

THE BULDAU YIOOHGEN PROGRAM PRESENTS

BIG DREAMS

EMBRACING CULTURE AT ANGLICARE VICTORIA

BULDAU YIOOHGEN NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025



WOMINJEKA

Come with Purpose.

Cabbe melemung'il narrin-ik Kellie.

Hello, my name is Kellie.

It's been a great last few months being out on Country and running our workshops with young people and the community. We have been very fortunate to meet some amazing young people who have been able to start their own personal Cultural journey.

In January, 11 young people were supported in working at the Australian Open in retail and customer experience roles. Each young person developed their CV with the guidance of Anglicare Victoria's recruitment staff to prepare them for applying to the global sporting event.

Savanah Jenkins, a proud Wemba Wemba and Taungurung woman and alumni of the 2024 leadership academy has returned to mentor our eight participants for 2025. We look forward to her continuing her mentorship throughout the year.

In April, we ran a Mob Day Out at Healesville Sanctuary, with beautiful weather and company. We also ran a three-hour session at the Studley Park Boathouse on the Yarra with AV's TEACHaR program for over 40 teachers to support staff in working with young Mob. Uncle Les has been travelling across the state visiting AV's cultural spaces and providing information and resources for staff meeting young people and their families.

Ngoon Godgin

Thank you

Kellie Hunter

Senior Cultural Operations Lead

FOUNDED BY ANGLICARE VICTORIA





BARRING WURRDHA BEGINS ON MARIA ISLAND

Barring Wurrdha is the annual on-Country camp to Maria Island and marks the young people's first steps into the Ngarra Jarra Leadership Academy to begin the Buldau Yioohgen year. This camp, formerly known as the Hike to Higher Education, has recently been renamed by Aunty Kellie. Barring Wurrdha means 'the path is endless' in the Woiwurrung language – which is definitely how some of those long hikes on the island can feel by the end!

Barring Wurrdha is the first opportunity for our new group of deadly young people to get together, ready to connect with Culture, the land, and each other. The bonds between them grew quickly, resulting in a tight-knit group who looked out for one another throughout the trip. The camp was full of teamwork, with everyone pitching in to do the dishes and care for each other in small but meaningful ways. The shared challenge of climbing the mountain added another layer of unity, forging trust and support as they navigated the terrain together. Uncle Ron Murray, a cultural educator, storyteller and yidaki (didgeridoo) player from the Wamba Wamba Mob, joined this year's program, providing cultural guidance along the way.

One of the highlights of the trip was a boat tour to Ile Des Phoques (Island of Seals), a small rocky island home to more than 500 Australian fur seals. This adventure off the coast of the Freycinet Peninsula brought out the biggest grins of the trip, especially from Jojo and Kaiden, two young people whose laughter lit up the day.



The Ngarra Jarra Leadership Academy standing tall at Bloodstone Point, Maria Island.



Their joy was infectious, and their energy brought the group even closer. When the boat entered a small cave inside the island, Uncle Ron played his yidaki, bringing the seals out from the water to investigate the sound echoing against the rocks.

The Barring Wurrdha trip was more than just a camp. It was a journey of cultural pride, resilience, and community, laying the foundation for a strong year ahead in the Buldau Yioohgen program.

Ngarra Jarra

meaning 'healing' in the Woiwurrung language, is the second phase of the Buldau Yioohgen program. After young First Peoples join Buldau Yioohgen, they engage with a range of cultural workshops and yarns with Aunty Kellie, Uncle Les and workshop facilitators to build confidence in their identity and forge cultural strength. The Ngarra Jarra Leadership Academy runs across the year with a group of 8-10 young future leaders attending four on-Country camps, beginning at Maria Island. Each camp offers a holistic approach to closing the gap for young First Peoples on-Country, rather than in an office or meeting room. Throughout the program, vital, life-changing leadership education for young people occurs in the great outdoors, guided and surrounded by Buldau Yioohgen Cultural Lore.

Buldau Yioohgen Cultural Lore

is a set of guiding principles for young Indigenous peoples to follow, informed by leadership, obligation, respect, empowerment and self-determination, in a world that often tells them they aren't good enough. Buldau Yioohgen aims to reverse that way of thinking right from the outset. In a society that sometimes tries to put them down, we arm them with the tools to succeed.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY GRADS A SMASH HIT AT THE AUSTRALIAN OPEN

With the tennis world's eyes on Melbourne, The Australian Open tournament has provided an exciting work opportunity for young people in 2025, giving them valuable experience and helping them develop important leadership skills. In collaboration with Buldau Yioohgen, Tennis Victoria and Tennis Australia have supported 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to secure positions at the Australian Open this year in retail and customer experience.

Each young person developed and refined their CV to successfully apply to Tennis Australia, then attend the assessment day and training. Their achievements embody the philosophy of the Buldau Yioohgen program, which is structured in a way that encourages young First Peoples to be work-ready and walk in both worlds. Aunty Kellie said the fantastic achievement of these young people in securing employment at a global sporting event like the AO is a great example of what Buldau Yioohgen is all about.

"In five years, we could probably have 20 to 30 young people working here. That's what I can see for our future leaders." - Uncle Les

"To have that on your resume is important in breaking down those barriers for young people following the COVID-19 pandemic. We were privileged to be able to support this great group of Aboriginal young people all the way, giving them a home base for two weeks of work experience at our cultural centre Darrango yandhan," she said.

Kolysha (Yorta Yorta, Gunaikurnai, Dja Dja Wurrung) graduated from the Buldau Yioohgen Leadership Academy in 2024. She shadowed the Tennis Victoria team throughout the tournament, working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who are visiting the event through the Deadly Choices program. Reflecting on the application process to work at the AO, Kolysha said: "It was a little bit challenging because I was nervous, but at the same time I was proud of myself for doing it".

She said her favourite part was "seeing the little ones getting excited" and "helping people around the place".

Tennis Victoria and Tennis Australia are valuable partners of Buldau Yioohgen, supporting those in the leadership academy and running inspirational events like Culture on Court, which draws families and young people from all over Victoria. Looking towards the future of the collaboration, Uncle Les says, "In five years, we could probably have 20 to 30 young people working here. That's what I can see for our future leaders."



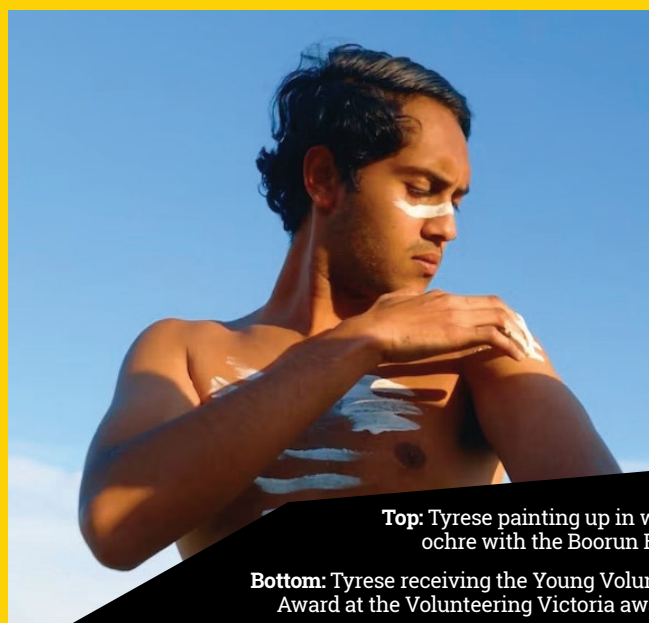
Kolysha at the Australian Open getting an Aboriginal flag put onto her arm.

The collaboration between Tennis Victoria, Tennis Australia, Buldau Yioohgen, and Anglicare Victoria continues to create opportunities and pathways for young First Peoples. By combining culturally-led activities with professional development, the partnership is helping build resilient, empowered leaders of tomorrow.

TYRESE ENCOURAGES YOUNG MOB TO CONNECT WITH THEIR CULTURE, FOSTERING PRIDE AND EMPOWERMENT

Tyrese is a proud young Taungurung and Kurnai man with a warm manner and great sense of humour.

As an alumnus of the Ngarra Jarra Leadership Academy, Tyrese demonstrated a remarkable commitment to his cultural journey and was a natural leader. In 2024, Tyrese joined Buldau Yioohgen as a mentor, supporting his community and sharing his knowledge with the next cohort of young Mob. While anxious and lacking confidence to start, in the past year he has had a huge positive impact on his peers, his mob, and his community.



Top: Tyrese painting up in white ochre with the Boorun Boys.

Bottom: Tyrese receiving the Young Volunteer Award at the Volunteering Victoria awards.

Tyrese's reconnection to culture has led to him being part of the Boorun Boys, a dance group on Gunaikurnai Country representing many mobs, including Wakka Wakka, Wurundjeri, Yorta Yorta, Gunaikurnai, Brabiralung, Taungurung, and Dharawal.

The name 'Boorun' comes from Kuri dreaming, meaning pelican, one of their many totems. The group is bringing back traditional songlines and leading a revival of 60,000 years of Culture.

"Culture feels like a lot of things," Tyrese said. "There are the main things that you can see in the physical world, the artefacts, the paintings, the storylines, and the songlines. And then there's the bigger aspect – the cultural values, the family stories."

More recently, Tyrese was celebrated at the Volunteering Victoria awards, where he was recognised with the Young Volunteer Award. Minister for Carers and Volunteers Ros Spence presented the awards at a ceremony in Melbourne in February 2025, recognising eight exceptional volunteers who have made an invaluable contribution to Victoria.

The Buldau Yioohgen Ngarra Jarra Leadership Academy's mission is to build the leaders of tomorrow by providing opportunities for young people to develop their skills, confidence, and cultural identity. It's inspiring to see Tyrese build on his own skills, confidence and knowledge and continue to share that with others, fostering pride and empowerment in those who come after him.



"There are the main things that you can see in the physical world, the artefacts, the paintings, the storylines, and the songlines. And then there's the bigger aspect – the cultural values, the family stories." – Tyrese