

Switched ON - Warrnambool College Radio Program

Koori students at Warrnambool College, with the support of the school's Koori Support Worker and Media Department, are going to switch-on in the studio and start broadcasting lunchtime radio programs. These programs will be entirely conceived, researched and produced by the students themselves. They will see their innovative idea grow into a hands-on opportunity to have their voices heard by their school peers and, beyond that, by the local community via local community radio.

Approximately 30 Indigenous students of the College will be involved in all aspects of the planning, production and broadcasting of the radio programs, including decision-making about content, researching issues and stories, writing scripts, choosing music and doing the sound production and technical aspects of the show. By being involved in all facets of the project and having the ultimate responsibility for its success, students have a personal investment in the outcome and feel committed to both the process and the product.

It's particularly important that students have a forum to talk about the issues that are important to them and have their voices and opinions validated as this empowers students and reinforces the value of dialogue and communication. Through involvement in a project run for and by Indigenous students with a focus on Koori issues and content, Koori kids can feel that their heritage and knowledge is valued, fostering cultural pride and maintenance. Investment in a regular school project also helps to make the school experience relevant to their lives. It builds self-esteem and a sense of belonging in the school community. It also develops particular skill bases and practical training, as well as an understanding of responsibility.

Young Indigenous people face a multitude of barriers to completing school. In a society in which Indigenous culture and heritage has been held in contempt and seriously undervalued, reinforcement that Indigenous youth are an invaluable part of the community and have something important to say is vital to strengthening pride and respect within the individual and the community. By building self worth and social connectedness, by empowering young adults to make decisions and take responsibility and by creating a space for Indigenous knowledge and culture to grow, young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow will thrive.