



VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

## 2025 Idiom Vol 61 No 1 – Call for contributions

### **A Chorus of Voices Sharing Stories, Knowledge, Truth**

#### **Theme**

‘This Short History of Australia begins with a blank space on the map ...’

—Sir Ernest Scott (an Australian historian and professor of history at the University of Melbourne from 1913-1936).

So begins Sir Ernest Scott’s *A Short History of Australia*, a book that claims to document the settlement and development of ‘civilised’ society in the country now known as Australia. Scott’s assertion is a colonial echo of early settler assertions of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one), which functioned to legitimate the process of colonisation. The ‘blank space’ Scott refers to – much like the early settler proclamation of *terra nullius* – is a fiction, a lie. So too is the assertion that the history of this country is short. The history of this ‘blank space on the map’ is far from short and, prior to invasion, this land did, in fact, belong to someone. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived on these lands for tens of thousands of years.

However, the dissemination of literature such as Scott’s through the Australian education system informed educational curricula that perpetuated false, Eurocentric narratives about not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but the very history of the country itself. For generations, the stories and knowledge within these curricula shaped the collective psyche of the nation, informing the way that emerging generations viewed and treated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Thankfully, we are now living in a golden age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature – a time in which a chorus of First Nations voices are being raised, each one offering unique perspectives on the state of the nation. These texts empower educators to engage in powerful Truth-telling, to decentralise Eurocentric approaches and make space for multiple perspectives. This is not easy work. In fact, it is often difficult, confronting, and uncomfortable. However, it is vital in our fight for reconciliation.

In *A Chorus of Voices: Sharing Stories, Knowledge, Truth*, VATE elevates and amplifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in a testament to our ongoing commitment (enshrined in our [Ambition Statement](#)) to working towards Makarrata and Truth-telling. It is a

manifestation of our pledge to support the [First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria](#) as they walk the path towards Treaty.

As educators, we have a responsibility to shape, nurture, and challenge the minds of emerging generations. To better support our students, it is imperative that we continue to inform and educate ourselves, deepening our knowledge and appreciation of the experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Oftentimes, this involves confronting our own unconscious biases and facing the truth about the history of not only our industry but our nation. We hope that *A Chorus of Voices: Sharing Stories, Knowledge, Truth* does exactly that.

This Idiom is a call to action, a rallying cry, a space in which a chorus of voices are heard, sharing stories, sharing knowledge, sharing truth. This edition of Idiom contemplates and reimagines our classroom environments and teaching methodologies to improve not only the experiences of our students but the future of the nation.

## **We want to hear from you**

We welcome a range of submissions for this edition of Idiom. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and educators are strongly encouraged to contribute.

We would like to hear from classroom teachers of English, teacher educators, educational researchers, pre-service and early career English teachers, teachers working in ES roles linked to English classes, and students in our English classes.

We invite different forms of contributing including written articles, academic essays, personal or reflective writing, short stories, and poems that respond to the theme *A Chorus of Voices: Sharing Stories, Knowledge, Truth*. In responding to this theme, you may like to write about the following:

- Ways of embedding Indigenous knowledges in your curriculum and teaching practice: lesson plans, classroom activities, units of work, curriculum overviews
- Text selection policies and initiatives to decolonise classroom and/or school libraries
- Ways of connecting with Country and local First Nations communities, Elders and organisations
- Supporting First Peoples in your school community: students, teachers and families

To discuss your ideas for a possible submission, please email [idiom@vate.org.au](mailto:idiom@vate.org.au).

## **Dates for submission**

Full submissions are due **Wednesday 23 April 2025** to: [idiom@vate.org.au](mailto:idiom@vate.org.au)

General advice about writing and formatting your article for Idiom is available [here](#) or please email [idiom@vate.org.au](mailto:idiom@vate.org.au)