

# Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023



**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government



Murray River, Mildura © Jacqui Barker/WikimediaCommons



**Cover image:** Djirri Djirri Dance Group performing at Smith Street Dreaming.  
**Photo:** Mikaela Egan. Used with permission of Djirri Djirri Dance Group.

## Acknowledgement

We proudly acknowledge Victoria's First Nations peoples and their ongoing strength in practising 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 respect to their Elders past and present.

Victoria's Aboriginal communities continue to strengthen and grow with the ongoing practice of language, lore and cultural knowledge. We recognise the contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life and how this continues to enrich our society more broadly. We acknowledge the contributions of generations of Aboriginal leaders who have come before us, who have fought tirelessly for the rights of their people and communities.

We acknowledge Aboriginal self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we commit to working towards a future of equality, justice and strength.

Finally, we acknowledge that there are long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation and dispossession. The reality of colonisation involved the establishment of Victoria with the specific intent of excluding Aboriginal people and their laws, culture, customs and traditions. Over time, the development of Victorian laws, policies, systems and structures explicitly excluded Aboriginal Victorians, resulting in and entrenching systemic and structural racism. We acknowledge that the impact and structures of colonisation still exist today. Despite the past and present impacts of colonisation, Aboriginal people, families and communities remain strong and resilient.

## Language statement

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria. Whilst the terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are commonly used to describe Aboriginal people of southeast Australia, we have used the term 'Aboriginal' to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in Victoria.

The use of the words 'our' and 'we' throughout this document refers to the Victorian Government.

## Artist statement



**Mikaela Egan**

I'm a proud Muthi Muthi/Gunditjmara woman. I grew up in Mildura and have been living in Melbourne for ten years. I'm an artist/photographer and Aboriginal health promotion officer. I have a great love for creating and capturing moments in time. I put passion and soul into all areas of my work and I love working in my community to help create healthier lives for our mob. I believe that we can truly set an example by being the change we wish to see in order to achieve better outcomes for our people.

My philosophy in life is to create change and evoke healing in our own lives and communities in order to move forward and live our best possible lives with the resources that we have. As a creative I am able to express myself and my culture through different art forms and I am truly blessed to be able to openly share that with not only the Aboriginal community but all Australians.



**Hollie Johnson**

I am a proud Gunai Kurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman currently living in Gippsland, Victoria. Growing up, I was fortunate enough to learn about my culture and traditions from my grandparents who I admire and respect deeply. I graduated from RMIT with a Bachelor of Arts Photography in 2016, and am currently the Program Manager for AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience) Gippsland and freelance in my spare time.

I have done work for Parks New South Wales, Yirramboi Festival through the City of Melbourne, Latrobe City Council, among others. I was the first student to study the VCE Indigenous Languages of Victoria, and I continue to practise language with hopes to study linguistics and teaching in the future. I hope to combine my knowledge and skills to start up my own business that will support up-and-coming Indigenous artists and people.



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*We need more Aboriginal people's voices in decision-making... it's not just good practice, it's good business.*

Community forum participant, Morwell

*Consult with Aboriginal people, sit down with them and have a yarn - if you want to close the gap you need to address the social determinants of health.*

Online survey respondent

## Message from the Premier



Like previous frameworks, this document lays out our state's approach to Aboriginal affairs.

It provides the metrics, the targets and the priorities to guide our progress forward.

But it also represents a new way of doing business. A new approach to Aboriginal affairs, with the voices of Aboriginal people at its heart.

Because, a decade on from the Closing the Gap agreement, there is no more evident truth: we only achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal people when that all-important work is led by Aboriginal people.

Here in Victoria we're making progress, passing our nation's first-ever treaty legislation into law.

But as this document – the product of consultation with Aboriginal communities across our state – shows, our work is far from over.

It's why we must keep listening to – and being led by – Aboriginal people, families and communities.

Because a more just, more equal, more decent future for Aboriginal people can only mean a more just, more equal, more decent future for our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Dan Andrews'.

**The Hon Daniel Andrews MP**  
Premier of Victoria



# Message from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



I am honoured in my role as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to present the new *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*.

The VAAF is the Victorian Government's plan for working with Aboriginal Victorians to close the gap. I would like to express my thanks to all community members who shared their time and wisdom. We hope that you see your voice reflected in these pages.

I would also like to thank the Aboriginal Executive Council for their advisory role in progressing whole-of-government self-determination reform.

The VAAF tells an important story about Aboriginal Victorians. It tells a story of strong, resilient Aboriginal people, families and communities who have great aspirations for their lives. It turns the spotlight on government and what actions must be taken to address the enduring impacts of colonisation.

The new VAAF recognises that positive change must involve government transforming to deliver culturally safe and community-owned services and programs. The VAAF sets out guiding principles that will underpin all future work to progress self-determination.

We know that transforming government will take time. We have started that process, with Aboriginal Victorians leading the way.

Together, we will help create a future where all Aboriginal people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Natalie Hutchins".

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

# 1

# PLAN





*There needs to be opportunities  
for everyone to have their voices  
heard and be listened to.*

Community forum participant, Geelong

# The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023

The goals, objectives, measures and self-determination guiding principles and actions within the VAAF set a clear direction for how government will **'Plan'**, **'Act'**, **'Measure'** and **'Evaluate'** to progress change across government, address inequity and deliver stronger outcomes for and with Aboriginal Victorians.

## Our purpose

The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (the VAAF) provides an ambitious and forward-looking agenda for Aboriginal affairs. The VAAF has two key purposes:

1. It is the Victorian Government's overarching framework for working with Aboriginal Victorians, organisations and the wider community to drive action and improve outcomes.
2. It sets out whole of government self-determination enablers and principles, and commits government to significant structural and systemic transformation.

Since 2006, Victoria has implemented whole-of-government frameworks to address the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

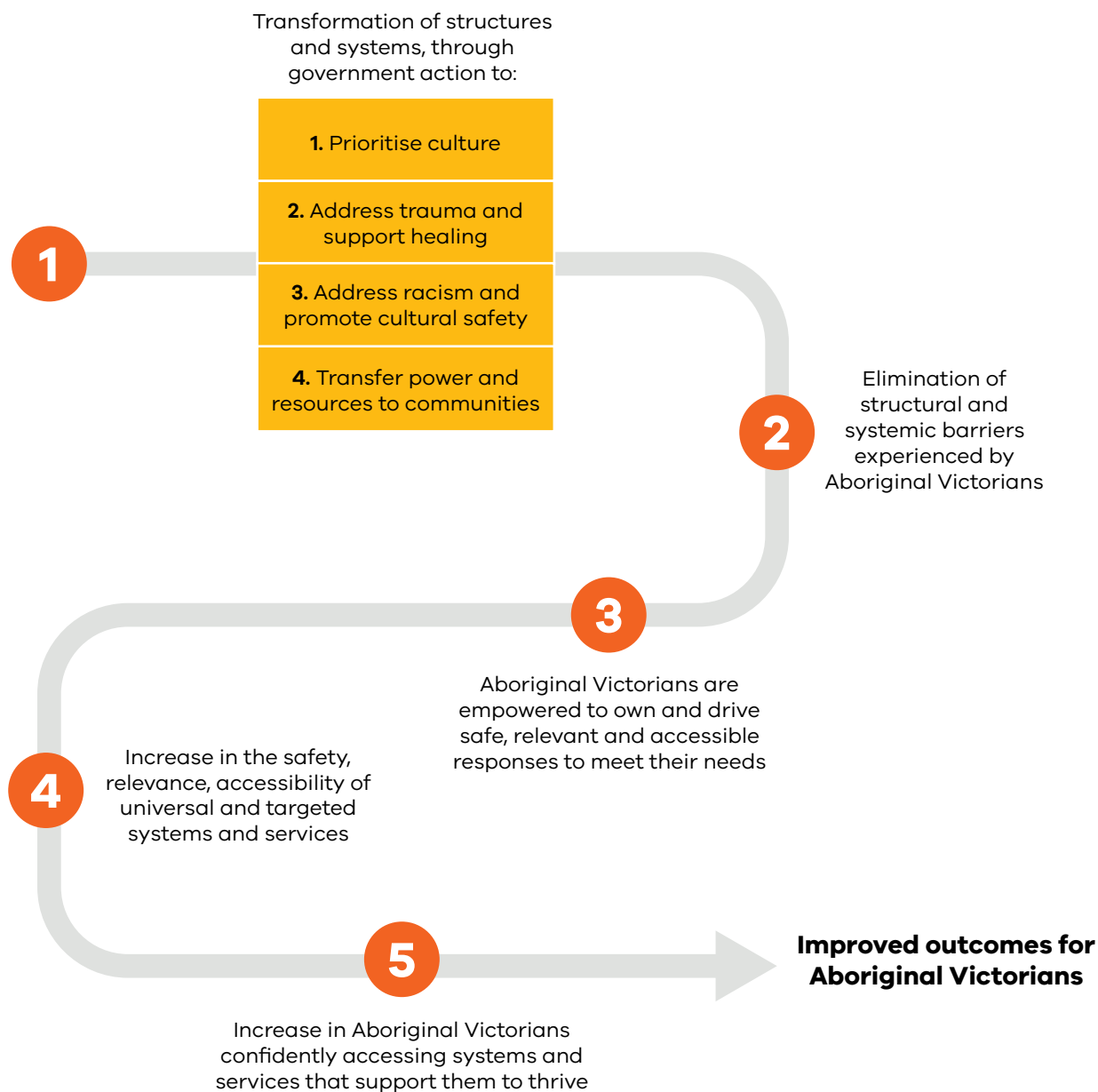
Victorians. This has included the national Closing the Gap agenda since its commencement in 2008. These frameworks have reflected the Victorian context, including the unique voices, strength, resilience and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Past government reporting in Aboriginal affairs focused on 'how Aboriginal people are faring'. While this VAAF still has a focus on measuring improvements in people's lives, it has transitioned to a new approach that enables community to hold government to account. The VAAF recognises that to achieve positive outcomes, we must fundamentally change the way governments work with Aboriginal people.

*All community should have a voice: children, young people, Elders.*

Community forum participant, Robinvale

## VAAF action logic



## Our shared vision

Our shared vision is that: 'All Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives.'

There has been significant investment and policy development contributing to strengthened cultural, economic, political and social outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Despite these efforts, much more needs to be done.

This vision acknowledges that Aboriginal aspiration extends *beyond* closing the gap towards long-term generational change and improved outcomes for all Victorian Aboriginal people, families and communities. It reflects our move away from just measuring life expectancy towards what Aboriginal people *expect* out of life.

We know that Aboriginal people know what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. Self-determination is the human right that underpins this vision and our collective efforts under the VAAF.

*Self-determination makes you feel like you should be happy, safe and content to live where you want. For you to have access and be treated equitably, but also for your mob too.*

Community forum participant, Lakes Entrance



## Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

**Our shared vision:** 'All Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives.'

### Self-determination enablers: What we'll do

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

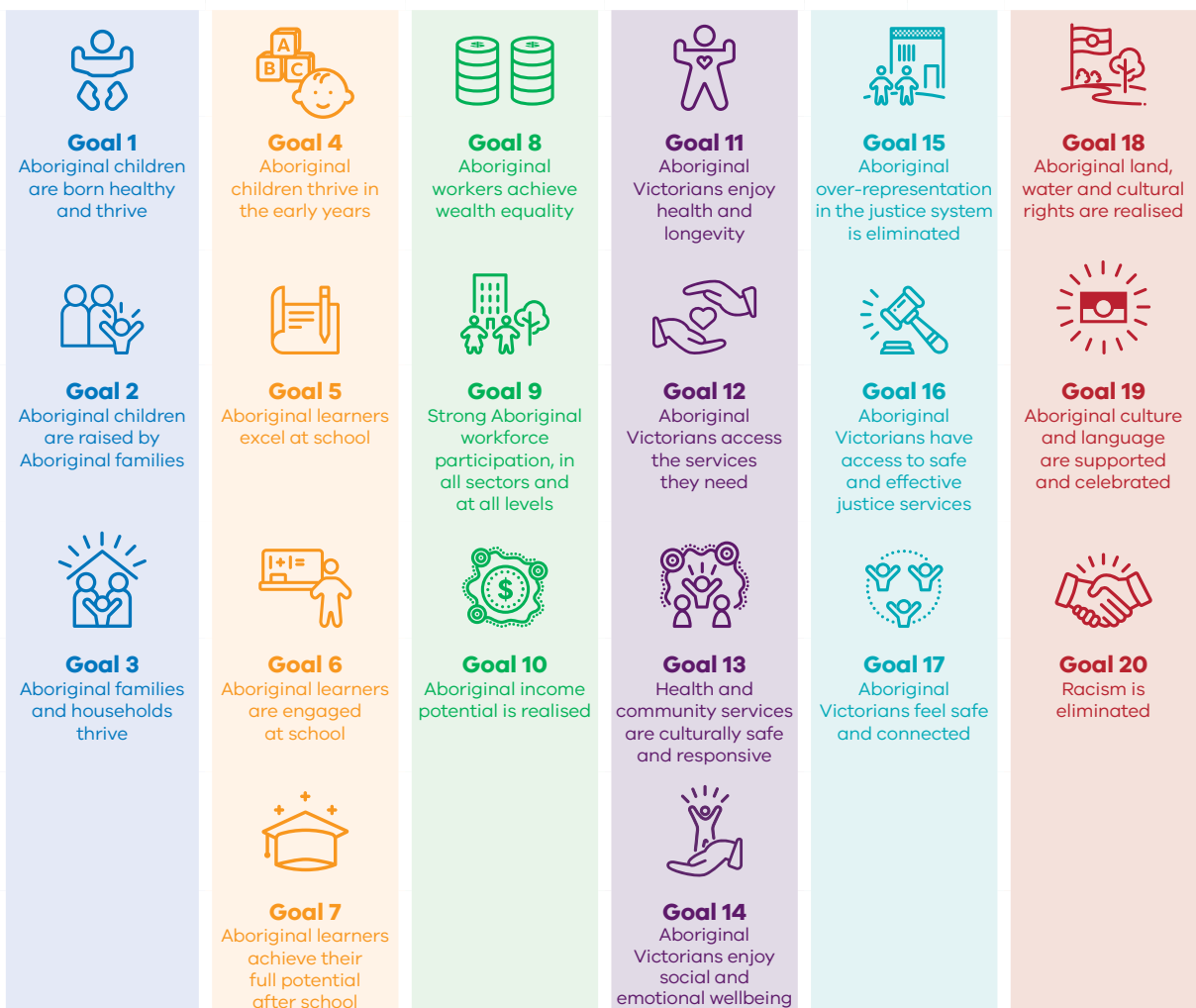
### Self-determination guiding principles: How we'll do it

- Human rights
- Cultural integrity
- Commitment
- Aboriginal expertise
- Partnership
- Investment
- Decision-making
- Empowerment
- Cultural safety
- Equity
- Accountability

### Domains



### Goals



## The journey so far

Victoria is leading the way on self-determination by ensuring Aboriginal Victorians are at the heart of decision-making on the matters that affect their lives.

2018 marked ten years since the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments signed the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap). The Victorian Government has undertaken extensive community engagement across the state to understand community perspectives on the previous national Closing the Gap agenda and the VAAF to ensure that Victoria's approach reflects Aboriginal voices.

More than 600 Aboriginal Victorians shared their wisdom and expertise on what the VAAF should look like. Open community forums and workshops were held throughout 2018 in 20 metro and regional communities across six regions: Loddon Mallee, Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume and Melbourne.

We heard from Elders, community members, Aboriginal organisations, mainstream services and government representatives. Conversations were held in a range of settings, including Aboriginal co-operatives, gathering places, community halls, sporting clubs and health services. There was a diversity of voices and experiences within the communities we visited, as well as common themes and aspirations. A summary of the community engagement activities can be found at *Appendix 1*.

In addition to the perspectives and voices of Aboriginal Victorians heard through community engagement, the VAAF builds on the reform and advocacy that has occurred in Aboriginal affairs and the contributions of generations of Victorian Aboriginal leaders.







*The government needs to be accountable to respecting and really listening and tuning into what the options are.*

Community forum participant,  
Lakes Entrance

# Some of the key milestones in Aboriginal affairs since 2006



## March 2015

The Victorian Government commits to **self-determination** as the new policy framework to guide Aboriginal affairs in Victoria.

## June 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak representative organisations from across Australia release the **Redfern Statement**, calling for a more just approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and for the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to address unacceptable disadvantage experienced by First Peoples.

## 2018

COAG agrees to launch a **refresh of Closing the Gap** and considers new national targets.

**Victoria undertakes wide community engagement on the VAAF** responding to the call from Aboriginal Victorians to further embed self-determination within policy design and promote community-led priority setting.

## May 2016

The call for treaty by Aboriginal Victorians is heard. The Victorian Government holds the **first Victorian Treaty Forum** to bring together Victoria's Aboriginal communities and discuss how to advance self-determination, a treaty and an Aboriginal representative body.



## May 2017

The **Uluru Statement from the Heart**, released by delegates of the First Nations National Constitutional Convention, calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution, and a Makarrata Commission to supervise an agreement making and truth-telling process between governments and First Nations.



## 2018

The **Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission** is established to strengthen independence for Aboriginal Victorians on the pathway to treaty and ensure they remain at the heart of the process. In June 2018, **Victoria passes Australia's first treaty legislation**. The *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* requires government to work with the Aboriginal Representative Body to establish the entities, rules and resource base necessary to support future treaty negotiations.



## The VAAF complements existing strategies

Aboriginal communities and organisations are working in partnership with government to embed self-determination and improve outcomes across a range of government policies, strategies and reforms.

Across Victoria, there are many community-led and culturally responsive initiatives and strategies underway that embed Aboriginal self-determination, and strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal organisations, mainstream organisations and government.

These strategies are about advancing Aboriginal self-determination and ensuring the voices of Aboriginal Victorians are at the heart of decision-making across policies, programs and practices throughout our state.

### The VAAF links existing strategies

Rather than replacing or redirecting existing strategies, the VAAF provides the overarching whole-of-government framework to link this work. The VAAF acknowledges, aligns with and champions these existing initiatives and strategies.

As the overarching framework for Aboriginal affairs, the VAAF provides broad accountabilities for all areas of government, and provides a consistent foundation that complements the objectives and outcomes of existing strategies.

While existing strategies may have more detailed goals and specific targets related to their individual areas of accountability, the VAAF includes broad aspirational goals and directions that work towards achieving equity of outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

### The VAAF allows us to monitor progress and challenges across all areas of life

There are many different and complex factors that affect the lives of Aboriginal Victorians. These factors don't exist in isolation – the realities and outcomes experienced in one part of a person's life and identity influence the outcomes experienced in other aspects of their life.

The VAAF, and the Victorian Government, acknowledges the inter-relationship between outcomes, and sets goals and objectives across all areas of life. The VAAF also allows us to critically assess the diverse social structures and policies in place as well as the accessibility of services, acknowledging their impact on outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Reporting against each of the VAAF's goals and objectives will, over time, give us a clearer picture of the progress government and community are making in partnership across all areas of life for Aboriginal Victorians, as well as the challenges we still need to address.



**The VAAF's relationship with existing strategies**

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023					
<p><b>1. Children, family &amp; home</b></p>	<p><b>2. Learning &amp; skills</b></p>	<p><b>3. Opportunity &amp; prosperity</b></p>	<p><b>4. Health &amp; wellbeing</b></p>	<p><b>5. Justice &amp; safety</b></p>	<p><b>6. Culture &amp; Country</b></p>
<p>Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children</p> <hr/> <p>Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement</p> <hr/> <p>Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement 2018-2028, Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families</p>	<p>Education State Reform Agenda</p> <hr/> <p>Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026</p> <hr/> <p>Early Childhood Reform Plan</p> <hr/> <p>Education State schools initiatives</p> <hr/> <p>Skills First</p>	<p>Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy 2013-2020</p> <hr/> <p>Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-2021</p>	<p>Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027</p> <hr/> <p>Balit Murrup: Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework 2017-2027</p> <hr/> <p>Absolutely Everyone: State Disability Plan 2017-2020</p>	<p>Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja: Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement – Phase 4</p>	<p>Safer Together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria</p> <hr/> <p>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016</p> <hr/> <p>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</p> <hr/> <p>Water for Victoria</p> <hr/> <p>Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018*</p>

\*The Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018 relates to all domain areas.

# 2

## ACT





*Truly self-determining structures need to be designed by Aboriginal people, but not just replicating the existing power structures that exist in the Aboriginal community currently.*

Community forum participant, Ballarat

# The VAAF is underpinned by Aboriginal self-determination

Self-determination is the guiding principle in Aboriginal affairs. Aboriginal self-determination underpinned the development of the VAAF, as it will underpin all future action across Victoria.

Aboriginal self-determination is not a new concept. For decades, Aboriginal Victorians have fought for self-determination and their right to make decisions on matters that affect their lives and communities.

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. It also describes self-determination as a right that relates to groups of people, not only individuals.<sup>1</sup>

While UNDRIP gives us a language to talk about self-determination, Aboriginal Victorians must not feel constrained by the definition set out in UNDRIP. Inherent to self-determination is the right of Aboriginal Victorians to define for themselves what self-determination means.

We have heard from community that Aboriginal self-determination encompasses a spectrum of rights that are necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve economic, social and cultural equity, based on their own cultural values and way of life. This includes rights to:

- not be discriminated against
- enjoy language, culture and heritage
- land and natural resources
- have access to the basic necessities of life and be economically self-sufficient
- make decisions that impact their lives from a position of wellbeing and empowerment
- 'grassroots community' having ownership and responsibility for their own affairs and their own communities, including through designing and delivering policy and services on their own terms, setting their own funding priorities and holding their service providers accountable.

## There are three reasons Aboriginal self-determination underpins the VAAF

### IT WORKS

Aboriginal Victorians hold the knowledge and expertise about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. Local and international evidence shows us that self-determination is the key policy approach that has produced effective and sustainable outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

### IT IS WHAT COMMUNITY WANTS

Aboriginal Victorians have consistently and long called for self-determination as the key enabler for Aboriginal people, families and communities to thrive.

### IT IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Australia is a signatory to international law instruments, including UNDRIP, that affirm the right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples.



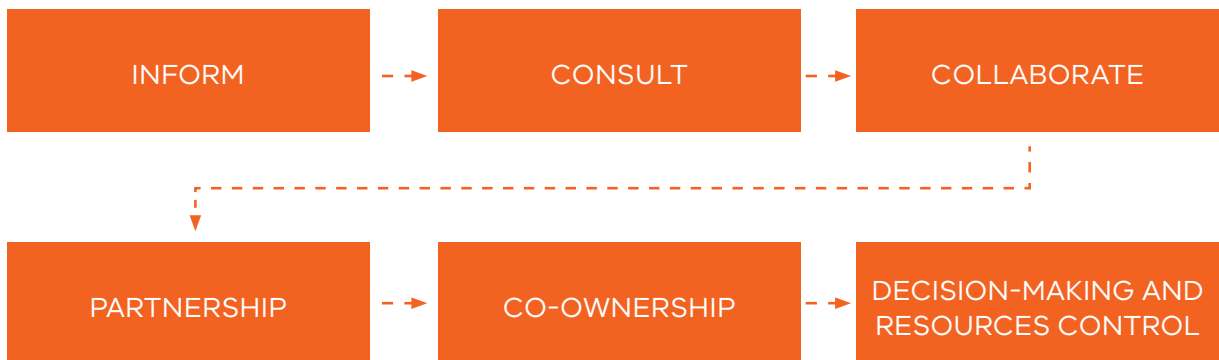
# Understanding government's efforts to advance Aboriginal self-determination

The Victorian Government recognises that Aboriginal self-determination involves more than consulting and partnering with Aboriginal Victorians on policies and programs that affect their lives.

There is a continuum that leads to Aboriginal self-determination, ranging from informing community through to transferring decision-making control. We acknowledge that different policies, initiatives and strategies across government are at different stages of advancing self-determination.

In our journey towards making Aboriginal self-determination a reality, government should continue to strive towards transferring decision-making control to Aboriginal peoples and community on the matters that affect their lives.

## ***Continuum towards Aboriginal self-determination***



*Self-determination is about community voice, led by community, measured by community, relating to the whole community.*

Community forum participant, Mildura

# Our future action will be underpinned by 11 self-determination guiding principles

The Victorian Government's future action to advance Aboriginal self-determination will be driven by 11 guiding principles of self-determination.

The self-determination principles have been developed following extensive community engagement with Aboriginal Victorians. They set the minimum standards for all existing and future work with Aboriginal Victorians. While different policies, initiatives and strategies across government are at different stages of

advancing self-determination, these principles provide a 'common language' for what Aboriginal self-determination looks like in practice.

These principles will underpin all action to progress Aboriginal self-determination.

## Self-determination guiding principles

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Self-determination initiatives honour the norms set out in UNDRIP and Victoria's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

### CULTURAL INTEGRITY

As First Nations peoples, the rich, thriving cultures, knowledge and diverse experiences of Aboriginal people, including where they fit with family, community and society, will be recognised, valued, heard and celebrated.

### COMMITMENT

Aboriginal self-determination will be advanced and embedded through planned action that is endorsed by, and accountable to, all parties.

### ABORIGINAL EXPERTISE

Government and agencies will seek out, value and embed Aboriginal culture, knowledge, expertise and diverse perspectives in policies and practice.

### PARTNERSHIP

Partnerships will advance Aboriginal autonomy through equitable participation, shared authority and decision-making, and will be underpinned by cultural integrity.

### DECISION-MAKING

Decision-makers will respect the right to free, prior and informed consent and individual choice and will prioritise the transfer of decision-making power to Aboriginal people in areas that impact their communities.

### EMPOWERMENT

Aboriginal people will have autonomy and participation in the development, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of legislation, policies and programs that impact their communities.

### CULTURAL SAFETY

Programs and services accessed by Aboriginal people will be inclusive, respectful, responsive and relevant, and informed by culturally safe practice frameworks.

### INVESTMENT

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.

### EQUITY

Systemic and structural racism, discrimination and unconscious bias and other barriers to Aboriginal self-determination will be actively identified and eliminated.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

All parties responsible for delivering outcomes involving Aboriginal people will be held accountable and subject to Aboriginal-led, independent and transparent oversight.

# We will prioritise action in four key areas

While government must not define or control Aboriginal self-determination, it does control many of the systems and structures that enable it. Government must therefore transform its systems and structures to support self-determination and improve outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

We acknowledge that the way government enables Aboriginal self-determination will continue to evolve over time, based on changing community expectations and needs. However, community has identified four self-determination enablers which government must commit to and act upon over the next five years to make Aboriginal self-determination a reality:

1. Prioritise culture
2. Address trauma and support healing
3. Address racism and promote cultural safety
4. Transfer power and resources to communities.

To help guide government's work, community has proposed broad areas in which government should prioritise its efforts.

These areas for action will require government and community to work together to develop a more detailed understanding of how such initiatives could be developed and implemented.

As detailed in the 'Evaluate' section of the VAAF, government will be held accountable for delivering on this work through an Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism. The Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism will include qualitative reporting on:

- efforts to progress the self-determination guiding principles
- implementation of the broad areas for action that support the four self-determination enablers.

In addition, government's self-determination action will be reported to community via an annual tabling of a whole-of-government progress report on the VAAF in Parliament.

## 1 Prioritise culture

We acknowledge that connection to family, community, culture and Country is critical to the wellbeing and positive self-identity of Aboriginal Victorians. Cultural identity is a key enabler of achieving positive outcomes and the full enjoyment of the right to practise culture.

*Self-determination has to come from strong culture first and foremost. People need to be able to regain their culture and traditions before they can self-determine.*

Community forum participant, Seymour

### Broad areas for action

Acknowledge, respect and celebrate the diversity and strength of Aboriginal culture

Support cultural pride and identity among Aboriginal Victorians

Promote greater understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture and communities among non-Aboriginal Victorians

Acknowledge, promote and support Aboriginal people, including Elders and young people, to strengthen, connect and re-connect to culture

Support Aboriginal-led research to build the evidence base on the role of cultural determinants to help develop effective policies and services.

## 2 Address trauma and support healing

We acknowledge the long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation, dispossession, child removal and other discriminatory government policies, including significant intergenerational trauma. Addressing trauma and supporting healing is important because the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, families and communities is fundamental to how they engage with the structures and systems that support them to thrive.

*Self-determination is ongoing, continuous, evolving – healing needs to happen first.*

Community forum participant, Morwell

### Broad areas for action

Increase investment in prevention and early intervention initiatives that help build strong families and communities

Address historical and contemporary discrimination

Develop a new relationship of trust, including through treaty

Embed trauma-informed policy and practice into funded services, recognising the leading role that Aboriginal organisations play in providing holistic, culturally safe services to Aboriginal people and communities

Ensure mainstream organisations and the wider community understand the ongoing impacts of colonisation and intergenerational trauma

Support members of the Stolen Generations and their descendants

Support the strengthening of relationships within and between Aboriginal communities

Support truth-telling.

## 3 Address racism and promote cultural safety

The structures and systems established during colonisation had the specific intent to exclude Aboriginal people and their laws, customs and traditions, resulting in entrenched systemic and structural racism. Governments as well as Aboriginal and mainstream organisations and services should provide mechanisms and supports for Aboriginal Victorian people, families, communities and organisations to fully participate in policy development. Targeted and universal systems and services must be culturally safe, relevant, accessible and responsive to communities. This enables Aboriginal Victorians to make decisions on the matters that affect their lives.

*Government needs to be held accountable for structural racism. It's not up to Aboriginal Victorians to address this.*

Community forum participant, Melbourne

### Broad areas for action

Ensure government departments, Aboriginal organisations and government-funded mainstream services are culturally safe and relevant

Ensure government departments, government-funded mainstream services and organisations and the wider community understand the impacts of colonisation, racism and unconscious bias

Increase the Aboriginal workforce across services, including in leadership roles

Ensure the Aboriginal workforce is supported

Ensure future State Budget bids reflect the voice and priorities of Aboriginal communities, including through engagement and consultation

Address racism, unconscious bias and discrimination in government laws, policy, practice, systems and institutions

Recognise and remove the barriers to the Aboriginal community accessing services and participating fully in social and economic activity

Increase alignment and co-ordination across and between state government, local governments, Aboriginal organisations, mainstream organisations and community.



## 4 Transfer power and resources to communities

Aboriginal people know what is best for themselves, their families and communities. We acknowledge the right of Aboriginal Victorians to have decision-making control over the issues that affect their lives. Community-led, place-based decision-making and resourcing at the state and local level will enable Aboriginal communities to lead the development and implementation of culturally safe and relevant responses. It will also allow Aboriginal communities to hold government, Aboriginal organisations and mainstream services to account.

*Government needs to transfer power and resources over to community control.*

Community forum participant, Bendigo

### Broad areas for action

Strengthen Aboriginal leadership, representation, decision-making and resource allocation/distribution at the local, regional and state levels, recognising the needs of Aboriginal communities

Ensure government, Aboriginal organisations and government-funded mainstream services respond to community voices

Support and resource self-determining Aboriginal governance structures at the local community level, within Aboriginal organisations and through the pathway to treaty

Support Aboriginal organisations and communities to design, deliver and evaluate programs, policies and services to Aboriginal people and communities, in line with community preference

Ensure funding for Aboriginal organisations and mainstream organisations providing services to Aboriginal Victorians is transparent, equitable, community led, flexible, sustainable, long term and based on outcomes not outputs

Deliver ongoing capacity strengthening and resourcing of Aboriginal organisations and communities around leadership, decision-making and evaluation

Ensure there is independent, community-led and resourced accountability of government, Aboriginal organisations and government-funded mainstream services back to local communities

Support data sovereignty

Support Traditional Owner-led management and control of land, water and other natural resources

Support community members as they work to advance and enforce their human rights.

# 3

## MEASURE





***“If you feel okay, then that’s a starting platform to have a healthy, stable life – that’s a platform for the same thing for your children and your grandchildren.”***

**Community forum participant,  
Lakes Entrance**

# Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023

The VAAF brings together a comprehensive set of data that can help community hold government to account on whether our combined efforts are improving the lives of Aboriginal Victorians. Further information on our evaluation approach is available in the 'Evaluate' section.

## OUR VISION

*All Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives.*

## OUR DOMAINS



**1. Children,  
family  
& home**



**2. Learning  
& skills**



**3. Opportunity  
& prosperity**



**4. Health  
& wellbeing**



**5. Justice  
& safety**



**6. Culture  
& Country**





## SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination is a human right. The Victorian Government will advance self-determination through **11 guiding principles** and action on **4 enablers**.



### OUR GOALS

The VAAF sets out **20 goals** across **6 domains**. These are clear statements that provide a definition of what the future should look like if we fulfil our vision.



### OUR OBJECTIVES

The VAAF outlines a total of **32 objectives**. Every goal contains one or more objectives. These focus attention on where we need to see change in order to meet our goals.



### OUR MEASURES

The VAAF outlines **111 measures**. These include measures on cultural safety, service or system access, and equity.



Domain 1  
**Children,  
family  
& home**



**Our shared commitment: 'All Aboriginal children and young people are safe, resilient, thriving and living in culturally rich, strong Aboriginal families and communities.'**<sup>2</sup>



## Goal 1: Aboriginal children are born healthy and thrive

**Objective 1.1** Improve maternal and infant health

**Objective 1.2** Children thrive in their first 1000 days

The first five years of a child's life are fundamental to shaping their future. Delivering better maternal and early childhood services means removing barriers, promoting genuine and effective partnerships and supporting Aboriginal families to access culturally safe services.

Ongoing investment in community-led responses to optimise maternal health and the development of Aboriginal children is an essential platform for Aboriginal self-determination, ensuring that all children have an equal chance to thrive and grow.

*“We want healthy babies, so working with young women and educating young families to rear/grow up strong healthy children.”*

Online survey respondent



## Goal 2: Aboriginal children are raised by Aboriginal families

**Objective 2.1** Eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care

**Objective 2.2** Increase Aboriginal care, guardianship and management of Aboriginal children and young people in care

**Objective 2.3** Increase family reunifications for Aboriginal children and young people in care

Culture, language and connection to community and Country all support children and young people to thrive.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, Victorian Aboriginal children and young people remain vastly over-represented in child protection and care.

Community-led responses that focus on prevention and early intervention are critical for reducing the number of Aboriginal children and young people in child protection and care. For those in care, it is important they

remain connected to kin, culture and community, and have the opportunity to be reunited safely with their families. Where this is not possible, the transfer of responsibility for Aboriginal children to Aboriginal organisations is a key action in progressing Aboriginal self-determination.

*We need to keep families together.*

Community forum participant, Mildura



## Goal 3: Aboriginal families and households thrive

**Objective 3.1** Reduce the incidence and impact of family violence affecting Aboriginal families

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. Aboriginal communities in Victoria have consistently led the way in developing strategic priorities and actions to prevent family violence. This is demonstrated through strong whole-of-community engagement initiatives that bring together women, men, children and Elders to collectively break the cycles of violence.

The Victorian Government's Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement 2018-2028, *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* articulates a vision for the future where Aboriginal people, families and communities live free from violence.

*All parties need to be supported with community education and services to help break the cycles and foster safe family environments.*

Community forum participant, Seymour



**Objective 3.2** Increase income and housing security for Aboriginal households

In achieving true equity, the fundamental importance of both a stable home and a secure income must be recognised. Housing is a key social determinant of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal Victorians. Secure, culturally safe and coordinated housing and support services can break cycles of homelessness, facilitate family reunification and promote safety. Stable housing is essential for physical and mental health, maintaining social networks, and accessing education, training and employment. Home ownership for Aboriginal Victorians can also play an important role in tackling disadvantage and increasing housing security for Aboriginal households. Home ownership is further detailed in Domain 3: Opportunity & prosperity.

*It always comes back to homelessness – if you don't have a home, you don't have anything.*

Community forum participant, Robinvale

*Economic factors play a part in school attendance and feelings of safety – for example not being able to send children to school with lunch or not being able to afford to go on the excursion.*

Community forum participant, Shepparton



Domain 2:  
**Learning  
& skills**



**Our shared commitment: 'Every Koorie person achieves their potential, succeeds in life, and feels strong in their cultural identity.'**<sup>3</sup>



## Goal 4: Aboriginal children thrive in the early years

### Objective 4.1 Optimise early childhood development and participation in kinder

Education is well known to be linked to improved wellbeing and increased equity, with kindergarten and early schooling a critical starting point to set Aboriginal children up for life.

Increased enrolment and participation in kindergarten and early-start programs can significantly improve social and emotional skills and resilience, and ensure Aboriginal children are in the best position to achieve their potential.

*Children need to be school ready, and schools need to be ready for them.*

Community forum participant, Mildura



## Goal 5: Aboriginal learners excel at school

**Objective 5.1** Bring Aboriginal achievement at school in line with learners' aspirations

**Objective 5.2** Increase the proportion of Aboriginal students who feel safe and connected at school

For Aboriginal learners to excel at school, it is vital that schools are culturally supportive and responsive learning environments. Cultural safety and connection to culture is a critical foundation that supports Aboriginal children to be confident learners and makes schools more inclusive of Aboriginal students and their aspirations.

Educational outcomes for Aboriginal students can be better supported by ensuring learning environments are addressing inequity, such as

experiences of racism and bullying, and increasing the confidence that Aboriginal students and their families have in the school system.

*Aboriginal children should be encouraged to be astronomers, scientists, engineers.*

Community forum participant, Ballarat



## Goal 6: Aboriginal learners are engaged at school

**Objective 6.1** Increase Year 12 or equivalent attainment

Remaining engaged in school and completing and excelling at Year 12 or equivalent can provide Aboriginal learners with greater opportunities and choice for their future pathways.

Completing Year 12 or equivalent can support Aboriginal learners to pursue further education and training or to gain employment.

*The more educated they are, the more Aboriginal people can self-determine their own future.*

Community forum participant, Horsham





## 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

The opportunities and pathways made available to students immediately after high school can help set up a strong foundation for a successful, healthy and prosperous future.

Aboriginal learners must be supported to pursue their pathway of choice, whether that be further education, training or formal employment. This

means making these opportunities more accessible for Aboriginal young people, as well as ensuring young people feel supported to follow their ambitions. Lifelong learning must also be accessible and encouraged for adult Aboriginal Victorians, particularly those facing additional challenges to social and economic participation.

*Year 12 attainment is a good target and measure, but we need to go further – for example, measure and track from Year 12 to tertiary education or employment.*

Community forum participant, Bendigo



## Opportunity & prosperity



**Our shared commitment: 'Building opportunity and economic prosperity for all Aboriginal Victorians.'**<sup>4</sup>



## Goal 8: Aboriginal workers achieve wealth equality

**Objective 8.1** Increase Aboriginal household income in line with the Victorian median

**Objective 8.2** Increase Aboriginal home ownership in line with the Victorian average

**Objective 8.3** Increase Aboriginal business ownership and support Aboriginal entrepreneurs

Aboriginal Victorians have a long history of enterprise. Today, successful Aboriginal entrepreneurs are role models for young Aboriginal people. As businesses grow and develop, they allow the next generation of entrepreneurs to step forward. Over time, this strengthens the economic position of Aboriginal communities.<sup>5</sup>

Raising Aboriginal household income supports personal and collective agency and enables Aboriginal Victorians to have equal access to opportunities. Home ownership is an aspiration held by many Aboriginal Victorians. Among other benefits, home ownership enables Aboriginal Victorians to obtain financial gain from the intergenerational transfer of wealth.

*“We need Aboriginal business in Aboriginal hands.”*

Community forum participant, Robinvale



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

**Objective 9.1** Increase Aboriginal workforce participation

**Objective 9.2** Increase workforce participation for Aboriginal women

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

**Objective 9.4** Increase Aboriginal leadership and representation across all sectors and levels

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.<sup>5</sup>

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 (VPS) as well as other sectors, and to enhance the quality of the workplace and career experiences of Aboriginal staff.

*[There] needs to be a localised focus on employment.*

Community forum participant, Bendigo



## Goal 10: Aboriginal income potential is realised

**Objective 10.1** Increase Victoria's Aboriginal gross income and decrease the opportunity cost of Aboriginal income inequality

Aboriginal people, organisations and businesses already make valuable contributions to Victoria's diverse economy. Aboriginal economic development is vital to growing Victoria's wealth generally and to increasing overall economic productivity

and competitive advantage. If the talent and aspiration of Aboriginal Victorians is given full expression in the Victorian economy, there is significant opportunity for Aboriginal income growth.

*[We need to] increase Aboriginal employment at executive levels.*

Community forum participant, Horsham



Domain 4:  
**Health &  
wellbeing**



**Our shared commitment: 'Self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities.'**<sup>6</sup>



## 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.

*“We need more end-to-end and holistic support.”*

Community forum participant, Sale

*“Prevention is better than cure.”*

Community forum participant, Geelong



## 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 clients' 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 (LGBTI).

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.

*It's very difficult to find housing with suitable disability access.*

Community forum participant, Seymour

*Aged and palliative care need looking after.*

Community forum participant, Mildura





## Goal 13: Health and community services are culturally safe and responsive

**Objective 13.1** Increase the cultural safety and responsiveness of services

It is important that Aboriginal Victorians can access culturally safe and culturally responsive health services when they need it – whether this is from an Aboriginal organisation or a mainstream service.

A culturally safe and racism-free health and community service system is one in which people feel safe, where they can freely affirm their identity and where their needs are met.<sup>6</sup>

A skilled and supported Aboriginal workforce plays a key role in supporting positive outcomes for Aboriginal patients, clients and communities.

*Mainstream organisations and service providers need cultural change, and a broader support of Aboriginal culture throughout the organisation, from top-down and bottom-up.*

*It is not enough to simply employ an Aboriginal person - they need to be valued and supported as an Aboriginal person.*

Community forum participant, Seymour



## Goal 14: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy social and emotional wellbeing

**Objective 14.1** Improve Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing

Most Victorian Aboriginal people and communities enjoy excellent social and emotional wellbeing and mental health. However, many Aboriginal people report experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Connection to family, kinship and community has a strong influence on social and emotional wellbeing.<sup>7</sup> It is vital that all Aboriginal Victorians, including people living with a disability, have social networks they can draw upon for everyday practical and emotional support, as well as during times of need.

It is important that Aboriginal Victorians have access to Aboriginal-led services that are appropriately resourced and trained to respond to mental-health care needs, as well as culturally informed mainstream services that understand Aboriginal concepts of social and emotional wellbeing.

*Health and wellbeing need to be considered holistically, with greater mental health focus.*

Community forum participant, Bendigo



Domain 5:  
**Justice  
& safety**



**Our shared commitment: 'Aboriginal people have access to an equitable justice system that is shaped by self-determination, and protects and upholds their human, civil and legal rights.'**<sup>8</sup>



## Goal 15: Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is eliminated

**Objective 15.1** Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the justice system

**Objective 15.2** Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal women in the justice system

**Objective 15.3** Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal men in the justice system

Most Aboriginal people will never become involved in the Victorian criminal justice system. However, those who do are more likely to experience ongoing involvement with the system.<sup>8</sup> Systemic and structural barriers that Aboriginal people experience,

such as racism, social and economic disadvantage and involvement in the child protection system, can lead to over-representation in the justice system and entrenched cycles of disadvantage.



## Goal 16: Aboriginal Victorians have access to safe and effective justice services

**Objective 16.1** Increase Aboriginal participation in culturally safe and effective justice prevention, early intervention, diversion and support programs

Prevention and early intervention can keep Aboriginal young people, women and men out of the criminal justice system. Community-based diversion programs and community-led services that connect people to culture can also help break cycles of offending and promote positive outcomes. This also requires intersectional services in health, child protection, homelessness and family violence, to deliver effective prevention and early intervention support.

*There needs to be a focus on community-based prevention for diverting people away from the justice system.*

Community forum participant, Sale



## Goal 17: Aboriginal Victorians feel safe and connected

**Objective 17.1** Increase community safety and trust in police and the justice system

Historic injustices have contributed to mistrust of police and the justice system amongst some Aboriginal communities. Community-led justice responses are working to address local issues and build greater trust between Elders, community and police.

*Prevention requires places to be culturally safe and trauma informed... This includes non-Aboriginal systems and places too.*

Community forum participant, Morwell



## Domain 6: **Culture & Country**



**Our shared commitment is the promotion of the rights and responsibilities under section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006: 'Aboriginal persons hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right, with other members of their community –**

- a. to enjoy their identity and culture;**
- b. to maintain and use their language;**
- c. to maintain their kinship ties; and**
- d. to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.'**<sup>9</sup>



## 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

We recognise 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. Reconnecting Traditional Owners to Country can help revive culture and contribute to an improved sense of identity.<sup>10</sup> We recognise that only Traditional Owners can speak for Country.

The *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* is Australia's first-ever treaty law.<sup>11</sup> The Act reflects the intent to help improve the lives of Aboriginal Victorians, and the lives of future generations. The Act also recognises Traditional Owners as key stakeholders in the treaty process, in recognition of their distinct cultural authority as Victoria's First Peoples. As we continue on the path to treaty, it is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians.

*“We are the custodians of this land, so it’s our right to look after Country. Healthy Country, healthy people.”*

Online survey respondent

*“Government needs to support treaty as negotiated by community, in support of self-determination.”*

Community forum participant, Bendigo



## Goal 19: Aboriginal culture and language are supported and celebrated

**Objective 19.1** Support the preservation, promotion and practice of culture and languages

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.<sup>6</sup> While cultural identity is central to the lives of Aboriginal Victorians, all Victorians should celebrate and take pride in Aboriginal culture and language.

*Language reclamation is important. It gives power back to the community and makes it a safe place.*

Community forum participant, Ballarat





## Goal 20: Racism is eliminated

### Objective 20.1 Address and eliminate racism

Racism can have a harmful impact on the cultural identity and confidence of Aboriginal Victorians. Research shows that experiences of racism can also have detrimental long-term health effects, both mentally and physically.<sup>6</sup>

Racism manifests in many forms: stereotyping and name calling, as well as systemically through structures that exclude the participation of Aboriginal Victorians in everyday life. Eliminating racism – in all forms, at all levels – should not be the responsibility of Aboriginal Victorians. It is everyone's duty to work towards a fair and equitable Victoria.

*Government needs to educate themselves on why community feel the way they do.*

Community forum participant, Swan Hill

# 4 EVALUATE





**“Aboriginal people need to monitor and gauge success.”**  
Community forum participant, Swan Hill



## Governance and accountability

Government and government-funded organisations must be held to account for delivering services that meet the needs of communities. Too often government funding in Aboriginal affairs focuses on outputs – what activities, products or services it is providing and at what cost. We need to move from measuring outputs to measuring outcomes – what we are achieving for and with Aboriginal Victorians. Government must also be held accountable for changing its systems and structures to enable Aboriginal self-determination.

*Government should be held accountable on the outcomes they deliver – the numbers speak for themselves.*

Community forum participant, Morwell

## Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism

Government alone cannot hold itself accountable for improving outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Government, Aboriginal organisations and government-funded organisations must be accountable to Aboriginal-led, independent and transparent oversight.

An Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism will be established to track government's progress against the VAAF.

This will include quantitative and qualitative reporting on the goals, objectives and measures, including:

- efforts to progress the self-determination guiding principles
- implementation of the broad areas for action that support the four self-determination enablers.

The terms of reference for this mechanism, including its function, scope, membership and governance, will be developed in partnership with community.

## Data transparency and accountability

Open, transparent and meaningful data that is disaggregated at the local and regional level is a significant part of government accountability. It tells us what is working and where further action is needed. Furthermore, increasing Aboriginal ownership and control of data is a key enabler of self-determination. When community is adequately resourced to undertake this work, data can strengthen Aboriginal advocacy, sector planning and decision-making.

*Data sovereignty needs to be advanced. Research, evidence and data should be community owned and controlled. This is a key mechanism for community decision-making.*

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) submission

## Next steps

Aboriginal Victorians have suggested a range of additional options to hold government accountable to community for its performance in Aboriginal affairs.

In the first instance, the Victorian Government commits to:

- commencing work immediately on the development of an Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism
- publishing disaggregated VAAF data via a public data platform
- tabling an annual whole-of-government progress report on the VAAF in Parliament
- exploring potential legislative and policy options to ensure system-wide, whole-of-government adoption and application of the Aboriginal self-determination guiding principles.



# VAAF measures

\*All measures will be reported using Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal data where available unless specified as an Aboriginal-specific measure.



## Domain 1: Children, family & home



### Goal 1: Aboriginal children are born healthy 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

#### Objective 1.2 Children thrive in their first 1000 days

- Measure 1.2.1** Participation rates for Maternal and Child Health Key Ages and Stages Consultations
- Measure 1.2.2** Attendance at Koori Maternal Health Service
- Measure 1.2.3** Immunisation rate at 24 months and 60 months
- Measure 1.2.4** Participation in facilitated playgroup (0-3 years)



### 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

#### Objective 2.2 Increase Aboriginal care, guardianship and management of Aboriginal children and young people in care

- Measure 2.2.1** Number and proportion of Aboriginal children and young people in care placed with **i)** relatives/kin and **ii)** other Aboriginal carers
- Measure 2.2.2** Number and proportion of Aboriginal children and young people in care with a Cultural Plan
- Measure 2.2.3** Number and proportion of Aboriginal children and young people in care on contractible orders managed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)
- Measure 2.2.4** Number and proportion of Aboriginal children and young people on protection orders under the direct authority of an ACCO (Section 18)

**Objective 2.3** **Increase family reunifications for Aboriginal children and young people in care**

**Measure 2.3.1** Number of children and young people reunified with parent(s) within 12 months of admission to care as a proportion of all Aboriginal children and young people admitted to care

**Measure 2.3.2** Number of Aboriginal children and young people who exit care who do not return to care within 12 months as a proportion of all Aboriginal children and young people who exit care



**Goal 3: Aboriginal families and households thrive**

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**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 Indigenous 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 Indigenous affected family member; and proportion who were the subject of a previous family incident report

**Measure 3.1.3** Number and proportion of notifications to child protection for children and young people where family violence is identified

**Objective 3.2** **Increase income and housing security for Aboriginal households**

**Measure 3.2.1** Proportion of households who had reliable access to sufficient food in previous 12 months

**Measure 3.2.2** Proportion of households with less than 50 per cent median equivalised income

**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



## Domain 2: Learning & skills



### 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



### Goal 5: Aboriginal learners excel at school

**Objective 5.1** Bring Aboriginal achievement at school in line with learners' aspirations

**Measure 5.1.1** Percentage of students in top three bands – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Year 3, 5, 7 and 9

**Objective 5.2** Increase the proportion of Aboriginal students who feel safe and connected at school

**Measure 5.2.1** Proportion of students who feel connected to their school

**Measure 5.2.2** Student attendance rates in government schools

**Descriptive Measure 5.2.3:** Number of Aboriginal people on school councils

**Measure 5.2.4:** Proportion of students who report experiencing bullying at school

**Descriptive measure 5.2.5:** Number and proportion of school-based Aboriginal education workers (principals, teachers, education support staff) across all government schools

**Descriptive measure 5.2.6:** Number of schools teaching an Aboriginal language

**Descriptive Measure 5.2.7:** Number and proportion of government schools having undertaken cultural understanding and safety training





## Goal 6: Aboriginal learners are engaged at school

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### 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



## Goal 7: Aboriginal learners achieve their full potential after school

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### Objective 7.1 Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education and training

- Measure 7.1.1** Destinations 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-old 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



## Domain 3: Opportunity & prosperity



### Goal 8: Aboriginal workers achieve wealth equality

**Objective 8.1**      **Increase Aboriginal household income in line with the Victorian median**

**Measure 8.1.1**      Median household income and median equivalised household income

**Objective 8.2**      **Increase Aboriginal home ownership in line with the Victorian average**

**Measure 8.2.1**      Proportion of home owners versus other tenure types (by age bracket)

**Objective 8.3**      **Increase Aboriginal business ownership and support Aboriginal entrepreneurs**

**Measure 8.3.1**      Number of Victorian business owner-managers who are Aboriginal

**Measure 8.3.2**      Aboriginal businesses that government enters into a purchase agreement with as a proportion of small to medium enterprises  
government enters into a purchase agreement with



### 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

**Objective 9.2**      **Increase workforce participation for Aboriginal women**

**Measure 9.2.1**      Workforce participation of women (as measured at 9.1.2)

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

**Measure 9.3.1**      Workforce participation (as measured at 9.1.2) by age, disability status and regional versus metropolitan



**Objective 9.4**    **Increase Aboriginal leadership and representation across all sectors and levels**

**Measure 9.4.1**    Aboriginal employment by sector, industry and occupation; with analysis by growth industry

**Measure 9.4.2**    Proportion of Aboriginal people employed across the VPS (with 2 per cent target by 2022)

**Measure 9.4.3**    Number of Aboriginal people at VPS 6 level and above in the VPS

**Measure 9.4.4**    Number of Aboriginal people participating on government boards



**Goal 10: Aboriginal income potential is realised**

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**Objective 10.1**    **Increase Victoria's Aboriginal gross income and decrease the opportunity cost of Aboriginal income inequality**

**Measure 10.1.1**    Victoria's Aboriginal income as sum of all income earned by Aboriginal workers

**Measure 10.1.2**    Opportunity cost: Aboriginal gross income at parity minus actual



## Domain 4: Health & wellbeing



### 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, by sex
- Measure 11.1.3** Rate of daily smoking, by sex
- 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



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

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

- Measure 12.1.1** Proportion who received a health check or assessment, by age
- Measure 12.1.2** Participation rates for cancer screening
- Measure 12.1.3** Proportion and number accessing disability services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Measure 12.1.4** Number and proportion accessing aged care services
- Measure 12.1.5** Number and proportion of people aged 55 years or over who had an annual health assessment

**Descriptive measure 12.1.6** Services implement strategies, partnerships and campaigns, and offer care and support that is inclusive and addresses the needs of Aboriginal people who are LGBTI



## Goal 13: Health and community services are culturally safe and responsive

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### Objective 13.1 Increase the cultural safety and responsiveness of services

**Measure 13.1.1** Proportion reporting experiences of racism in the health system

**Measure 13.1.2** Proportion reporting positive client experience of GP services

**Measure 13.1.3** Hospitalisations where patients left against medical advice/  
were discharged at own risk

**Descriptive measure 13.1.4** Number and proportion of Aboriginal people employed in the health or social services sector



## Goal 14: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy social and emotional wellbeing

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### 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



## Domain 5: Justice & safety



### Goal 15: Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is eliminated

**Objective 15.1**      **Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people 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

**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



## Goal 16: Aboriginal Victorians have access to safe and effective justice services

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**Objective 16.1** Increase Aboriginal participation in culturally safe and effective justice prevention, early intervention, diversion and support programs

**Measure 16.1.1** Number and proportion of Aboriginal youth receiving intensive bail support through the Koori Intensive Support Program

**Measure 16.1.2** Number and proportion of Aboriginal adults receiving intensive bail support

**Measure 16.1.3** Number of Aboriginal youth accessing community support programs through youth justice community services



## Goal 17: Aboriginal Victorians feel safe and connected

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**Objective 17.1** Increase community safety and trust in police and the justice system

**Measure 17.1.1** Proportion of police officers who have received Aboriginal cultural awareness training

**Measure 17.1.2** Proportion who feel safe/very safe walking alone at night in local area

**Measure 17.1.3** Proportion who have experienced any violence in the last 12 months

**Descriptive measure 17.1.4** Number and proportion of Aboriginal people employed across the justice system



## Domain 6: Culture & Country



### 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



### 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



### Goal 20: Racism is eliminated

**Objective 20.1** Address and eliminate racism

- Measure 20.1.1** Proportion of Aboriginal people who report having experienced racism in the previous 12 months
- Measure 20.1.2** Prevalence of racist attitudes against Aboriginal Victorians held by the Victorian community



# Appendix 1: Community engagement summary

The development of the VAAF has been guided by the voices of Victorian Aboriginal communities across the state.

## Statewide forum

**Melbourne** 31 January, Richmond Football Club

## Open community forums

**Mildura** 26 March, Mildura Rowing Club

**Robinvale** 27 March, Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-Operative

**Swan Hill** 28 March, Ibis Styles Swan Hill

**Bendigo** 23 April, Lakeview Motor Inn

**Ballarat** 26 April, Saxon House, Ballarat Football League

**Seymour** 27 April, Seymour Football Netball Club

**Warragul** 30 April, Mecure Warragul

**Morwell** 1 May, Morwell Bowling Club

**Sale** 2 May, The Wedge – Performing Arts Centre

**Lakes Entrance** 3 May, Bellevue on the Lakes

**Geelong** 7 May, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, St Mary's Library and Research Centre

**Warrnambool** 8 May, Gunditjamara Aboriginal Co-Operative

**Portland** 10 May, Dhauwurd-Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Service

**Echuca** 22 May, Tindarra Resort

**Halls Gap** 22 May, Halls Gap Recreation Reserve

**Horsham** 23 May, Horsham College

**Shepparton** 23 May, La Trobe University

**Wodonga** 24 May, Cube Wodonga

## Open workshops

**Melbourne** 20 June, Mantra Bell City

**Ballarat** 21 June, Saxon House, Ballarat Football League

**Bendigo** 21 June, Bendigo Tennis Association

**Shepparton** 22 June, Parklake Hotel

**Robinvale** 25 June, Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-Operative

**Morwell** 5 July, The Gathering Place

**Lake Tyers** 6 July, Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust Community Hall

**Warrnambool** 16 July, Gunditjamara Aboriginal Co-Operative

**Portland** 17 July, Dhauwurd-Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Service

## Written submissions

- Public Health Association of Australia – Victoria Branch
- Victorian Council of Social Services
- Many Mobs Aboriginal Community Group
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- Mission Australia
- Djirra
- Aboriginal Justice Caucus Working Group on Family Violence
- 23 surveys submitted via [engage.vic.gov.au](https://engage.vic.gov.au)

## Presentations

- Aboriginal Executive Council
- Secretaries Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs
- Aboriginal Justice Forum and Koori Caucus
- Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum (formerly Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum)
- Aboriginal Children's Forum
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service
- Improving Care for Aboriginal Patients Program workers

## One-on-one meetings

The Department of Premier and Cabinet met with individual community members and organisations upon request.

## Endnotes

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

Thank you to the Aboriginal Victorians and other community members and organisations across the state who shared their time, expertise and personal stories on what the new Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework should look like.

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