 Koorie student’s Career Action Plan (Wannik Managed Individual Pathways/ Managed Individual Pathways/Pathway Plan)
- incorporates the Managed Individual Pathways plan from Year 8 to 12 as an overall planning document for both learning and career and pathway planning.

Visit: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/aboriginal/Pages/wannikteachlearn.aspx>



Central Highlands Koorie Educators Network (CHKEN)

Phoenix College is also an active member of the Central Highlands Koorie Educators Network (CHKEN). The College ensures its students have the most up to date information on what is happening in their community and how they can engage in any opportunities to stimulate their interests. The network also provides the College with opportunities to demonstrate their students' achievements and progress along their educational journey.

Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council

Engagement with the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council has also proven extremely valuable to Phoenix College. Staff from the Council visit the students to support them in preparing for their next steps along their career pathway, whether that be critiquing resumes and cover letters for part time employment, discussing TAFE & university options or just talking about what is happening in their local community.

Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME)

Since 2013, students have been supported and encouraged to participate in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) program designed for students from Years 9 to 12. AIME provides a dynamic educational program that provides Indigenous high school students with the skills, opportunities, belief and confidence to finish school at the same rate as their peers. AIME has proven to dramatically improve the chances of Indigenous students finishing school. AIME also connects students with post-Year 12 opportunities including further education and employment.

Visit: <https://aimementoring.com/welcome>

How do individual students benefit from these opportunities at Phoenix College?

Amber Barker Lovett

Amber Barker Lovett, a 2015 graduate of Phoenix College said, "The support I received from the staff at Phoenix College meant that I and the other students never missed out on an opportunity to participate in the AIME program and so many other cultural experiences".

The opportunities to share experiences with students from other schools was also a highlight according to Amber. "The opportunity to collect students from other schools on the bus along the way so we could chat about experiences and ideas prior to reaching the university for the day's program was really valuable."

Amber is a proud Gunditjmara and Wemba Wembra woman who feels that not only the AIME program, but the support and guidance she received over her secondary education, has given her the confidence to now support other Indigenous youth.

Amber had the honour of being named Ms NAIDOC 2015 for her work in her community and for showing exemplary skills and abilities as a positive role model and community leader.

Amber has started two dance troupes, including Namarilly Bagarook – Dancing Daughters, that perform at many cultural events both locally and at a state level.

Amber has also gained employment at Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) as the BADAC Well-Being Services Receptionist.





Macayla Vanoosterom, Shaqiera Cartledge, Makayla Rumler



Topsy Milera, Amber Barker Lovett

