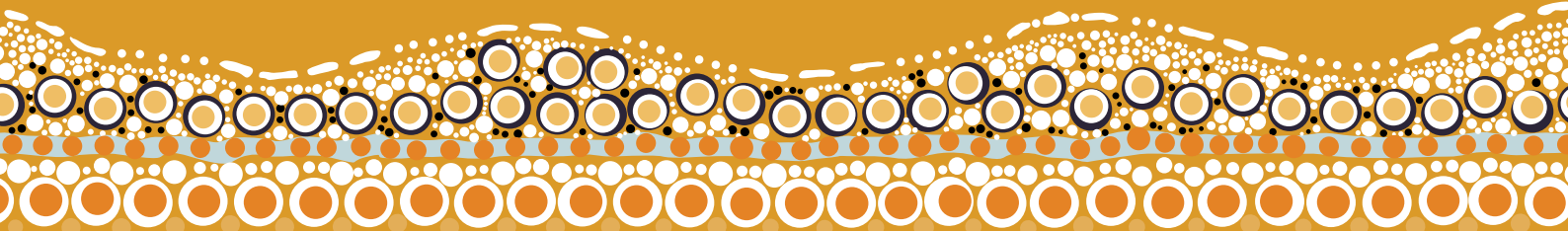


ACT
Government

KOORI PRE CULTURAL SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Every Aboriginal person, every Aboriginal child, needs to feel that their sense of self and their identity is 'valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them'.

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency



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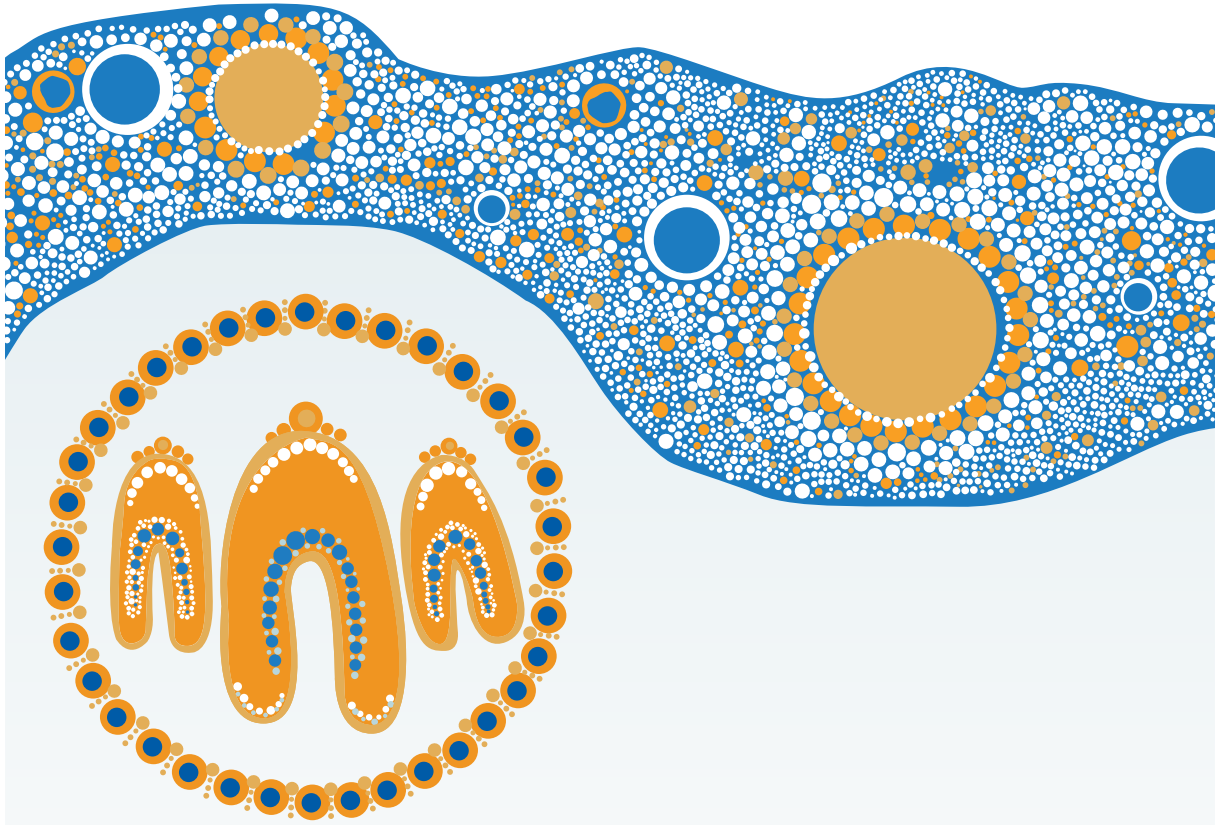
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Acknowledgement

The Education Directorate acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and custodians of the Canberra region. The region is also an important meeting place and significant to other Aboriginal groups.

We also acknowledge and pay respect to the Wreck Bay peoples as traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the Jervis Bay school is located.

We respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and their continuing culture, and contribution they make to the Canberra region and the life of our city.



A big thank you to Mob including children, families and community.

This curriculum would not have been possible without your kindness, generosity, thoughts, ideas, knowledge, hopes and dreams for Koori Pre.

Shona Chapman

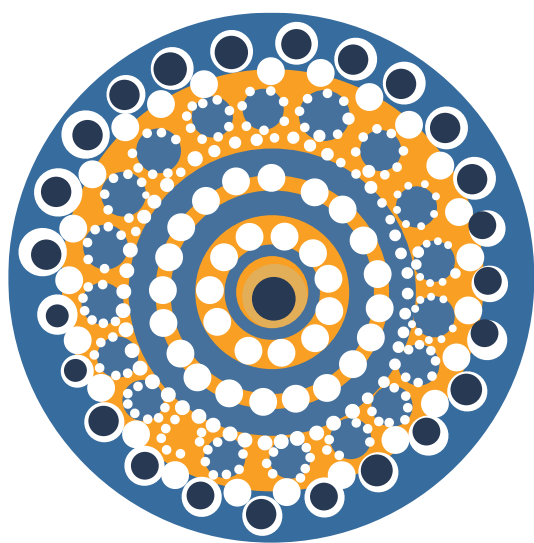
OVERVIEW

VISION

A high quality, high expectation and holistic early childhood program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the ACT, grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledges and values, that recognises that children and their families are proud, strong and deadly.

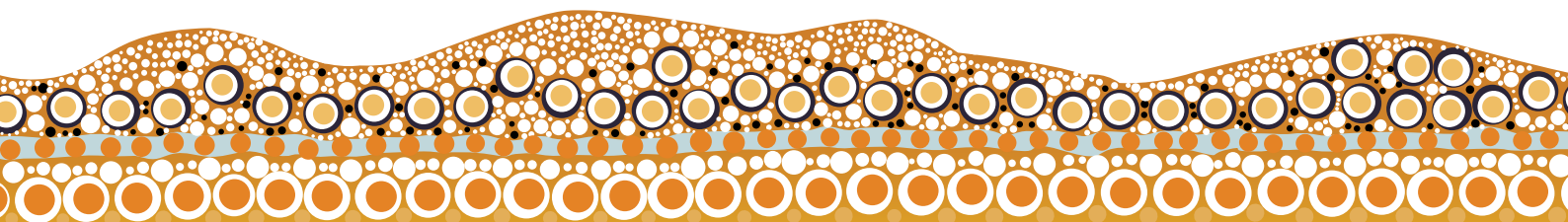
A BIT ABOUT WORDS

Words used by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are included in the Framework. For example, the word Mob refers to extended family, clan or wider community group or people from a particular place or Country.



Creating a culturally-safe environment is about relationships and actively creating opportunity for Aboriginal voice and presence in an organisation's planning, policies and activities. Consult with local Aboriginal people, Aboriginal community controlled organisations (ACCOS) and local organisations with Reconciliation Actions Plans or Aboriginal Inclusive policies for guidance on how your organisation can be culturally-safe. Cultural safety is about how your organisation is experienced by Aboriginal people and in particular by Aboriginal children.

Commission for Children and Young People tip sheet



A BIT ABOUT KOORI PRE CO-DESIGN

The Koori Preschool Co-design is a key deliverable of the first phase of *Set up for Success: An early childhood strategy for the ACT*.

The objective is to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Canberra and Wreck Bay to co-design the evolution of a Koori Preschool Program that meets the communities' needs and aspirations, now and into the future, particularly around cultural safety and integrity. This is consistent with the commitment to self-determination in the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028* and aligned to the *Future of Education Strategy (2018–2028)*.

The co-design process, led by proud Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri woman, Shona Chapman, is guided by the *Koori Pre Co-design Project Cultural Safety Framework* and shaped by three Ngunnawal words:

- **ngarambay** which translates to listen, hear, perceive
- **dhuni** which translates to talk
- **binyin** which translates to find.

The binyin (findings) which inform this Framework come from ngarambay (listening and hearing) and dhuni (yarning) with children and adults

from each of the Koori Preschools as well as with representatives from community organisations, peak bodies, schools, government and community.

The project team is indebted to Ngunnawal woman, Megan Daley, for granting permission to use the words, and to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and community for their kindness and generosity in sharing their thoughts, ideas, knowledge, hopes and dreams about Koori Pre.

This Framework is informed by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Work Association (NATSIHWA) Cultural Safety Framework, the ACT Child and Family Centres' Cultural Safety Framework and the Education Directorate's values of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation.

**Co-design in essence:
is nothing about us, nothing
implemented, without us.**

June Oscar Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Social Justice Commissioner, 2019

A BIT ABOUT KOORI PRE

Koori Pre started in 1993. At this time, the ACT Education Directorate's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section (formerly known as Indigenous Policy and Organisational Practice and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support) provided a teacher and an assistant who travelled between Holt, Narrabundah and Wanniasa Koori Preschools. Between 1993 and 1997, families had access to a bus which transported children to Koori Preschool. The Koori Pre teaching assistant accompanied the children on the bus.

Following a trial in 2011, the management of Narrabundah, Wanniasa, Ngunnawal (established in 2005) and Richardson (relocated from Calwell in 2011) Koori Preschools became the responsibility of the school principal.

Holt Koori Preschool continued to be managed by the Directorate's Early Childhood Education Section until 2012 when it came under the management of Kingsford Smith School.

Currently, Koori Pre offers preschool to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged three to five years at Ngunnawal Primary School, Kingsford Smith School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School, Richardson Primary School and Wanniasa School. Children under the age of three can attend a Koori Preschool when accompanied by a parent or carer.

A BIT ABOUT CULTURAL SAFETY

A cultural safety framework informs and enhances all aspects of our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and community members by ensuring that our support to, our engagement with and our inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities is culturally respectful and culturally-informed.

KOORI PRE CULTURAL SAFETY FRAMEWORK

The Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework is intended as a guiding document to enhance and enrich how we engage with each other, work together, learn from one another, make decisions and understand and enact what matters to children, families and community.

*I'd like him to learn more
about Koori, that's why I
send him to Koori Preschool.*

Parent

WHAT MATTERS TO MOB

'What matters to Mob' brings together the recurring themes shared through the consultation about what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and community members believe contributes to high quality, high expectation, holistic and culturally-safe Koori Pre. This is the basis for the commitments and actions articulated in this framework.

- **Culture** — authentic, connected, community input.
- **Staff** — culturally-aware and responsive, good fit, recruitment and selection.
- **Curriculum** — co-designed, culturally-responsive, cultural safety framework.
- **Family voice** — parent/caregiver knowledge and input.
- **Connection** — school, community, each other, Country, supports and services.
- **Physical environment** — sense of belonging and identity.
- **Knowing about Koori Pre** — what's on offer, range of channels.

Cultural safety is 'an environment that is safe for people where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening'.

Robyn Williams 2008

CULTURAL SAFETY COMMITMENTS

MOB

Holistic place-based responses to the strengths, expectations and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

PLACE

Authentic and connected spaces that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and promote belonging, identity, family knowledge and connection with community and Country.

Children hold a sacred place in the cultures of Indigenous peoples. With that comes a sacred responsibility to care for them. High-quality, culturally-specific and well-supported early learning programs, services and supports that are specifically designed for and with Indigenous families and communities will make a genuine difference in the early experiences of children. This, in turn, will support children's long-term development and life outcomes.

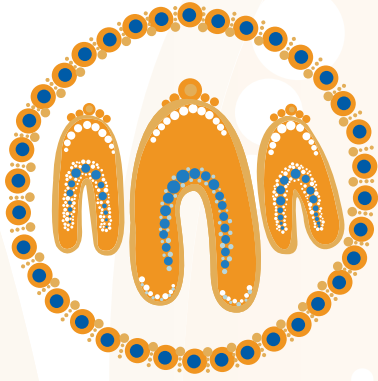
Indigenous Early Learning Framework
Government of Canada, 2018

PEOPLE

Good fit, culturally-aware and culturally-responsive, appropriately qualified staff selected and recruited to positions.

WAY

Transformation through working together the Koori Pre way. Working and walking together.



MOB

Holistic place-based responses to the strengths, expectations and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

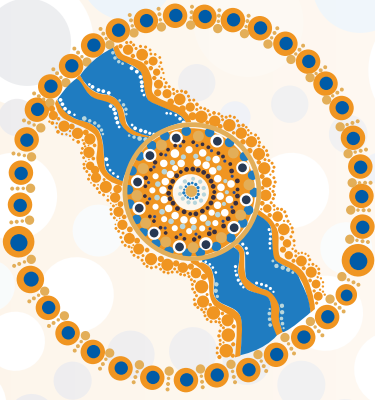
- Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Build strong relationships and partnerships with families, community, government and non-government organisations.
- Seek input and act on positive and negative feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Prioritise the strengths, aspirations and identified needs of children and families.
- Co-design the program with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.
- Consult and engage local Aboriginal facilitators, Elders and community members.

- Honour the knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Work with community to embed Ngunnawal language and respect protocols for sharing languages from other groups.
- Communicate regularly using multiple channels to keep families informed and to share and promote Koori Pre.
- Acknowledge Koori Pre takes place on Ngunnawal land and includes families from nations from all parts of Australia.
- Actively promote family and community engagement.
- Celebrate days that are significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Strengthen effective transitions through creating Koori-ready preschools and schools.

Mediocre is not good enough, got to have the best. Koori Pre is the first step on the long road to uni.

Deborah Eades Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group (ATSIEAG)

PLACE



Authentic and connected spaces that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and promote belonging, identity, family knowledge and connection with community and Country.

- Acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future at all preschool sessions, meetings and significant events.
- Provide high quality, high expectation and holistic preschool grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledges and values that recognises children and families are proud, strong and deadly.
- Create safe, inclusive and welcoming indoor and outdoor environments that reflect the culture of children, families and community.
- Embed strengths-based approaches and Aboriginal pedagogy that build on the capabilities of children and families.
- Consult with community and engage community members to embed responsive and relevant programs.
- Partner with local communities to provide culturally-strong, proficient and safe services relevant to local needs.
- Co-design, with children, families and community, place-based programs that focus on strengths and aspirations and identified needs.
- Embrace every opportunity to meet, learn and play on and with Country.

**Tacking Koori to
the name doesn't
make it Koori.**

Parent



PEOPLE

Good fit, culturally-proficient, appropriately qualified staff selected and recruited to positions.

- Position descriptions and selection criteria that enable quality recruitment.
- Include Aboriginal representation on the recruitment panel.
- Actively recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to identified positions and include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply in non-identified position descriptions.
- Honour and respect the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.
- Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff with leadership opportunities.
- Create a Koori Pre liaison position in the Directorate.
- Consult and engage local Aboriginal facilitators, Elders and community members.
- Co-design programs with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in the implementation of programs.
- Communicate regularly using multiple channels to keep families informed and to share and promote Koori Pre.
- Actively promote family and community engagement.
- Provide professional learning and supervision to build staff expertise and confidence and increase cultural proficiency.
- Provide equitable access to intervention support.
- Embed opportunities for staff to lead and share culturally-safe Koori Pre practice.
- Deliver an induction and orientation process that informs all staff about the commitment and intent of Koori Pre.
- Privilege family engagement and decision-making.
- Communicate with families using a range of formal and informal strategies.
- Engage in ongoing professional learning and participate in a Koori Pre Community of Practice.

We want our little people sitting in the right environment and have the right people around them.

Maurice Walker ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB)



Issues with the system are blamed on Aboriginal people. Get back to what families need to have a fair, equitable and safe experience.

Kim Davison Executive Director, Gugan Gulwan

WAY

Transformation through working together the Koori Pre way. Working and walking together.

DIRECTORATE

- Review and refine the Koori Pre Program, in an ongoing way, to meet the aspirations and needs of the community.
- Consider the impact of policies and processes on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Increase line of sight to strengthen leadership, performance and accountability.
- Provide suitable human and infrastructure resources to deliver a culturally-safe program.
- Ensure measures and mechanisms for reporting participation and outcomes better represents Koori Pre.
- Promote Koori Pre.
- Uphold evidence-informed practice including evidence of what maximises cultural-safety for children and families, promotes strong families and communities.

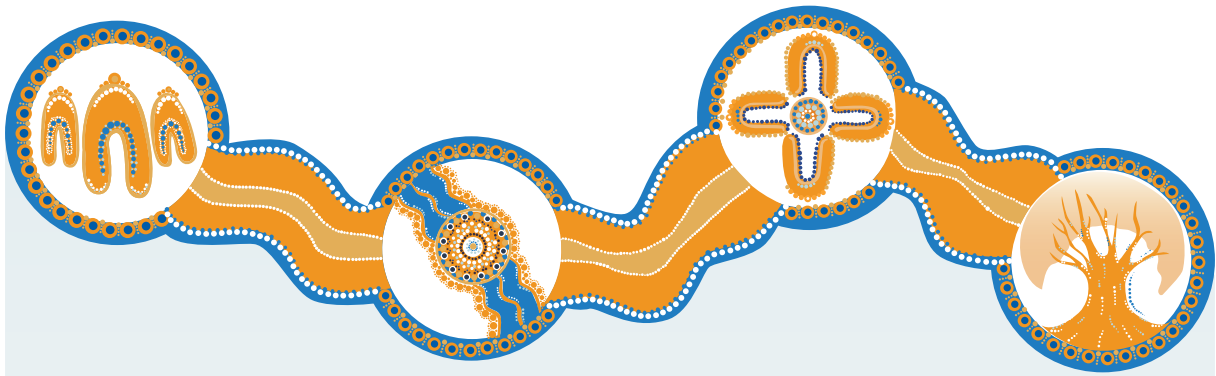
PRINCIPAL

- Lead Koori Pre and implement the Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework.
- Be open to the voices, views and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- Consider the impact of school procedures on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Arrange a parent meeting at the beginning of each term to promote shared decision-making.
- Invest in innovation, partnerships and improvement.
- Allocate sufficient resources to ensure a culturally-safe program.
- Embrace and commit to accountability to parents and community.
- Communicate with local area preschools to support children to access Koori and mainstream preschool.
- Support staff to engage in a Koori Pre Community of Practice and ongoing professional development.

STAFF

- Build relationships with children and families based on trust and respect.
- Deliver culturally-strong and safe programs relevant to local aspirations and needs.
- Plan and assess children's learning using a comprehensive and holistic approach that builds on the cultural strengths of children, families and community and promotes both ways learning.
- Facilitate a parent meeting at the beginning of each term to promote shared decision-making.



Culture is a living, breathing, entity, it is like water, it will always find a path, a way to evolve, even when it stays in the one place, water will promote life. As such, despite colonisation, invasion and war, my people evolve culturally, our maintenance and revitalisation of culture, dance, ceremony, art, hierarchy, philosophies and doctrines are fuelled not only from what was, but also, from what is, our culture, our people, our voice, evolves. It is fed from the pre-contact period, the contact period and the here and now, it is also fed from possibility and hope, it is fed from the hope of a better tomorrow.

We use our visual art to paint a new cultural tapestry for the nation, we use our songs to sing of what was, what is and what can be, our art shapes a new national identity, our past is a foundation for all this hope. Our art is a tool for cultural capacity building not only for ourselves, but for others, for all."

Richard J Frankland

Gunditjmara author, musician, artist, 2018

RESOURCES

WEBSITES

- *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028*, <<https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/agreement-2019-2028?msclkid=eb4d5a61cf1b11ec8cd2fc134b35772b>>.
- *ACT Indigenous Protocols*, <www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/indigenous-protocols>.
- *Set Up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT*, <https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1620347/Early-Childhood-Strategy-for-the-ACT.pdf>.

FILMS AND VIDEOS

- *In My Blood It Runs*, <<https://inmyblooditruns.com/>>.
- *VAEAI Best Practice in Koorie – Inclusive Early Childhood Education* <www.vaeai.org.au/best-practice-in-koorie-inclusive-early-childhood-education/>.
- MACS Modules 1&2, <https://youtu.be/UdaeoKT_ECU>.
- MACS Module 3, <<https://youtu.be/xA4rOL4Tt3s>>.
- Bubup Wilam, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNjj2QRAvUA>.



Below: *People, Place, Mob and Way* by Megan Daley.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



People, Place, Mob and Way by Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri artist Megan Daley was commissioned as part of the Koori Pre Co-design.

Megan spent her childhood on Wiradjuri Country in Wellington New South Wales, before moving to Canberra in 1999. Her art is often reflective of the two places she calls home. Megan works as a Child and Family Worker with the ACT Government and is passionate about Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing and childhood development.

The acrylic on canvas painting comprises four circles linked by a pathway. Each circle represents one of the four Cultural Safety Commitments identified and developed through the Koori Pre Co-design.

These are People, Place, Mob and Way.

People is represented by four people sitting together, sharing stories and learning.

Place is represented as a common meeting point where people come together to share learning and culture.

Mob is represented by a guardian figure such as a mother, father, grandparent or carer and the families who care for the children who attend Koori Pre.

Way is represented by a tree which symbolises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.

The thousands of stars in the night sky at the top of the painting represent thousands of years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge. The bright stars represent the success and opportunities for children in Koori Pre.



[www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/
public-schools-in-the-act/koori-preschools](http://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/public-schools-in-the-act/koori-preschools)

