

# THANK YOU

## From the Staff and Trustees of Opening the Doors Foundation

Have we carried out our Vision on your behalf?

The *Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report 2017* recognises that "There is no doubt that a good education unlocks opportunities later in life. Education is fundamental to unlocking the potential of future generations ..." WITH YOUR SUPPORT Opening the Doors Foundation continues to strive to assist in unlocking exciting and successful educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Victoria.

The statistics and Responses in this Activity Report tell us firmly that Opening the Doors Foundation IS needed ... that it IS meeting its Vision ... and YOUR support: *Donors, Philanthropic organisations, Partner Groups, Parishes, Religious Orders, FIRE Carrier Schools and especially our long-term, loyal, every day supporters who give what they can, year after year, provides the Foundation with the funds to offer our student support. YOU are the catalyst, for without you, the Foundation could not continue to provide the opportunity to enable generational change and transformation in the educational outcomes of our young people*

By giving families the capacity to choose alternative, culturally safe and positive educational journeys for their children, the Foundation, with your support, is one of the keys to unlocking the potential of our youth, our future leaders.

We recognise with gratitude our major, long term supporters:  
Portland House Foundation

St Vincent de Paul Society (National Council)

Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Victorian Catholic Bishops

Cabrini Health

Merrin Foundation

L. Arthur Pty. Ltd.

Eric and Elizabeth Gross Foundation

6A Foundation

Killen Family Foundation

Eirene Lucas Foundation

Magistrates Court Fund

Arnold Bloch Liebler



### OUR VOLUNTEERS

Who provide the Foundation with the gift of their time and their skills.

We appreciate You! We Salute You! and We say THANK YOU!

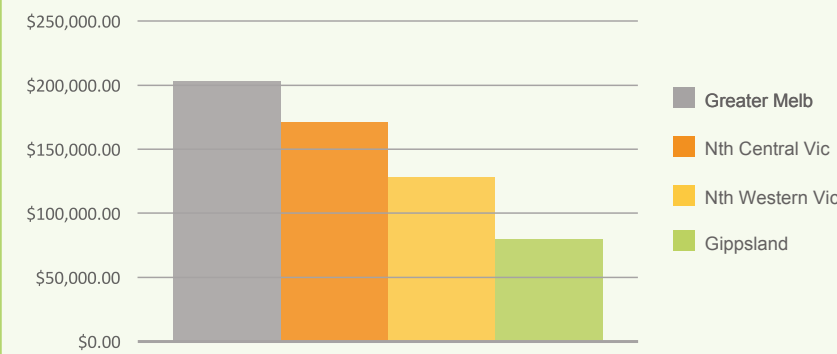
Would you like to join these wonderful volunteers? We NEED YOU!

The months from October to March are extremely busy as we respond to over 700 applications in a very short time frame.

Would you have one or two days a week to spare to work with the Administration Team to help process applications? Please contact the Foundation Manager on 9443 9070 or email an enquiry to [openingthedoors@optusnet.com.au](mailto:openingthedoors@optusnet.com.au)

## Where our students come from?

### Regional Distribution



The regional breakdown is as follows. Once again, Melbourne is leading the way, however, the country cousins are making families more aware of OTDF and the support that is available to them in a range of supportive and excellent Independent schools



## OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION

*Keeping Koorie Kids in an Education of their Choice*

## Activity Report 2016/2017

### Chair's Message

## Enriching the Students Education



Opening the Doors Foundation is a very proud Aboriginal controlled community organisation that commenced its work as an organisation focused on assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) families to choose an alternative education to the government system for their children, through financial assistance and advocacy. Initially, the gap in the need was for financial assistance with the purchase of school uniforms, books and participation in extra curricula school activities.

Whilst the student funding is still primarily focused towards these needs, over time, largely due to the generous bequests from Foundation supporters, the Foundation has been able to extend funding for new opportunities which enrich the students' education.

The Music Grant program is being funded from the Harry and Agnes Bugden bequest. This year, 38 students are being assisted with the development of their music prowess. The funding covers the cost of tuition across a wide range of instruments including piano, guitar, wind and also vocal.

### JEMMA WRITES TO US:

*Hi my name is Jemma. I am 11 years old and in my last year at Primary School. I have written this letter to tell you how helpful and useful your program is.*

*Your program has helped me so much in my education. For example camp. If you guys didn't pay for my camp I wouldn't know all the things I know now. Paying for camp wasn't all about the learning, you guys also made me have an awesome time with my friends and teachers.*

*You guys also helped me with paying for my school uniform, thank you so much for that because you made me feel a part of the school community. I don't feel left out or different, I feel part of the community.*

*My bomber jacket! Now being a grade 6 is one of the most important years of primary school. In case you didn't know, my bomber jacket is very important to me because it has the names of people that I have been growing up with on the back of my jacket. How cool!*

*An overall summary, thank you so much. I honestly don't know what / where I would be in my learning and education without your help.*

*From Jemma*

The Curriculum Extension Program (CEP) commenced in 2008. The purpose of the CEP program is to offer students the opportunity to participate in school arranged programs, both overseas and within Australia that enable students to improve a language other than English, experience other cultures and ways of life, have cultural immersion experiences through visits to other ATSI Communities and undertake programs relating to future employment pathways. The Foundation has recently been advised that the Merrin Foundation will make a substantial bequest to ensure the continuation of the CEP program into the future.

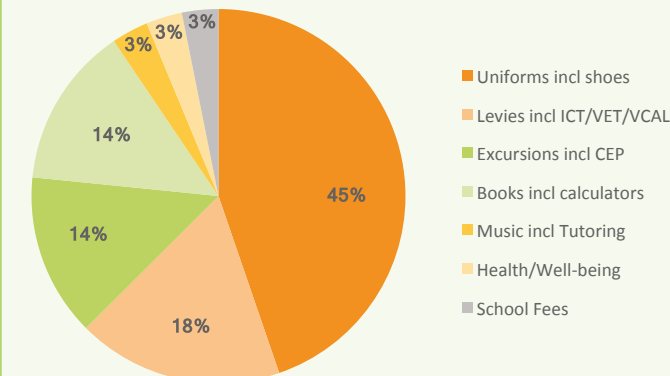
The financial capacity of some ATSI families still severely limits the ability for their children to develop their musical skills or participate in life experiences that the CEP program provides. The music and CEP programs are enriching the education of many ATSI students.

**John Arthur OAM**  
Chair

## What are the main items requested by our families?

As you can see, OTDF have disbursed grants in the following categories.

### Category Distribution



Uniforms incl shoes	\$256,591.67
Levies incl ICT/VET/VCAL	\$102,048.13
Excursions incl CEP	\$80,714.82
Books incl calculators	\$80,000.00
Music incl Tutoring	\$18,254.37
Health/Well-being	\$17,916.00
School Fees	\$18,043.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$573,567.99</b>

## Where our money comes from?

### Donation Base 2016/2017



### Donations

Philanthropic Foundations	\$228,500
General	\$83,266
Bishops	\$60,000
Student Fundraising	\$28,866
Religious Communities	\$24,550
Parish Appeals	\$18,456
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$443,638</b>

## OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION

*Keeping Koorie Kids in an Education of their Choice*



Designed and artwork by Reanna Bono, Wiradjuri and Wemba Wemba  
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The 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.



The last word from Team Leader

The 757 students that the Foundation has been able to financially support this year speaks volumes.

In the last 18 months as the Team Leader, I have had the absolute privilege to be part of a wonderful partnership that has provided me with a wealth of knowledge. Working here has been a learning experience and I am thankful for the skills I've acquired along the way. I've come to realise that being part of a team takes compromise and it is this compromise as Team Leader that I've followed and more often than not, met in the middle.

I look back on my time and know that as a parent who has children who are recipients, I cannot thank them enough. Without this valuable financial support, my children as well as all our other families would not be able to receive the education of their choice. I close off with a quote from a student ...

" .... The only way I can pay back or express my gratitude to the Foundation is to do my best at school and make the most of the opportunities provided to me. I hope to achieve the scores in Year 12 In 2017 to study Psychology at Monash University. This may not have been possible without the support OTDF ..... so I write to say thank you ....

The increase of numbers also means that to support these students and the sustainability of the foundation, we need your support and encouragement to continue our responses to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

THANK YOU TO TEAM LEADER:

The Trustees of Opening the Doors Foundation take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Helen for her dedication to the work of the Foundation for the past 18 months. Helen has been a tremendous advocate with and for our families and students, her enthusiasm and commitment to them has enabled the Foundation to assist them as they seek their successful and meaningful educational experiences.

We wish Helen every success as she moves on to her new position and we know that the connections formed with the Foundation will continue.

Once again, Helen, THANKYOU!



Where are they .....

**School attended:** The Peninsula School, Mt Eliza

**Years supported:** 4 years

**Year level completed:** Year 12 with a high ATAR score which resulted in him being offered a chancellors scholarship at Melbourne University to study for his Bachelor of Science. He is currently residing at Janet Clarke Hall and undertaking studies in Maths, Physics, Engineering and Chinese.

**Career aspirations:** Mathematical physics which will hopefully take him into the field of research.

His mother says that the help of Opening the Doors Foundation gave Nicolas the opportunity to achieve his potential. He takes his studies and responsibility to his community seriously and the support he has received enables this (story and photo supplied by parent)

Year 12 Graduation Dinner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students in Victorian Catholic Schools

In 2017, 98 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will have completed Year 12 in Victorian Catholic Schools. Of the 98 students, Opening the Doors Foundation funded 32 students. This night was again held at the Catholic Leadership Centre in Melbourne on Friday 8th September and it was an inspiring night where families and students celebrated the achievement of our future leaders.

Name change to Curriculum Extension Program – Merrin Foundation Curriculum Extension Program Grant

Through the Curriculum Extension program we are pleased to recognise the life of Merrin Tegner 1947-2004, and the work of her husband Charles Tegner through the Merrin Grenet Foundation, a long time supporter of Opening the Doors. Merrin Tegner had an interest in education and Aboriginal people and this support is offered as a reflection of that interest.



Reflections from our students and families:

**Siobhan to Warralong, W.A.:** The thing I liked most was the acceptance from the community members towards us ..... travelling to Warralong has helped me gain more knowledge about what it means to be Indigenous and has allowed me to connect with my culture. It also helped me to tackle common stereotypes ... I learned how to combat negative stereotypes using facts, evidence and my own personal experience. I also learned more about Culture and Law which has enhanced my connection. I WOULD LIKE EVERY KOORIE KID TO GET OUT THERE AND TRAVEL BECAUSE IT'S AMAZING AND IT'S A FANTASTIC WAY TO EXPERIENCE CULTURE ....

**Joel to Daly River:** I learned more about my Aboriginal culture and the many different ways people live and communicate in Darwin / Daly. Travelling has helped me to know more about how beautiful something could be .... To travel to see something special that not many people have seen makes me feel good and very grateful....

**Kiewa to China:** The weekend I stayed with my host family was the Moon Festival weekend, so for the two nights I stayed with them we went to have dinner with their families and it was so good to mingle with local Chinese people and tell them about myself and being Aboriginal. For a thank you present to my family I painted an Aboriginal painting and I told them what it meant and they loved learning about Aboriginal culture. Coming back from China made me appreciate things more ... the trip was definitely the most amazing and educational experience that I have ever had and would really like to say thank you for helping me out so much ....



**And a quick thank you and ongoing success from Wayne:** I am writing to say thank you for your support helping me financially with the education of my children. The eldest is now at University and my second son has opted for a government school this year. I am very grateful for your help and support over the years....



The Difference You are Making!

My daughter received “above average” in both reading and writing ... participated in the school choir and attended the Eisteddfod .... The best thing is that she received assistance with the school levies which provided the opportunity to access Mathletics, ICT, go on excursions and have incursions. Also has access to up to date programs on the computer and laptops.

My daughter who is now in year 9 continued music / piano lessons which she would otherwise not have been able to access without OTDF support. Her older sister, graduated Year 12 this year with other Aboriginal students ... it was an honour and privilege to see her graduate with other Aboriginal students it was a moving celebration.

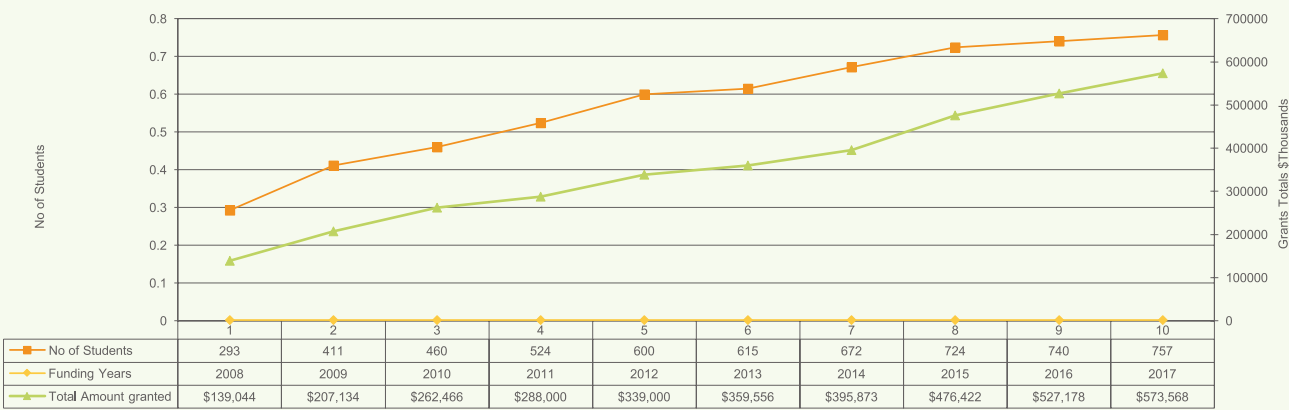
Brian graduated year 11 successfully and participated in school based traineeship with AFL Sportsready at the ANZ bank. He has now exited school to begin full time traineeship with ANZ. thank you for your assistance support, we as a family are very grateful.

Total All Students 2017 = 757

Since the Foundations inception in 2001 where we had 32 students our numbers have continued to grow. 2017 is no exception with 757 students.

As we know more students means more money to support them, but your generosity has been growing with our students!!

Growth in the Foundation's Distribution - 2008 to 2017



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Activity Report 2016/2017

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