

# Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023



**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government



# Acknowledgement

We proudly acknowledge the First Peoples of Victoria and their ongoing strength in practicing the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Victorian Traditional Owners maintain that their sovereignty has never been ceded. Since time immemorial, Victorian Traditional Owners have practiced their laws, customs and languages, and nurtured Country through their spiritual, material and economic connections to land, water and resources.

We acknowledge that while Aboriginal Victorians are strong in their culture and identity, there are long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation and dispossession. The reality of colonisation involved the establishment of laws and policies with the specific intent of excluding Aboriginal people and their laws, customs, cultures and traditions. We acknowledge that the impact and structures of colonisation still exist today.

Finally, we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all those who have paved the way and fought for the rights of Aboriginal people, including the right to self-determination. We also recognise the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this continues to enrich our society more broadly. Through the strength, resilience and pride of Aboriginal Victorians, their cultures, communities and economies endure and continue to grow and thrive today.

## Language Statement

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria. While the terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are commonly used by Aboriginal people of Southeast Australia, we have used the term Aboriginal in this report to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in Victoria – with the exception of specific programs and frameworks with Koori in the title.

## Cultural Advice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may include photos, quotations and/or names of people who are deceased.

The Victorian Government gratefully acknowledges the people and organisations that have given permission to reproduce the images in this document.













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# Opening statement

## Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Chair of the Aboriginal Executive Council



The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) represents a fundamental shift in the approach of governments to Closing the Gap, one that is built upon genuine and meaningful partnerships with the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector, Traditional Owner groups and the wider Aboriginal community. This shift has been driven at the national level by the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks), and here in Victoria by the Aboriginal Executive Council (AEC)<sup>1</sup> and other key Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).



The original Closing the Gap framework was not able to deliver on the hope and expectation it created as it was not developed or implemented in true partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, nor did it adequately resource Aboriginal communities as the drivers of change. Unlike the original framework, the new National Agreement reflects the needs, expectations and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia.

Whilst Victoria is in the early stages of transferring power, decision-making and resources to the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and Aboriginal communities, we know this is central to developing a new relationship between the State and Victoria's First Peoples. This is reflected in Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023 and the Victorian Government's broader commitment to treaty, working with the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (Assembly); and to truth telling through the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission.

Prioritising self-determined solutions that promote culture, connection and community strengthening is the key to Closing the Gap. We are ensuring the preservation of Aboriginal culture by supporting Aboriginal Elders, and empowering the next generation of proud, strong and thriving Aboriginal people to continue their culture.

A strong, sustainable, and well-resourced Aboriginal community-controlled sector will enable the delivery of critical services across all areas of inequity, including health, justice, education and employment whilst also driving accountability of other parties to deliver on their responsibilities.

For thousands of years, Victoria's Traditional Owner communities have expertly managed Country and its natural resources to ensure sustainable food supplies, ongoing prosperity and the maintenances of strong culture. They remain the Traditional Owners of the lands, waters and country that we all live and work upon and have profound cultural, spiritual and economic connections through their relationship with country. This connectedness to land and water resources on country is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal families and communities.

Continued connection to Country, and particularly through increasing the role of Aboriginal communities in caring for Country, improves the social and emotional wellbeing outcomes across all aspects of community as well as provide Aboriginal Victorians with opportunities for economic advancement.

Our shared aspiration extends beyond Closing the Gap and reflects a move away from just measuring life expectancy towards fulfilling what Aboriginal people desire out of life.

<sup>1</sup> The Aboriginal Executive Council is the Victorian Government's partner in Closing the Gap implementation. The AEC was established in 2017 to provide sector-specific advice on whole of government self-determination reform. AEC meets jointly with the Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs (SLG), to set self-determination reform priorities, and the Senior Officers' Group on Aboriginal Affairs (SOG), to operationalise these. AEC also meets independently of government.



Aboriginal people know what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. Commitments under the National Agreement include transferring power and resources from government departments and mainstream agencies to Aboriginal community-control, strengthening shared decision-making structures, achieving a minimum level of progress against socio-economic targets by 2031, and independent Aboriginal-led evaluation and monitoring of progress.

Self-determination is the human right that underpins our collective efforts under the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023 (Implementation Plan) and Victoria's existing Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF) 2018-2023. The VAAF is Victoria's overarching framework for Aboriginal affairs and commits the government to advancing Aboriginal self-determination through an ambitious, forward-looking agenda. This commitment acknowledges that the best outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians are achieved when policies and programs are based on their knowledge, expertise and priorities.

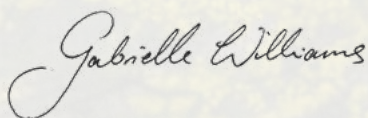
While Aboriginal self-determination means different things to different people, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) describes self-determination as the ability for Indigenous people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Australia is a signatory to international law instruments, including UNDRIP, that affirm the right to self-determination for indigenous peoples

In implementing the National Agreement, we will continue to be driven by the right to self-determination and existing commitments under the VAAF. We will pursue more ambitious targets in areas such as youth and adult justice, and family violence and push beyond the Closing the Gap targets where they are already within reach. We are committed to parity and equity.

Alongside Closing the Gap, the foundational work to support future treaty negotiations with the Assembly is continuing. The Assembly is the sole representative of Aboriginal Victorians for the purpose of working with the State to establish by agreement the elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations.

We know that restoring the health, wellbeing and prosperity of Aboriginal people and communities requires acknowledging and understanding past wrongs, from their perspective, and the intergenerational impacts. The establishment of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission, the first of its kind anywhere in Australia, represents a significant step forward on Victoria's path towards treaty. Truth-telling recognises the strength and resilience of Aboriginal people and acknowledges that it is only through a shared understanding of, and reckoning with, our past that Victorians – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – can build a shared future. Treaty and truth telling are fundamental to Closing the Gap.

Victoria's commitment to Closing the Gap is unequivocal. We will be clear about our commitments, rigorous in assessing progress and always led by the views, aspirations, rights and priorities of Victoria's Aboriginal community.



**Gabrielle Williams MP**  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



**Esme Bamblett**  
Chair, Aboriginal Executive Council



## Message from the Acting Premier



**After generations of injustice, dispossession and deprivation, we need to recognise a fundamental truth:**

If we are genuinely committed to better outcomes for Aboriginal people, then they need to be led by Aboriginal people.

It's why here in Victoria, we're proud to be progressing both truth-telling and treaty.

The Yoo-rrook Justice Commission will serve as our nation's first formal truth-telling forum – compelling us to confront what's come before and acknowledging that the pain of our past, lives on in our present.

We're also delivering on our promise to give Aboriginal Victorians a voice by establishing – and enshrining in law – the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

Our state's first and only democratically elected body for First Nations people, the Assembly ensures that Aboriginal people are at the heart of Victoria's treaty discussions.

Far more than a seat at the table, this is recognition that the table – and the treaty process – must belong to Aboriginal people too.

Although, in many respects, Victoria continues to lead the nation, there remains much more to be done.

As a state and as a nation, we need to acknowledge the deep injustices Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to confront – and their remarkable strength and survival in the face of it all.

Together, we must do more.

A more just, more equal, more decent future – for all Australians – is relying on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Merlino'.

**The Hon James Merlino MP**  
Acting Premier of Victoria







# Working in partnership

## Purpose of this Implementation Plan

The Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023 outlines the actions Victoria will undertake to achieve the objectives of the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap:

***'overcome the entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians'.***

The purpose of this Implementation Plan is to make clear the work we will undertake for the first three years of the National Agreement (2021-2023).

The plan is not fixed for three years. It will be closely monitored and reviewed. Victoria has worked in close partnership with the AEC, other key Aboriginal partnership forums and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (collectively referred throughout this plan to as Victoria's Implementation Partners) to develop this plan. We will continue to work with our Implementation Partners to identify specific additional measures required to keep the Closing the Gap targets on a trajectory to success.

This Implementation Plan, is the first of a series running to 2031, focuses on the enablers that will drive Closing the Gap in the long term. Quite deliberately the first stage of implementation will involve engagement and consultation with the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal governance structures so that the plan remains responsive to emerging needs.

The Implementation Plan focuses on embedding key priority reform enablers across the work of Victorian Government including:

- Priority Reform One: Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
- Priority Reform Two: Building the community-controlled sector
- Priority Reform Three: Transforming government organisations
- Priority Reform Four: Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Enablers of success include implementing Aboriginal Funding Reform, providing ACCOs with long-term flexible funding with reduced administrative burden; data development to enable Closing the Gap outcomes and targets to be assessed at a regional and statewide level; and committing to ACCO sector development plans to grow and sustain the ACCO sector across all Closing the Gap outcome areas.

The enablers set the groundwork for lasting change. They will ensure we achieve sustainable, long-term success, that we equip Victoria's Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to take the lead while ensuring departments and mainstream services are accountable for delivering effective culturally-safe services.

The Implementation Plan references specific clauses under the National Agreement including those that have specified timeframes for completion. It includes, Jurisdictional Actions, actions that the Victorian Government is required to undertake, and Partnership Actions, actions that all governments and the Coalition of Peaks must work on collectively and implement nationally.

This Implementation Plan is informed by and includes commitments from existing state government policy including the VAAF. The plan aligns these existing commitments, on areas such as funding reform, with the reforms and strategies under the National Agreement.

As a public document the Implementation Plan will assist the Victorian Aboriginal community to hold all parties to the National Agreement, the Commonwealth, State and Local Government, mainstream agencies and ACCOs, to account for their role in Closing the Gap.



## Closing the Gap Partnership

In October 2018, a revised Closing the Gap framework was due to be finalised and signed off by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) – a forum consisting of the Prime Minister, State Premiers, Territory Chief Ministers and the Australian Local Government Association.

ACCOs from across Australia came together as the National Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peaks to call for the new Closing the Gap framework be re-developed through a formal and equal partnership with the ACCO sector. The AEC joined the Coalition of Peaks and advocated to the Victorian Government that it supported this position.

At the December 2018 meeting, COAG agreed to enter into a formal partnership and in March 2019, a formal Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap (The Partnership Agreement) was established between the Commonwealth Government, state and territory governments, the Coalition of Peaks and the Australian Local Government Association.

From 2019–2029, the Partnership Agreement commits all parties to the shared governance of Closing the Gap through a Joint Council. The Joint Council on Closing the Gap is comprised of 12 ACCO peak representatives (one from each state and territory and four national ACCO peak representatives) and 9 government representatives (the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers or their Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs and the Australian Local Government Association).

The Joint Council, which represents both government and the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is the ultimate decision-making body on Closing the Gap. In July 2020, the Joint Council signed off the National Agreement with an expanded set of agreed outcomes and targets to be achieved by 2031 and its four priority reforms as the drivers of sustainable change. Under the National Agreement all governments are required to develop Closing the Gap implementation plans with their initial implementation plan to be provided to Joint Council in July 2021.

Victoria plays an important role in the partnership and has strongly advocated for all governments to commit to genuine Aboriginal community-control to improve the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

Shifting the way in which governments works with Aboriginal communities and organisations takes time. The National Agreement and this Implementation Plan set the groundwork for this necessary change by prioritising partnership in decision making between governments and Aboriginal communities, making mainstream organisations more culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, as well as improved data sharing.





## Partnership on this Implementation Plan

The actions contained in the Implementation Plan along with the commitments made under the National Agreement will be felt first-hand by Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

To ensure the Implementation Plan reflects the needs of the wider Aboriginal community, Victoria has worked in close partnership with the AEC and other key Aboriginal partnership forums and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to develop this plan.

The AEC and the Victorian Government's Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs holds responsibility for development, oversight and review of Victoria's Implementation Plan. To draft the plan a Closing the Gap Working Group (Working Group) consisting of officials from all Victorian Government departments, our Implementation Partners and key representatives from Aboriginal community-controlled sector

organisations was established. Input into the Working Group was drawn from existing Aboriginal governance structures across all service sectors.

Ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal community and the ACCO sector is a feature of the Implementation Plan, which will assist in developing new iterations of this plan informed by ongoing reviews.

Final endorsement of the Implementation Plan was provided through the joint AEC and the Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs prior to sign off by the Victorian Cabinet.

## Working with local government

Local government is central to the achievement of equity for Aboriginal communities and has a responsibility under the National Agreement to actively support Closing the Gap implementation.

Recognising the critical role and potential of local government to contribute to Closing the Gap, the Victorian Government has developed this Implementation Plan in consultation with local government, to ensure local councils can be engaged to drive positive change.

To acknowledge the important role of local governments, Victoria appointed a State Ambassador for Closing the Gap (State Ambassador). Victoria's State Ambassador is Christine Couzens MP, who has actively

engaged and advocated with local councils to strengthen shared decision-making at the local level with Aboriginal communities.

The role of local governments will continue to develop throughout the life span of this Implementation Plan. Victoria will shortly be refreshing the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy, which will align the Victorian whole of government Aboriginal affairs program of work with the vital services and programs delivered by local governments.



## Accountability, monitoring and reporting on progress

Independent monitoring and annual reporting against the Closing the Gap outcomes and targets is essential to accountability and ensuring that the Aboriginal and broader community has access to regular information on progress.

The National Agreement has specific requirements for accountability monitoring and reporting that must be adhered to by all governments. Consistent with the National Agreement the following will occur:

- The Productivity Commission will:
  - develop with Joint Council a publicly accessible data dashboard on progress against Closing the Gap covering all state and territories
  - undertake a comprehensive independent review of progress every three years
- Each party, including the Victorian Government and the Coalition of Peaks, must prepare an annual public report including information on the measures and actions taken to implement the National Agreement and the number of ACCOs funded and supported under Closing the Gap
- At the national level independent Aboriginal-led reviews of progress will be carried out within 12 months of each Productivity Commission review.

Under the VAAF the State Government has committed to the establishment of an Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism to provide independent monitoring the VAAF goals and measures.

Since then, the establishment of the Assembly and Victoria's journey towards treaty means this overarching reporting and review mechanism will be considered and developed having regard to structural and systemic reform proposed through the treaty process.

Until independent Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanisms are finalised, Victoria will report on Closing the Gap measures under the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Report (VGAAR). Currently the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet has lead responsibility for the development of the annual VGAAR. Victoria will embed and report on Closing the Gap through the VGAAR, which is tabled in Parliament annually in July. Current reporting requires annual progress reports on Victoria's implementation and commitments to embed self-determination across all areas of the government.

Whilst not an independent report, the VGAAR provides progress on not only how better life outcomes and equity is being achieved but aims to hold government accountable for what we are doing to improve outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians and enable self-determination. It provides an overview of how government is working with community to realise the goals and objectives of the Self-Determination Reform Framework and encompasses the Victorian commitment to embed self-determination across all areas of government.

The VGAAR 2020 tracks progress against 111 VAAF measures across 20 goals, as well as reporting on action towards the government's commitment to self-determination. The report demonstrates a significant shift in the way government measures and reports on outcomes in Aboriginal affairs. Along with the publication of this year's VGAAR in late 2020, an interactive data dashboard was launched to improve transparency and accessibility of government data.

The annual VGAAR is subject to review by the AEC and tabled in Parliament, to ensure transparency and accountability from both government and the community-controlled sector. This will continue to occur as the VGAAR includes Victoria's progress and reports on actions under this Implementation Plan.

The Victorian Government will work with the Victoria's Implementation Partners to ensure Aboriginal-led evaluation and review against the VAAF and the National Agreement progresses in the immediate term. A summary of this annual VGAAR review will be included in the VGAAR when tabled in Parliament, while acknowledging that in the longer term, both treaty and the recommendations of the Yoo-rook Justice Commission will likely lead to significant systemic reform, including in relation to systems oversight and accountability.

The VGAAR and Implementation Plan will also be tabled at an annual meeting of the AEC, all departmental secretaries and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and representatives from Aboriginal partnership forums to provide an opportunity to discuss progress and additional measures required to accelerate meeting commitments under the National Agreement.







## Making a difference

This Implementation Plan acknowledges that real and sustained impacts are made through Aboriginal self-determination.

This plan, which is for an initial three-year period, focuses on advancing Aboriginal self-determination through transferring power and resources to the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, promoting accountability of government departments and mainstream service providers and breaking down systemic barriers faced by Aboriginal people throughout life.

The Implementation Plan will drive the four Closing the Gap priority reforms areas that hold the key to achieving and exceeding the socio-economic targets and outcomes within the National Agreement. The Victorian Government will continue to transform the way in which we engage with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to ensure Aboriginal people are respected to make decisions about their own lives.





# Priority Reforms

The priority reform areas outlined within the National Agreement are the mutually reinforcing enablers for successfully achieving equity and better outcomes for Aboriginal people across Victoria. These reforms respond to the voices and aspirations of Aboriginal people and provide a clear strategy for changing the way governments work with community.

*These reforms will support the overall objective of the National Agreement – equity.*

The priority reforms are consistent with Victoria's nation-leading approach to Aboriginal affairs, and complement our existing policies and commitments including the VAAF, treaty and the Yoo-rook Justice Commission. These actions combined demonstrate the changing nature of the relationship between the Victorian Government, Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal community, towards partnership and self-determination.

The priority reform areas set out foundational enablers for changing the way we work, which includes embedding Aboriginal-led approaches that are underpinned by self-determination and partnership. We recognise that improved outcomes can only be achieved through policy initiatives that are informed and guided by Aboriginal communities.

As the funder and provider of many of the services accessed by Aboriginal Victorians, government must also transform its systems and structures to support self-determination and improve outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

Victoria is committed to embedding these priority reform areas in our planned activity over the next three years. Work is already underway in transforming the way government works, with key reforms and nation-leading projects across all four priority reform areas including:

- **Priority Reform One:**  
Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
- **Priority Reform Two:**  
Building the community-controlled sector
- **Priority Reform Three:**  
Transforming government organisations
- **Priority Reform Four:**  
Shared access to data and information at a regional level







## Priority Reform One: Partnership and shared decision-making

**Outcome:** People are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

**Target:** There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in place in each state and territory enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have chosen their own representatives.

Victoria recognises that meaningful and sustainable change can only come about if Aboriginal people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments. This is articulated in the VAAF as a step on the continuum towards self-determination. Victoria has established shared governance and decision-making mechanisms, including through our partnership with the AEC on Closing the Gap and the development of this plan.

The AEC, as the Victorian member for the Coalition of Peaks, play a crucial advocacy role in Victorian

Aboriginal affairs. Due to this advocacy, and in part Victoria's significant involvement in developing the National Agreement, many of the commitments under the Priority Reform Areas align with the work programs of Victoria's Implementation Partners.

The AEC continues to operate as the Victorian member of the Coalition of Peaks working with all governments to progress the partnership actions and joint commitments at the national level.



## Partnership Actions

The Victorian Government is committed to partnership actions under the National Agreement, including the establishment of policy partnerships and place-based partnerships.

## Jurisdictional Actions

The Victorian Government has many structures and mechanisms to partner with the ACCO sector and Aboriginal community. In alignment with the National Agreement, existing governance forums, including Local Aboriginal Networks, will be tasked with completing a self-evaluation of their structure against partnership-elements outlined in clauses 32 and 33 of the National Agreement.

In 2020, the Improving Aboriginal Governance Structures Project, commissioned by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, outlined a series of recommendations for how existing shared governance structures could be collectively improved. This will be an important resource for the self-evaluation process to draw upon.

As part of Priority Reform One, the Victorian Government will:

- ensure that the parameters for the self-evaluation process will:
  - include the option of improving investment in independent Aboriginal-led policy secretariats for each of the existing Aboriginal governance forums. The eventual establishment of reporting and evaluation approaches will be considered and developed having regard to structural and systemic reform proposed through the treaty process and the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission.
  - consider the principles in the Partnership Agreement
- agree with existing Aboriginal governance structures arrangements for their role in independent review and monitoring of Victoria's Implementation Plan and the VAAF
- work with Aboriginal governance structures to strengthen their role in the State Budget process
- respond to findings and recommendations arising from the Improving Aboriginal Governance Structures Project
- align these recommendations with the principles elaborated on in the Partnership Agreement.

## Current Initiatives

Shared decision-making through Aboriginal governance structures is crucial for ensuring self-determining and culturally appropriate responses are provided for the Victorian Aboriginal community. Victoria has a long history of shared decision-making through both the Aboriginal Justice Forum and the Partnership in Aboriginal Education (1990) and the resulting Yalca Agreement (2001) - which has existed for over a decade. These forums have developed and evolved over time to respond to the changing needs of communities. Victoria is committed to further strengthening these structures and incorporating meaningful partnership opportunities moving forward.

Shared Aboriginal – Victorian Government decision-making structures include:

- The Aboriginal Justice Forum
- Aboriginal Children's Forum
- Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum
- Marrung Central Governance Committee
- Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council
- Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum
- Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum
- Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council
- Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum, Implementation Action Group and Implementation Working Group
- Aboriginal Executive Council/ Secretaries Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs
- Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum



## Priority Reform Two: Building the community-controlled sector

**Outcome:** Building the community-controlled sector: There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.

**Target:** Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.

Victoria acknowledges that Aboriginal community-controlled services produce better, more sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal people and their communities. They achieve better results, employ more Aboriginal people, and are often preferred over mainstream services. Empowering the sector to provide culturally sensitive, appropriate, and accessible services to Victorian Aboriginal communities is in line with Victoria's ongoing commitment to self-determination.

Building the capacity and capability of the community-controlled sector also drives sustainability and self-determination by equipping organisations to set the policy direction for, and independently plan the services, they provide to their people and community.

Victoria is committed to embedding the elements of a strong community-controlled sector across its actions under this priority reform area, by working towards ensuring:

- there is sustained capacity building and investment proportionate to the number of people accessing services in Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to deliver certain services to address community identified needs, and address issues through a set of clearly defined standards or requirements, such as an agreed model of care
- there is a dedicated and identified Aboriginal workforce (that complements a range of other professions and expertise) and people working in community-controlled sectors have wage parity based on workforce modelling commensurate with need
- a strong and sustainable Aboriginal workforce that experiences wage parity through aligning workforce costs in State Budget business case development with current Victorian Public Service remuneration standards

- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that deliver common services are supported by a peak body, governed by a majority Aboriginal Board, which has strong governance and policy development and influencing capacity
- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations that deliver common services have a dedicated, flexible, reliable and consistent funding model that are designed to suit the types of services required by communities, responsive to the needs of those receiving the services, and is developed in consultation with the relevant peak body.

Priority Reform Two will align with the VAAF by:

- Taking guidance from the VAAF action logic and self-determination continuum, which provides a path towards improved outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians through the transformation of structures and systems
- Working alongside the ambition set by Goal 9 of the VAAF: Strong Aboriginal workforce participation. The VAAF recognises that Aboriginal staff bring unique knowledge, skills and expertise to the workforce and understand the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal community. The importance of representation working in sectors like the Victorian public service also enhances the quality of the workplace and career experiences.



## Partnership Actions

As agreed by the Joint Council in April 2021, Victoria will develop Sector Strengthening Plans for the four sectors identified for priority action - early childhood care, housing, health, and disability. The Victorian Government will work closely with Coalition of Peaks and the relevant Aboriginal community-controlled sectors to support the development of these plans. Active engagement with both the Coalition of Peaks and the community-controlled sector will ensure these plans reflect the needs and expectations of the sector, and in turn produce better outcomes for the wider Aboriginal Victorians.





## Jurisdictional Actions

Consistent with clause 46 of the National Agreement, the Victorian Government is committed to building the Aboriginal community-controlled sectors across all Closing the Gap outcomes. This will include, but not be limited to, the four sectors specified as priorities in the National Agreement - early childhood care and development, housing, health, and disability.

Work to develop the Sector Strengthening Plans will commence during the first year of this Implementation Plan with existing Aboriginal governance structures playing a key role in developing the plans.

Sector strengthening is required across all areas of the community-controlled sector, given the integrated and wholistic nature of many ACCOs. The first four priority sectors listed above will have immediate focus in line with the National Agreement.

This consideration will be informed by Victoria's baseline performance against targets and its performance relative to other jurisdictions. For example, at 30 June 2019, Victoria had the highest rate of overrepresentation in out-of-home care in Australia, with Aboriginal children being placed in care at 20 times the rate of their non-Aboriginal peers. In 2020, there were 3,518 family violence incidents in Victoria in which Aboriginal women were the victim/survivors. In addition, family violence is under-reported and that there has been no significant or sustained decrease over the past five years. This data highlights the need to strengthen ACCOs to provide early intervention and family support for families at risk of child protection involvement and incidents of family violence as a priority.

The Victorian Government recognises that building the ACCO sector must include more than building their contracted service delivery role. As such, Sector Strengthening Plans will include actions that pertain to:

- resourcing ACCOs for their cultural programs, community, sport and recreation activities and their roles in community development and advocacy
- the prioritising of cultural activities and languages
- the multi-functional nature of many ACCOs that provide services across a diversity of Closing the Gap outcomes
- supporting and resourcing ACCOs to transition to carbon neutral service operations
- resourcing the development of existing ACCOs to extend their scope of operations in response to local and regional community needs and aspirations

- providing access to long-term support, particularly to smaller ACCOs, to develop and expand their scope of operations
- identifying locations and regions where new ACCOs should be developed in line with local community aspirations.

More broadly, the Victorian Government will undertake the following actions to strengthen the ACCO sector and achieve the objective of the National Agreement:

- In partnership with the ACCO sector and shared governance structures, identify and embed initiatives that enable Aboriginal Elders to live longer healthier and active lives and enjoy community engagement and connection in accordance with cultural protocols, by embedding mandatory consideration of the needs and rights of Elders in all aspects of Victoria's Implementation Plan, including in each Sector Strengthening Plan. Early consideration will also be given to standalone policy for Aboriginal Elders.
- In alignment with Clause 55b of the National Agreement, where new funding programs are intended to service the broader population, allocate a meaningful proportion of funding to ACCOs.
- Consolidation of accreditation, regulation and standards to support holistic culturally based service provision by ACCOs, noting work that is already underway in relation to this such as the Department of Fairness, Families and Housing review of the Human Services Standards.
- Taking account of Infrastructure Victoria's 30-Year Draft Infrastructure Strategy plan for, and undertake long-term investment in ACCO infrastructure that is fit for purpose and accommodates the service breadth of ACCOs.

This Implementation Plan will also integrate existing funding and actions from the AEC/ Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs meetings that directly align with Victoria's commitments under the National Agreement. This includes commitments to:

- contractual and Systemic Funding Reform: Clauses 55a and 55b
- alignment of State Budget Development Process with Aboriginal governance structures
- establishment a baseline of funding for the ACCO sector: Clauses 59-62
- streamline funding arrangements through options such as pooled funding, longer-term funding agreements, optimised purposeful reporting and minimised compliance burden

- systemic funding reforms that align with Aboriginal self-determination and provide maximum flexibility to respond to local community priorities
- alignment of the State Budget development process, service planning and funding with the high level of Aboriginal population growth in Victoria and regional variations in population growth
- identify current State Government spending on Aboriginal programs and services and identify opportunities to re-prioritise funding to ACCOs (Clause 113)

## Current Initiatives

Victoria is committed to strengthening the ACCO sector, which is in line with our commitment to self-determination. Empowering ACCOs to determine their own planning and funding priorities provides sustainable, flexible and culturally appropriate responses for Aboriginal Victorians. Existing initiatives aimed at strengthening the ACCO sector include:

### Aboriginal Workforce Fund to strengthen Aboriginal workforce capacity and capability

The Victorian Government has partnered with the Aboriginal community controlled sector to design a funding model for the \$40 million Aboriginal Workforce Fund. For the first time in Victoria, ACCOs are creating a model which builds their organisation's workforce capacity without a complicated and onerous application process. The fund is being co-designed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Victorian Aboriginal Social Recovery Advisory Group. It will use Aboriginal measures of success and funding will be allocated on the advice of Aboriginal-led governance groups.

### Funding to Aboriginal community controlled organisations

- The Victorian Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) are co-designing with ACCOs a suite of reforms to the way funding is provided to the sector. Reforms include a prioritisation funding policy, longer term funding contracts, a pooled outcome based funding model and a reduction to onerous reporting and accountability processes, including multiple funding reports to the one department. The pooled outcome based funding model is being piloted with three ACCOs. The pilot model will include health and human service funding across both the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Department of Health. Critical features of the model will be:
  - measuring investment against Aboriginal defined outcomes
  - co-design of service agreements
  - reduced reporting burden
  - monitoring and evaluation processes to measure impact

### COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund

The \$10 million COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Response and Recovery Fund (Fund) was established in 2020, following calls from the COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Taskforce that the community-controlled sector required more funding opportunities to provide local services to their communities. The Fund provided flexible funding to Aboriginal communities and organisations across four categories - Emergency Relief, Outreach and Brokerage, Cultural Strengthening and Social and Emotional Wellbeing.

The Fund ensured Aboriginal communities were adequately resourced to develop local, place-based responses to address key impacts of COVID-19. Government is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal self-determination is embedded throughout response and recovery efforts. To ensure that post COVID-19, all Aboriginal people, families and communities are safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives, the Victorian Aboriginal Social Recovery Advisory Group was developed to continue the crucial work required to recover from COVID-19 impacts.



## Priority Reform Three: Transforming government organisations

**Outcome:** Improving mainstream institutions: Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.

**Target:** Decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experiences of racism.

The Victorian Government is committed to the services Aboriginal Victorians access being culturally safe and culturally responsive whether the service is provided by an Aboriginal organisation, a government department or agency or a mainstream non-government organisation. As the provider or funder of services intend to benefit the entire community, it is crucial that the government ensures its systems, institutions, and the services it funds, are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people.

Historic government policies and processes have caused systemic racism across Victoria's service system. A culturally safe and racism-free service system is one in which people feel safe, where they can freely affirm their identity and where their needs are met.

The VAAF outlines the Victorian Government's existing commitment to transform its systems and structures to support self-determination and improve outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. As identified by community, the four enablers which government has committed to act upon to make Aboriginal self-determination a reality are:

- Prioritise culture
- Address trauma and support healing
- Address racism and promote cultural safety
- Transfer power and resources to community.

The VGAAR, tabled in Parliament annually, will provide detail on how we are tracking to address these enablers, alongside outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians in a broader range of socio-economic domains than that is captured in the National Agreement. The Victorian Government is making significant inroads towards structural and systemic transformation. This includes action on the Self-Determination Reform Framework, and funding reform.

Under Clause 59 of the National Agreement, Victoria has committed to structural transformation of government organisations and mainstream service providers, including to:

- establish an anti-racism taskforce which will identify and eliminate racism through a statewide anti-racism strategy
- embed and practice meaningful cultural safety
- partner with Aboriginal organisations, communities and people with the goal of these organisations transitioning to independently delivering services in the future.
- increase accountability through transparent funding allocations
- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- improve engagement with Aboriginal people.



## Partnership Actions

The National Agreement requires governments to identify, develop or strengthen an independent mechanism that will support, monitor and report on the transformation of mainstream agencies and institutions. The mechanism must be culturally safe and support mainstream agencies to embed and practice culturally appropriate service offerings. It will be required to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in relation to any concerns about mainstream institutions and report publicly on the transformation of mainstream agencies.

Both treaty and the Yoo-rook Justice Commission will likely lead to significant systemic reform, including in relation to systems oversight and accountability. The Victorian Government will work with Victoria's Implementation Partners to consider the best approaches for establishing the mechanism to support and monitor the transformation of mainstream agencies, services and institutions. This will include how any mechanism aligns with existing commitments to Aboriginal-led evaluation and review of progress against the VAAF and the National Agreement.

In the immediate term the VGAAR, which is tabled in Victorian Parliament, will incorporate the AEC's review of the VGAAR as a key Aboriginal sector led accountability approach.

## Jurisdictional Actions

Through a range of strategies and frameworks, the Victorian Government is undertaking transformative action to ensure institutions are culturally safe and are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal Victorians.

This already includes requiring all Victorian Government departments to report against the Self-Determination Reform Framework on action they are undertaking to transform their organisations in line with the VAAF self-determination enablers. Noting that the statutory bodies are within the scope of the National Agreement, the Victorian Government will work with its Implementation Partners and statutory bodies to ensure they are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Noting that Priority Reform Three is inclusive of mainstream institutions and agencies that are funded by governments to develop policies or deliver services, the Victorian Government will work with ACCOs, mainstream institutions and funded agencies to:

- develop an agreed health and human services-wide approach to progressing cultural safety of mainstream institutions and funded services
- develop sector-specific commitments for resource transfer from mainstream non-government organisations and government departments to Aboriginal community control.

Other whole of government ways in which the Victorian Government is supporting the transformation of institutions are outlined below.

### Self-determination Reform Framework

The Self-Determination Reform Framework guides public service action to enable self-determination in line with government's commitments in the VAAF.

It also provides an architecture for government departments to report annually on this action under the framework, outlining progress towards transforming government systems and structures to enable self-determination.

### Anti-Racism Strategy and Taskforce

The Victorian Government has established the Anti-Racism Taskforce (Taskforce) to guide the design and implementation of a whole of government Anti-Racism Strategy. The new statewide strategy will aim to prevent and crackdown on race-based discrimination and abuse.

The Anti-Racism Strategy will focus on a broad range of elements that underlay and perpetuate racial discrimination such as unconscious bias, privilege, and the intersection of race and other forms of discrimination.

The new Taskforce will provide advice and recommendations to the Victorian Government to ensure the strategy sets out a clear and targeted road map to reduce racism in Victoria.

The Taskforce is co-chaired by Josh Bull MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Member for Sunbury, and Sheena Watt MP, Member for the Northern Metropolitan Region and a proud Yorta Yorta woman.

Membership includes ex-officio representatives from the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, as well as 11 community members appointed through an open and competitive recruitment process.

This Taskforce comprises people with a broad range of professional and lived experience, reflecting the diversity within our communities. Three young Victorians have been appointed to ensure young people's voices are central to this work.



### **Inquiry into anti-vilification protections**

The Legislative Assembly's Legal and Social Issues Committee completed an in-depth inquiry into the overall effectiveness of the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (RTTA), and in March 2021, delivered 37 recommendations across multiple portfolios on how to strengthen its effectiveness and eliminate vilification within Victoria.

The government's response to the Inquiry is being led by the Attorney-General and an interdepartmental working group is coordinating across government to prepare the response and develop a Bill for implementing key recommendations for introduction in 2021.

### **The Social Procurement Framework**

The Department of Treasury and Finance provides economic, financial and resource management advice to help the Victorian Government deliver its policies.

The Department of Treasury and Finance led the development and implementation of the Social Procurement Framework (SPF). The SPF uses government buying power to generate social value beyond the value of the procurement spend. This has enabled government to support and grow Aboriginal businesses and employees. The framework provides a platform to engage with Aboriginal business and enable access to economic opportunities that may not ordinarily occur.

The Department of Treasury and Finance Self-Determination Taskforce was established in 2019 to promote Aboriginal self-determination in the department's work and meet commitments in the Self-Determination Reform Framework.

Since delivering the first set of reforms published in advancing self-determination in DTF in May 2020, this Taskforce has undertaken a series of workshops to progress new plans.

The Department of Treasury and Finance's next steps involve preparing a longer-term plan for promoting self-determination and expanding the Taskforce's scope to include the department's preparations for treaty. Key aims of the long-term plan will include budget reform, cultural safety and how the department can support improved outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

### **Cultural Safety Framework**

The Department of Fairness, Families and Housing is responsible for the implementation of the Cultural Safety Framework in health and community services across the state. The framework was developed in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal organisations and provides a continuous quality improvement model to strengthen the cultural safety of individuals and organisations. Cultural safety has been embedded systemically into hospitals' Statements of Priorities, Human Service Standards, Improving Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Patients reforms and the Child Safe Standards. The department has also included guidelines for reporting racism within the department's Positive and Fair Workplaces Policy and redesigned the department's peer support model to better deliver tailored supports for Aboriginal staff. The department has released the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Guidelines for funded agencies on how to apply the framework in the service sector.





# WERGAIA

Buibadjali

Jagwadjali

Horsham

Jargwadjall

Stawell

Knenkn  
wurrung

Wergera River

WADJALI

DJA  
WURR

LAB WUR



## Priority Reform Four: Shared access to data and information at a regional level

**Outcome:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

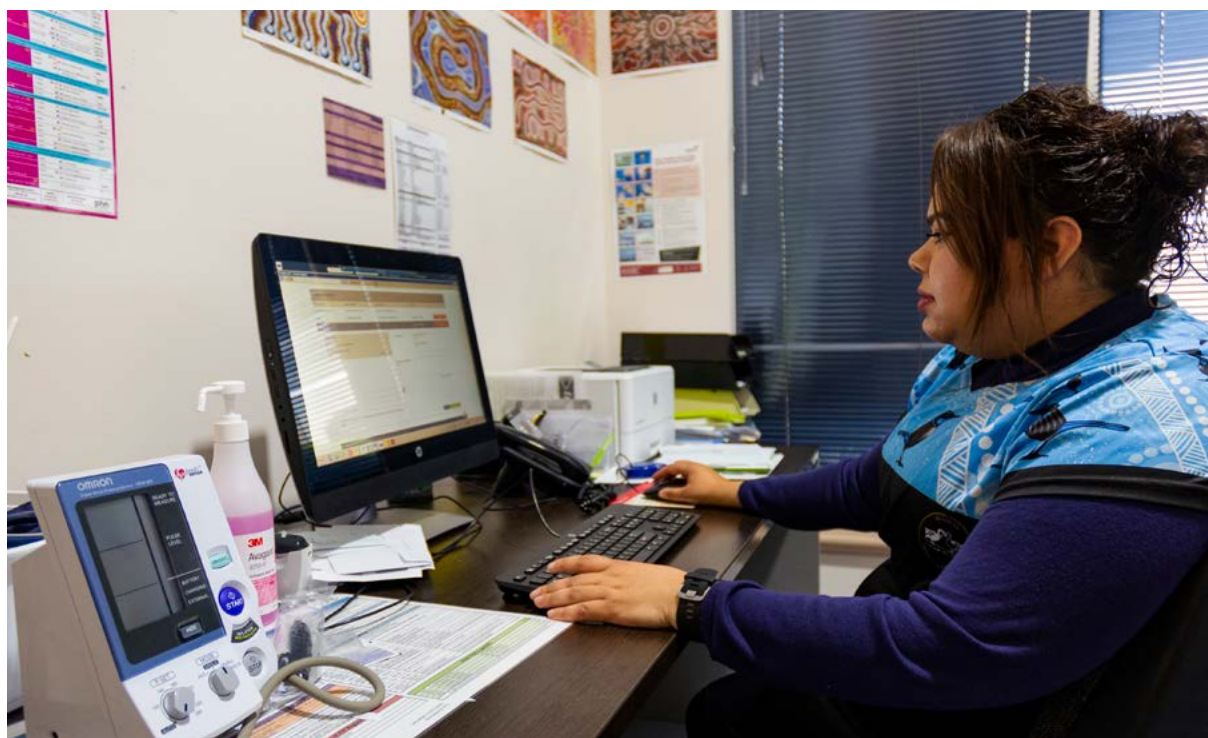
**Target:** Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

Increasing Aboriginal ownership and control of data is a key enabler of self-determination. Aboriginal data sovereignty recognises that Aboriginal communities and organisations should have governance, choice and control over data collected from and about their communities, and have ready access to data and data analytics capacity necessary to support strong organisational governance and service planning.

When ACCOs are adequately resourced and supported to undertake this work, it strengthens Aboriginal advocacy, sector and local level service planning. Open, transparent and meaningful data that is disaggregated at the local and regional level is essential to ensure that service responses

reflect local needs and that all stakeholders are accountable. It tells us what is working and where further action is needed.

Sharing data that is locally relevant demonstrates that the Victorian Government is working towards a true partnership approach. Ensuring data sovereignty means Aboriginal community-controlled organisations have the information they need to make decision about the communities they serve. The State as an entity has historically controlled and monitored Aboriginal data. In working towards a partnership approach, Victoria recognises that ACCOs are best placed to hold control of data that relates to their own communities.



## Partnership Actions

The National Agreement commits all parties to work together to identify up to six locations across Australia for local data projects intended to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to analyse and use local and regional data to drive tailored Closing the Gap responses.

The Victorian Government will pursue local data projects tailored to reflect Victoria's unique jurisdictional experience. Locally relevant data will help to identify the differing needs

and experiences between Aboriginal people in metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Victoria recognises the collection of data must be done in a culturally appropriate way which empowers the ACCO sector to utilise their own data to make their own decisions. This can be ensured through leveraging technical and community expertise to conduct research, whilst ensuring adequate resourcing and capacity for ACCOs to partake in data collection and reporting against Closing the Gap targets.

## Jurisdictional Actions

To advance Aboriginal ownership and control of data, the Victorian Government will:

- develop modelling of the trajectories for each target alongside the anticipated year when parity will be achieved. This will include agreeing defined regions for disaggregation of data and the minimum data sets available for each region and will utilise the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency/ AEC/ Social Ventures Australia work on service demand modelling as a starting point
- review and consider the case for more ambitious Closing the Gap targets or additional targets where Victoria is on track to achieve any Closing the Gap targets in advance of 2031
- identify potential indicators and measures to support future reporting against VAAF and Closing the Gap, with an emphasis on exploring opportunities for the inclusion of more culturally specific indicators, for example ASQTrak
- undertake longer-term work on qualitative work against VAAF self-determination enablers and the Closing the Gap objectives and outcomes (National Agreement Clause 3) and Transformational Elements (National Agreement Clause 59).

Victoria will develop modelling of the trajectories for each target alongside the anticipated year when parity will be achieved. The Victorian Government will also support access to ACCO and Aboriginal led, strength-based data measures, as well as considering ways to improve local and regional control over data.

Victoria will also undertake a mid-term review of the VAAF (and by extension, the VGAAR) to ensure it is aligned with the Closing the Gap targets. This will allow a greater degree of aspiration to be built into Victoria's Closing the Gap targets as there are instances where the VAAF measures are more ambitious than those outlined in the National Agreement. The mid-term review will also ensure more baseline data is collected for

VAAF measures than those that are currently not reported on (for example, life expectancy) to inform government and community decision-making.

### Aboriginal Data Sovereignty

Victoria will implement existing data sovereignty commitments agreed between the AEC and Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs including:

- departments to develop sector wide data access and data sharing agreements with and for ACCOs and Traditional Owners in their sector (local, statewide and peak) with advice and input from the appropriate Aboriginal governance mechanism
- departments to prioritise additional investment in ACCO data management and analytics as a core function of ACCOS and Traditional Owners and collaboratively develop options to properly resource this function through allocations from departmental funding programs and through the annual budget process.

Victoria will also actively pursue the data and information sharing elements specified under the National Agreement (Clause 71); including as follows:

- ensuring there are partnerships in place between ACCOs and government organisations to guide the improved collection, access, management and use of data to improve shared decision making
- providing ACCOs with the same data and information on which decisions are made
- collecting, managing and disaggregating data in an accessible and timely way to empower ACCOs and Aboriginal communities to use data for local decision making
- supporting and resourcing ACCOs and Aboriginal communities to build capacity and expertise in data collection, management, and analysis.



# Targets

The National Agreement sets out 17 national socio-economic targets across areas that have an impact on life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The purpose of this section of the Implementation Plan is to set out Victoria's planned actions for achieving the targets, and in turn improving the life outcomes of all Aboriginal people.

In addition, the VAAF, as Victoria's overarching framework for Aboriginal affairs, includes 111 measures developed after extensive community consultation. It commits Victoria to achieving 11 key outcomes across cultural safety, service or system access and equity. The VAAF recognises that to achieve positive outcomes, we must fundamentally change the way governments work with Aboriginal people.

These existing outcomes paired with the socio-economic targets under the National Agreement bring together a comprehensive set of data that can help community hold government to account on whether our combined efforts are having an impact. These targets cut across key domains including culture, health and wellbeing, justice, learning and family.

The Victorian Government recognises that these targets set out the minimum level of ambition to be achieved through the National Agreement and commits to the achievement of equity against all measures and outcomes in the VAAF. Our actions will also embed a specific focus on cohorts facing multiple barriers to achieving equitable outcomes, including Aboriginal Elders, young people, LGBTQI+ people, and people with disability. Victoria is exploring, in partnership with our Implementation Partners and key stakeholders, options to address key gaps in the National Agreement such as disability.

While the National Agreement aims for nationally consistent outcomes, the approach and appropriate method for achieving those outcomes will depend on the unique context of each jurisdiction. The commitments under the National Agreement provide a baseline level for targets and a partnership approach. Victoria's broader self-determination agenda seeks to move beyond partnership and towards co-ownership and a transfer of decision-making and resource control. In Victoria, we will continue to be guided by the VAAF on more ambitious targets, as these were developed through extensive consultation with community.

To ensure these socio-economic targets are monitored, and that government remains accountable throughout the lifespan of the National Agreement, each outcome and the associated targets will be allocated to existing Aboriginal governance forums for monitoring and review throughout the life of the National Agreement. Allocating targets to existing governance forums will ensure sector-specific experts can oversee issues, actions and outcomes and adapt as necessary. It also minimises governance burden, by utilising existing forums and limiting duplication.

In addition, we will continue to report on progress under the VAAF via the VGAAR, which will be integrated with reporting on the National Agreement.







# Outcome 1: People enjoy long and healthy lives



**Target 1:** Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.

## Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 11: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy health and longevity
  - Objective 11.1: Improve Aboriginal health status, quality of life and life expectancy
    - Measure 11.1.1 Life expectancy at birth, by sex
    - Measure 11.1.2 Proportion reporting 'excellent or very good' health status<sup>2</sup>
    - Measure 11.1.3 Rate of daily smoking
    - Measure 11.1.4 Rate of hospitalisations for potentially preventable causes (vaccine preventable, acute, chronic and all)
    - Measure 11.1.5 Incidence of selected cancers
    - Measure 11.1.6 Rate of emergency department presentations for alcohol or drug-related harm
    - Measure 11.1.7 Specialist alcohol and other drug treatment services provided to Aboriginal Victorians

Since the commencement of the Closing the Gap journey, data demonstrates that the disparity in the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians continues to grow.

Victoria's Aboriginal population is growing at a much faster rate than the non-Aboriginal population, increasing 12 per cent between the 2011 and 2016 Census. However, due to the smaller number of Aboriginal people in Victoria, life expectancy estimates are not able to be produced<sup>2</sup>. VicHealth research indicates that based on 2006 ABS data it is estimated a life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians of 11.8 years for men and 10 years for women<sup>3</sup>. Diseases such as cancer, diabetes and circulatory diseases and the impacts of poor mental health continue to be the leading causes of death for Aboriginal people<sup>4</sup>.

In response to ongoing calls from the Aboriginal community and community-controlled sector, the Victorian Government is focused on measuring quality of life as an overall indicator of a long and healthy life. To capture a holistic picture of quality

of life, Victoria, through the VAAF, measures life expectancy at birth, proportion reporting 'excellent or very good' health status and other associated outcomes.

The health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people is affected by several risk factors including the experiences of racism and discrimination, especially within the health system. As a result, Aboriginal people continue to experience poorer health outcomes than non-Aboriginal people. Victoria already measures a number of underlying factors that contribute to Aboriginal life expectancy rates including but not limited to:

- life expectancy at birth
- self-reported health status
- daily smoking rates
- rates of preventable hospitalisation
- emergency room presentations due to alcohol or other drug-related harm.

These factors will inform Victoria's measurement of life expectancy and ensure that the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians continues to close.

A well-resourced Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) sector is crucial for addressing the underlying factors that contribute to Aboriginal life expectancy rates and ensuring that the Aboriginal community has access to culturally safe care that reflects their definition of health and wellbeing.

Social and cultural determinants of health including connection to Country, culture, community and family provide strong protective factors for Aboriginal people. Increased focus on preventative strategies and timely access to culturally safe services are ways the health system can contribute to improved health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people. Strong, holistic wraparound models of care that are based in Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing can provide additional opportunities to improve health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people and families.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/indigenous-life-expectancy-and-deaths>

<sup>3</sup> [Aboriginal health RS---prior to EFR.pdf \(vichealth.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-health-rs---prior-to-efr.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/indigenous-life-expectancy-and-deaths>

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

In 2019, the Victorian Government committed to the creation of a health forum led by the Aboriginal community to provide governance, oversight, and decision making on Aboriginal health priorities. The Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum was established in April 2021 to meet those goals. This forum is the lead body for the Aboriginal health sector to identify health priorities, design Aboriginal-led solutions, and advise government to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for Victoria's Aboriginal community. Co-chaired by the Minister for Health and the Board Chairperson of the Victorian Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), the forum will lead the development of a Victorian Aboriginal health plan with agreed priorities to drive and coordinate government and Aboriginal sector action.

The Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum, established in 2017 to provide a statewide mechanism for Aboriginal-led decision making will work in partnership with the Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum to ensure that health issues are considered across community and social services, and contribute voice towards the progression of health priorities.

To improve health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people, commitment and action is also required across the broader health service system. Through health reform activities, government will need to ensure that Aboriginal voices are included and involved in decision-making at the state and local level.

## Government commitment to self-determination

The Victorian Government is committed to improving health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. At the very heart of this change is self-determination, whereby Aboriginal people take ownership, carriage and responsibility for designing, delivering and evaluating policy and services on their own terms.

On July 2017, the former Department of Health and Human Services launched the 'Supporting self-determination: prioritising funding to Aboriginal organisations' policy with the overall objective of supporting Aboriginal self-determination and improving the health, wellbeing and safety outcomes of Aboriginal Victorians. The policy aims to prioritise Aboriginal-specific funding to Aboriginal organisations who provide services that address their communities' health, wellbeing and safety needs and aspirations.

## Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is Martin Foley MP, Minister for Health, with the supporting portfolio of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong



**Target 2:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 1: Aboriginal children are born health and thrive
  - Objective 1.1 Improve maternal and infant health
    - Measure 1.1.1 Rate of low birth weight
    - Measure 1.1.2 Rate of preterm birth
    - Measure 1.1.3 Rate of perinatal mortality
    - Measure 1.1.4 Smoking during pregnancy

Being born healthy is fundamental to Aboriginal babies having a strong start to life. For Aboriginal babies to have a greater chance of being born at a healthy birthweight, their mothers must be supported and healthy before and during pregnancy.

Koori Maternity Services (KMS) are an integral part of Victoria's maternity system. They provide flexible, holistic and culturally safe pregnancy and postnatal care for Aboriginal women, women having Aboriginal babies and their families. Provided at both Aboriginal organisations and public health services, KMS embrace a holistic Aboriginal understanding of health that extends beyond physical wellbeing to include the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing of the individual woman, her family and her community.

To ensure that Aboriginal babies are born with a healthy birthweight, KMS aim to increase access to earlier antenatal care, reduce smoking rates during pregnancy for Aboriginal women, reduce the proportion of Aboriginal babies born early, and reduce the number of deaths of Aboriginal babies during pregnancy or soon after birth.

Efforts to improve health outcomes for vulnerable and at-risk women, babies and families must address the social determinants of health, including those that do not directly relate to the healthcare system. Achieving this requires KMS to work with early childhood family support services and the community in order to respond to the individual needs and circumstances of each woman and her family. KMS teams, like other antenatal care providers, often play a central role in identifying and providing the first response

for women and families experiencing increased vulnerability or risk. They make care and support accessible and safe, whenever needed.

KMS are delivered in line with a commitment to placing Aboriginal women, their babies and their families at the centre of care, grounded in Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing.

### Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

The Department of Health has a working relationship between KMS and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) to support streamlined continuum of care to ensure that Aboriginal children and mothers are healthy and have a strong start to life.

The VACCHO Koori Maternity and Early Years team coordinates peer networking and learning opportunities for the KMS workforce, including the annual Women's Business Forum and quarterly steering committee meetings. External education and training opportunities coordinated and promoted by the Koori Maternity and Early Years team include specialised training in sexual health, smoking (tobacco) cessation, drugs and alcohol, family violence, oral health, breastfeeding and diabetes management.

The Royal Women's Hospital's Maternity Services Education Program provides on-site workshops for maternity service providers across Victoria. This pregnancy care education is designed and implemented in partnership with VACCHO, enabling the KMS workforce to maintain an evidence-based approach to practice.

### Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is Martin Foley MP, Minister for Health, with the supporting portfolio of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

### Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 3:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years



**Target 3:** By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 4: Aboriginal children thrive in the early years
  - Objective 4.1: Optimise early childhood development and participation in kinder
    - Measure 4.1.1 Number and proportion of eligible children enrolled in a funded four-year-old kindergarten program in the year before school
    - Measure 4.1.2 Number of children funded to participate in Early Start Kindergarten
    - Measure 4.1.3 Proportion of children vulnerable on one or more domain on the Australian Early Development Census

Along with positive outcomes in language, literacy, numeracy and overall social and emotional wellbeing, culturally responsive early childhood learning provides an important foundation for future learning and development. The experience of children in the years before school and during the transition to school can shape participation in school and education in later school years.

International research on brain development and early learning environments also demonstrates

that it is paramount for young children to be engaged in high-quality early childhood education programs if later academic success is to be achieved (Early Childhood Australia, 2016). When Aboriginal children and their families are supported to access a high-quality and culturally respectful early childhood education programs, this has positive flow-on effects on learning outcomes and attendance throughout the schooling years.

Victoria is already exceeding or is well on track to meet this target. In Victoria, the four-year-old kindergarten participation (enrolment) rate for Aboriginal children was 92.4 per cent in 2018, on par with the rate for all Victorian children 92.1 per cent.

In 2019, the four-year-old kindergarten participation rate for Aboriginal children was 99.9 per cent, above the rate for all Victorian children 91.8 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

Similar increases in enrolment rates of Aboriginal children in three-year-old kindergarten have been observed across Victoria. In 2018, the enrolment rate for Aboriginal children in three-year-old kindergarten was 61 per cent, increasing to 66 per cent in 2019. With the introduction of funded three-year-old kindergarten for all children in Victoria from 2022, it is important that the increases in kindergarten enrolment in both three and four-year-old kindergarten are maintained.

<sup>5</sup> Victorian participation measures are different to those used by Commonwealth departments.

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

Action to improve learning and development outcomes for Aboriginal learners across early childhood, schools and further education and training is delivered through Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 (Marrung). Consistent with the guiding principles underpinning self-determination, Marrung was developed together with the Victorian Government's principal partner in Koorie education, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

The Marrung Central Governance Committee was established to oversee the implementation of Marrung, monitor progress against key targets and indicators and provide strategic advice on programs and policy reform. The Marrung Central Governance Committee is co-chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and the President of VAEAI, and includes

representatives from statewide Aboriginal peak bodies including the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), VACCHO and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Agency Limited (VACSAL). The Marrung Central Governance Committee membership also extends to organisations and departments across a range of sectors in Victoria who support educational and social and emotional outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

## Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is the Hon Ingrid Stitt MLC, Minister for Early Childhood, with the supporting portfolio of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years



**Target 4:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 4: Aboriginal children thrive in the early years
  - Objective 4.1: Optimise early childhood development and participation in kinder
    - Measure 4.1.1 Number and proportion of eligible children enrolled in a funded four-year-old kindergarten program in the year before school
    - Measure 4.1.2 Number of children funded to participate in Early Start Kindergarten
    - Measure 4.1.3 Proportion of children vulnerable on one or more domain on the Australian Early Development Census

The first five years of a child's life are fundamental to shaping their future. There are currently barriers in place preventing Aboriginal families from accessing culturally safe maternal child health and early childhood programs. To improve outcomes, our mainstream services need to better engage with Aboriginal families so as to promote genuine and effective relationships, as early childhood inequalities underpin the lifelong disparities in health, educational achievement and wellbeing (Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026, p25).

Although Victoria has high rates of Aboriginal participation in kindergarten programs, Aboriginal children are more than twice as likely to be developmentally at risk in one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census in their first year of education compared to non-Aboriginal children. This reiterates the need to ensure early childhood services are inclusive and culturally safe to ensure Aboriginal children can meaningfully participate and are able to access any additional supports as early as possible.

Within Victoria there is a vibrant and high-quality community-controlled early years sector that provides education and holistic support to

Aboriginal children and their families. Aboriginal Child and Family Centres and Multifunctional Aboriginal Children's Services are often described as 'one-stop shops' for Aboriginal families, connecting them to a variety of integrated services that support wellbeing for children and their families. The services provided are often based around community needs and may include health programs such as hearing and maternal health services, parenting programs; legal and housing supports, and outreach and transportation supports. When resourced appropriately, these services have the potential to influence positive outcomes across a range of the Closing the Gap targets and VAAF measures.

Access to quality parenting information, advice and support that is culturally relevant and accessible is critical for giving Aboriginal children the best possible start in life. When parenting programs focus on the early stages of a child's life, particularly on the quality of parent-child interaction, they can help promote the wellbeing of children and prevent problems from developing later in life.

Balert Gerrbik: Koorie Families as First Educators, an initiative under Marrung, is a culturally responsive evidence-based parenting support initiative currently delivered by ACCOs in regional and metropolitan locations. The underlying principles of the initiative continue to be early intervention and prevention and a strengths-based approach to building the capacity of parents as first educators of their young children from birth to preschool age.

Alongside access to educational services, providing an Aboriginal baby with a healthy start to life will determine their health and wellbeing outcomes into childhood and across their lifespan. To improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal mothers and babies, the Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health program is critical and provides choice of access of MCH services at sixteen local Aboriginal organisations or through mainstream MCH providers. This supports the delivery of services that are culturally welcoming, respectful and safe and strengthens self-determination in Aboriginal organisations.

Victoria has an over 20-year history of Aboriginal MCH programs with the first program commencing at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) in 1999. This program continues to be provided under the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Women's and Children's Program which provides MCH key ages and stages checks, immunisations for children and adults, pregnancy care, women's health, support with parenting, child health and development, paediatric assessments and follow ups.

**The Aboriginal MCH program aims to:**

- embed self-determination as a core principle of MCH service delivery, recognising the importance of Aboriginal organisations in delivering services to meet the health, wellbeing, and safety aspirations of their local Aboriginal community
- offer families choice and flexibility in how they access MCH services, including place-based support tailored to their needs
- support relationships between mainstream MCH providers and Aboriginal organisations to provide integrated, coordinated support and referral pathways.

Improving the first five years of an Aboriginal child's life, including through maternal and childhood health programs, early childhood development and access to family support services, remains a key focus as the critical foundation to ensuring Aboriginal children enjoy better educational engagement and achievement throughout their schooling and beyond.

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

In 2016, the Victorian Government allocated \$1.6 million for the Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Initiative (AMCHI) over two years as part of Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children. The Aboriginal community was engaged through a co-design process to develop a MCH service delivery model to deliver more culturally responsive and high-quality services through both ACCOs and current service providers.

AMCHI was trialled in nine services across a range of local government and Aboriginal organisational service delivery settings from 2017-18 until 2019-20. The 2018/19 Victorian Budget made a further investment of \$4 million for Aboriginal MCH over four years. This supported the continuation of the Aboriginal MCH program in four Aboriginal organisations that were part of the AMCHI trial and allowed its expansion into a further six Aboriginal organisations from late 2020.

The department's Korin Korin Balit Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027 informed the Aboriginal MCH program's continuation and expansion, along with the VAAF 2018-2023 Objective 1.2: Children thrive in their first 1000 days, which is measured by measure 1.2.1: Participation rates for MCH Key Ages and Stages Consultations.

In addition to the existing Marrung Central Governance Committee, established through Marrung, Victoria has established the Aboriginal Families and Children Working Group.

This working group aims to strengthen collaboration and coordinate a strategic approach across the Victorian Government to improve outcomes for Aboriginal families and children, particularly those vulnerable to harm, disadvantage or social exclusion. This working group comprises senior leaders from statewide Aboriginal peak bodies and senior departmental leaders.

The Marrung Central Governance Committee membership also extends to organisations and departments across a range of sectors in Victoria who support educational and social and emotional outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

## Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is Martin Foley MP, Minister for Health, with the supporting portfolio of the Hon Ingrid Stitt MLC, Minister for Early Childhood, and Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

Progress against this target is supported by the kindergarten participation initiatives identified under Target 3 above, as well as the Koorie Families as First Educators program.

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.

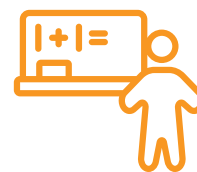






# Outcome 5:

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full potential



**Target 5:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20 – 24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 6: Aboriginal learners are engaged at school
  - Objective 6.1: Increase Year 12 or equivalent attainment
    - Measure 6.1.1 Proportion of young people aged 20-24 with Year 12 or equivalent
    - Measure 6.1.2 Apparent retention rates for students in Years 10 to 12
    - Measure 6.1.3 Number of Aboriginal students who complete the VCE, VCAL or VET in Schools Certificate

Access to high-quality education provides significant short-term and lifelong benefits, not only for academic attainment, but also for resilience, creativity, and a range of social and economic outcomes. Education and training are vital to achieving better life outcomes for all young people. Strong learning and development foundations are essential to ensuring Aboriginal students are supported to complete their schooling and access the full range of higher education and training pathways, and subsequent economic opportunities.

In Victoria in 2019, 688 Aboriginal young people completed the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) or Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools Certificate, an increase on the 594 Aboriginal students that completed in 2018. Victoria does not currently report this data as a proportion due to the lack of availability of a reliable population denominator.

The gap in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates is trending towards parity with the proportion of Aboriginal people aged 20-24 having completed secondary school increasing from 56.4 per cent in 2006 to 71.3 per cent in 2016. Over the same period the gap in attainment between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people has also decreased from 30.0 per cent to 19.2 per cent. More Aboriginal students are completing a Year 12 or equivalent qualification than ever before. The number of Aboriginal students who completed the VCE, VCAL

or VET in the Schools Certificate more than doubled from 2011 to 2018.

Over the past five years, the proportion of Aboriginal students achieving in the top 2 bands of NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy has increased in Years 3 and 5 Reading, and Years 3 and 9 Numeracy, while remaining stable in other year levels. Over the same 5-year period, the proportion of Aboriginal students performing in the bottom 2 bands for Reading and Numeracy has decreased across all year levels, with the exception of Year 7 Reading. Together with the increases in the number of students in the top 2 bands, this indicates a general lifting across all levels of achievement. However, there remains a persistent achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

The apparent retention rate for Aboriginal students in Years 10 to 12 is lower than for non-Aboriginal students. In 2019, the Year 10-12 apparent retention rate for Aboriginal students in Victorian government schools was 58.8 per cent, compared to 78.2 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.

### Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

The Marrung Central Governance Committee was established to oversee the implementation of Marrung, monitor progress against key targets and indicators and provide strategic advice on programs and policy reform. Year 12 attainment rates, and associated measures are implemented, monitored, and reported against through this governance committee.

### Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is the Hon. James Merlino, Minister for Education with the supporting portfolio of Hon. Gabrielle Williams, MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

### Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.



## Outcome 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways



**Target 6:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 7: Aboriginal learners achieve their full potential after school
  - Objective 7.1 Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education and training
    - Measure 7.1.1 Destination of Year 12 completers
    - Measure 7.1.2 Proportion of 17-24 year old school leavers participating in full-time education and training and/or employment
    - Measure 7.1.3 Tertiary education participation and completion:
      - 7.1.3a: VET participation rate
      - 7.1.3b: university participation rate
      - 7.1.3c: VET course completion rate
      - 7.1.3d: university course completion rate
    - Measure 7.1.4 Proportion of 20-64 year olds with qualifications at Certificate III level or above
    - Measure 7.1.5 Proportion of 20-64 year olds government-funded and total VET graduates employed and/ or in further study after training
    - Measure 7.1.6 Proportion of graduates and cadets employed in VPS; retention, progression and satisfaction

The proportion of young Aboriginal people engaged in education, training or employment has grown significantly across the last decade. Empowering Aboriginal people to complete a tertiary qualification will enable economic independence and security, whilst further strengthening the skilled Aboriginal workforce for generations to come.

The 2019 On-Track Survey of Year 12 completers suggests Victoria still has some way to go before meeting this target. This survey found 29.8 per cent of Aboriginal Year 12 completers (who completed the survey) commenced a Bachelor degree, slightly lower than in 2018 (32.9 per cent). 15.7 per cent commenced a Certificate or Diploma and 17.3 per cent went into an apprenticeship or traineeship. In 2019, 0.6 per cent of Aboriginal Year 12 completers advised they were a decrease from 0.9 per cent in 2018 and 2.6 per cent in 2017.

Compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, young Aboriginal Year 12 leavers are more likely to undertake an apprenticeship, traineeship, Certificate, Diploma or be employed, rather than go to university after finishing Year 12.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal students are supported in education to pursue and complete their desired tertiary pathways. We aspire for success for every Aboriginal child in education, achieving their developmental potential and their ambitions for life.

Education is the cornerstone of economic development and self-determination. Education increases a person's opportunity and choice in life, equipping them with personal and practical skills to get the jobs they want and live healthier and more prosperous lives.



## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

Since 2000, Victorian Aboriginal learners participating in VET have been supported through the Wurreker Strategy. The Wurreker Strategy was implemented in partnership with VAEAI to improve education and training delivery in the TAFE sector to achieve quality education, training and employment outcomes for Aboriginal learners. The strategy enables collaboration between TAFE and dual sector institutes and local Aboriginal communities to address local vocational education and training needs.

The Toorong Marnong Higher Education Accord aims to develop ways in which the nine Victorian universities can cooperate to enhance their engagement with Aboriginal communities. The accord is a partnership initiative between VAEAI and the Victorian Vice-Chancellors' Committee. This collaborative work is recognised in the 2017 Universities Australia Report in relation to building Indigenous participation and success (Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy, 2017 – 2020).

The Marrung Central Governance Committee was established to oversee the implementation of Marrung, monitor progress against key targets and indicators and provide strategic advice on programs and policy reform. Targets and measures relating to further education and training are implemented, monitored, and reported against through this governance committee.

## Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education, with the supporting portfolios of the Hon James Merlino MP, Minister for Education and Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth engaged in employment or education



**Target 7:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15 – 24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to 67 percent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 7: Aboriginal learners achieve their full potential after school
  - Objective 7.1: Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education and training
    - Measure 7.1.1 Destination of Year 12 completers
    - Measure 7.1.2 Proportion of 17-24 year old school leavers participating in full-time education and training and/or employment
    - Measure 7.1.3 Tertiary education participation and completion:
      - 7.1.3a: VET participation rate
      - 7.1.3b: university participation rate
      - 7.1.3c: VET course completion rate
      - 7.1.3d: university course completion rate
    - Measure 7.1.4 Proportion of 20-64 year olds with qualifications at Certificate III level or above
    - Measure 7.1.5 Proportion of 20-64 year olds government-funded and total VET graduates employed and/or in further study after training
    - Measure 7.1.6 Proportion of graduates and cadets employed in VPS; retention, progression and satisfaction.

Aboriginal young people are the community leaders of tomorrow. Supporting young people to achieve their life ambitions is fundamental to achieving better outcomes for individuals, communities and the Victorian population. Supporting pathways to further education, training and employment is key to ensuring Aboriginal Victorians can navigate the future world of work. This requires communities, educators, families and industry working together to build aspirations through the provision of high-quality career education. Key to this is ensuring Aboriginal people are supported to

access education and employment opportunities at all stages of life.

Between 2006 and 2016, the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians aged 20-64 with qualifications at Certificate III level or above increased by 16.5 per cent, a faster rate increase compared with their non-Aboriginal peers.

The disparity between employment outcomes for Aboriginal young people and non-Aboriginal young people continues to persist in Victoria. The economic impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately impacted young people. While the overall unemployment rate in Victoria as at February 2021 had almost returned to parity with the February 2020 figure (5.6 per cent and 5.2 per cent, respectively), the unemployment rate for young people has risen significantly from 10.6 per cent to 15.3 per cent over the same period.

While official unemployment figures for Aboriginal Victorians are not available, government engagement reveals that Aboriginal young people have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This is partly the result of concentrated employment in industries such as hospitality and events, cultural-based businesses, and trades, which were significantly impacted by pandemic.

The Victorian Government has committed to employment initiatives that provide meaningful employment for Aboriginal young people. New initiatives like the Jobs Victoria Advocates program has a focus on ensuring Aboriginal outcomes are supported by engaging community groups and organisations to work with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR).

Aboriginal self-determination is imperative to ensuring sustainable and culturally appropriate solutions. Programs like the Jobs Victoria Advocates are ensuring DJPR is actively applying a self-determined approach to supporting Aboriginal people into networks and supports that assist them with employment participation opportunities.

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

In line with self-determination, DJPR established the Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council (Council) in 2020. The Council provides economic leadership, strategic advice and ensures all policies and programs are developed in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal community, consistent with the self-determination approach contained in the VAAF.

The Council's representation comprises both DJPR Executive Board members and 20 Aboriginal community members. These community members represent broad experience in employment and economic development in the areas of business and entrepreneurship, Traditional Owner economic development, education and skills development, creative industries, community development, tourism and young people. The Council is co-chaired by DJPR and community representatives. The Council membership brings together:

- DJPR's Executive Board and other relevant executives from across the department and the VPS.

- Six Aboriginal Executive representatives from the standing Aboriginal community entities.
- 14 Aboriginal community members with experience in employment and economic development in the areas of business and entrepreneurship, tourism and creative industries, employment and procurement, Traditional Owners and community development, education and skills development.

## Minister responsible

The Hon James Merlino MP, Minister for Education; the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education; the Hon Jaala Pulford MP, Minister for Employment, Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business; with the supporting portfolio of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A





## Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities



**Target 8:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 – 64 who are employed to 62 percent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 9: Strong Aboriginal workforce participation, in all sectors and at all levels
  - Objective 9.1: Increase Aboriginal workforce participation
    - Measure 9.1.1 Employment to population ratio
    - Measure 9.1.2 Proportion employed in full-time versus part-time or casual employment
    - Measure 9.1.3 Aboriginal jobseekers supported into work

The VAAF acknowledges the centrality of economic opportunity and prosperity to improving outcomes and commits to key principles including a principle around its approach to investment which states that ‘Investment to support self determination will be sustainable, flexible and appropriate to strengthen Aboriginal peoples’ aspirations and participation, including around economic participation, economic independence and building wealth’.

This shift to support long-term and more substantive investment in Aboriginal economic development will be intrinsically identified as part of this outcome. In so doing it is essential to focus on the investment in building and sustaining the requisite skills, expertise and leadership within the Aboriginal community to enhance capability for facilitating meaningful employment opportunities.

Another element to economic prosperity is the critical element of providing and supporting jobs. Actions under this outcome focus on the facilitation of the inspirations, aspirations and initiatives of community priorities that support self determination of Victorian Aboriginal communities. This represents a shift away from delivering programs and initiatives focused on disadvantage, and toward building capability. Self-employment is also a vital and viable

alternative to traditional employment for many Aboriginal Victorians and supports sustainable economic outcomes. This is another key focus area for DJPR in working towards meeting this outcome.

One of the most important pieces of work currently underway is the development of the new Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy (VAEES). This strategy is scheduled to be launched in October 2021, replacing the lapsed Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy and Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy. The new strategy will consider a long-term outlook that will provide a pathway for exploring how the Victorian Government can support Aboriginal communities to be empowered for long-term self-sustaining and meaningful economic outcomes. This strategy will ensure a strong focus on employment that provides economic advantage to Victorian Aboriginal communities.

Other strategies such as the Victorian Public Service’s Barring Djinang, which focuses on initiatives to enhance attraction, recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff, the DJPR Aboriginal Career and Recruitment Strategy, and other government strategies identify the absolute need to invest in and adopt new practices and initiatives to support retention and attraction into employment opportunities within government agencies. Employment outcomes are a shared responsibility across government.

Aboriginal staff bring unique knowledge, skills and expertise to the workforce, including understanding the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal community. Providing opportunities for increased workplace participation is key to building economic prosperity for Aboriginal Victorians.

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

As per Outcome 7, DJPR actively engages with the community through and in partnership with the Council. This ensures a self-determined approach to our engagement, relationships, and program development. DJPR continues to support and engage with individuals, business, industry bodies and communities to advocate and support Aboriginal employment and inclusion through the roll out of funded initiatives to be outcomes focused.

DJPR will continue to work with ACCOs, Traditional Owners, peak bodies and the community to ensure programs are inclusive and actively addressing identified needs within communities, respecting the cultural nuances of each group.

Through the forthcoming launch of the new Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy which will be developed in partnership with the Council, government will strengthen our commitment to drive economic participation and prosperity for Aboriginal Victorians.

## Minister responsible

The Hon Jaala Pulford MP, Minister for Employment, Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business, with the supporting portfolio of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 9:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need



**Target 9:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 3: Aboriginal families and households thrive
  - Objective 3.1: increase income and housing security for Aboriginal households
  - Objective 3.2 Increase income and housing security for Aboriginal households
    - Measure 3.2.3 Proportion of households experiencing rental stress
    - Measure 3.2.4 Proportion of Victorians who are homeless and proportion of clients accessing homelessness services
    - Measure 3.2.5 Proportion living in overcrowded dwellings

In February 2020, the Victorian Government helped launch the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home* (VAHHF). The VAHHF is the first of its kind in Victoria and sets out a blueprint to improve Aboriginal housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians by 2031.

In 2018-19, 9,837 Aboriginal Victorians accessed homelessness services, which equates to 17.2 per cent of the Victorian Aboriginal population. This rate is 11.6 times higher than for non-Aboriginal Victorians. The national *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report suggests overcrowding rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are decreasing. However, the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requiring housing support is an ongoing issue. Furthermore, at a national level, the proportion of Aboriginal people living in overcrowded dwellings has steadily decreased since 2006, however it remains high, at 10.7 per cent in 2016.

The VAHHF sets a clear direction to government on strategies to increase access to housing

through both social and affordable housing, but also identifies pathways for home ownership, improved home security and reduced rates of overcrowding. Victoria is committed to reviewing and identifying opportunities to develop policy that supports increased outcomes for Aboriginal home ownership.

The Closing the Gap target is slightly higher than the existing 87.6 percent reported for Victoria. It is likely that this target has since been met and that priority areas should be re-assessed in order to address current needs of Aboriginal Victorians. In addressing the Aboriginal socio-economic disadvantage factors, housing stability is a fundamental factor to making the difference in people's lives. Through the direction of the VAHHF governance mechanisms, Victoria's Implementation Plan sets out a targeted set of actions and outcomes to be achieved in addressing the housing needs of many Aboriginal Victorians.

A collective approach between government and the Aboriginal community is needed to ensure that the underlying principles set out in Implementation Plan has identified the key priorities and approaches required to achieve the desired outcomes identified by community through the VAHHF.



## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

Following the launch of the VAHMF in February 2020, a robust governance structure to oversee the VAHMF's implementation was established. Three forums – Aboriginal Housing and Homeless Forum, Implementation Action Group, and the Implementation Working Group, co-chaired between Aboriginal Housing Victoria's CEO and Homes Victoria's CEO – are used by Homes Victoria to make decisions with the support from the community.

Several key programs have developed as part of this arrangement, including:

- \$35 million for Aboriginal maintenance and upgrades building works package that will deliver property upgrades to more than 2,000 long term social housing properties owned and managed by the Aboriginal community-controlled sector
- the More than a Landlord Program
- \$4.2 million over two years for an Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program to support 950 households.

The announcement of the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build, whereby 10 percent of the social housing is allocated for Aboriginal housing, presents an opportunity for Homes Victoria to deliver more housing for the Aboriginal community and to increase greater participation from Aboriginal organisations already delivering housing services.

## Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is the Hon Richard Wynne MP, Minister for Housing, with the supporting portfolio of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system



**Target 10:** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 15: Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is eliminated
  - Objective 15.2: Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal women in the justice system
    - Measure 15.2.1 Number and rate of unique adult female alleged offenders processed by police
    - Measure 15.2.2 Average daily number and rate of Aboriginal women under corrections supervision in prison and community corrections
    - Measure 15.2.3 Proportion of women who return to prison under sentence within two years of release
    - Measure 15.2.4 Proportion of women in prison on remand
  - Objective 15.3: Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal men in the justice system
    - Measure 15.3.1 Number and rate of unique adult male alleged offenders processed by police
    - Measure 15.3.2 Average daily number and rate of men under corrections supervision in prison and community corrections
    - Measure 15.3.3 Proportion of men who return to prison under sentence within two years of release
    - Measure 15.3.4 Proportion of men in prison on remand

Victoria introduced Aboriginal justice targets in 2012 committing to close the gap between the rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adults under justice supervision (custodial and community-based) by 2031. Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja, Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4 (AJA4) has clear milestones for how many fewer Aboriginal people need to be under justice supervision by the end of the National Agreement (2023) in order to close these gaps by 2031. The Closing the Gap target is lower than the existing Victorian target committed to in 2012 and reflected in AJA4.

Victoria is currently tracking behind the AJA4 milestone which is to reduce the average daily number of Aboriginal adults under justice supervision by at least 344 between 2016-17 and 2022-23. This requires the average daily number of Aboriginal adults under justice supervision to decrease to less than 1,151 by 2022-23. In 2018-19 (the base year for the National Agreement on Closing the Gap target) the average daily number of Aboriginal adults under justice supervision was 1,682.

The majority of Aboriginal adults under justice supervision are male, but the number of Aboriginal women in contact with the justice system has increased over the past decade. On an average day in 2018-19 there were 204 Aboriginal women under corrections community-based supervision (a rate of 109.2 per 10,000) and 77 Aboriginal women in prison (41.2 per 10,000). The majority (58.4 per cent) of Aboriginal women in prison were on remand. In 2018-19 there were 714 Aboriginal men under corrections community-based supervision (a rate of 384.6 per 10,000) and 687 in prison (370.1 per 10,000) on an average day.

The over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system is a complex and enduring issue. The VAAF explicitly recognises that the contemporary social and economic circumstances of Aboriginal people are inextricably linked to ongoing and previous generations' experiences of European colonisation. Increasing Aboriginal over-representation in Victoria's criminal justice institutions has the potential, in the absence of more appropriate responses, to further perpetuate social and economic exclusion, and compound losses of culture, family, and purpose, for a growing number of Aboriginal people.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety continues to work in partnership with the Aboriginal community through the AJA4 to address these issues. In addition to broader measures to reduce contact with the justice system, within the corrections system there are a range of initiatives designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal people and address the likelihood of reoffending.

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

In Victoria, action to improve Aboriginal justice outcomes has been progressed through the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), a formal long-term partnership agreement between the Government and the Aboriginal community to work together to improve justice outcomes by addressing Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system and improving family and community safety. The AJA was developed in direct response to recommendations of the 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) and subsequent 1997 National Ministerial Summit into Indigenous Deaths in Custody.

There have been four phases of the AJA since 2000, with the current and fourth phase, AJA4 Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja, launched in 2018. The AJA is the longest-running agreement of its kind in Australia and has enabled the establishment of significant initiatives. Addressing over-representation is a complex problem requiring generational change – as such the AJA4 is a long-term strategy to be rolled out until the gap in the rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people under justice supervision is closed by 2031.

The community-government partnership structures of the AJA4 provide the strategic, governance and implementation mechanisms to shape and drive this change. These structures include:

- Aboriginal Justice Caucus comprises the Aboriginal community members of the Aboriginal Justice Forum (AJF).

The Aboriginal Justice Caucus provides leadership, advocacy and drives continuous across the criminal justice system.

- The AJF brings together Aboriginal community leaders, senior government representatives, members of the judiciary and Commissioners for Victoria Police, Aboriginal Children and Young People and Equal Opportunity and Human Rights to oversee the development, implementation and direction of the AJA4.
- Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (RAJACs) and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees advocate for and promote improved Aboriginal justice outcomes and initiatives by bringing together key Aboriginal community members and justice agencies in each region.

Actions included in the AJA4 were developed in a collaborative process with Aboriginal community partners to identify initiatives to contribute to the achievement of Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja outcomes.

### Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is the Hon. Jaclyn Symes, MP, Attorney-General, with supporting portfolios of the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; the Hon. Lisa Neville, MP, Minister for Police; and the Hon. Natalie Hutchins, Minister for Crime Prevention, Corrections, Youth Justice, and Victim Support.

### Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system



**Target 11:** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17) in detention by at least 30 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 15: Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is eliminated
  - Objective 15.2: Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal women in the justice system
    - Measure 15.1.1 Number, rate and age profile of unique youth (10-17 years) alleged offenders processed by police
    - Measure 15.1.2 Average daily number and rate of children and young people (10-17 years) under youth justice supervision in detention and the community
    - Measure 15.1.3 Proportion of first-time youth alleged offenders (10-17 years) cautioned by police
    - Measure 15.1.4 Proportion of youth (10-17 years) in detention on remand

The number of Aboriginal children and young people under Youth Justice supervision has decreased by 40 per cent between 2016-17 and 2019-20 and by 25 per cent in the last year alone. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of Aboriginal young people processed by police as unique alleged offenders decreased by 31.5 per cent.

Victoria is ahead of the more ambitious target (than the national one) set out in AJA4 to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in youth justice and close the gap. The AJA4 milestone is to reduce the average daily number of Aboriginal young people aged 10-17 years under Youth Justice supervision by at least 43 young people from 2016-17 to 2022-23. This equates to a target decrease in the average daily number of Aboriginal young people from 132 in 2016-17 to 89 by 2022-23. There were 81 Aboriginal young people aged 10-17 under Youth Justice supervision on an average day for 2019-20, ahead of these targets.

Victoria has one of the lowest rates of Aboriginal young people under custodial or community supervision in the country. Custodial supervision

rates have fallen from 21.7 Aboriginal young people per 10,000 population (aged 10-17 years) in 2016-17 to 15.3 Aboriginal young people per 10,000 in 2019-20. Community supervision rates have fallen from 115.67 Aboriginal young people per 10,000 population (aged 10-17 years) in 2016-17 to 70.7 per 10,000 in 2019-20.

The Closing the Gap target of a 30 per cent youth detention rate reduction by 2031 is lower than the existing Victorian target committed to in 2012 and reflected in the AJA4. Victoria's targets more accurately reflect the Victorian Aboriginal community's aspirations for change and support the Coalitions of Peaks' advocacy for more ambitious national targets. In 2020-21 the Minister for Youth Justice introduced a target in the 2020-21 Victorian Budget Paper 3 to drive further reductions in the numbers of 10 to 17 year-old children in custody.

Victoria remains focused on maintaining these results and reducing these numbers further to address over-representation and achieve no gap by 2031. Several programs and services have been funded to support achievement of this goal in partnership with the Aboriginal community and underpinned by efforts to further Aboriginal self-determination. These investments and programs are set out in the tables that follow.

### Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

As with Target 10, partnership arrangements for Target 11 are enshrined in AJA4. AJA4 is a formal long-term partnership agreement between the Government and the Aboriginal community to work together to improve justice outcomes by addressing Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system, improving family and community safety, and supporting Aboriginal self-determination.

The community-government partnership structures of the AJA4 provide the strategic, governance and implementation mechanisms to shape and drive progress towards targets, and include the AJF, the Aboriginal Justice

Caucus, and the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (RAJAC) network. The Youth Collaborative Working Group oversees implementation of relevant youth justice actions in AJA4, including the development of new initiatives. This ensures that Aboriginal leadership and partnership with government is embedded at all levels of the Agreement and provides transparency and accountability for actions back to the AJF.

DJCS funds Aboriginal organisations to deliver key services and supports for young people in the youth justice system or at risk of entering it. These Aboriginal-led services are helping to realise Close the Gap targets.

## Minister responsible

The lead minister responsible is the Hon. Natalie Hutchins, Minister for Youth Justice, with her supporting portfolios of Crime Prevention, Corrections, and Victim Support. Other supporting portfolios which are signatories to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement are the Attorney-General, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes, MP; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, MP; and Minister for Police, the Hon. Lisa Neville, MP.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not over-represented in the child protection system



**Target 12:** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 2: Aboriginal children are raised by Aboriginal families
  - Objective 2.1: Eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care
    - Measure 2.1.1 Rate and number of children and young people in care
    - Measure 2.1.2 Number of families engaged with family support and intensive family support services

Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented in the child protection system and care systems. Victoria has the country's second highest rate of Aboriginal children in care. In 2019-20, the rate of Aboriginal children in care services was 20 times the rate for non-Aboriginal children in care. This is the highest rate of over-representation in any jurisdiction and well above the national rate (11 times the rate of non-Aboriginal children).

Recognising the need to address this in 2018, parties to the tripartite Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement (Wungurilwil Gaggapduir) agreed through ACF to a set of key performance indicators to address the over representation of children in child protection and care systems.

These key performance indicators are used to develop the quarterly data report provided by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to the ACF members; they complement the existing agreed targets made through the VAAF.

All objectives and agreed key performance indicators contribute to the overall aim of Wungurilwil Gaggapduir which is, that all Aboriginal children and young people thrive and live in culturally rich and strong Aboriginal families and communities. Victoria has developed initiatives to reform the child protection system guided by the

commitment to increase Aboriginal self-determination by transferring decision-making, resources and responsibility to Aboriginal organisations.

Victoria has a range of parenting and family services in place to promote children's safety, stability and healthy development and learning from pre-birth up to 18 years and to support children to remain safely at home. This includes intensive responses aimed at preventing entries to care.

The introduction of the Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response in 2020, is changing the way services are delivered, providing culturally led, evidence-informed and outcomes-focused support to children and families, in partnership with child protection services to:

- keep children safely at home
- prevent children and young people entering care services
- support children and young people currently in care to safely reunify with their family.

The Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response aims to engage families early providing intensive family support to prevent children entering child protection or return children home.

### Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

At the 2015 Aboriginal Children's Summit, it was agreed a quarterly ACF would be established to focus on the priorities articulated in Koorie Kids: Growing Strong in their Culture (Koorie Kids). From June 2018, the forum transferred focus from Koorie Kids to oversight and monitoring of the implementation of Wungurilwil Gaggapduir.

ACCOs are the majority members and hold the most voting rights in relation to critical decisions, which includes but is not limited to membership and changes to the structure of the ACF. The

hosting of the quarterly ACF is shared between all funded ACCOs, and where possible held on the traditional lands of the hosting ACCO. A representative of the hosting ACCO co-chairs the ACF with the Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing on the first day of the forum and the Victorian Minister for Child Protection on the second day.

An ACF working group has been established to set the agenda for the ACF, make key recommendations on membership and progress actions of the ACF. The ACF working group includes the Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance (representing their ACCO membership), the VACCA, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (representing their community service organisation membership), the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People and the Victorian Government.

The ACF has advocated for a number of key initiatives in the Aboriginal children and families sector, including Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care, Transitioning Aboriginal Children to ACCOs and the development of *Wungurilwil Gapgapduir*.

## Minister responsible

The minister responsible is the Hon Luke Donnellan, MP, Minister for Child Protection, Disability, Ageing and Carers.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe



**Target 13:** By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 3: Aboriginal families and households thrive
  - Objective 3.1: Reduce the incidence and impact of family violence affecting Aboriginal families
    - Measure 3.1.1 Number and proportion of family incident reports involving an Aboriginal other party; and proportion who were the subject of a previous family incident report
    - Measure 3.1.2 Number and proportion of family incident reports involving an Aboriginal affected family member; and proportion who were the subject of a previous family incident report
    - Measure 3.1.3 Number and proportion of reports to child protection for children and young people where family violence is identified

Family violence has a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal people in Victoria, particularly women and children, regardless of whether they live in rural, regional or urban areas. Family violence is not part of Aboriginal culture and it is also important to note that family violence against Aboriginal people is perpetrated by people from all backgrounds.

In 2020, 3,642 Aboriginal women in Victoria were victims or survivors of family violence incidents attended by Victoria Police, an increase from 3,076 in 2016. However, we know that family violence is under-reported and that based on the experience of ACCOs, is likely to be significantly higher. COVID-19 poses additional family violence concerns, and thus further challenges to progressing toward Outcome 13.

While data alone cannot provide a holistic picture of the complexities faced by Aboriginal Victorians experiencing family violence, these figures do demonstrate the importance of an

appropriately resourced, culturally safe and responsive specialist family violence service, as well as the need for a targeted approach to reducing the incidence of family violence through early intervention and prevention.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence reported the disproportionate impact of family violence on Aboriginal people, especially women and children, and the unique barriers that Aboriginal people face in accessing culturally appropriate service responses that meet their needs and aspirations.

The royal commission also acknowledged Dhelk Dja as foundational work in family violence policy, and it made nine recommendations specific to Aboriginal communities to increase investment in targeted prevention and early intervention initiatives, as well as culturally sensitive services.

### Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

Dhelk Dja is the key Aboriginal-led Victorian agreement that commits Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal services and government to work together and be accountable for ensuring that Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from family violence.

The Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and its members are the individual and collective champions and strategic leaders that oversee the agreement. Aboriginal community leaders and the Victorian Government work closely with the community and stakeholders to refine the Aboriginal-led agenda for culturally safe responses to family violence and to advance the strategic priorities and monitor progress against the Dhelk Dja agreement.

Ensuring the principles of self-determination are at the heart of the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum's work, there are a number of associated Aboriginal community-led governance structures in place:

- Aboriginal Caucus comprises the Aboriginal community members of the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum, responsible for priority setting including Aboriginal led-prevention responses for women and children, men, Elders and those who use violence.
- Eleven Dhelk Dja Action Groups across Victoria provide place-based, Aboriginal community-led approaches to drive local action to prevent and address family violence in partnership with key community stakeholders.
- Dhelk Dja Priority Sub-Working Groups track progress and outcomes against each strategic priority through the development of the Dhelk Dja Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan.
- The ACCO Family Violence Sector Forum, comprises of Chief Executive Officers of all family violence funded Aboriginal organisations and provides a formal engagement and consultation mechanism under the auspice of the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum to support the development of culturally safe services and responses for Aboriginal people impacted by family violence.

The Dhelk Dja Three Year Action Plan articulates the critical actions and supporting activities required to progress the agreement's five strategic

priorities. Each of these priorities recognise the need to invest in Aboriginal culture, leadership and decision-making as the key to ending family violence in Victorian Aboriginal communities.

In addition, Family Safety Victoria are strengthening Aboriginal frontline family violence services through the design and implementation of the Dhelk Dja Fund, the Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy and other key activity during 2021.

An Aboriginal Data Mapping and Data Needs project has commenced to support baseline understanding of Aboriginal family violence and build the evidence base for prevention and intervention. The defined data, indicators and measures developed will support annual reporting to the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and inform strategic decision-making and priority setting.

### Minister responsible

The minister responsible is Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

### Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing



**Target 14:** Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 14: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy social and emotional wellbeing
  - Objective 14.1: Improve Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing
    - Measure 14.1.1 Proportion reporting 'high or very high' levels of psychological and psychosocial distress
    - Measure 14.1.2 Rate of self-harm-related emergency department presentations (by 15-24 years old, and all)
    - Measure 14.1.3 Proportion reporting strong social networks they can draw on in times of crisis
    - Measure 14.1.4 Proportion of Aboriginal Victorians with a disability who have strong social support networks
    - Measure 14.1.5 Number of Aboriginal Victorians receiving clinical mental health services

Many Victorian Aboriginal people and communities are strong and rich in their culture. However, Aboriginal people generally experience significantly poorer mental health, wellbeing and safety outcomes than non-Aboriginal people. The legacy of intergenerational trauma and experiences of systemic racism and discrimination are key drivers of these poorer outcomes. It is important that Aboriginal Victorians have access to Aboriginal-led services that are appropriately resourced and trained to respond to mental health needs, as well as culturally informed mainstream services that understand Aboriginal concepts of social and emotional wellbeing.

'Social and emotional wellbeing' is the term preferred by many Aboriginal Australians to describe the social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing of a person (Henderson et al.

2007). While acknowledging mental health as a critical area of wellbeing, social and emotional wellbeing emphasises the importance of individual, family and community strengths and resilience, feelings of cultural safety and connection to culture, and the importance of realising aspirations, and experiencing satisfaction and purpose in life.

This is a significant time for Aboriginal communities with the Victorian Government committed to Aboriginal self-determination. The Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027 (Balit Murrup) embeds Aboriginal self-determination as the core principle to drive actions to improve the social and emotional wellbeing, resilience and mental health of Aboriginal people, families and communities. The objective of Balit Murrup is to reduce the health gap attributed to suicide, mental illness and psychological distress between Aboriginal Victorians and the general population.

The release of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System final report in March 2021, with its 65 recommendations, will drive many actions needed to reform Victoria's mental health system. The Victorian Government has committed to implementing all 65 recommendations in the final report of the royal commission, including specific recommendations to support Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing.

By supporting Aboriginal people, families and communities to achieve and sustain the highest attainable standards of social and emotional wellbeing and mental health, the Victorian Government, Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal communities will aim to prevent and reduce the incidence of suicide.

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

The Victorian Government is working with Aboriginal organisations and communities to implement key actions from Balit Murrup, including the:

- Improving mental health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with moderate to severe mental illness (Demonstration Projects) initiative
- Aboriginal mental health traineeship program
- Aboriginal clinical and therapeutic mental health positions.

Aboriginal leaders, organisations, people, families, carers, and communities were instrumental in sharing their individual and collective experiences of pain, trauma and resilience as part of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The final report also acknowledged the significant contribution of the VACCHO, in developing the Balit Durn Durn report, which informed the work of the royal commission.

In 2020, Mental Health Reform Victoria (MHRV) and the VACCHO formed the VACCHO-MHRV Partnership. The VACCHO-MHRV Partnership is planning co-design activities to strengthen Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing. This partnership with its focus on supporting Aboriginal self-determination is critical to the successful delivery of Aboriginal and social and emotional wellbeing recommendations within the final report.

Key actions from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System interim report to be progressed under VACCHO-MHRV Partnership include:

- Establishing and expanding multidisciplinary social and emotional wellbeing teams in

Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations

- The delivery of scholarships to enable Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing team members to obtain recognised clinical mental health qualifications from approved public tertiary providers, with a minimum of 30 scholarships awarded over the next five years
- A Centre for Excellence in Social and Emotional Wellbeing to be developed, hosted and maintained by VACCHO
- Resourcing Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services to provide Aboriginal children and young people to access specialist mental health services and family-oriented therapeutic treatment
- Resourcing Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations to commission the delivery of social and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people
- Co-designing the future establishment of two healing centres
- Working with an Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Service to design and establish a culturally appropriate, family-oriented service for infants and children who require intensive social and emotional wellbeing supports.

## Minister responsible

The minister responsible is the Hon James Merlino MP, Minister for Mental Health with supporting portfolios of Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





## Outcome 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters



**Target 15a:** By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia’s landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interests.

**Target 15b:** By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s legal rights or interests in the sea.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 18: Aboriginal land, water and cultural rights are realised
  - Objective 18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights
    - Measure 18.1.1 Area of Crown land with native title determinations and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreements
    - Measure 18.1.2 Work of the State in advancing the treaty process
    - Measure 18.1.3 Number of Registered Aboriginal Parties that have submitted a notice of intention to enter into an Aboriginal cultural heritage land management agreement
    - Measure 18.1.4 Number of Whole of Country Plans published
    - Measure 18.1.5 Number of Joint Management Plans and area of land covered
    - Measure 18.1.6 Number of cultural burns conducted
    - Measure 18.1.7 Number of formal partnership agreements for planning and management between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies

Reconnecting Traditional Owners to Country will help revive culture and contribute to an improved sense of identity.

The current legislative regimes aimed at recognising and providing for these land rights and interests are based on Australian legal principles. Aboriginal Victorian concepts of rights to land and water are inherently different to the way that the Australian legal system has recognises these rights. In particular, Aboriginal concepts of Country are connected to traditional laws, culture and identity. The interdependence of land, water and identity for our Aboriginal Victorians and Traditional Owners means that notions of land and water rights are also inherently linked to aspirations for broader self-determination on Country.

Whether Traditional Owner groups choose to seek a determination of native title, Traditional Owner Settlement Act agreement, or both, is for them to self-determine.

Subject to each Traditional Owner group determining their own course, it is ambitious but feasible to anticipate all of Victoria being covered by Aboriginal legal rights and interests by 2030.

The table below sets out the progress that would be required to meet that target.

The Victorian Government recognises that Aboriginal Victorians hold distinct cultural rights including the right to maintain their spiritual, material and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters. The connection to land, water and resources on Country is important to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Victorians, particularly Traditional Owners.

		Baseline	Projected increase (100% by 2030)		Target
		2021	2024	2027	2030
Victorian land and sea covered by native title / TOS Act agreements	km <sup>2</sup>	50,976	113,194	175,411	237,629
	%	21%	48%	74%	100%

## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

Victoria works with First Nations Legal and Research Services, a Traditional Owner organisation with statutory responsibility to identify native title groups and act as solicitor for some of those groups. This includes work with negotiation teams nominated by native title groups and corporations nominated or appointed to represent the groups' interests. The State's role is to support and respond to those claims or negotiations.

For the targets and indicators set out in this outcome, the Aboriginal Justice Group in the Department of Justice and Community Safety has proposed a formal partnership with First Nations Legal and Research Services to agree the targets and process for monitoring and amending the targets.

Victoria is committed to implementation of Victoria's modernised Regional Forest Agreements (agreed 2020) in partnership with Victoria's Traditional Owners. Victoria's Regional Forest Agreements now clearly recognise the relationship of Traditional Owners with Country including forests. Several new clauses that Traditional Owners were involved in drafting have been incorporated throughout the agreements and reflect Traditional Owner rights and aspirations. The modernised Regional Forest Agreements drive:

- genuine and meaningful partnership with Traditional Owners to support the protection and management of Country, foster sustainable land, water and forest management practices, and maintain continuation of spiritual and cultural practices
- involvement of Traditional Owners in decision-making, and the active incorporation of Traditional Owner knowledge when making decisions regarding management of forests
- assessment and evaluation of outcomes relating to matters of importance to Traditional Owners in five-yearly reviews.

Across Victoria, many Traditional Owners groups have published their Whole of Country Plans as a means of expressing their people's vision, aspirations, strategies, actions and threats for land and water management. Whole of Country Plans provide guidance for government to understand and engage with the rights and interests of Traditional Owners. The State provides support for the use and delivery of these plans through whole of government strategies such as the VAAF and the Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025 along with departmental policy such as the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning Our Future': Self Determination Reform Strategy 2020-2025.

The ability to conduct cultural fire practice on Country is a vitally important approach to restoring the health of Country and people, particularly in a changing climate. The Victorian Government is committed to enabling Traditional Owners to implement their own cultural pathways to the establishment of this practice in Victoria by reducing legislative and procedural barriers to this cultural practice and building the capacity of Traditional Owner corporations so they can lead this practice. Many Traditional Owner corporations have natural resource management field staff available for contracted government works, which provides economic opportunity while caring for Country. Other economic benefits explored by Traditional Owner groups include renewable energy, bush foods and native plant propagation.

Victoria also provides funding to support Traditional Owner groups to capture information about their tangible and intangible cultural values and manage that information so that it can shape decisions about the management of Victoria's state forests. Traditional Owner groups will have information sovereignty, meaning that they will control their information and knowledge, including making decisions about what is shared with the Victorian Government.

The Victorian Aboriginal Water Program is working to inform water management policy and decision-making, supporting Aboriginal access to water for economic development, and increasing Aboriginal inclusion and participation in Victoria's water sector.

## Minister responsible

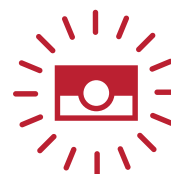
The Attorney-General, Hon Jaclyn Symes MP, is the minister responsible for this outcome, with supporting portfolios of the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water and the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.



## Outcome 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing



**Target 16:** By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

### Relevant VAAF measures:

- Goal 19: Aboriginal culture and language are supported and celebrated
  - Objective 19.1 Support the preservation, promotion and practice of culture and languages
    - Measure 19.1.1 Participation in community events which celebrate Aboriginal culture
    - Measure 19.1.2 Investment in Aboriginal language and culture revitalisation programs

Past government policies of dispossession and assimilation led to loss of Aboriginal cultural practice and languages. Despite this, the strength and resilience of Aboriginal Victorians has helped to preserve cultural practices and languages, which continue to be practised and passed onto future generations. Connectedness to culture and community strengthens individual and collective identities, and promotes self-esteem, resilience and improved outcomes for Aboriginal people. While cultural identity is central to the lives of Aboriginal Victorians, all Victorians should celebrate and take pride in Aboriginal culture and language.

There are currently 38 Aboriginal languages in Victoria, all classified as reclamation languages, with extremely small numbers of, or no remaining, community speakers. Programs to support the teaching and learning of Aboriginal languages for children and adult learners is essential to increase the number of community language speakers and contributing to the language revival process.

The teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools and early childhood services is supported in Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026. This includes through action 2c. to (increase) the number of Aboriginal language programs in Victorian kindergartens and schools, by supporting community efforts at language learning through working with

VAEAI and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages, and providing assistance to support Aboriginal community members to undertake relevant language and teacher training courses (Marrung, p.18).

The number of Aboriginal language programs offered in Victorian government schools has increased from 8 in 2016, to 17 in 2019. This increase has been supported by the introduction in 2016 of the Victorian Aboriginal Languages curriculum in the Victorian Curriculum Foundation-10.

In 2019, the Early Childhood Language Program was launched which provides funding to kindergartens to provided language programs. To date, 18 kindergartens have received funding through this program to provide Aboriginal language programs.

Victoria also aims to promote and preserve First Peoples' Languages in Victoria through engaging with Traditional Owners about place names on Country and helping promote the significance of language, place, and culture through a range of initiatives. In 2019, Victoria collaborated with Traditional Owners, organisations and communities across Victoria on a range of activities to support the use and revival of Aboriginal languages including through:

- Sponsoring the River of Language exhibition at the Melbourne Museum
- Delivering Aboriginal place names workshops across Victoria to promote the importance of recognising traditional place names when assigning names to roads, features and localities
- Working with Traditional Owners to name meeting rooms across metropolitan and regional office locations.

Through embedding Aboriginal language in Victorian schools, Victoria can reclaim and preserve Aboriginal languages in the next generation of Victorians. Paired with the ongoing initiatives that promote Aboriginal language throughout the wider Victorian community, Victoria can continue to increase the number, strength and knowledge of Aboriginal languages.



## Partnership with Aboriginal Victorians

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the Victorian Department of Education and Training work in close partnership to ensure the teaching of Aboriginal languages in schools and early childhood services is culturally safe and respectful of Traditional Owners.

## Minister responsible

Supporting portfolios of the Hon Gayle Tierney MP, Minister for Training and Skills, the Hon James Merlino MP, Minister for Education, and Ingrid Stitt MLC, Minister for Early Childhood.

## Actions

A full list of actions can be found at Appendix A.





# Further Actions

This section includes further actions that do not fall within the scope of specific targets or priority reform areas related to the overall success of the National Agreement. This includes through focusing on resourcing for the ACCO sector that will create sustainable change.

## Cross-cutting outcome areas

**Victoria commits to the following actions to advance cross-cutting outcomes:**

- Build broader public awareness of the Victorian Governments partnership on Closing the Gap, with specific actions to be developed in consultation with Victoria's Implementation Partners.
- Develop a robust communications plan developed in consultation with Victoria's Implementation Partners, which focuses on shifting the narrative of past failures to one of progress and hope.
- Establish an Aboriginal community disaster management strategy in alignment with clause 64 of the National Agreement.
- Embedding shared decision making and transparency of Closing the Gap funding at both a State and Commonwealth level.
- As part of accountability and transparency arrangements, annual statements on outlays that support Closing the Gap will be prepared as part of the State Budget.
- Proceeding with a focused review of the Financial Management Act 1994 (Vic) as recommended by the Aboriginal Funding Reform Pilot Project Report.







## Further cross-cutting actions

The Victorian Aboriginal community is diverse in its needs, experiences, and life trajectories – meaning this Implementation Plan needs to capture whole of government areas of concern and action in our state. Through responding to and capturing cross-cutting outcome areas, Victoria can ensure that all Aboriginal people are experiencing better life outcomes across these targets.

The following goals from the VAAF have been identified as of particular importance in addressing cross-cutting issues and challenges:

### Goal 9: Strong Aboriginal workforce participation, in all sectors and at all levels

**Objective 9.3** Increase workforce participation for Aboriginal young people, people with a disability and people living in regional areas



Fully participating in the economy provides Aboriginal Victorians with the resources they need to determine the future they want. Economic participation is therefore key to Aboriginal self-determination. Building work opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal young people, women, people living with a disability and those in regional areas is key to inclusive economic growth. Greater effort is needed to ensure that all Aboriginal Victorians – in all levels, across all sectors – are better represented.

Aboriginal staff bring unique knowledge, skills and expertise to the workforce and understand the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal community. Further work is required to improve the representation of Aboriginal people in the Victorian Public Service as well as other sectors, and to enhance the quality of the workplace and career experiences of Aboriginal staff.

### Goal 11: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy health and longevity

**Objective 11.1** Improve Aboriginal health status, quality of life and life expectancy



Enjoying good health and wellbeing is fundamental. While many Aboriginal Victorians report good health and there have been areas of improvement, government, services, and communities need to take

significant steps to improve health outcomes and quality of life for all Aboriginal Victorians. Improving health outcomes and having a good quality of life will ensure all Victorian Aboriginal communities can thrive.

## Goal 12: Aboriginal Victorians access the services they need



**Objective 12.1** Improve access to health and community services for all Aboriginal Victorians

Access to primary health care is essential for supporting equitable health outcomes. Primary health care also plays an important role in prevention and early detection.

The provision of services alone does not ensure equity of access. Ensuring all Aboriginal Victorians can access the services they need means responding to the diversity of people's needs. This includes promoting the voice of and providing support services to older people, people with a disability and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and intersex (LGBTIQ+).

Aboriginal Elders hold a highly valued position in Aboriginal communities. Supporting Elders and older people to access health and community services can promote greater independence, cultural and social inclusion, and quality of life.

Aboriginal Victorians with a disability may face additional barriers to achieving health

and wellbeing. Further work is required to transform the disability service system, including through the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, so that it is culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people with a disability and their families.

The National Agreement does not commit parties to a disability outcome and associated target, leaving a significant gap for bettering the outcomes of First Nations people living with a disability. The Victorian Government will prioritise this work through the development of a Sector Strengthening Plan for the disability community-controlled sector as part of action under Priority Reform Two. Additional consideration for how the disability sector can be strengthened will be considered through alignment with existing VAAF measures.





## Local, regional implementation

Victoria has a strong history of successful localised, place-based projects and implementation. This plan will be effectively implemented across local, regional, and remote locations through existing regional governance forums.

As outlined within this Implementation Plan, socio-economic outcomes will be allocated to relevant existing governance forums, which include local, regional and remote cohorts and organisations. These localised committees will be responsible for the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting of progress against the outcomes, targets, and existing commitments within the National Agreements.

Victoria will continue its commitments to effective implementation through place-based partnerships and Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks.

### Place-based partnerships

The National Agreement commits all parties to work together to identify up to six locations across Australia for local place-based partnerships intended to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to achieve local outcomes under Closing the Gap. The Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions is responsible for work to identify

possible Victorian sites for local projects for possible inclusion in the six locations. The proposed Victorian sites for inclusion in the six locations will be recommended on the advice of the AEC/Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs, Victoria's Implementation Partners, participating Aboriginal communities and local ACCOs.

### Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks

The Victorian Government is worked with local Aboriginal communities to establish Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks (Networks) at the height of the pandemic. The Networks were a platform where community members and organisations could access and share information about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts; seek referral points; raise systemic issues and risks directly to government; and identify gaps in the mainstream and Aboriginal-specific COVID-19 response. Consideration will be given to how best utilise these networks to support local and regional engagement on Closing the Gap.

## Commitments in the National Agreement

Victoria is committed to ensuring effective and meaningful implementation of the National Agreement across local, regional, and remote communities within Victoria.

Victoria will also complete the follow actions, as per commitments under the National Agreement:

### Data Development Plan

- Collaborate with other parties to the National Agreement to establish a data development plan for data development actions identified in Appendix A, for endorsement by Joint Council within 2 years of this National Agreement commencing.

### Joint Communications Strategy

- Support Aboriginal people to take ownership of this National Agreement
- build awareness and ownership of the National Agreement to assist Aboriginal people to talk to governments on how to apply the commitments under the National Agreement to communities and organisations across the country
- Ensure a central role for Aboriginal media, in particular community-controlled media, including the promotion and distribution of material and information across a range of mediums to Aboriginal as well as to other Australians.





## Bataluk Cultural Trail

### Check the weather forecast

Check the weather forecast before you start your walk. The weather can change quickly and it is important to be prepared. Bring a hat, sunscreen and plenty of water.

### The local Aboriginal community

The local Aboriginal community is the traditional custodians of the land. Please respect their culture and traditions. Ask permission before taking photos of people or their property.



### A meeting place again

This site is a traditional meeting place for the local Aboriginal community. It is a place where people have gathered for centuries to share stories, songs and dances. Please respect the site and its significance.

WALKING TRACK →



## How this Implementation Plan will work in practice

The commitments under the National Agreement will produce real-life impacts on Aboriginal people across Victoria. It is therefore important to ensure this document can evolve and adapt to changes happening across Victoria, Australia, or the world.

This Implementation Plan is a living document, which will regularly be subject to review, adaptation and reform as we continue a journey towards equity for Aboriginal Victorians.

### Changes to this Implementation Plan

This Implementation Plan will be reviewed by 2023, as will the VAAF. Following the initial three years, it will be subject to a review and analysis of outcomes as identified in the relevant VGAAR reports. Amendments, additional actions, and priority reform sectors will be updated to reflect these changes.

### Annual Reporting

Each year, the VGAAR provides a chance to consider how we've tracked against our commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians as measured against the VAAF. Victoria will embed the outcomes under the National Agreement through this pre-existing reporting mechanism. It's also an important opportunity to recognise the achievements and strengths of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

In accordance with Victoria's commitments under the National Agreement, the VGAAR complies with all relevant requirements (cl118), including:

#### **Inclusion of data from the Closing the Gap dashboard and annual Productivity Commission data compilation report**

In addition to reporting against the 111 data measures included in the VAAF, the VGAAR will also include reporting on Closing the Gap measures from 2021 onwards. This data will be drawn from the data dashboard and annual Productivity Commission data compilation report to ensure consistency of measures of progress.

#### **Reporting on the National Agreement's four Priority Reform areas**

The VGAAR already reports on existing action by the Victorian Government to reform systems, structures, and service delivery to advance Aboriginal self-determination. This includes information on departmental and whole of government action to embed the four VAAF self-determination enablers: Prioritise culture, address trauma and support healing, address racism and support cultural safety, and transfer power and resources to communities. In addition to this, from 2021, reporting will also include

information on efforts to implement the four Priority Reform areas, particularly outlining how implementation aligns with the National Agreement's principles for action.

#### **Demonstrating alignment of efforts, investment, and actions to support achievement of Closing the Gap goals**

The VGAAR currently includes a range of reporting approaches to demonstrate how efforts, investment and actions are aligned and support VAAF outcomes. This includes data presentation and analysis, case studies, information on Victorian Government investment and annual action across each of the VAAF domains. From 2021, these approaches will also be used to demonstrate efforts, investment, and actions to support achievement of Closing the Gap goals.

#### **Information on funding to ACCOs and other Aboriginal organisations**

Where appropriate, the VGAAR will include additional information on funding to ACCOs and other Aboriginal organisations from 2021 onwards. This will include information listing the number of ACCOs and other Aboriginal organisations that have been allocated for the purposes of Clause 24, 55a and 55b, and 135 of the National Agreement, and subject to confidentiality requirements, also lists the names of the organisations and amount allocated.

## Accountability

Victoria's Implementation Partners will provide oversight and sector-specific direction into the implementation of Victoria's commitments under the National Agreement. Furthermore, existing Aboriginal partnership forums will be assigned accountability over specific National Agreement targets.

In addition, the Victorian Government commits to undertaking further engagement, in partnership with Victoria's Implementation Partners, with the full spectrum of ACCOs in Victoria and ensuring that they are empowered with information on how they can leverage the National Agreement at the local and regional level, and provide opportunities to recommend Closing the Gap priorities for the annual State Budget process.

Victoria will also consider how to embed consideration of the National Agreement within state budget processes.

The AEC currently review the VGAAR and provide feedback, assessment, and priorities for the Victorian government to focus on for the following 12 months – this process will now encompass the outcomes under the National Agreement.

Victoria also established an inter-departmental working group to develop this Implementation Plan, which is chaired by both the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Implementation Partners, with membership consisting of all Victorian Government departments, Local Government representatives and the National Indigenous Australians Agency. This working group will pivot to provide a monitoring and evaluation role through which annual progress reports, feedback from Joint Council and any outcomes from the Productivity Commission and Aboriginal-led reviews will be considered.

## Communicating about this Implementation Plan

The VAAF is a community-developed and owned resource, which empowers Aboriginal communities to understand their needs and outcomes. Likewise, Victoria believes that both the National Agreement and this Implementation Plan should be owned by the Victorian Aboriginal community. To ensure the Victorian Aboriginal

community maintains ownership and connection to this Implementation Plan, Victoria will engage with Aboriginal-led media and communication organisations to develop an in-depth engagement and communication plan which ensures this plan, and the commitments within it, are visible and accessible to the wider Aboriginal community.







## Meeting our commitments

Victoria has met, as per our commitments to the National Agreement, the following criteria:

As per the National Agreement, jurisdictional Implementation Plans will:	Checked
Be fully aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and state that their purpose is to implement the Agreement (cl96)	☑
Respond to the differing needs, priorities and circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia (cl96)	☑
Demonstrate a commitment to undertake all actions in a way that takes full account of, promotes, and does not diminish in any way, the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (cl 21 and 107)	☑
Be whole of government plans, covering government agencies and statutory bodies (cl108)	☑
Be developed and delivered in partnership between governments, the Coalition of Peaks, and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners (cl108)	☑
Set out how existing policies and programs will be aligned to the National Agreement (cl 104 and 108)	☑
Set out actions to achieve the Priority Reforms and partnership actions (cl108)	☑
Set out actions to achieve the agreed outcomes and targets (cl108)	☑
For transparency, include information on funding and timeframes for actions (cl108)	☑
Include the approach to annual reporting, including when they will release their public report (cl108)	☑
Include information on how the states and territories will work with local government to implement this National Agreement (state and territory Implementation Plans only) (cl108)	☑
Include data development actions identified in the Data Development Plan (cl106)	☑
Be published on the jurisdiction's website (cl111)	☑



# Appendix A









PRIORITY REFORM ONE – FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS AND SHARED DECISION-MAKING				
<b>Priority Reform One Outcome:</b> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.				
<b>Priority Reform One Target:</b> There will be formal partnership arrangements to support Closing the Gap in place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments in place in each state and territory enshrining agreed joint decision-making roles and responsibilities and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have chosen their own representatives.				
Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Whole of Government actions:				
Establish joined-up approach to five policy areas: (Clause 38) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justice</li> <li>Social and emotional wellbeing</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Early childhood care and development</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages</li> </ul>	Existing	Existing Funding	2023	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs  Minister Pulford
<b>Establishment of the First People's Assembly of Victoria</b>  The Assembly is the first democratically elected body of Aboriginal Victorians in the State's history and has been tasked with establishing the framework that will support future Treaty negotiations, in partnership with government. To reflect diversity of Aboriginal voices across Victoria, the Assembly is made up of 21 general members elected by Aboriginal Victorians across five voting regions and 11 seats reserved for members of formally recognised Traditional Owner groups	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
<b>Establishment of the Yoo-Rrook Truth and Justice Commission</b>  In pursuing treaty, the government is committed to acknowledging the truth of Victoria's history and laying the foundations for new, positive relationships between the State, Aboriginal Victorians and non-Aboriginal Victorians. Aboriginal Victorians have been clear and consistent in their call for truth-telling as an essential part of the treaty process. In particular, the Assembly formally called for a truth and justice process through a resolution of its Chamber in June 2020. It is anticipated that the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission will investigate both historical and ongoing injustices committed against Aboriginal Victorians since colonisation by the State and non-State entities, across all areas of social, political and economic life. In doing so, the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission will engage Victoria's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community to achieve its aims of truth telling and truth listening.	New	\$44.4 million over for years to support establishment and operation	Ongoing	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

<p><b>COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Taskforce</b></p> <p>The Joint COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established to support a comprehensive, coordinated and culturally safe response to COVID-19 impacts on Aboriginal Victorians and was integral in coordinating both proactive and emergency responses to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on Victoria's Aboriginal communities. These responses include contribution and development of a Whole of Victorian Government Aboriginal-specific COVID-19 funding package, development of an Aboriginal Community COVID-19 Fund, providing support for Aboriginal school students during the pandemic, culturally effective COVID-19 communications, securing food supplied to a number of Aboriginal communities during the pandemic and ensuring culturally-safe contact tracing.</p>	Existing	Emergency Funding	Dec 2021	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
<p><b>Victorian Aboriginal Social Recovery Advisory Group</b></p> <p>The Victorian Aboriginal Social Recovery Advisory Group was established as a shared decision-making body between the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and Victorian Government Departments. It supports the Victorian Government's social recovery efforts and ensures that self-determination is central to recovery. A priority for this group has been the co-design of the funding model for the \$ 40 million Aboriginal Workforce Fund.</p>	Commenced December 2020.	NA	To be determined.	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Partnership with Victoria's Implementation Partners to jointly develop Victoria's Implementation Plan.	Existing	Existing	Ongoing	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Land, Water, Environment and Planning actions:				
Establishment of the Caring for Country Partnership Forum	New	\$300,000	Ongoing	Minister for Water Minister for Planning Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change Minister for Solar Homes
Begin regular Regional Partnership Forums made up of senior Traditional Owner Corporation staff and senior DELWP regional staff.	New	\$150,000	Ongoing	Minister for Water Minister for Planning Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change Minister for Solar Homes
Continue to develop local Traditional Owner Self-Determination Plans with Traditional Owner groups and DELWP regions.	Existing	\$40,000	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning



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Continue to implement improvements to DELWP systems and processes to enable Aboriginal self-determination.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water Minister for Planning Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change Minister for Solar Homes
Develop local Traditional Owner Self-Determination Plans with Traditional Owner groups and DELWP regions.	Existing	\$40,000	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Implement improvements to DELWP systems and processes to enable Aboriginal self-determination.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water Minister for Planning Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change Minister for Solar Homes
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing actions:				
<p><b>Korin Korin Balit-Dajk system transformation project</b></p> <p>This work embodies Aboriginal world views, that respects Aboriginal systems and ways of working, that delivers greater agency and control.</p> <p>Aboriginal Strategy and Oversight have partnered with the DFFH Koorie Caucus to redesign the existing KKBD strategy across five key priority reform areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance and self determination</li> <li>• Leadership and Workforce</li> <li>• Cultural Competency</li> <li>• Funding and Commissioning</li> <li>• Data and Knowledge</li> </ul> <p>The purpose is to give greater agency and control of the system to Aboriginal People; and to develop place based and policy based plans which enables self-determination by shifting power to the Aboriginal community.</p>	New	\$14 million	2024	Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
<p><b>Aboriginal Governance and Accountability Framework</b></p> <p>The Aboriginal Governance and Accountability framework defines shared decision-making and articulates self-determination within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. However the policy landscape has shifted significantly since the framework was developed in 2017, and the department has commissioned an independent review to identify opportunities for improvement. The review aims to embed Aboriginal leadership and decision making at all levels of the department; strengthen accountability and transparency to the Aboriginal community; and engage and promote diverse Aboriginal voices – particularly of local communities to inform policy direction and funding decision</p>	The framework was established in 2017 and is under review.	Existing funding mechanisms are in scope for the review	The review is expected to be completed in 2021-2022.	Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

making. The review is being driven by a Koorie Caucus working group and is being overseen by an independent, Aboriginal-led panel.				
<p><b>Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Children and Families Agreement and the Aboriginal Children's Forum</b></p> <p>Wungurilwil Gaggapduir is a tripartite agreement between the Aboriginal community, child and family services sector and the government. The agreement prioritises efforts to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children involved in child protection and care services.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Children's Forum gives practical effect to the implementation and monitoring of Wungurilwil Gaggapduir to promote the safety, health and resilience of vulnerable Aboriginal children and young people, so they thrive and live in culturally rich and strong Aboriginal families and communities.</p>	Existing	Since 2018, over \$150m of new investment provided by the Victorian Government to implement Wungurilwil Gaggapduir	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
<p><b>Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028</b></p> <p>An Aboriginal-led Victorian Agreement that commits Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal services and government to work together and be accountable for ensuring that Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from family violence. There are a number of associated Aboriginal community-led governance structures:</p>	Existing	N/A	Ongoing	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Establishment of Disability Local Area Networks to bring together key stakeholders focused on building relationships between Aboriginal community and organisations, government and mainstream disability providers. This will facilitate opportunities for DFFH to hear from the ACCOs on the challenges that the sector as well as Aboriginal people with disability face in transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and help guide priority issues in conversations with NDIA governance groups	Existing	Victorian Government Transition Support Package	June 2021	Minister for Disability and Ageing
Office for Disability has engaged the First Peoples Disability Network (Australia) to undertake consultations with Aboriginal Victorians. These consultations will inform actions to be developed under a new four-year state disability plan. Engagement data will also be used to make plan commitments more generally responsive to the strengths and self-determination of Aboriginal people with disability, and culturally safe and appropriate. It is anticipated that building on actions from the current state disability plan listed below will also be factored in identifying new commitments.	Existing	Victorian Government Transition Support Package	June 2021	Minister for Disability and Ageing



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Aboriginal Victorians with disability were identified as a key target group as part of disability advocacy outreach funding announced in May 2020 by the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers to support diverse and hard to reach communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.	New	\$180,000 (\$150,000 in 2019-20 and \$30,000 in 2020-21)	June 2021	Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
Department of Health actions:				
Strengthen decision making and priority setting through the establishment of the Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum and development of a health plan for streamlined implementation of commonwealth and state health commitments and priorities identified by Aboriginal community.	New	\$230,000 per annum	Commence 2020/21	Minister for Health
Establish partnerships between Local Public Health Units and Aboriginal community to support place based responses to pandemic and infectious diseases.	New	within existing budget	Commence 2021/21	Minister for Health
Continue partnership with VACCHO on the Victorian Cancer Screening Steering Committee and funded to lead cancer screening efforts for Aboriginal Victorians under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework.	Existing	part of \$600,000 per annum to lead Aboriginal cancer screening initiatives under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework	2019-2022	Minister for Health
Development of Victoria's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections plan.	New	within existing budget	2021/22	Minister for Health
Support VACCHO to deliver culturally appropriate preventive health initiatives aimed at reducing smoking, preventing diabetes, increasing healthy eating and active living, supporting improved maternal and child nutrition and health, supporting breastfeeding and improved sexual and reproductive health, as well as reducing risk factors for cancer.	Existing	\$2.634 million	2018/2019	Minister for Health
Department of Treasury and Finance actions:				
To support the State's progression towards treaty, DTF will prepare a paper exploring options on how to structure the Self-Determination Fund under the Financial Management Act 1994. These options will outline practical approaches to enable flexibility and Aboriginal decision-making in fund allocations.	New	Existing	The review is expected to be completed in 2021-2022.	Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Continue implementation of actions to advance self-determination through the budget process including increased collaboration with the Aboriginal community on business case development.	New	Existing	The review is expected to be completed in 2021-2022.	Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Development of the Side by Side program with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	Existing	Existing	2023	Treasurer

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions actions:				
<p>Established a Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council comprising of 20 Aboriginal community leaders and DJPR Executive Board to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a conduit for partnership between DJPR and the Victorian Aboriginal community;</li> <li>• provide Aboriginal community input into DJPR's decision making processes; and</li> <li>• Finalise the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy;</li> <li>• Provide guidance to local councils and Aboriginal organisation on inclusion of Aboriginal voices in council strategic planning processes; and</li> <li>• guide the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy, including shared input into budget development and related initiatives.</li> <li>• Establish First Peoples Partnership Group in Sport, Recreation and Racing (SRR), to ensure an Aboriginal Community self-determination led approach to sport and active recreation.</li> </ul>	Existing	\$1.004 million	2020 - 2024	<p>Minister for Employment</p> <p>Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy</p> <p>Minister for Small Business</p> <p>Minister for Multicultural Affairs</p> <p>Minister for Community Sport</p> <p>Minister for Youth</p>
<p>Continue to support VAEEC to complete the next iteration of the Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy</p>	New	\$0.40 million	2020 - 2024	<p>Minister for Employment</p> <p>Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy</p> <p>Minister for Small Business</p>
<p>Established the Creative Victoria - First Peoples Directions Circle (previously the First Peoples Partnership Group) established in December 2019.</p>	Existing	0.120 million	2020 - 2025	<p>Assistant Treasurer</p> <p>Minister for Regulatory Reform</p> <p>Minister for Government Services</p> <p>Minister for Creative Industries</p>
<p>Building ongoing partnerships with Traditional Owners – action taken include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to reserving up to 2 community and business memberships on each Regional Partnership for Aboriginal Victorians. Vacancies are still open on the Great South Coast, Ovens Murray and Central Highlands Regional Partnerships.</li> <li>• DJPR worked with Aboriginal Victoria and other stakeholders to ensure the most recent recruitment process was advertised to a broad range of Aboriginal networks throughout the state, including Koori Mail, and direct engagement with DPC Community Brokers</li> </ul>	Existing	Victorian Government Transition Support Package	June 2021	Minister for Disability and Ageing



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process resulted in an increase of Aboriginal representatives on Regional Partnerships, from 5 in the previous term to 8 current members.</li> <li>The majority of the 8 current Aboriginal Regional Partnership members are Traditional Owners within their region.</li> <li>New and continuing Regional Partnership members will undertake Cultural Awareness training in a local context.</li> </ul>	Existing	Pending budget outcomes	2020 - 2025	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business Minister for Regional Development Minister for Agriculture
Supporting the Victorian Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy	Existing	Pending budget outcomes	2020 - 2025	Minister for Regional Development Minister for Agriculture
Department of Transport actions:				
Development of the new Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23 aims to transform the transport portfolio's systems and procedures to enable and empower Aboriginal Victorians to share decision-making authority and accelerate policy and place-based progress against CtG outcomes.	New	Existing Funding	2020-23	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating
Implementation of a new whole-of-transport portfolio model of engagement with Aboriginal Victorians at the local level to co-design solutions to transport issues that matter to them.	New	Existing Funding	2020-23	As above
Documenting these solutions in Regional Chapters (as local implementation plans) to be promoted on transport websites for transparency and to enable ongoing review and monitoring of actions to occur.	New	Existing Funding	2020-23	As above
Inviting Victorian Registered Aboriginal Parties to develop co-designed partnership agreements with the portfolio as a mechanism to support more strategic conversations to occur in relation to delivery of Victorian transport projects and other Traditional Owner priorities.	New	Existing Funding	2020-23	As above
Partnering with other tiers of government and the private sector, where appropriate, to further enhance outcomes.	New	Existing Funding	2020-23	As above

Department of Education and Training actions:				
<p><b>Marrung Central Governance Committee</b></p> <p>Formal partnerships and shared decision-making with Victorian Aboriginal community to support improved learning and development outcomes for Aboriginal learners currently occurs through Marrung governance mechanisms, including VAEAI, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited.</p> <p>Aboriginal organisations and/or community stakeholders sit on decision-making groups and steering committees for all Aboriginal education programs and initiatives.</p>	Existing	N/A	Ongoing	Minister for Education Minister for Early Childhood Minister for Training and Skills

PRIORITY REFORM TWO – BUILDING THE COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED SECTOR				
<p><b>Priority Reform Two Outcome:</b> Building the community-controlled sector: There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.</p>				
<p><b>Priority Reform Two Target:</b> Increase the amount of government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services going through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.</p>				
Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Whole of Government actions:				
<p><b>Aboriginal funding reform project</b></p> <p>Aboriginal Strategy and Oversight is co-designing and piloting a pooled outcome-based funding model with 3 ACCOs (Djirra, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, and Ramahyuck).</p> <p>The pilot model will include health and human service funding across both DFFH and Department of Health. Critical features of the model will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measuring investment against Aboriginal defined outcomes</li> <li>Co-design of service agreements</li> <li>Reduced reporting burden</li> </ul> <p>Monitoring and evaluation processes to measure impact and inform phase 2 of the project (for upscaling).</p>	Existing	\$330,000 will be allocated from the Korin Korin Balit-Djak budget	wPhase 1 will be completed in July 2021	Minister for Health Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
<p><b>AEC/SOG Funding coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DPC to coordinate the collection of information from all departments regarding allocation of funding to ACCOs. The purpose of this work is to develop an understanding of whole of government allocation of funding to ACCOs.</li> <li>Funding allocation transparency and tracking to be progressed through Aboriginal partnership forums by 2023.</li> </ul>	Existing	Existing Funding	2023	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



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<p><b>Aboriginal Workforce Fund</b></p> <p>Workforce Fund is a two-year initiative that supports Aboriginal community controlled organisations (ACCOs). The fund is being co-designed by DFFH and the Victorian Aboriginal Social Recovery Advisory Group and will use Aboriginal measures of success. Funding will be allocated on advice from Aboriginal-led governance groups.</p>	New	\$40 million	<p>\$10 million will be allocated in the 2020-21 financial year.</p> <p>\$30 million will be allocated in the 2021-22 financial year..</p>	<p>Minister for Aboriginal Affairs</p> <p>Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing</p>
<p><b>COVID-19 Aboriginal Support Package</b></p> <p>A coordinated funding package to support the ACCO sector to deliver services and increase IT capability during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a \$10 million dollar self-determination fund for Aboriginal-led place based responses to COVID-19 impacts on local communities.</p>	New	\$23 million	Emergency/ COVID response	Families, Fairness and Housing
Department of Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Increase the number of projects and initiatives where Aboriginal people are accessing water for economic development and other self-determined purposes.	New	Existing funding	30 June 2024	Minister for Water
Develop a sustainable funding model for TO groups that elevates self-determination and the ability to submit to 2021-22 budget bid.	New	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Develop a DELWP Learning and Development package with Traditional Owners to be utilised by Traditional Owner Corporations.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Prioritise Aboriginal suppliers when procuring goods and services by developing a DELWP Aboriginal Procurement Report in order to prioritise Aboriginal suppliers when procuring goods and services.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water (lead DELWP Minister)
Work with DELWP's Aboriginal suppliers to identify how DELWP's project and procurement processes incorporate cultural responsibilities and knowledge.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2024	Minister for Planning
Strengthen Traditional Owner decision-making in sustainable water management.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water
Strengthen Traditional Owner decision-making in biodiversity.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing actions:				
<p>Family Safety Victoria are strengthening Aboriginal frontline family violence services through the design and implementation of the Dhelk Dja Fund and the Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy.</p> <p>A Dhelk Dja 10 Year Investment Strategy will be developed to provide a mechanism for the Dhelk Dja Koori Caucus and Partnership Forum to inform the government's budget development process. The strategy will be endorsed by the Dhelk Dja Partnership in late 2021.</p>	Existing	Existing funding	2021	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

<p>Continue progress under Wungurilwil Gagapduir: Objective two within the Wungurilwil Gagapduir has direction actions that resource and support Aboriginal organisations to care for Aboriginal children, families and communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling Aboriginal children and young person's right to access services provided by Aboriginal organisations</li> <li>• Develop flexible and longer term funding arrangements for Aboriginal organisations that support locally designed and tailored responses</li> </ul> <p>Strengthen the support for Aboriginal parents, foster and kinship carers.</p>	Existing	Since 2018, over \$150m of new investment provided by the Victorian Government to implement Wungurilwil Gagapduir	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
<p>Improving cultural safety in the Forensic Disability Program for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people with cognitive impairment involved in the criminal justice system by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing an Aboriginal liaison position</li> <li>• creating culturally safe spaces within forensic disability residential services</li> <li>• providing cultural support through engagement with Elders for Aboriginal forensic disability residents.</li> </ul>	New	\$150,000, funded recurrently	Commenced 2020-21, ongoing	Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
<p>Victoria has established Disability Local Area Networks across Victoria to build relationships between Aboriginal organisations, the NDIA and mainstream disability providers, in partnership with Aboriginal and community organisations. The networks support information sharing capacity building and engagement with the Aboriginal community controlled organisations to assist them responding to clients, particularly on NDIS access and use matters.</p>	Existing (2017-20 state disability plan commitment)	Funded through existing DHHS (now DFFH) budget	Jun-20	Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
<p>Project work has significantly advanced to provide consultancy support to Vic ACCOs to understand the NDIS, including impacts of operating as NDIS provider and how to best support their community through transition. VACCHO have developed various resources and are working intensively with their members to plan for NDIS. Due for completion in June 2020.</p>	Existing (2017-20 state disability plan commitment)	Funded through existing DHHS (now DFFH) budget	Jun-2021 (originally for completion in Jun-2020, but impacted by COVID)	Minister for Disability and Ageing
Department of Health actions:				
<p>Development and piloting of outcomes-based funding model with peak body for Aboriginal community-controlled health sector.</p>	New	\$1,100,000	2021/22	Minister for Health
<p>Continue to support ACCOS to understand the NDIS including what it means for their organisation as well as how Aboriginal people can access the scheme. This includes building awareness of the scheme, facilitating informed decision making and support with implementation if they become an NDIS provider.</p>	Existing	Victorian Government Transition Support Package	June 2021	Minister for Disability and Ageing



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Continue to improve access to specialist appointments and medical care for Aboriginal people in rural and regional areas in collaboration with the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector	Existing	\$136.3 million over four years	2021-22 and 2022-23  The is an existing four year election commitment with the first year of the commitment was 2019-20.	Minster for Health
Continue partnership between Royal Children's Hospital and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service has supported the access to self-determined health care for Aboriginal children and families within an Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation (ACCO)	Existing	\$1,254,000 pilot	30 June 2022	Minister for Health
Increase cancer screening expertise at VACCHO and strengthen data systems to improve cancer screening reporting	Existing	part of \$600,000 per annum to lead Aboriginal cancer screening initiatives under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework	2019-2022	Minister for Health
Continued delivery of the Best Practice Forum on Aboriginal Tobacco Control, an action under the Korin Korin Balit-Djak Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027, where Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) are provided opportunities to report on local initiatives, build capacity and share stories and progress in reducing smoking. Due to COVID-19, the forum is currently being delivered as a series of webinars.	Existing	\$10,000 per annum	ongoing	Minister for Health
Continuation of funded activity by VACCHO to co-ordinate culturally safe strategies to reduce smoking prevalence amongst Aboriginal people and support ACCHOs across Victoria to become smoke free. This includes carrying out smoke free workplace audits across ACCHOs, identifying training opportunities and road shows on how to use nicotine replacement therapy.	Existing	\$165,000 per annum	2022/23	Minister for Health
Build the capacity and capability of the Aboriginal AOD workforce through an increase in Aboriginal AOD FTE and workforce development	New	\$2,562,000 total for the 18-month period commencing 1 July 2021	1 July 2021 - 30 December 2022	Minister for Health
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions actions:				
Continue partnership with Victorian Traditional Owners to support the development of native food and botanicals crops by Victorian Aboriginal organisations through Djakitjuk Djanga and through funding to support the development of a Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy (TONFABS). Agriculture Victoria plans to continue to collaborate with Traditional Owners to implement TONFABS.	Existing	\$2.4 million	2020-2025	Minister for Regional Development  Minister for Agriculture

<p>Establishment of both Working for Victoria and the Jobs Victoria Employment Network, including significant investment provided to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver services to support Closing the Gap including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working for Victoria has supported 33 proposals from Aboriginal organisations. An investment of \$15.6 million has created 266 FTE positions.</li> <li>Jobs Victoria is the Victorian Government's flagship employment program. Under the current Jobs Victoria Employment Network 1,150 Aboriginal job seekers have been supported into work since late 2016.</li> </ul>	Existing	\$15.6 million through Working for Victoria	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver on the Victorian Budget 2020/21 announcement of \$619.4 million to provide jobseekers with the information, advice and support they need to get back to work through an expanded Jobs Victoria.</li> </ul>	New	Allocation to support Aboriginal communities TBC	2020-2023	Minister for Employment
<p>Continue funding place-based Aboriginal economic strategies to assist in stimulating self-determined regional community-controlled organisations and Traditional Owner Corporation economic activity.</p> <p>As part of the development of Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) for each of the nine Regional Partnership regions, a specific focus on Aboriginal economic development objectives is being included. While the REDS are region-wide Strategies, they will take into account the self-determined economic aspirations of Traditional Owners and the broader regional Aboriginal community.</p>	New	\$0.10 million (approx.) to deliver materials to support engagement	2020-2024	Minister for Regional Development
<p>Supporting the establishment of an Aboriginal State Sport and Recreation Body to advocate for increased capacity and capability across the sport and recreation sector (including to Government) to effectively engage with the Victorian Aboriginal Community and deliver enhanced sport and recreation participation opportunities.</p>	New	Pending budget outcomes	2020-2024	Minister for Multicultural Affairs Minister for Community Sport Minister for Youth
<p>Continue working with communities to develop community based independent tourism body.</p>	New	\$1.6 million	2020- 2024	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business
<p>Investing in the development of Kinaway Chamber of Commerce as a peak body in supporting Aboriginal businesses.</p>	Existing	\$0.973 million	2020- 2025 2024	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business



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Department of Transport actions:				
Under the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23: The Victorian transport portfolio will work together with Aboriginal stakeholders to ensure provision of culturally safe transport services and access to community facilities and services.	Existing	Existing funding	2020-23	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating
It will also trial pooled, outcomes-based funding models with Aboriginal stakeholders, including Aboriginal community controlled organisations, that build the capacity of Aboriginal Victorians to lead the procurement of services they consider best placed to deliver transport outcomes.	Existing	Existing Funding	2020-23	As above

## PRIORITY REFORM THREE – TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

**Priority Reform Three Outcome:** Improving mainstream institutions: Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.

**Priority Reform Three Target:** Decrease in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experiences of racism.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Whole of Government actions:				
<b>Establishment of the First People's Assembly of Victoria</b> The Assembly is the first democratically elected body of Aboriginal Victorians in the State's history and has been tasked with establishing the framework that will support future Treaty negotiations, in partnership with government. To reflect diversity of Aboriginal voices across Victoria, the Assembly is made up of 21 general members elected by Aboriginal Victorians across five voting regions and 11 seats reserved for members of formally recognised Traditional Owner groups.	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
<b>Establishment of the Yoo-Rook Truth and Justice Commission</b> In pursuing treaty, the government is committed to acknowledging the truth of Victoria's history and laying the foundations for new, positive relationships between the State, Aboriginal Victorians and non-Aboriginal Victorians.	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Aboriginal Victorians have been clear and consistent in their call for truth-telling as an essential part of the treaty process. In particular, the Assembly formally called for a truth and justice process through a resolution of its Chamber in June 2020. It is anticipated that the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission will investigate both historical and ongoing injustices committed against Aboriginal Victorians since colonisation by the State and non-State entities, across all areas of social, political and economic life. In doing so, the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission will engage Victoria's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community to achieve its aims of truth telling and truth listening.				
AEC/SLG Action: DTF and AEC to collaborate on further long term reforms to the budget development process in time for the 2022-23 Victorian Budget	Existing	Existing Funding	2022	Treasurer
AEC/SLG Action: All departments to seek and share information on the development of budget priorities with AEC and SOG, where appropriate and with any necessary level of approval	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Treasurer
AEC/SLG Action: All departments to ensure the current budget process supports self-determination and engage AEC and/or other Aboriginal governance mechanisms for advice in the detailed preparation of budget bids for the 2020/21 budget.	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	All Departments
Table Victoria's Implementation Partner's review of the VGAAR as a key Aboriginal sector led accountability approach	New	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Deliver mandatory Cultural Safety Training package to DELWP staff.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Water (lead DELWP Minister)
Implement improvements to DELWP systems and processes to enable self-determination.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water Minister for Planning Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change Minister for Solar Homes
Identify ways in which Traditional Owner values can be better reflected in DELWP's planning systems.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Identify the potential DELWP legislative improvements to support the principles of self-determination.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning



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Incorporate government response from the First Principles Review for continuous improvement of DELWP engagement with Traditional Owners to enable Self-Determination.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Work with DELWP's Aboriginal suppliers to identify how DELWP's project and procurement processes incorporate cultural responsibilities and knowledge.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Include actions towards self-determination in the DELWP Group Business Plans and Executive annual performance plans.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Water (lead DELWP Minister)
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing actions				
Implement DHHS' Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework through its People and Culture Strategy. This will be overseen by the FSV People and Culture Committee, in consultation with Aboriginal staff working at FSV.	Existing	Existing funding	2021	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Design and establish culturally responsive Aboriginal Access Points to support victim survivors, vulnerable children and families and those who use violence to navigate the service system to access services that meet their needs and aspirations.  The finalisation of an Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan will embed inclusion, access and equity in The Orange Doors.	Existing	Existing funding	2021-2022	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Continue the Strengthening Cultural Safety in Family Violence project which will establish a framework for assessing and implementing a culturally safe workplace in The Orange Doors in 2021	Existing	Existing funding	2021-2022	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence
Cultural safety training workshops and education packages have been provided to executives and staff across the Department of Health and the Department of Families, Fairness and Health. This has included partnering with Koorie Heritage Trust.	Existing	Within existing budget	Commenced 2019, ongoing	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Women Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Minister for Multicultural Affairs Minister for Youth Minister for Child Protection Minister for Housing
Improving cultural safety in the Forensic Disability Program for Aboriginal and people with cognitive impairment involved in the criminal justice system by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>establishing an Aboriginal liaison position</li> <li>creating culturally safe spaces within forensic disability residential services</li> <li>providing cultural support through engagement with Elders for Aboriginal forensic disability residents.</li> </ul>	Existing	Within existing budget	Commenced 2019, ongoing	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change

Department of Health actions:				
Implement the Victorian Cultural Safety Framework and embed cultural safety in mainstream health responses with a priority on hospitals and response to public intoxication	Existing	within existing budget	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Implementation of the Aboriginal health funding model to strengthen the cultural safety of Victorian public health services. Cultural safety actions are targeted to 8 key areas also aligning with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS) and includes: Aboriginal (health) employment, cultural safety training, partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, executive leadership, identifying community needs/gaps, strong accountability, culturally welcoming spaces, and improved patient identification.	Existing	Funding of \$29m was allocated to 41 public health services in 2020/21	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Implementation of the Aboriginal Leadership in Cultural Safety initiative (State government funded) to support Aboriginal leadership and self-determination to improve the cultural safety of Victorian health services.	New	\$1 million per annum	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Embedding cultural safety in mainstream health responses to public intoxication in alignment with the decriminalisation of public drunkenness reforms	New	\$16 million in total for implementation of a health-based approach to public intoxication.	November 2020- November 2022	Minister for Health
Grow and strengthen the Aboriginal workforce across the health sector through increased access to training through cadetships and scholarship programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South West Indigenous Community Internship Program</li> <li>• Postgraduate Medical Council of Victoria</li> <li>• Aboriginal (Nursing and Midwifery) Postgraduate Scholarship Program</li> <li>• Aboriginal Cadetship Program (Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health)</li> </ul> Maternal and Child Health Nursing Scholarship Program	Existing	Pending budget outcomes	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Department of Treasury and Finance actions:				
Continue embedding commitments under the Social Procurement Framework (SPF)	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Treasurer
Provide cultural safety and Aboriginal self-determination training for budget analysts	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Treasurer
Continue embedding longer-term planning to deliver self-determination reform and improved outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Treasurer



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DTF and Implementation Partners to collaborate on further long-term reforms to the budget	Existing	Existing funding	2022	Treasurer
Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions actions:				
Continue commitments under the Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy to ensure a minimum two per cent Aboriginal employment, creating a culturally safe work environment and improving its connection to and work with Victoria's Aboriginal communities.	Existing	\$1.061 million	2020-2023	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business
Continue work under the Aboriginal Landholder Information Service (ALIS) to collaborate directly with Aboriginal organisations to provide them with a flexible, responsive, demand driven service.	Existing	\$0.23 million	2020-2025	Minister for Regional Development Minister for Agriculture
The Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council has transformed the way DJPR works and partners with the Aboriginal community to improve accountability and better respond and deliver on Aboriginal economic development opportunity and prosperity.	Existing	\$1.0 million	2020-2024	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business
Department of Transport actions:				
DoT and the wider Victorian transport portfolio will educate staff on Aboriginal affairs objectives (including CtG, VAAF and self-determination reforms) and culturally safe workplace requirements through participation in cultural competency training and daily activities and events	Existing	Existing Funding	2020-2023	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating
Ensuring delivery of culturally safe services through initiatives that acknowledge traditional owners (e.g. conductor announcements), general celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage(e.g. through Aboriginal artwork on trains and trams, plaques and Aboriginal naming of infrastructure) and other initiatives identified by Aboriginal Victorians.	Existing	Existing Funding	2020-2023	As above
Ensure accountability through the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Steering Committee including Aboriginal representation overseeing implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress against CtG and VAAF outcomes.	Existing	Existing Funding	2020-2023	As above
Establish mechanisms for evaluating levels of cultural safety and experiences of Aboriginal Victorians on transport services and in transport workplaces	Existing	Existing Funding	2020-2023	As above

Department of Education and Training				
Deliver of Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) for all staff in all government schools. In the vocational education and training (VET) sector, work is underway to redesign the Aboriginal VET workforce and reform the way the sector engages and supports Aboriginal learners.	Existing (CUST) and new (VET)	Existing funding (CUST)	Ongoing (CUST)	Minister for Regional Development  Minister for Agriculture

#### PRIORITY REFORM FOUR – SHARED ACCESS TO DATA AND INFORMATION AT A REGIONAL LEVEL

**Priority Reform Four Outcome:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

**Priority Reform Four Target:** Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Whole of Government actions:				
Develop modelling of the trajectories for each socioeconomic target alongside the anticipated year when parity will be achieved.	New	TBC	2022	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Conduct a mid-term review of the VAAF and VGAAR to ensure alignment with Closing the Gap targets align	New	TBC	2022	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
All departments to negotiate sector wide data access and sharing agreements that prioritise long term investment in ACCO data management	New	TBC	TBC	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Explore what Indigenous Data Sovereignty, as committed to in the Government's Self-Determination Reform Framework, means to Traditional Owners within Victoria in relation to DELWP	Existing	\$20,000	30 June 2022	Minister for Water  Minister for Planning  Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change  Minister for Solar Homes
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing actions:				
Continue engaging with VACCHO to understand data discrepancies regarding Aboriginal people with disability who may be eligible for NDIS support and themes on some challenges that Aboriginal people with disability are facing accessing the scheme	Existing	No funding attached	Ongoing	Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
Development of the Dhelk Dja Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan to accompany the Dhelk Dja Agreement, laying out a plan for how the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum can monitor and evaluate its strategy throughout its life.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence



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An Aboriginal Data Mapping and Data Needs project has been established to support the development of baseline understanding of Aboriginal family violence and build the evidence base for prevention and intervention. The defined data, indicators and measures developed will inform strategic decision making and priorities and support annual reporting to the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum.	Existing	Existing	Ongoing	Multiple
Department of Health actions:				
Support VACCHO to deliver a digital transformation of the Victorian Aboriginal health sector including embedding of telehealth, improved client and referral management systems and development of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Information System	New	\$4,480,000	Commence 2020/21	Minister for Health
Support Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health to access Child Development Information System for improved client and referral management and their service data to support continuous improvement	New	\$10,000	2020/21	Minister for Health
The review and refinement of the Koori Maternity Services (KMS) minimum dataset, in partnership with VACCHO and the KMS workforce, will include the establishment of an agreed format and processes for quarterly data reports back to KMS providers (health services and ACCOs)	New	Within existing budget	ongoing	Minister for Health
Strengthened data monitoring of Statewide Aboriginal cancer screening participation through the Victorian Cancer Screening Data Monitoring Framework	New	Part of \$600,000 per annum to implement Victorian Cancer Screening Framework	2019-2022	Minister for Health
Department of Transport actions:				
Establish integrated Regional Chapters (as implementation plans) that create a one-stop-shop of self-determined transport activity occurring in each region, with links back to CtG outcomes, for transparency and to be leveraged by other tiers of government and the private sector.	New	Existing Funding	2020-23	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating
Prepare integrated transport data and information packs for local Aboriginal stakeholders to enable informed participation in development of self-determined transport solutions that progress and enhance Closing the Gap and VAAF outcomes (packs including integrated transport maps and consolidated project and service information and employment and development opportunities available across the transport portfolio)	New	Within existing budgets (\$48,000 in 2020)	2020-23	As above

## Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives

**Target 1:** Close the gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Health actions:				
Continue implementing strategies to support improved eye health within the Aboriginal community including the Aboriginal Spectacle Subside Scheme through the Australian College of Optometry and through the Victorian Eyecare Scheme and participation in the Victorian Eye Health Strategy Committee	Existing	\$255,000 per annum	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Implement the nationally endorsed Optimal Care Pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing the rates of cancer amongst Aboriginal Victorians will also reduce the mortality rates.</li> <li>Preferences community-controlled organisations to deliver culturally safe services.</li> </ul>	New	Within existing budget	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Implement the Victorian Cancer Agency Collaborative Research Grant to support the acceleration of translational cancer research in areas of unmet need to ultimately reduce the disparities in outcomes for certain cancers and peoples.	Existing	\$1,991,700	August 2019 – August 2024	Minister for Health
Improve Aboriginal cancer screening participation through supporting VACCHO to lead all Aboriginal cancer screening initiatives under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and implementation of an Aboriginal cancer screening strategy</li> <li>Strengthened Aboriginal data</li> <li>Increased cancer screening expertise embedded at VACCHO</li> <li>Representation on the Victorian Cancer Screening Steering Committee</li> </ul>	Existing	\$600,000 per annum	2019-2022	Minister for Health
Continue focusing on reducing high rates of smoking by Aboriginal Victorians, which is a significant contributor to the gap in life expectancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of funded activity by VACCHO to co-ordinate culturally safe strategies to reduce smoking prevalence amongst Aboriginal people and support ACCHOs across Victoria to become smoke free. This includes carrying out smoke free workplace audits across ACCHOs, identifying training opportunities and road shows on how to use nicotine replacement therapy; and</li> <li>Continued promotion of the Quitline, including the Commonwealth-funded Aboriginal Quitline, which is delivered by Quit Victoria</li> </ul>	Existing	\$1,991,700	August 2019 – August 2024	Minister for Health



Develop and implement a range of strategies and policies to support older Aboriginal community members including the Ageing Well Framework including specific response for support Aboriginal Elders and older community members, and implementation of Seniors Card for Aboriginal people aged over 50 years	Existing	Within existing budget	TBC	Minister for Aging
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**Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born health and strong**

**Target 2:** Target 2: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a health birthweight to 91 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Health actions:				
Continue supporting the delivery of Koori Maternity Services across Victoria	Existing	Within existing budget	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Planned Best Practice Forum on Aboriginal Tobacco Control webinar focussing on reducing smoking during pregnancy.	Existing	\$10,000	Ongoing	Minister for Health

**Outcome 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years**

**Target 3:** By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Education and Training actions:				
Continue to support Aboriginal children to attend two years of kindergarten through providing three and four-year-old children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten a week.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Continuation of the Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten campaign that raises awareness of the importance of three and four-year-old kindergarten and promotes available supports.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Continue the Koorie Pre-School Assistants program which work with kindergarten services in selected sites to enhance access and participation of Koorie children, assist in delivery of inclusive programs, support attendance of Koorie children and encourage involvement of Koorie families.	Existing	Existing and new of \$2.8m over 5 years, \$0.9m ongoing	Ongoing	Minister for Health
Commit to School Readiness Funding which is needs-based funding for kindergartens that aims to address the effects of educational disadvantage and enable children to get the most out of their early learning.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Health

#### Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years

**Target 4:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Education and Training actions:				
Continue Balert Gerrbik: Koorie Families as First Educators: a culturally responsive evidence-based parenting support initiative currently delivered by ACCOs in both regional and metropolitan locations.	Existing	Existing Funding	2016-2026	Minister for Early Childhood
Continue the early years initiatives identified under Target 3 to support progress against this target in Victoria through both universal and targeted supports including through the rollout of funded three-year-old kindergarten, three-and-four-year old kindergarten supports, the Koorie Pre-School Assistants program in selected sites and the Koorie Education Workforce.	Existing	Existing Funding	Existing	Minister for Early Childhood
Establishment of Aboriginal response as part of development of Early Parenting Centres	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Minister for Early Childhood
Department of Education and Training actions:				
Delivery of universal Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health services	Existing	\$1,540,000	12 month funding has been provided	Minister for Health

#### Outcome 5: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential

**Target 5:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20 – 24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Education and Training actions:				
Continue to implement a range of universal programs such as Equity, Catch-up and Literacy and Numeracy funding, supports provided through the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, LOOKOUT and Navigator Centres, School-based Apprenticeship and Traineeship opportunities, the Reconnect Program and, in 2021, a Tutor-learning program in all schools.	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education
State-wide Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) continue to support schools to provide an inclusive environment for Koorie students, build local partnerships with Koorie communities, engage with parents and families and support Koorie learners to excel in their education.	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education

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Continue roll out of Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) to all government schools to ensure a positive learning environment for Koorie students and promote the vibrant living cultures of First Nations People.	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education
Continue awarding the Marrung Scholarships each year to Koorie students in year 10 to support completion of year 11 and 12.	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education
Continue the Koorie Literacy and Numeracy Programs that provide additional funding to schools to support eligible Koorie students to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education
Continue the Koorie Academy of Excellence that provides out of school hours support to Koorie students to build their aspirations to complete Year 12 and pursue their desired tertiary education pathway	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education
Continue funding and support for the Koorie Education Children's Court Liaison Officers who support Koorie students who appear before the Children's Koori Court to re-engage with education	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education
Department of Transport actions:				
Implement, under the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23, a transport portfolio-wide Aboriginal scholarships program that provides funding to support completion of secondary school, mentoring support and work placement opportunities for scholars – with the goal of establishing a pipeline of Aboriginal talent to be employed across the transport portfolio and sector.	New	Within existing budgets (\$150,000 across secondary school, TAFE, and University)	2023	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating

### Outcome 6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways

**Target 6:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Education and Training actions:				
Continue fee support for Aboriginal learners in government-subsidised training, and 1.5 loading applied to all Aboriginal enrolments in government subsidised accredited vocational education and training	Existing	Existing	2016-2026	Minister for Training and Skills



Continue fee support for Aboriginal learners in government-subsidised training, and 1.5 loading applied to all Aboriginal enrolments in government subsidised accredited vocational education and training	Existing	Existing	2016-2026	Minister for Training and Skills
Continue monitoring and implementation of the Wurreker Implementation Plans required at every TAFE and Dual Sector Institute to outline strategies to support improved outcomes for Aboriginal students, improved Aboriginal employment at the TAFE or Institute, and an inclusive learning environment.	Existing	Existing	2016-2026	Minister for Training and Skills
From 2021, three specialist Aboriginal staff members will be employed at every Victorian TAFE and dual sector institute, to increase Aboriginal student participation at TAFE, improve learner outcomes and help create clearer pathways to employment.	New	\$2.8m per annum	2021	Minister for Training and Skills
Department of Transport actions:				
Implement, Under the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23 a transport portfolio-wide Aboriginal scholarships program that provides funding to support completion of TAFE and University studies, mentoring support and work placement opportunities for scholars – with the goal of establishing a pipeline of Aboriginal talent to be employed across the transport portfolio and sector.	New	Within existing budgets (\$150,000 per annum across secondary school, TAFE and University over three years)	2023	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight wand Boating

Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth engaged in employment or education				
<b>Target 7:</b> By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15 – 24 years) who are in employment, education, or training to 67 percent.				
Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions actions:				
Continued efforts to address Target 7 through the following Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Employment Program, Victorian Apprenticeship Recovery Package (a Victorian government response to COVID-19) and the VPSC Graduate Program.</li> </ul>	Existing	\$0.284 million	2020-2022	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business

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Increase Koorie participation in employment, further education and training through a suite of initiatives including Careers education reforms, School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, Tech School STEM programs, the Koorie Academy of Excellence in selected locations, and the Reconnect program.	Existing	Existing funding	2016-2026	Minister for Education Minister for Training and Skills
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning:				
Continue to strive for internal targets including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum 20 per cent of the three per cent DELWP Aboriginal employment target achieved to Victorian Public Service (VPS) level 6 roles or above</li> </ul> A three per cent Aboriginal workforce target at DELWP.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Water Minister for Planning Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change Minister for Solar Homes
Develop Aboriginal leadership employment strategies in DELWP that focus on achieving outcomes through each stage of the employee lifecycle.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water (lead DELWP Minister)
Develop and deliver an Aboriginal staff mentor program.	Existing	\$30,000	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Develop Aboriginal Scholarship and Cadetship Programs that empower and support self-determination through educational attainment and support Aboriginal recruitment into DELWP.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
DELWP Managers proactively support Aboriginal staff to attend culturally-informed professional development.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water (lead DELWP Minister)
Develop an Aboriginal Women in Fire (or Land Management) Pathway Program.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Water (lead DELWP Minister)
Explore measures to allocate places for Aboriginal female staff in targeted career programs and pathways.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Department of Transport:				
Continue to, under the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23, work with Aboriginal staff and community members to develop and implement strategies that attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal youth within the transport portfolio, including through Aboriginal traineeships, scholarships and mentoring programs.	Existing	Existing funding	2023 (ongoing)	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating

## Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

**Target 8:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 – 64 who are employed to 62 percent

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions actions:				
Development of a new Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy in partnership with the Council.	New	Noted at PR1	2021	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business
Funding of place based Aboriginal economic strategies that will assist in stimulating self-determined regional and Traditional Owner Corporation economic development strategies	New	Approximately \$5.7 million investment in 2020/2021 approximately \$5.7 million investment in 2020/2021	2020-2021	Minister for Regional Development Minister for Agriculture (\$5mil) Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business (\$700k)
Provide jobseekers with the information, advice and support they need to get back to work through an expanded Jobs Victoria.	New	\$619.4 million	2021	Minister for Employment Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy Minister for Small Business
Collaboration with Traditional Owners to implement the Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy and the Aboriginal Landholder Information Service that will increase the proportion of Aboriginal people with businesses and / or working in the agriculture sector.	Existing	Pending budget outcomes	2020-2025	Minister for Regional Development Minister for Agriculture
Managing bushfire recovery funds to support initiatives for the Aboriginal community and businesses in the Gippsland Region affected by the 2019/20 bushfires (funding provided to Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and Taungurung Land & Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation).	New	\$2.0 million	2020-2022	Minister for Water Minister for Police and Emergency Services



## Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023

### Appendix A

<p>Commitment to Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy:</p> <p>Minimum two per cent employment target comprising of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 per cent at VPS 6 and above levels</li> <li>• 75 per cent of roles to be ongoing</li> </ul> <p>Only counting employment contracts of 18 months or more.</p>	Existing	\$1.061 million	2016-2026	<p>Minister for Employment</p> <p>Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy</p> <p>Minister for Small Business</p>
<p>Working for Victoria (WV), announced in March 2020, was the Victorian Government's immediate response to the labour market impacted by COVID.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To date WV has supported 33 proposals from Aboriginal organisations. An investment of \$15.6 million has created 266 FTE positions.</li> </ul>	Existing	Existing \$15.6 million	2021	<p>Minister for Employment</p> <p>Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy</p> <p>Minister for Small Business</p>
<p>Under the current Jobs Victoria Employment Network, 1,150 Aboriginal job seekers have been supported into work since late 2016.</p> <p>Note: program finishing in June 2021; will be replaced by new Jobs Victoria Employment Services</p>	Existing	Lapsing	2020-2021	<p>Minister for Employment</p> <p>Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy</p> <p>Minister for Small Business</p>
<p>Conduct a series of 10 Aboriginal Regional Employment Round Tables are currently underway bringing together Aboriginal community members and a range of government and community based agencies. The round tables will act as a forum to exchange information, discuss issues and collectively explore the following initial broad themes/focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identification of regional employment and training opportunities</li> <li>• identification of opportunities to enhance policy and programs to improve Aboriginal employment outcomes</li> <li>• create and drive employment opportunities that build on regional opportunities.</li> <li>• identification of the gaps in service delivery and the challenges for Aboriginal job seekers</li> </ul>	Planned	N/A	2020-2021	<p>Minister for Employment</p> <p>Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy</p> <p>Minister for Small Business</p>
Department of Transport:				
<p>Establish an internal transport portfolio-wide Aboriginal employment working group to support the roll out targeted initiatives that will drive achievement of the Victorian Government's 2% Aboriginal employment target by the transport portfolio (including the Aboriginal scholarships program detail in Outcomes area 5 and 6). (Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23)</p>	New	Existing funding	2020-23	<p>Minister for Transport Infrastructure</p> <p>Minister for Suburban Rail Loop</p> <p>Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety</p> <p>Minister for Ports and Freight</p> <p>Minister for Fishing and Boating</p>

Establish an internal portfolio-wide procurement working group to drive achievement of the Victorian Governments 1% Aboriginal procurement target – enhancing employment outcomes through project delivery and other transport activities. (Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23)	New	Existing funding	2020-23	As above
Continue work to increase Aboriginal participation on transport boards and committees (1% target) to ensure Aboriginal leadership, knowledge and expertise is embedded in transport decision making. (Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23)	New	Existing funding	2020-23	As above
Major Transport Infrastructure Authority also has a 2.5% Aboriginal employment target for major projects, measured as a percentage of total labour hours.	Existing	Within existing budgets (via contract award)	2023	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop

### Outcome 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

**Target 9:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing actions:				
<p>Ten per cent net of the Victorian Big Housing Build allocated for Aboriginal Victorians, increasing access to social housing options. This involves :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action which will increase social housing for Aboriginal Victorians</li> <li>Action which will increase the capacity of the Aboriginal sector to become registered housing providers</li> <li>Co-designing an approach with VAHHF governance to adhere to the principles of Aboriginal self-determination (Principles)</li> <li>Commencement of data sharing and access authorisation requirements for Aboriginal communities</li> <li>Seeking additional opportunities for affordable housing options for Aboriginal Victorians in partnership with DTF</li> </ul>	New	\$5.3b Victorian Big Housing Build stimulus	2021-2025	Minister for Housing and Treasurer

## Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023

### Appendix A

<p>Reduce rates of homelessness by 10 per cent per annum. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a Homelessness System Service Review and providing recommendations to implement an Aboriginal focused homelessness service system</li> <li>• Action which will improve the homelessness service system gaps for Aboriginal communities</li> <li>• Action which will increase the cultural capacity of the homelessness service system</li> <li>• Action which will increase the capacity of the Aboriginal sector to become registered housing providers, which will open future opportunities for additional accommodation</li> <li>• Co-designing with VAHMF governance an approach that meets the needs of community</li> <li>• Offering access to service level data to shape service design and delivery</li> </ul>	New	<p>\$5.3b Victorian Big Housing Build stimulus</p> <p>\$300k Aboriginal Feasibility study of the homelessness system.</p> <p>\$35m Building Work – Aboriginal maintenance stimulus</p>	3 -10 years	Minister for Housing
<p>Better support for Aboriginal tenancies that enables choice and control. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action directly relating to identifying and addressing service system barriers to access to private rental</li> <li>• Increasing the capacity of the Aboriginal sector via tenancy management</li> <li>• Expansion of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program making it available across Victoria</li> <li>• Action which will improve the service system gaps for Aboriginal communities across housing and homelessness</li> <li>• Co-designing with VAHMF governance arrangements to determine an approach to housing and homelessness that meets the needs of community</li> <li>• Adhering to the principles of Aboriginal self-determination and offering greater support to Aboriginal tenants. This involves:</li> <li>• The creation of an Aboriginal tenancy advocacy role</li> </ul>	New	Funding to be sought through future budget cycle	2 year period	Minister for Housing
<p>Increase rates of home ownership for Aboriginal Victorians. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking additional opportunities for affordable housing options for Aboriginal Victorians in partnership with DTF</li> <li>• Increasing home ownership, reducing the system demand for social housing, including by providing Aboriginal Victorians with additional supports in the Victorian Homebuyer Fund (a shared equity scheme to accelerate Victorians into home ownership by reducing the size of the deposit required).</li> <li>• opportunities to develop policy that supports increased outcomes for Aboriginal home ownership</li> <li>• Offering leverage for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support future housing demand need</li> </ul>	New	<p>\$500m Victorian Homebuyer Fund</p> <p>\$35m Building Work – Aboriginal maintenance stimulus</p>	4 - 6year period	Minister for Housing & Treasurer
<p>Increase access and ownership of Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness data. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an Aboriginal data dashboard to inform future housing demand and service requirements</li> </ul>	New	Funding contribution via Homes Victoria	2-Year Period	Minister for Housing



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying opportunities to support Aboriginal data sovereignty for the Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing and identify service system barriers</li> <li>Improving the service system gaps for Aboriginal communities</li> <li>Adhering to the principles of Aboriginal self-determination and data sovereignty</li> </ul> </li> <li>Increasing the capacity of the Aboriginal sector to inform future housing demand and service modelling requirements</li> </ul>				
<p>Increase the cultural capability of mainstream housing and homelessness sector to deliver culturally safe services. This will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address and identify service system barriers</li> <li>Increase the capacity of the Community Housing Sector to delivery culturally safe services</li> <li>Improve the service system delivery</li> <li>Adhere to the principles of Aboriginal self-determination</li> </ul>	New	<p>Funding to be sought through future budget cycle</p> <p>Fee for service model (external cultural safety framework delivery)</p>	3 year period	Minister for Housing

### Outcome 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system

**Target 10:** By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Justice and Community Safety actions:				
<p><b>Local Justice Worker Program</b></p> <p>Support Aboriginal offenders on corrections orders to meet the conditions of their orders, by sourcing supervised community work opportunities in culturally-appropriate environments as well as linking to relevant programs and services available in the community. Local Justice Workers work with the Sheriff's Office and Aboriginal people with outstanding fines to negotiate payment plans as well as acting as a key point of contact between local Aboriginal communities and justice agencies.</p>	Existing	2021-22: \$3,209.239 (including GST)	Ongoing program with funding provided to ACCOS through 4-year agreements.	Attorney General
<p><b>Community-based Intensive Diversion Programs</b></p> <p>Deliver four community-based intensive diversion programs, under AJA4, for Aboriginal people who have had, or are vulnerable to, involvement with the criminal justice system in order to address factors contributing to offending. The current programs are: The Bramung Jaarn Program, Cultural Mentoring Program, Massive Murray Paddle (MMP) and an additional Aboriginal men's diversion program will commence in late 2021.</p>	Existing	<p>\$11 million per annum (excluding GST)</p> <p>Additional funding of \$3.2 million over two years provided through 2021-22 State Budget for diversion programs for Aboriginal males.</p>	Ongoing programs with funding provided to ACCOS through 4-year funding covering 2019-20 to 2022-23.	Attorney General

<p><b>Koori Women's Diversion Program</b></p> <p>Continuation of the Koori Women's Diversion Program addresses service and program gaps for Aboriginal women who are at risk of further involvement with the justice system. The program offers intensive case management and culturally appropriate support, to successfully complete court, bail and/or community corrections orders, referrals to programs and services that reduce their likelihood of offending or reoffending, as well as help to navigate the justice and broader social welfare systems. The KWDP operates in four sites including Mildura, Morwell, Northern Metro and Odyssey House.</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>\$1.3 million per annum (including GST)</p> <p>Additional funding of \$0.9 million over two years provided through 2021-22 State Budget.</p>	<p>Ongoing programs with funding provided to ACCOS through multi-year funding agreements</p>	<p>Minister for Housing</p>
<p><b>Legislated Spent Convictions Scheme</b></p> <p>Implementation of a Legislated Spent Convictions Scheme. The Spent Convictions Bill 2020 (the Bill) passed the Victorian Parliament on 18 March 2021. The Bill creates a legislated spent conviction scheme (Scheme), which prescribes that certain criminal history records will be protected from disclosure (i.e. 'spent') after a period without re-offending. The Scheme ensures that historical convictions will no longer be a factor in determining the opportunities available to Aboriginal Victorians. In this way, the new laws go some way to address the socioeconomic disadvantage and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system faced by Aboriginal people by supporting rehabilitation and providing protection against discrimination. The Scheme's design largely aligns with the recommendations of the Woor-Dungin Criminal Record Discrimination Project that were endorsed by the Aboriginal Justice Forum in 2017.</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>\$2.5 million over two years was allocated in the 2021-22 Budget</p>	<p>The Scheme commences in December 2021 and is ongoing</p>	<p>Attorney General</p>
<p><b>Public Intoxication Reforms</b></p> <p>The Victorian Government has committed to decriminalising public drunkenness and implementing a holistic health model, statewide, to support intoxicated people in public and meet their immediate and long-term health needs.</p> <p>Public drunkenness offences have disproportionately affected Aboriginal Victorians and contributed to incarceration rates and deaths in custody. Repealing these offences was also a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.</p> <p>Parliament passed the Summary Offences Amendment (Decriminalisation of Public Drunkenness) Act 2020 (the Act) on 19 February 2021 as a critical first step. The Act repeals the public drunkenness offences in the Summary Offences Act 1966 and makes consequential amendments to the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 and the Bail Act 1977 to remove references to public drunkenness offences. The Act will commence on or before the 7 November 2022.</p> <p>Following this date, police will no longer be able to arrest a person for the sole offence of being intoxicated in public. The time prior to commencement will enable the development, trial and implementation of the health model.</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>Budget 2020/21</p> <p>\$16 m was provided to trial the health response to public intoxication.</p> <p>This funding is part of the DHHS Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation output</p> <p>Budget 2021/22</p> <p>\$9.5 million was allocated to the Department of Health to support these reforms.</p>	<p>The health model will be established statewide before the Act commences on 7 November 2022.</p> <p>Following this date, police will no longer be able to arrest a person for the sole offence of being intoxicated in public.</p>	<p>Attorney General</p>

<p><b>Aboriginal Healing Unit</b></p> <p>Under AJA4, Corrections Victoria committed to a 20-bed Aboriginal Healing Unit delivered collaboratively with the Aboriginal community. Utilising cultural strengthening as a protective factor and providing unique case management and support specifically developed for Aboriginal women in prison this initiative aims to reduce the overall over-representation of Aboriginal women in the criminal justice system. This project will contribute to the target by providing the necessary supports to Aboriginal women to build the essential life skills required to maintain pro-social connections following release from prison.</p>	New	\$4.846 million over four years provided through 2021-22 state budget and \$1.900 million provide for required infrastructure upgrades.	The Aboriginal Healing Unit is anticipated to commence operations in 2023.	Minister for Corrections
<p><b>Yawal Mugadjina Cultural Mentoring Program</b></p> <p>A three-stage program, Yawal Mugadjina aims to provide culturally tailored mentorship to Aboriginal prisoners to support their transition and reintegration. back into their communities. The program contributes to the target by helping reintegration and prevent recidivism. The program was designed in consultation with community members and sessions are delivered by Elders and Respected persons.</p>	Existing	Yes, funded through the 2017 Victorian State Budget.	Ongoing	Minister for Corrections
<p><b>Kaka Wangity Wangin Mirrie Cultural Program Suite.</b></p> <p>Kaka Wangity Wangin Mirrie Cultural Program Suite.</p> <p>Provides three years of grant funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled and Not for Profit organisations to deliver a suite of cultural programs within prisons and community corrections for Aboriginal prisoners and offenders. Programs are designed and delivered by Aboriginal community organisations and Aboriginal Justice Caucus members are invited to sit on the procurement panel to determine grant recipients. This grant program aligns with Priority Reform 1: Partnerships and Shared Decision Making.</p>	Existing	Funded through Ministerial grants.	Grants lapse 28 February 2023.	Minister for Corrections
<p><b>Ngarra Jarranounith Place (NJP)</b></p> <p>A 16-week intensive residential program to support Aboriginal men who use or are at risk of using family violence to make positive changes in their lives. The program offers intensive one-on-one support and group activities that focus on supporting and addressing: strong spirit and strong culture; taking responsibility; and healthy relationships.</p>	Existing	Initially funded through Ministerial grant. \$1.230 million over three years provided through 2021-22 state budget	2024	Minister for Corrections
<p><b>Wadamba Prison to Work Pilot</b></p> <p>The program provides access to employment services, career guidance and cultural support for offenders in custody as well as post release support. The program contributes to the target by providing young people with an opportunity to secure ongoing employment and prevent recidivism. The program was designed in consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal community and Aboriginal Justice Caucus.</p>	Existing	Funded through Commonwealth IAS grant which lapses in September 2021. \$1.835 million over two years provided through 2021-22 state budget	2023	Minister for Corrections



<p><b>The Torch – Statewide Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Program</b></p> <p>Art program delivered by the Torch, the SIAPC program reconnects Aboriginal people to their culture through development of art skills related to their individual language group. With pre-release and post release components the program supports Aboriginal people’s reintegration and economic development by providing them the opportunity to earn income through the promotion, licensing, and sale of artworks.</p>	Existing	\$1.488 million over two years provided through 2021-22 state budget	2023	Minister for Corrections
<p><b>Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers (AWOs)</b></p> <p>Continued support for AWOs. Established in response to the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, AWOs provide the foundation for all other cultural programs that support rehabilitation and reintegration and improve outcomes for Aboriginal prisoners by providing cultural and wellbeing support to Aboriginal prisoners, re-connecting Aboriginal prisoners to their family and community and engaging Aboriginal prisoners with relevant support services pre and post release. AWOs contribute to the target by supporting reconnection to culture and community and assisting with transition and reintegration supports.</p>	Existing	Positions initially funded using internal dollars. \$2.491 million over two years provided through 2021-22 state budget	Ongoing	Minister for Corrections

<b>Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system</b>				
<b>Target 11:</b> By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Is this action: existing, or changed/new</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Timeframe for completion</b>	<b>Minister Responsible</b>
Department of Justice and Community Safety actions:				
<p><b>Deliver additional Aboriginal led and community-based supports to further reduce over-representation through additional Victorian State Budget investment of \$11.9m over four years</b></p> <p>Funding is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding the <b>Community Based Koori Youth Justice Worker program</b> (including gender-specific responses for young women and after-hours support)</li> <li>Developing a place-based <b>Aboriginal youth justice hub</b> to provide Aboriginal led services to children and young people from early intervention and diversion through to responses that address the complex needs of Aboriginal young people.</li> <li>Re-establishing <b>Balit Ngulu, specialist Aboriginal youth legal service by VALS</b></li> <li>Supporting the Koorie Youth Council through <b>‘amplifying the Voice of Aboriginal children and young people’</b> by developing a mechanism to engage the voices of Aboriginal children and young people in the design and delivery of youth justice services</li> </ul> <p>Introducing Aboriginal Case Management Review Panels to help Aboriginal children have better and culturally rich lives away from the justice system.</p>	New	\$11.9 million over four years in the 2020-21 State Budget	2020-2024	Minister for Youth Justice

<p><b>The Koorie Youth Justice Taskforce</b>, was an AJA4 initiative jointly led by the Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People to explore the over representation of Aboriginal young people in the youth justice system. The Taskforce examined the cases of all Aboriginal children and young people on Youth Justice Orders (between 1 October 2018 and 31 March 2019), aiming to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• address issues that impact cultural connectedness, holistic wellbeing</li> <li>• review and update interventions and supports offered to those in the system</li> </ul> <p>identify and address systemic issues to overrepresentation.</p>	New	Part of \$10.8 million over four years in the 2018-19 State Budget	2018-2023	Minister for Youth Justice
<p><b>Services for Aboriginal children and young people in the community</b></p> <p>Programs and services which divert Aboriginal children and young people from Youth Justice, and support them to address offending behaviour, are delivered through 14 funded agencies across Victoria (mainly Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)). These include the Community Based Aboriginal Youth Justice Program, Koori Early School Leavers Program, Aboriginal Youth Support Service.</p> <p>Departmental programs and services available to Aboriginal children and young people in contact with youth justice include Koori Intensive Support Program and a Koori Court Advice Worker.</p>	New and Existing	Part of \$11.9 million over four years in the 2020-21 State Budget  Part of \$10.8 million over four years in the 2018-19 State Budget	Ongoing	Minister for Youth Justice
<p><b>Supports for Aboriginal Children in Custody</b></p> <p>Cultural and program supports are provided to Aboriginal young people in custody through the Aboriginal Liaison Officer program. Four Aboriginal Liaison Officers and a Team Leader provide intensive support to Aboriginal young people in custody with a focus on strengthening and maintaining connections to family and culture. Aboriginal young people can have a Cultural Support Plan and access to cultural support through Elder Inreach. Leadership development programs have been run for Aboriginal young women.</p>	Existing	Base funding	Ongoing	Minister for Youth Justice
<p><b>Additional supports to respond to COVID-19 Stay Deadly in Challenging Times package</b></p> <p>This package was released to support Aboriginal children and young people in contact with or at risk of contact with the youth justice system. The Stay Deadly in Challenging times included COVID-19 care packs and cultural programs.</p> <p>The COVID-19 Care Packs were provided to Aboriginal children exiting custody and involved with YJ programs in the community. Packs included Clothing the Gap Face-masks, art supplies, disposable masks, hand sanitisers and a culturally themed tote bag. Tailored communication materials developed in partnership with the Koorie Youth Council were included so that Aboriginal young people received accessible information within an Aboriginal youth cultural context.</p>	Existing	\$129,880 in 2020-21 \$154,000 2019-20	2020-21	Minister for Youth Justice

<p>Cultural programs included virtual yarning sessions facilitated by the Koorie Youth Council of Aboriginal young people engaged with Youth Justice programs in the community. These online sessions included guest speakers. Cultural mentoring programs through Strong Brother Strong Sister and Dardi Munwurro for Aboriginal young people in custody are also a part of the package.</p> <p><b>Additional brokerage funding</b> was also provided to Community Based Aboriginal Youth Justice organisations to provide the supports and resources required for young people during COVID-19.</p>				
<p><b>Aboriginal community led development of the first Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy under the umbrella of Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja (AJA4)</b></p> <p>The Aboriginal Justice Caucus are leading the development of the Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy to be further considered in 2021 by Caucus.</p>	Under development	Part of \$11.9 million over four years in the 2020-21 State Budget	2021	Minister for Youth Justice
<p><b>The Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030</b></p> <p>The new Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030 reflects a 10-year vision for delivering a leading youth justice system in Victoria. It sets out the ongoing commitment to reform Youth Justice, anchored by the Armytage and Ogloff Youth Justice Review and Strategy. This includes addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people as one of the eight focus areas of the plan and considered in all of Youth Justice's reforms.</p>	Existing (launched on 21 May 2020)	State Budget funding for significant investments in the plan	2020-2030	Minister for Youth Justice
<p><b>Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Project (AYCP)</b></p> <p>The Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program (AYCP) is a five-year program of work, funded through the Victorian Government's Community Safety Statement. AYCP seeks to address the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system, through greater use of cautioning and diversion options, through a community-led model based on the principles of self-determination, early intervention and harm-reduction.</p> <p>The AYCP is piloting a holistic community approach to divert young people, upon receiving a caution, from the justice system and into locally administered Aboriginal community programs. This pilot has been implemented in Bendigo, Dandenong and Echuca.</p>	Existing	Existing funding	Five years	Minister for Police and Emergency Services

**Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system**

**Target 12:** By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing actions:				
Establish the Victorian Aboriginal Family Reunification and Preservation Response to deliver immediate and intensive support to children at-risk of being placed in care, and to reunify children so they can return safely home.	New	\$335m over four years to implement the Response across the entire children and families' sector	Ongoing – no expiration date	Minister for Child Protection



Implement the Aboriginal response to child protection reports trial that enables ACCOs to investigate reports of Aboriginal children notified to child protection.	New	Funded through the Victorian government State budget until June 2024 for two pilot sites. \$11.6m over four years	April 2021 - June 2024.	Minister for Child Protection
Establish the Early intervention and prevention consortia model will trial different early intervention models at the child protection investigation stage. The ACCO will work closely with families to prevent entry into care.	New	Funded for 12-18 months as a trial in four locations to prevent entry into care. \$850,000	June 2021 - December 2022	Minister for Child Protection
Continue initiatives under Wungurilwil Gaggapduir which has been developed in consultation with the Aboriginal community, as well as with the input of Aboriginal services and key mainstream child service organisations.  The Strategic Action Plan details the steps which the sector needs to take in addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection and out-of-home care systems. A refreshed Strategic Action Plan is being developed through the Aboriginal Children's Forum, to operate from 2021-22 to the end of the 2023-2024 financial year. The current Strategic Action Olan expires at the end of the 2020-21 financial year.	Existing. Refreshed strategic action plan for financial years 2021-2024.	Since 2018, \$150 million of new Victorian Government investment has been provided to support the initiatives under <i>Wungurilwil Gaggapduir</i> .	Ongoing – no expiration date	Minister for Child Protection
Continue transitioning Aboriginal Children to ACCOs programs: This initiative transfers case management of Aboriginal children in care from the department to Aboriginal community controlled organisations. It enables ACCOs to undertake daily case management of Aboriginal children on a specific order.	Existing including growth for 673 children.	Funded through the Victorian government state budget on an ongoing basis. \$15.0 million per annum	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
Continue commitment to the Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (section 18/guardianship) enables ACCOs to assume full responsibility of children on a final court order.	Existing including growth for 396 children	Funded through the Victorian government state budget on an ongoing basis. \$12.2 million per annum	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
Commitment to develop cultural plans for all Aboriginal children in care, this is essential for Aboriginal children in care to maintain and strengthen their Aboriginal identity and encourage their connection to their Aboriginal family, culture and community.  The ACCO is funded by the department to assist in the development of the cultural plan and the ACCO CEO approves the final plan.	Existing	Funded through the Victorian government state budget on an ongoing basis	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
Continue suite of Family Services that provide a range of service responses, varying in intensity, for vulnerable children and their families to promote children's safety, stability and healthy development and learning from pre-birth up to 18 years and support children to remain safely at home.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection
Continue suite of Parenting Services that provide support the safety, wellbeing, and healthy development of children by providing early help to parents to develop their confidence and the skills to respond positively to parenting challenges.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Child Protection

Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households are safe				
<b>Target 13:</b> By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50% as progress towards zero.				
Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Justice and Community Safety actions:				
Design and implement the Dhelk Dja Fund to enable Aboriginal organisations to deliver more frontline family violence services.	New	\$18.2m through the Dhelk Dja Fund	March 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Finalise an Aboriginal Family Violence Industry Strategy to strengthen Aboriginal frontline family violence services.	Existing	2017-18 Family Violence Industry Planning (\$95.5m over 4 years) Funded from existing budget	June 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Design and establish Aboriginal Access Points alongside The Orange Door network to increase service choice for Aboriginal people.	New	2019-20 Dhelk Dja Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Plan (\$28.8m over 4 years) Funded from existing budget	December 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Finalise the Orange Door Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan and best practice model for supporting Aboriginal clients of The Orange Door.	Existing	2017-18 Family Violence Industry Planning Funded from existing budget	June 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Strengthen Aboriginal-led prevention through a refreshed Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework.	Existing	Existing Funding	December 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Undertake a comprehensive mapping of Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention programs and initiatives to identify strengths and gaps in current effort and opportunities for building further effort (led by Respect Victoria)	Existing	2017-18 Family Violence Industry Planning Funded from existing budget	September 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Initiate a large scale action research project on primary prevention of family violence in Aboriginal communities, designed and led by Aboriginal communities	New	Funded from existing budget	End 2022	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
Investment in the Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund, which enables 11 Dhelk Dja Action Groups across Victoria to support local Aboriginal community-led family violence prevention and education projects.	Existing	2017-18 Therapeutic Interventions Reform (Counselling & Therapeutic Supports: Capacity building initiatives) \$1.1m ongoing	Ongoing	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs

Invest in the Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Innovation Fund to enable 11 Aboriginal-led organisations to deliver innovative initiatives aimed at strengthening the factors that protect against family violence.	Existing	2017-18 Prevention of Family Violence Strategy (\$3.295m)  Funded from existing budget	June 2021	Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Aboriginal Affairs
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### Outcome 14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing

**Target 14:** Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Health actions:				
Development of a place-based postvention framework in Gippsland in partnership with Gippsland Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and other service networks such as Gippsland Primary Health Network to provide better support to Gippsland Aboriginal communities.	New	Existing Funding	2021-22 – 2022-23	Minister for Mental Health
Engage in a Data monitoring partnership with Coroners Court via the Koori Family Liaison Officer to monitor and respond to the passing by suicide of Aboriginal people in Victoria.	Existing	Existing Funding	Ongoing	Minister for Mental Health
Establish the Yarning SafeNStrong 24 hour Aboriginal helpline to provide counselling support to callers who experience anxiety, distress and mental health challenges. Yarning SafeNStrong provides outbound referrals to local ACCOs who provide social and emotional wellbeing and mental health services as well as referrals to other support services (state-wide and local services) to callers who wish to be contacted.	Existing	\$1,500,000	2020-21	Minister for Mental Health
Implement pilot projects under Balit Murrup to improve the mental health outcomes for Aboriginal communities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of four demonstration projects led by ACCHOs in partnership with mainstream health services to trial new multi-disciplinary models of care that provide continuity of care, self-determination, and culturally safe and responsive support for Aboriginal people, families and communities across services.</li> <li>• Growth of the Aboriginal mental health workforce by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Increasing 10 clinical and therapeutic positions in selected Aboriginal community-controlled organisations across rural and metropolitan areas. to deliver services that are culturally responsive and embed Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.</li> <li>◦ Establishing of 10 Aboriginal Mental Health Traineeships within eight area mental health services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Existing	Total \$28,600,000	Funded to June 2022	Minister for Mental Health



## Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023

### Appendix A

<p>Work collaboratively to implement interim and final report findings of the Royal Commission into Mental Health. Key actions from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System interim report to be progressed under VACCHO-MHRV Partnership include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing and expanding multidisciplinary social and emotional wellbeing teams in Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations</li> <li>• Delivery of scholarships to enable Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing team members to obtain recognised clinical mental health qualifications from approved public tertiary providers, with a minimum of 30 scholarships awarded over the next five years</li> <li>• Establishment of a Centre for Excellence in Social and Emotional Wellbeing, to be developed, hosted and maintained by VACCHO.</li> <li>• Resourcing Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services to provide Aboriginal children and young people to access specialist mental health services and family-oriented therapeutic treatment.</li> <li>• Resourcing Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations to commission the delivery of social and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people.</li> <li>• Co-designing the future establishment of two healing centres</li> <li>• Working with an Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Service to design and establish a culturally appropriate, family oriented service for infants and children who require intensive social and emotional wellbeing supports.</li> </ul>	New	\$116 million over four years, \$32 million ongoing: 2021-22 State Budget	From 2020-21 -Ongoing	Minister for Mental Health
<p>Continue implementation of Decriminalisation of public drunkenness: Establishing social and emotional wellbeing pathways for Aboriginal people who are intoxicated in public and may be at risk of suicide</p>	New	Existing	November 2022	Minster for Mental Health
Department of Transport actions:				
<p>Transport will proactively implement initiatives that seek to end systemic racism and the associated mental health impacts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting and celebrating Aboriginal culture and heritage internally and across the Victorian transport program</li> <li>• Providing culturally safe and accessible transport services</li> <li>• Providing culturally safe workplaces, including through provision of pastoral and cultural care and support to Aboriginal staff.</li> </ul>	Existing.	Existing Funding	2023 (ongoing)	<p>Minister for Transport Infrastructure</p> <p>Minister for Suburban Rail Loop</p> <p>Minister for Public Transport</p> <p>Minister for Roads and Road Safety</p> <p>Minister for Ports and Freight</p> <p>Minister for Fishing and Boating</p>

**Outcome 15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters**

**Target 15a:** By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in Australia's landmass subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests

Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Continue to work with Traditional Owners for the protection of cultural heritage under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Identify and connect programmed efforts to support protection and promotion of Aboriginal Heritage.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Strengthen Traditional Owner decision-making in biodiversity planning.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
DELWP will incorporate support for finalising negotiations and implementation of new native title determinations and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreements involving public lands and waters.	New	Subject to government decisions for TOSA settlements	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Work with Traditional Owners to develop guidance and explore opportunities to invest in renewable energy in DELWP.	Existing	Existing Funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Fund Traditional Owner Corporations to establish their own pathways to implement the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy	New	\$22.6 million over 4 years, with \$6.3 million ongoing allocated in 21/22 State budget	30 June 2022	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Work with Traditional Owners to devise and establish culturally appropriate governance arrangements for the leadership of cultural landscapes management and fire practice.	New	Funded from existing budget	31 December 2021	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Work with the State-wide Caring for Country Partnerships Forum to recognise barriers and opportunities to Aboriginal self-determination in the area of heritage protection and management on public land.	Existing	Existing funding	October 2021	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Work with Traditional Owner Corporations to fund and build internal capacity to deliver the full range of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management services to DELWP	New	Funding provided as part of the Delivering Victoria's Regional Forest Agreement commitments 2021-25 State Budget allocation. Specific funding allocations still be finalised	30 June 2025	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change

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Work with Traditional Owner Corporations to establish their own pathways to implement the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape Strategy and partnership in the management of state forests	New	Funding provided as part of the Reducing Bushfire Risk in a Rapidly Changing Climate 2021-25 State Budget allocation. Specific funding allocations still to be finalised determined	30 June 2025	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Department of Justice and Community Safety actions:				
Conclude the native title claim process in the Federal Court for the Eastern Maar people. This action is anticipated to increase the landmass covered by a positive native title determination	Existing – the claim was made in December 2012, and actively prosecuted towards a consent determination outcome since December 2018.	The Eastern Maar legal costs are met by FNLRS, which receives funding from the NIAA for that purpose	2021-2022, depending on actions of respondent parties and the Federal Court	The state minister responsible is the Attorney-Genera
Enter into agreements under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act with the Eastern Maar people and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement under the Native Title Act. The TOS Act agreement would increase the landmass covered by a state-based land justice framework and include rights over land on which native title does not exist.	Existing – the state and Eastern Maar commenced negotiations in late 2017.	The Eastern Maar legal costs are met by FNLRS, which receives funding from the NIAA for that purpose.  The state provides funding to Eastern Maar’s corporation to enable it to engage in negotiations and prepare for implementation.  The state pays native title compensation and other funding to support the agreements.	2021-2022	The state minister responsible is the Attorney-General.
Conclude the native title claim process in the Federal Court for the First People Millewa Mallee people. This action is anticipated to increase the landmass covered by a positive native title determination.	Existing – the claim was made in December 2015, and actively prosecuted towards a consent determination outcome since December 2018.	The legal costs are met by FNLRS, which receives funding from the NIAA for that purpose	2021-2022, depending on actions of respondent parties and the Federal Court	The state minister responsible is the Attorney-General
Enter into agreements under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act with the First Peoples Millewa Mallee people and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement under the Native Title Act. The TOS Act agreement would increase the landmass covered by a state-based land justice framework and include rights over land on which native title does not exist.	Existing – the state and Eastern Maar commenced negotiations in late 2017.	The legal costs are met by FNLRS, which receives funding from the NIAA for that purpose.  The state provides funding to Millewa Mallee’s corporation to enable it to engage in negotiations and prepare for implementation.	2021	The state minister responsible is the Attorney-General.



Department of Transport actions				
Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Transport actions				
The transport portfolio will continue to work with Victorian Traditional Owners to ensure compliance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth) and Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010. Under this legislation the transport portfolio recognises Registered Aboriginal Parties as having responsibilities in managing and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage on Country	Existing	Existing Funding	2023 (ongoing)	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating
<b>Target 15b:</b> By 2030, a 15 per cent increase in areas covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests in the sea.				
Action	Is this action: existing, or changed/new	Funding	Timeframe for completion	Minister Responsible
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Increase the number of DELWP projects and initiatives where Aboriginal people are accessing water for economic development and other self-determining purposes.	Existing	Existing Funding	30 June 2024	Minister for Water
Strengthen Traditional Owner decision-making in sustainable water management.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2024	Minister for Water
Delivery of DELWP Aboriginal Water Program	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2024	Minister for Water
Development of the Cultural Landscapes Strategy. Written by Traditional Owners, the strategy will set out how Traditional Owners can lead planning and management of Country in line with cultural obligations to care for Country	Existing	\$350,000	2021	Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Cultural Fire Strategy implementation	Existing	\$22.5 million	Ongoing	Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
Department of Justice and Community Safety actions:				
The Eastern Maar native title consent determination and TOS Act agreements are anticipated to include sea country. The area of sea country is to be determined.	Existing – the state and Eastern Maar commenced negotiations in late 2017.	The legal costs are met by FNLRS, which receives funding from the NIAA for that purpose.  The state provides funding to Eastern Maar corporation to enable it to engage in negotiations and prepare for implementation.	2021-2023, depending on how long is required for negotiations.	The state minister responsible is the Attorney-General.

<b>Outcome 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing</b>				
<b>Target 16: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken</b>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Is this action: existing, or changed/new</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Timeframe for completion</b>	<b>Minister Responsible</b>
Department of Education and Training actions:				
Continue to work with VACL, VAEAI, and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to support kindergartens and schools delivering Aboriginal language programs and ensure these are culturally safe and respectful of Traditional Owners.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Education Minister for Early Childhood Minister for Training and Skills
Continuing Aboriginal Languages Training Initiative to deliver support for Koorie learners in VET and adult education. This funding will support the licensing and contextualisation of two new nationally accredited courses, Certificate II and III in Learning an Australian First Nations Language and ongoing delivery of the Certificates to a cohort of up to 20 students per year.	Existing	\$2.7 million over 4 years, \$0.7 million ongoing	2016-2026	Minister for Education Minister for Early Childhood Minister for Training and Skills
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Continue exploration of a Aboriginal language and culture revitalisation program.	Existing	Existing funding	Ongoing	Minister for Energy, Environment & Climate Change
Identify and connect programmed efforts to support protection and promotion of Aboriginal Heritage.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Planning
Continue to work with Traditional Owners for the protection of cultural heritage under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016.	Existing	Existing funding	30 June 2022	Minister for Education
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning actions:				
Under the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self-Determination Plan 2020-23 continue to work with Aboriginal Victorians and Victorian Traditional Owners to identify ways to recognise and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage, including language with Victorian Traditional Owners. This includes working with DELWP to deliver workshops on place naming legislation and Traditional Owner engagement to transport staff.	Existing	Existing funding	2023 (ongoing)	Minister for Transport Infrastructure Minister for Suburban Rail Loop Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads and Road Safety Minister for Ports and Freight Minister for Fishing and Boating

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