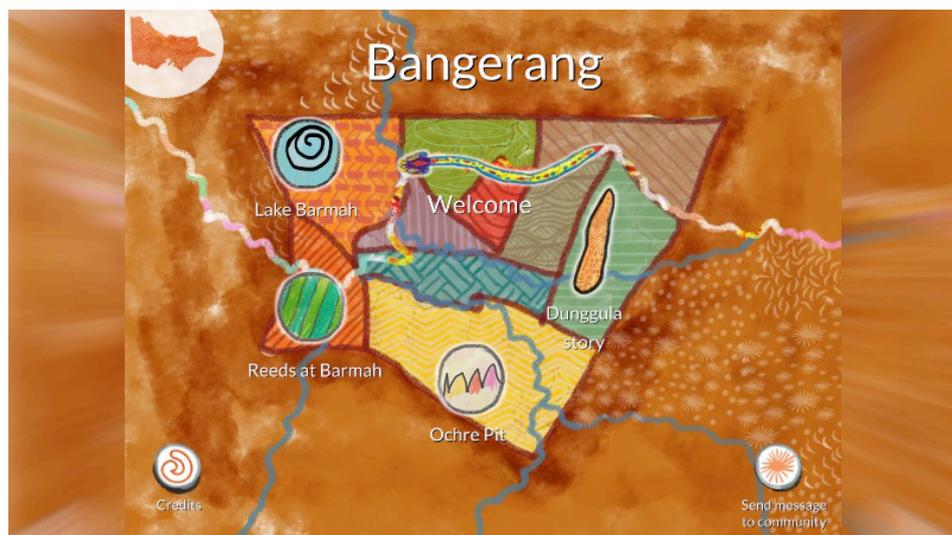


## Bringing Victorian Aboriginal languages, culture and voices to everyone

An interview with Daen Sansbury Smith - 7 October 2020



**Connection Matters Radio (CMR):** Earlier today, the Koorie Heritage Trust in partnership with Sharing Stories Foundation launched Koorie Culture Map. Promoted as a groundbreaking project that brings Koorie languages, stories and culture uniquely together in one place, Culture Map is an online platform where people can explore First Nations voices, culture, and art.

Joining me today on Connection Matters Radio to talk about this, is Sharing Stories' Victorian Production Manager, Narungga and Trawoolway man, Daen Sansbury Smith. Daen, welcome to the program.

**Daen:** Thanks for having me, how are you doing?

**CMR:** I'm absolutely fine, thanks so much for asking. Daen, let's start with an overall view of the Culture Map Program. Specifically, what can people expect to see when they explore it on the Trust's website?

**Daen:** The map is an interactive map experience, produced by Sharing Stories in partnership with the Koorie communities and youth from local primary schools. It has a collection of creation stories, animations, and videos of culturally significant sites, which are originally from the Sharing Stories iBook Collection.

**CMR:** So what's the Sharing Stories iBook Collection? Let's get an understanding of that.

**Daen:** It's a series of iBooks that we've worked with partner communities for a number of years. There's a number of iBooks that will be released in mid-November, the first series. So Victoria has a handful of books that we've released and nationally we have a body of them that will be released. Yeah.

**CMR:** And what are in those iBooks?

**Daen:** They are cultural creation stories that the communities and the elders share with the youth at the primary schools that get reinterpreted, and they're bilingual and they just filled with some of the stuff that you'll see in the Culture Map.

**CMR:** When you're talking about the content of the iBooks, are these audio or text-based stories or a mix of both?

**Daen:** They're text-based stories that are interactive and digital. So they have audio, they have video animations, and just filled with all different kinds of media. Yeah.

**CMR:** And this is obviously transitioned into the Koorie Culture Map project. When did that transition take place or start taking place? We know it was launched today and what were the motivations behind that?

**CMR:** It's a project that we've been working on for some time now, but when COVID hit at the start of the year and working with primary schools closely, we saw the

necessity to have access for students at home and kids at home to have access to these stories and to elders, just passing on with them an encouragement just to continue learning and just keeping kids engaged.

**CMR:** And what's been your involvement in the project.

**Daen:** I'm the program manager for Victoria, so I manage a handful of relationship. It's my responsibility to make sure that we do the work appropriately, respectfully and kind of facilitate all of the professional or facilitators like the audio workers, the engineers, the animators, and kind of sit between the communities and get the work done.

**CMR:** So when people get online today at the Koorie Heritage Trust, what are some of the experiences that they will encounter?

**Daen:** You'll see welcomes. You'll be welcomed to each community that's on the map and you'll see some special sites from these communities, and you'll see a story narrated in the language with English subtitles from each community.

**CMR:** And how many communities are included in the project at this early stage,

**Daen:** Three are going live today and we have a number of others that will be added over a period of time. So it's a project that's definitely growing and we'll keep expanding.

**CMR:** What are the communities that are already included?

**Daen:** Today we have the Jaara community, we have the Wamba Wamba community and the Bangerang community.

**CMR:** And how much further can we expect this to go? Because there's a heck of a lot of communities and mobs out there in Victoria.

**Daen:** Yeah. Ideally we'd love to work with everyone, but if being a small organisation, we're not massive, we don't want to compromise the work of each community. So we will be doubling that and potentially more over the next 12, 24 months,

**CMR:** Daen, one of the chief aims of the

Sharing Stories Foundation is to work with communities to, as it says, protect, maintain and grow language. Is this regarded a significant piece of work in achieving that ultimate goal?

**Daen:** Of course. It's a monumental moment for me to be working for years with communities while they've been putting these languages or the stories back in the language, and then to share publicly like this, it's amazing. I'm going to be sitting there with the kids today, they've watched it and heard it thousands of times, but we're going to go through it all again.

**CMR:** Daen, you've said a couple of times that a main focus of this particular project was for school children. It seems to me though that its appeal would be much broader than that - for indigenous, non-indigenous people of all ages. Would that be a fair assumption?

**Daen:** Yeah, definitely. If you go onto the map today and you'll see the three communities and you'll experience... You get welcomed to the country in different ways and you'll see these special sites and what you'll see is three diverse communities. And as that map starts to populate, you'll start to see just how every community has their special customs and cultures and art. And you'll start to see the diversity in Victoria. Just Victoria from this map, and just think about that on a larger scale. I hope that opens the minds to Aboriginal Australia.

**CMR:** And definitely, I would assume that it would also open up people's minds to fully appreciate the presence and the care of this country, that's been established by First Nations People from time immemorial. Daen, how can people actually get online and view this work?

**Daen:** If you get onto the Koorie Heritage Trust website and go to the KHT Online, you'll find the experience there.

**CMR:** And we'll be providing everybody with the link to the KHT website and to the project site itself later on today on the Connection Matters Radio website. Daen, before we let you go, you mentioned earlier on in the interview that this project was an extension of the iBooks that Sharing Stories Foundation has been undertaking for quite a while. What's the extent of those iBooks? How many are there?

**Daen:** Off the top of my head, Victoria, where we're going to release seven over the next 12 to 24 months-

**CMR:** And where can people get their hands on these?

**Daen:** Well, they're going to be added on to the iTunes, the iBooks library, and they'll start populating that area from mid-November this year.

**CMR:** And there are a couple of more that were spoken about offline that I would love to announce but I won't do that. But I would suggest to everybody, keep your eye on those books as they come out and also on the KHT website as well, because there are some exciting new chapters in this story to continue. Daen, thanks so much indeed for coming on to Connection Matters Radio today, well done on the project, look forward to seeing more as it rolls out.

**Daen:** Thanks for having me, keep your eyes out on the Sharing Stories' social media and you might see some of those hints of what's to come.

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