



**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