

Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2019



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.

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

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

Image: Gunditjmara aquaculture features at the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape World Heritage property. **Photo:** Tyson Lovett-Murray.





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Message from the Premier



Here in Victoria, we're committed to advancing Treaty and self-determination.

It represents a fundamental reset in the relationship between Aboriginal communities and government: A reset that means the voices of Aboriginal people are being heard and government is being held to account. And as this report shows, the actions we've taken – together – are important first steps.

But although we've made some vital progress, there remains much more to be done. We must close the gap of disadvantage, but we must also go beyond only looking at deficits. And fundamentally, we must ensure Aboriginal people are being given the respect and the responsibility to write their own futures. Nothing less will do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Dan Andrews". The signature is fluid and cursive.

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria

Message from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



As the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I'm proud to present the first annual report on the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*.

The new framework sets an ambitious agenda for Aboriginal affairs in Victoria, ensuring government is working alongside Aboriginal communities, Traditional Owners, organisations and businesses to advance self-determination.

This Report tells a complex story that celebrates the successes and achievements of Aboriginal Victorians, while continuing to highlight the areas in which government must further commit its energy and resources, under Aboriginal leadership, to address systemic inequalities.

There are areas where we are continuing to make great progress, such as education, health and economic participation. However, there remain critical areas where we are not making progress fast enough, such as the over-representation of Aboriginal children in care, and over-representation of Aboriginal people across the justice system.

I acknowledge the far-reaching consequences of colonial violence, including dispossession of land and traditional culture. There is unfinished business in this nation of addressing these matters that should never have come to be. This history means that fostering connection to culture and country is critical to improving outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. For the first time in this report, we are reporting on how we are ensuring Aboriginal Victorians have access to their cultural rights, including maintaining and revitalising language and transferring decision-making for land, waters and resources.

As the historic work towards treaty continues, the relationship between government and Aboriginal communities will continue to evolve. It is my hope that this report, the first of its kind under the new *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*, will be used to shape strategic action as we work with Aboriginal Victorians to reimagine a future to which all can aspire.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gavin Jennings". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops.

The Hon. Gavin Jennings
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Message from the Secretary



I am privileged to be part of the Secretaries' Leadership Group on Aboriginal Affairs.

The work we are undertaking with Secretaries and leaders from all Victorian Government departments is guided by our commitment to embedding Aboriginal self-determination.

I am delighted that this Report provides a new way to monitor the progress we are making across government departments to improve outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians and enable Aboriginal self-determination.

This work is happening in partnership with the Aboriginal Executive Council, which comprises executives from peak and statewide Aboriginal organisations across Victoria charged with advising on whole of government self-determination reform.

A critical step we have made in 2019 is the development of the Victorian Government Self-Determination Reform Framework. Under this framework, all Victorian Government departments are now required to report annually, from 2020, on how they are enabling self-determination in line with the commitments in the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023*.

While there is a significant way to go yet, our actions this year have created a solid foundation for the public service to work alongside Aboriginal communities to create genuine change.

In this way, we can work together to meet our commitment to embed self-determination into the systems, structures and everyday work of the Victorian Government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Eccles'.

Chris Eccles AO
Secretary

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of the Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report (the Report) is to outline progress towards achieving the vision of the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023* (VAAF):

‘that all Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives’.

To measure progress towards achieving this vision, this Report sets out how we are working to realise the 20 goals across six domains in the VAAF:

- Children, family & home
- Learning & skills
- Opportunity & prosperity
- Health & wellbeing
- Justice & safety
- Culture & Country

The 20 goals are clear statements of what the future should look like if we achieve our vision. Each goal includes several objectives and measures to track progress.

Collecting data for, and reporting against, each of these measures through this Report provides community and government with valuable information. This allows us to monitor progress across all areas of life, as well as the challenges that we still need to address.

Assessment of progress in the Report is made by examining data from 2008 (or closest to) until the end of 2018-19 (or the most updated validated data). As data is sourced from annual administrative collections as well as survey data, the baseline and latest year of available data varies across the Report.

To maintain consistency with current reporting practices, all rates not directly sourced from published reports are calculated using population denominators drawn from the 2011 ABS census-based population estimates and projections. In the 2020 Report, rates will be updated using the 2016 census-based population estimates and projections, which may alter data for certain measures.

While this is the first annual Report on the new VAAF, it builds on previous annual reports over many years and the previous Victorian Indigenous Affairs Frameworks, which began in 2006.

The Report is intended to keep government accountable for improving outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians as well as ongoing work to progress Aboriginal self-determination.





A new way of reporting

In 2018, the Victorian Government worked with Victorian Aboriginal communities and organisations to develop a new VAAF that would set an ambitious and forward-looking agenda for Aboriginal affairs.

The development of the new VAAF signified a meaningful shift, one that renewed government's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination. This commitment acknowledges that the best outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians are achieved when policies and programs are led and guided by the knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal people.

The journey of transferring power, decision-making and resources back to Aboriginal communities is at an early stage. The Victorian Aboriginal community told government that they wanted the future agenda to be strengths-based and to demonstrate and celebrate the unique strengths and achievements of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Community members also told government that we must move away from previous approaches focused on gaps, deficits and laying individual blame, and instead focus on the significant shift required across systems, services, policies and broader society to improve outcomes and opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians.

The VAAF explicitly frames the understanding of and response to Aboriginal disadvantage by acknowledging the impact of dispossession of Aboriginal people that occurred from European colonisation and its intergenerational impact.

This Report provides the first progress report on the Victorian Government's commitment to embed self-determination across all areas of the government as the underpinning approach in Aboriginal affairs.

Consistent with this, these annual reports will no longer focus solely on how Aboriginal people are faring, but will aim to hold government accountable for what we are doing to improve outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians and enable self-determination.

Positive change requires not only a fundamental shift in the way that governments work with Aboriginal people, it also requires significant government effort to eliminate the structural and systemic barriers experienced by Aboriginal Victorians, including ensuring services and programs are culturally-safe and community-owned.



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	Self-determination guiding principles: How we'll do it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise culture • Address trauma and support healing • Address racism and promote cultural safety • Transfer power and resources to communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Cultural integrity • Commitment • Aboriginal expertise • Partnership • Investment • Decision-making • Empowerment • Cultural safety • Equity • Accountability

Domains

 <p>1. Children, family & home</p>	 <p>2. Learning & skills</p>	 <p>3. Opportunity & prosperity</p>	 <p>4. Health & wellbeing</p>	 <p>5. Justice & safety</p>	 <p>6. Culture & Country</p>
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Goals

 <p>Goal 1 Aboriginal children are born healthy and thrive</p>	 <p>Goal 4 Aboriginal children thrive in the early years</p>	 <p>Goal 8 Aboriginal workers achieve wealth equality</p>	 <p>Goal 11 Aboriginal Victorians enjoy health and longevity</p>	 <p>Goal 15 Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is eliminated</p>	 <p>Goal 18 Aboriginal land, water and cultural rights are realised</p>
 <p>Goal 2 Aboriginal children are raised by Aboriginal families</p>	 <p>Goal 5 Aboriginal learners excel at school</p>	 <p>Goal 9 Strong Aboriginal workforce participation, in all sectors and at all levels</p>	 <p>Goal 12 Aboriginal Victorians access the services they need</p>	 <p>Goal 16 Aboriginal Victorians have access to safe and effective justice services</p>	 <p>Goal 19 Aboriginal culture and language are supported and celebrated</p>
 <p>Goal 3 Aboriginal families and households thrive</p>	 <p>Goal 6 Aboriginal learners are engaged at school</p>	 <p>Goal 10 Aboriginal income potential is realised</p>	 <p>Goal 13 Health and community services are culturally-safe and responsive</p>	 <p>Goal 17 Aboriginal Victorians feel safe and connected</p>	 <p>Goal 20 Racism is eliminated</p>
	 <p>Goal 7 Aboriginal learners achieve their full potential after school</p>		 <p>Goal 14 Aboriginal Victorians enjoy social and emotional wellbeing</p>		

Summary of key outcomes in the Report



Children, family & home

Aboriginal children remain over-represented in care at more than 20 times the rate of non-Aboriginal children in 2017-18. However, community-led approaches are connecting more children to culture and kin.

- The number of Aboriginal children in care who are placed with relatives, kin and/or Aboriginal carers has steadily increased, to almost three quarters.
- The number of Aboriginal children and young people on contractible orders managed by Aboriginal Organisations has also increased significantly from 8.7 per cent in 2015-16 to approximately 33 per cent in 2018-19.



Learning & skills

Victorian Aboriginal children are achieving and excelling throughout their schooling years - from the critical early schooling years right through to secondary school and beyond.

- Aboriginal children are enrolled in kindergarten in the year before school at a high rate and on par with their non-Aboriginal peers.
- The number of Aboriginal students completing VCE, VCAL or VET has more than doubled between 2011 and 2018.



Opportunity & prosperity

The Aboriginal business sector continues to thrive, contributing to growth in economic prosperity for Aboriginal Victorians.

- More Aboriginal people are starting businesses than ever before, with Aboriginal business owner management increasing by over 80 per cent between 2006 and 2016.

From 2006 to 2016, Aboriginal Victorians' median annual household income increased by more than \$20,000. This represents a significant decrease in the income gap between Aboriginal Victorians and non-Aboriginal Victorians.



Health & wellbeing

The number of Aboriginal Victorians accessing preventative healthcare has increased for all age groups over the last decade.

- Since 2007, the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians aged 55 and over receiving annual health assessments has more than tripled, from 7.5 per cent to 25.7 per cent.
- The proportion of Aboriginal children aged 0-14 receiving health checks has increased tenfold, from 1.5 per cent to 16.9 per cent in 2017.



Justice & safety

The number of Aboriginal young people processed by police has decreased by 31.5 per cent from 2008 to 2018. However, Aboriginal young people continue to be over represented in detention with increasing rates of young people being held in remand.

The over-representation of Aboriginal adults in the justice system has continued to rise, particularly for Aboriginal women who represent one of the fastest growing prison cohorts in Victoria.



Culture & Country

Aboriginal language programs are being adopted into schools and kindergartens across the state at an increasing rate. This is supported by the development of accredited training in learning and teaching endangered Aboriginal languages.

Traditional Owner groups are being increasingly supported in their work caring for Country, instilling recognition and respect for Aboriginal land, water and cultural rights and working to embed Aboriginal knowledge in the everyday management Country.





Aboriginal self-determination

Aboriginal Victorians, and Indigenous people around the world, have fought for the right to self-determination including the right to make decisions on matters that affect their lives and communities. The right to self-determination is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to which Australia is a signatory.

Self-determination is driven by Aboriginal Victorians, and within this, government has a responsibility to reform its systems, structures and service delivery to better reflect the aspirations of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

The VAAF places self-determination at the heart of strategy across government to improve outcomes and services for Aboriginal Victorians. Based on broad engagement with communities, the new VAAF identified four areas in which government should prioritise action to enable self-determination.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Embedding self-determination across government

Self-Determination Reform Framework

From 2020, all Victorian government departments will report annually on how they are embedding self-determination in all that they do: their systems, their people, how they work to achieve outcomes and how they stay accountable to Aboriginal Victorians. This will be measured and reported on through the new Self-Determination Reform Framework.

The Self-Determination Reform Framework is based on Aboriginal community-identified priorities in the VAAF. It provides a coordinated approach to how government should enable self-determination and how we should meet our commitments to self-determination.

The Self-Determination Reform Framework focuses the attention of government on what we can do to enable self-determination, ensuring that our everyday work, our policies, our programs and our reforms are culturally-safe and relevant, and are working towards making Aboriginal self-determination a reality.

Starting from next year, reporting against the Self-Determination Reform Framework will be shared in this annual report, reflecting the government's commitment to increased accountability for its progress towards enabling self-determination.

Aboriginal-led accountability of government

To ensure independent, community-led and resourced accountability of government and government-funded organisations, we have commenced work to develop an Aboriginal-led Evaluation and Review Mechanism.

As committed in the VAAF, the Mechanism will track government's progress against goals in the VAAF and government action to enable self-determination. In 2019, Aboriginal Victorians provided advice on the most appropriate form and functions of the future Mechanism and explored principles to guide the design of the future Mechanism.

Given potential intersections with the ongoing treaty process and the Aboriginal Representative Body raised during consultations with community, the Mechanism will continue to be developed once the Assembly is established.



Treaty

Treaty is a practical and tangible way for the Victorian Government and Aboriginal Victorians to work together toward Aboriginal self-determination in Victoria. The treaty process will help to build a positive and sustainable partnership between Aboriginal Victorians and the government based on fairness, equality and mutual respect.

The treaty process advances the Victorian Government's commitment to self-determination by recognising Aboriginal peoples' right to freely determine their participation and form of representation in the treaty process and to be the central decision-makers on the matters that affect their lives.

The *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* (Treaty Act) cements the Victorian Government's commitment to advancing a treaty process with Aboriginal Victorians.

Aboriginal Victorians and Traditional Owners will be represented in the next phase of the treaty process by an Aboriginal Representative Body, to be known as the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (Assembly).

The Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission, headed by Commissioner Jill Gallagher AO, is charged with establishing the Assembly in consultation with Aboriginal communities across Victoria. The Commissioner, a well-respected Gunditjmarra person, is independent of government, further supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal Victorians in the treaty process.

Self-determination and empowerment are enshrined under the Treaty Act as one of several guiding principles for the treaty process. These guiding principles will apply to all participants in the treaty process, including the Assembly, the State, the Treaty Authority, and any person, group or body participating in future treaty negotiations.

The Treaty Act also provides guidance to the Assembly and the State about what a treaty should provide for. The Assembly and the State must ensure that the treaty negotiation framework provides for the negotiation of a treaty or treaties that: help heal the wounds of the past; provide recognition for historic wrongs; address ongoing injustices; support reconciliation; and promote the fundamental human rights of Aboriginal peoples, including the right to self-determination.



Victorian Government action underway to enable self-determination

Formal reporting against the four self-determination enablers in the VAAF will commence in 2020. The Victorian Government is already pursuing several reforms to advance Aboriginal self-determination within its systems and structures. A few case study examples are outlined below.

Funding Reform

Current funding arrangements disadvantage and overburden Aboriginal organisations. A key part of transferring power and resources to communities is ensuring transparent, community-led, sustainable, and outcomes-based funding for Aboriginal organisations.

The Victorian Government is currently exploring new ways of funding Aboriginal organisations to achieve this. As a first step, government is working collaboratively with five Aboriginal organisations to investigate and test new approaches to funding. In 2019, this project has focused on identifying and developing solutions to address funding issues that affect their organisations, including changes that need to occur within government systems.

Over the longer term, the project will develop, test and work towards achieving pooled, outcomes-based funding arrangements and other mechanisms to realise greater self-determination for Aboriginal organisations in relation to budgeting, planning and funding. It is anticipated that new funding arrangements will reduce administrative burden and provide greater flexibility for these organisations to deliver the services that meet the needs of their Aboriginal clients.



Ensuring departments and mainstream services are culturally-safe

The government is prioritising the elimination of systemic and structural racism, discrimination and unconscious bias in recognition that racist and discriminatory policies, structures and services are a significant barrier to Aboriginal self-determination.

As part of this, in 2019 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has developed the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework* to help the department and mainstream Victorian health, human and community services create culturally-safe environments, services and workplaces.

The Cultural Safety Framework is designed to support individuals and organisations as they reflect and continue their journey of understanding and improving cultural safety in the workplace.

Cultural safety is a key commitment under ***Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027*** to achieve the Victorian Government's vision of 'self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal communities', and serves as a reminder that cultural safety is everyone's responsibility.



Budj Bim Heritage Listing

Acknowledging, maintaining and celebrating Aboriginal cultural heritage is a key part of prioritising culture. In a momentous recognition of self-determination and ingenuity, Budj Bim Cultural Landscape in south west Victoria was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in July 2019, becoming the first Australian site to be internationally recognised exclusively for its Aboriginal cultural values.

This Heritage listing is the result of significant efforts by the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners and the wider Victorian Aboriginal community with the support of the Victorian and Australian governments. This included investment of \$13 million from the Victorian Government to protect the area as it develops into a world-class tourism destination, which supports self-determination for the Gunditjmara in sharing the land with the rest of the world.

The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape includes a long dormant volcano, the source of the Tyrendarra lava flow that extends over 50 kilometres and is central to the history of the Gunditjmara. Budj Bim is also home to one of the world's oldest and largest aquaculture systems and is evidence of a large, settled Aboriginal community systemically harvesting and smoking eels for food and trade.

The system includes weirs, dams and stone channels some hundreds of metres long and dug out of basalt lava flow which has been carbon dated to a remarkable 6,600 years old. Budj Bim also features the remains of more than 300 round, basalt stone houses, further evidence of the Gunditjmara's permanent settlement in the area.

Shared decision-making to progress the national Closing the Gap agenda

In June 2019, Victoria signed the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019-2029 (Partnership Agreement) between COAG and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (Coalition of Peaks).

The 10-year agreement is an historic arrangement. It supports formal, shared decision making between Australian governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Peak Organisations on Closing the Gap.

The Partnership Agreement was an initiative driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies from across Australia, including Victoria's Aboriginal Executive Council.

The Coalition of Peaks comprises 49 national, state and territory non-government Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and certain independent statutory bodies. The Coalition of Peaks provides important, sector-specific expertise and leadership that is essential to discussions and negotiations under the Partnership Agreement.

The Victorian Government is working closely with all governments and the Coalition of Peaks to develop and finalise a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It is important that this work at the national level complements our work to progress treaty and enable self-determination at the state level.

Victorian Government Investment

The Victorian Government has continued to make significant investment to improve services and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians and to ensure Aboriginal Victorians are supported to make decisions about their own lives, communities and futures.

The 2019/20 Victorian Budget invested \$109 million over four years, building on the 2018/19 investment of \$115 million over four years, to progress treaty and self-determination, to prioritise and celebrate Aboriginal culture and to support Aboriginal Victorians through frontline service delivery.



\$30.4 million over two years to progress the next steps of treaty in 2019/20, including the establishment of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, supporting Traditional Owner readiness for treaty, and ensuring that Aboriginal Victorians are at the centre of decision-making when preparing for treaty negotiations. This builds on the \$9 million for progressing treaty in the 2018/19 Victorian Budget.



\$40.3 million in 2018/19 to implement *Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja*, the fourth phase of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement, a long-term partnership between the Aboriginal community and the Victorian Government. This includes investment in a range of community-led self-determination initiatives such as expanding the Aboriginal Community Justice Panels across the state, expanding Koori Courts model, and expanding the Statewide Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Program.



\$53.3 million over four years in 2018/19 as part of *Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children in Families Agreement*, the first ever tripartite agreement between the Aboriginal community, child and family services sector and the Victorian Government. This funding is supporting the Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care program and initiatives to improve cultural connection for Aboriginal young people in care.

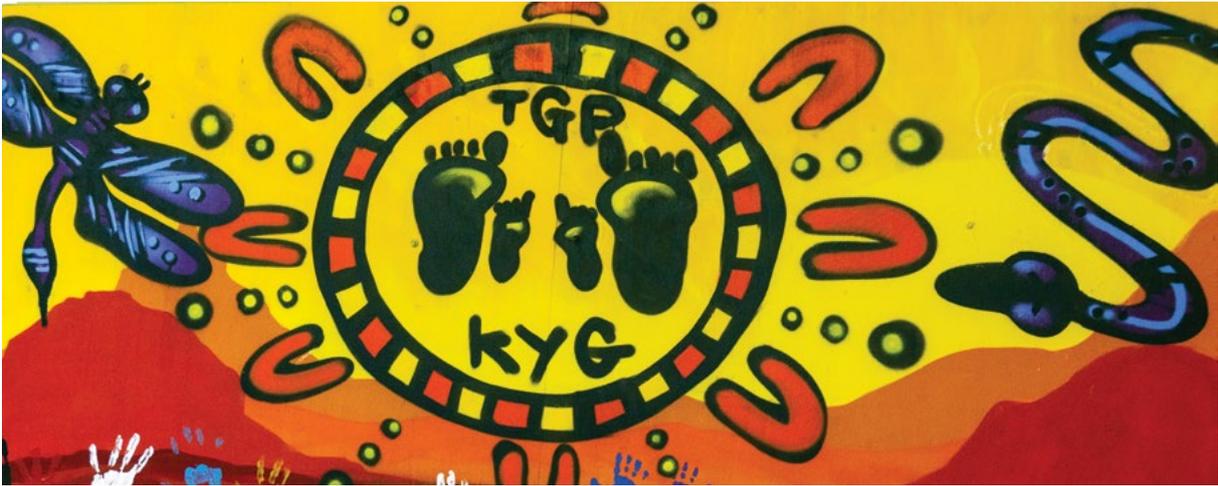


\$28.8 million over four years in 2019/20 to continue implementing the *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way: Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families, Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement*.

This includes funding to continue establishing Aboriginal Orange Door access points and frontline Aboriginal family violence services, working towards realising Dhelk Dja's vision: Aboriginal people are culturally strong, safe and self-determining, with families and communities living free from violence.



\$14 million per year for 10 years from 2017/18 to support *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027*. This funding is supporting the collaborative action between DHHS, Aboriginal communities, community organisations, other government departments and mainstream service providers to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal people in Victoria.



In addition to these significant investments, the Victorian Government has funded a range of frontline services in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to improve outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, including:

- Continuing the successful Koori Women's Place, providing a culturally-safe space where women facing the challenges of family violence can come together and feel supported, heard and understood.
- Strengthening Aboriginal children's connection with family, culture and community through a new model of kinship care, including an Aboriginal kinship finding service.
- Continuing Aboriginal mental health projects, supporting Aboriginal Victorians with severe mental illness, trauma and other needs.
- Expanding culturally-safe sexual assault support services to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal communities.



We have invested heavily in the strength of Aboriginal youth, communities and organisations, including through:

- Developing the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence in Shepparton, a new educational, sporting, cultural and community centre for local Aboriginal people.
- Supporting Aboriginal organisations to deliver targeted youth mentoring programs which support and empower Aboriginal young people.
- Increasing employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians in natural resource management across government organisations.



There has also been significant investment in Aboriginal cultural initiatives, including:

- Continuing delivery of an accredited Aboriginal languages program and supporting Aboriginal languages in schools and kindergartens.
- Investing in intensive land and natural resource management, including dedicated Traditional Owner ranger positions, to encourage visitors and improve biodiversity at Kalimna Park and Greater Bendigo National Park.
- Supporting Victorian Traditional Owners groups as they work towards formal recognition.
- Establishing a Joint Management Committee including Traditional Owners, state and local government to ensure a partnership approach to implementing the Hanging Rock Strategic Plan.
- Supporting Aboriginal events and festivals across the state and providing more opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians to work in the creative industries.

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.

—

Families and Aboriginal child-rearing practices are fundamental to raising strong Aboriginal children and young people. Supporting Aboriginal families with safe and effective services enables better outcomes.

Encouraging Aboriginal children and families to be strong in culture and proud of their unique identity can ensure that every Aboriginal child has the best start in life.



Goal 1: Aboriginal children are born healthy and thrive



1.1 Improve maternal and infant health

More than 1,100 Aboriginal babies were born in Victoria in 2017 and this number continues to rise.

The health of a mother and her baby during pregnancy and at birth is a key determinant of health and wellbeing later in life. Ensuring access to culturally-safe maternal health care contributes to better outcomes for both mothers and their babies.

Since 2009, the rate of perinatal mortality for Aboriginal babies has fallen dramatically. This is a significant achievement and demonstrates improved and increased specialised care for Aboriginal babies born prematurely, and the effectiveness of maternal services delivered by Aboriginal organisations.

However, the rate of Aboriginal babies born with a low birth weight and the rate of Aboriginal babies born prematurely continues to be much higher than comparable rates for non-Aboriginal babies.

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 in Victoria have an equal chance to thrive and grow.

- 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

Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Initiative

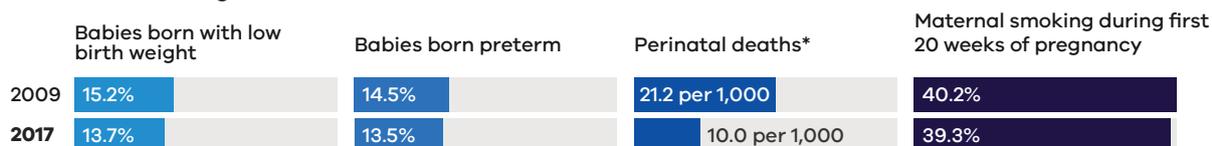
The Aboriginal MCH Initiative was established to trial innovative MCH service provision. Developed through a co-design process with Koorie communities and the MCH sector, the initiative aims to improve access to, and participation in, MCH services by Aboriginal families.

The initiative was trialled in 2017 and 2018 across nine sites including ACCOs and local governments. The service model provided increased flexibility and choice for families in where and how they accessed MCH services, stronger engagement between councils and their local Aboriginal community, and improved quality and coordination through culturally-safe service delivery.

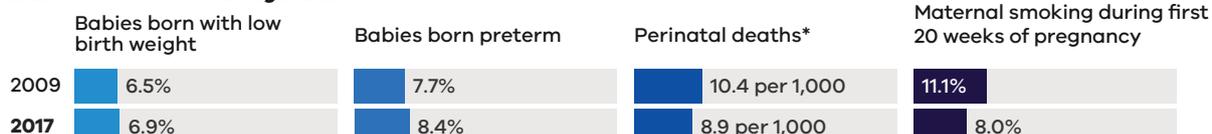
In 2019-20, the Initiative will expand its delivery of MCH services through ACCOs, ensuring Aboriginal families have choice in where and how they access MCH services.

Maternal and infant health

Babies born to Aboriginal mothers



Babies born to non-Aboriginal mothers



*Includes perinatal mortality data from 2009-11 and 2015-17.

1.2 Children thrive in their first 1,000 days

The first five years of life are the building blocks for a child's future health and development. Children's early experiences and interactions shape brain development and serve as the foundation for subsequent learning.

Participation in Key Ages and Stages Consultations has generally increased year-to-year. In 2016-17, participation at the first home visit consultation was near universal for Aboriginal families. However, participation has tended to decline for all families over time, particularly after the four month visit.

Early childhood home visiting empowers parents and caregivers to meet their family's needs and to engage more fully in their children's care and growth.

Data for Measure 1.2.2 Attendance at Koori Maternal Health Service is currently unavailable. The update of the Koori Maternity Services minimum dataset will enable reporting on this measure from 2020.

One of many services offered by Aboriginal organisations in the early childhood space, Koorie Supported Playgroups commenced in 2018 and is funded until 2021. In 2018, 69 Aboriginal children aged 0-3 participated in Koorie Supported Playgroups. Enrolment numbers in future years are expected to rise.

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 1.2.4 Participation in facilitated playgroup (0-3 years)

Koori Maternity Services

Koori Maternity Services (KMS) deliver flexible, holistic and culturally-safe antenatal and postnatal care which is central to improving outcomes and increasing participation in maternity care for Aboriginal women, babies and families.



Participation at Key Ages and Stages Consultations

Aboriginal children (%)

	Home visit	2 weeks	4 weeks	8 weeks	4 months	8 months	12 months	18 months	2 years	3.5 years
2010-11	99.6	94.8	87.2	83.0	79.4	62.7	61.9	52.9	49.7	45.3
2016-17	99.2	90.8	88.5	89.1	85.3	70.7	70.4	61.3	57.5	56.4

All children (%)

	Home visit	2 weeks	4 weeks	8 weeks	4 months	8 months	12 months	18 months	2 years	3.5 years
2010-11	100	97.6	96.8	96.3	93.7	85.0	81.9	71.5	68.9	62.8
2016-17	100	96.1	96.3	95.2	93.8	84.3	81.9	71.0	67.6	62.9

1.2 Children thrive in their first 1,000 days

Childhood immunisation coverage rates have steadily increased in Victoria since 2008. Coverage rates measure the percentage of children who have had all the vaccinations recommended for their age.

Immunisation coverage by age five is at the highest it's ever been, with almost all Aboriginal five-year-old children (94.7 per cent) receiving the recommended immunisations for that age. Immunisation coverage for Aboriginal one-year-olds has also increased since 2008. However, immunisation coverage for Aboriginal two-year-olds has decreased slightly, and is slightly lower than the Victorian average.

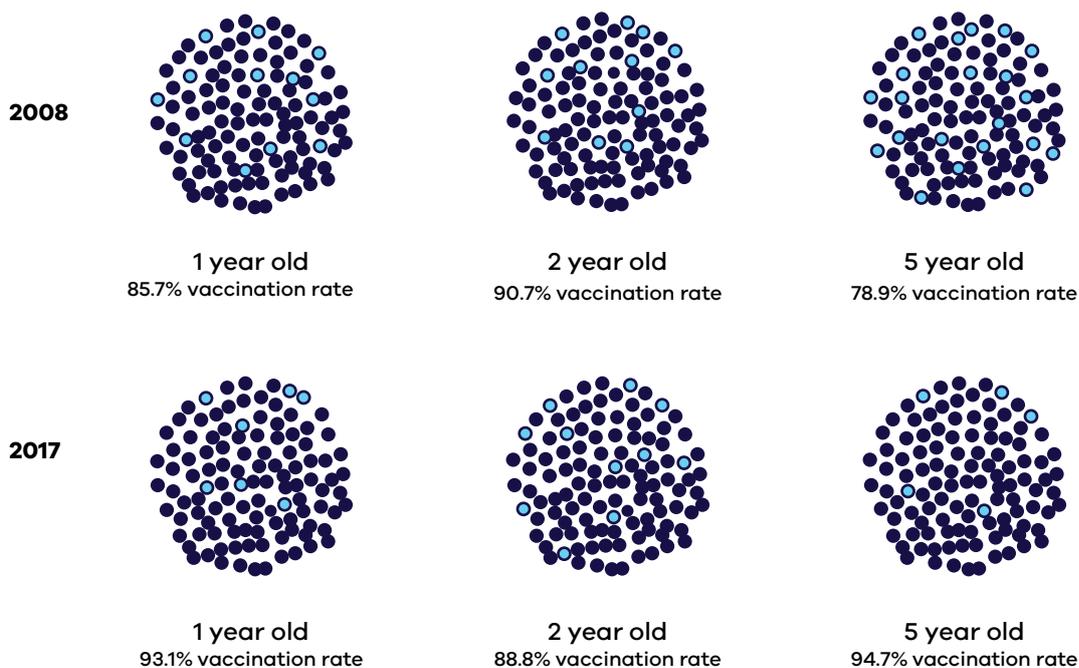
Measure 1.2.3 Immunisation rate at 24 months and 60 months

The high rates of immunisation among Aboriginal children in their first five years of life is a significant achievement and reflects the leading work of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs).

Aboriginal Victorian children aged one and five years are close to meeting the Australian Immunisation Register's coverage target of 95 per cent.

Immunisation rates for Aboriginal children

● Vaccinated ● Susceptible



Goal 2. Aboriginal children are raised by Aboriginal families



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

Aboriginal children and young people are vastly over-represented in the child protection system. From 2007-08 to 2017-18, the recorded number of Aboriginal children in care almost tripled from 660 to 1,975 children. While this significant increase is in part due to changes in data collection, such as improved identification and recording of Aboriginal status, the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care is concerning and addressing this disparity remains a government priority.

The period between July 2007 and June 2018 also saw a five-fold increase in the number of Aboriginal children engaged with intensive family support services.

While the increased demand for intensive family support services suggests that more families are accessing the support they need, heightened demand also highlights the need for greater preventative measures to address and 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

The growing number of children engaged with intensive family support services, alongside increased funding for community-led early intervention and prevention of family violence, are likely to positively impact on the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care in future years.

Children and young people in care, and engagement with intensive family support services

Children and young people in care (n)



Children and young people in care (rate per 1,000)



Children and young people engaged with intensive family support services (n)



From 2017-18, Victoria excluded children subject to Permanent Care Orders from the count of children in care.

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

Maintaining ongoing connection to kin, community and culture for Aboriginal children and young people in care is fundamental to a young person's wellbeing.

There are several ways to measure key protective factors across the child protection and family service systems that promote connection to kin and culture. For example, the proportion of Aboriginal children who are being cared for by relatives or kin, and the proportion who have been provided with a cultural support plan.

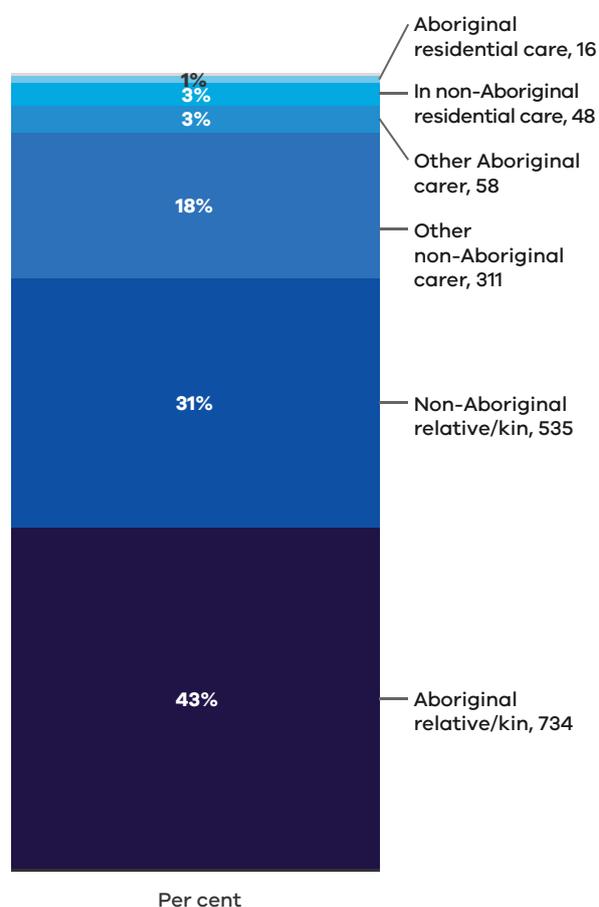
As of June 2018, around three quarters of Aboriginal children and young people in care had been placed with relatives or kin, a considerable increase since July 2007 (less than half). However, only 19.4 per cent of Aboriginal children in care have a cultural support plan despite its development being a legislative requirement. Working with Aboriginal organisations to increase this number is essential to delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal children.



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

Aboriginal children in care by placement type, 2017–18

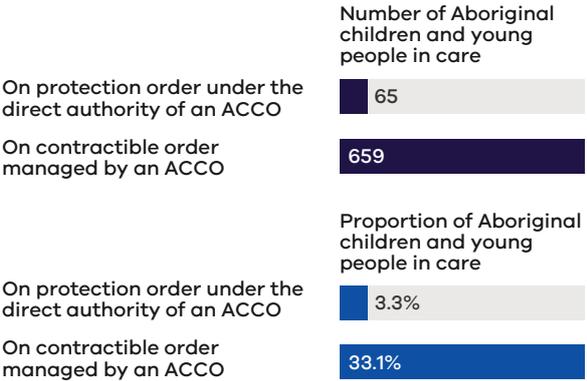


Excludes 273 Aboriginal young people who were living independently or unknown.

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

As the Victorian Government gradually transitions care of Aboriginal children to Aboriginal organisations, the number of contractible orders managed by Aboriginal organisations will continue to increase. At June 2019, two ACCOs had been authorised responsibility for Aboriginal children in care, with a further two ACCOs funded to prepare for authorisation.

ACCO case management, 2018–19



Transfer of case management of Aboriginal children

The 2019/20 Victorian Budget commits an additional \$13.6 million over two years to further boost the transfer of case management of Aboriginal children on contractible orders from child protection and non-Aboriginal community service organisations to ACCOs.

The Aboriginal Children's Forum is driving and overseeing the transfer of case management to ACCOs. Since the transfer process began, significant progress has been made, with approximately 33 per cent of all Aboriginal children in care case managed by an ACCO in 2018-19, almost four times the rate compared with 2015-16 (at approximately nine per cent).

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)

Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care

Over the past four years, the Victorian Government has committed, through the *Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children* and the more recent *Wungurilwil Gagapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement*, to the principles of self-determination and selfmanagement.

This has resulted in more funding and a stronger role for ACCOs in the design and delivery of local services and supports that are culturally-responsive and safe.

A new nation-leading initiative, Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care (ACAC) has been developed to support ACCOs to assume responsibility for Aboriginal children on contractible orders. ACAC is a co-designed model of Aboriginal child protection, enabling ACCOs to create and deliver a culturally-sensitive service which focuses on strengthening connection to community, culture and family.

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

Aboriginal children and young people belong with their families and communities. Connection to culture, family, community and Country is fundamental to supporting strong children and strong families.

It is important to measure the frequency in which Aboriginal children are being reunified with their families and how often this occurs within 12 months. Supporting children to return to their families, with adequate supports, is most often the best outcome.

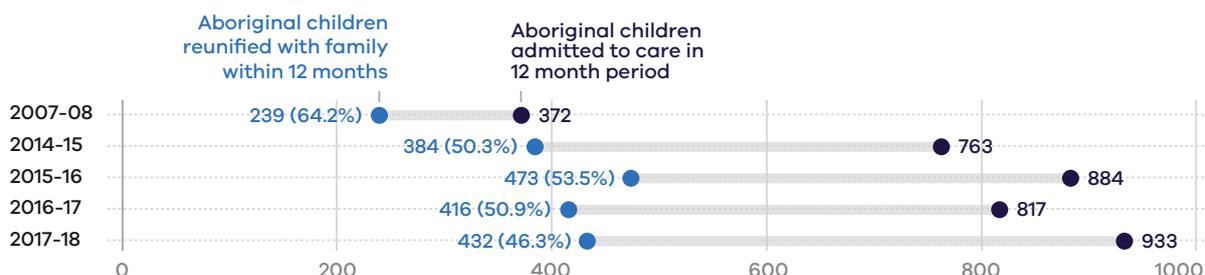
In 2017-18, just under half of all Aboriginal children admitted to care were reunified with their families within 12 months. This number differs to the total number of children in care in a given reporting period (as this also includes children that have been in care for longer than 12 months).

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

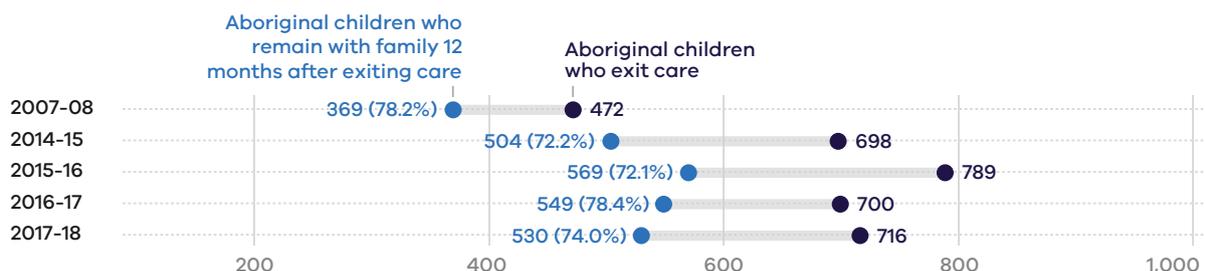
Measure 2.3.2 Number of Aboriginal children and young people who exit care who do not return to care within 12 months as a proportion of all Aboriginal children and young people who exit care

Furthermore, in 2017-18 almost three quarters of Aboriginal children and young people who exited care did not return to care within the next 12 months.

Aboriginal children who are reunified with parents within 12 months of admission to care



Aboriginal children who exit care and do not return to care within 12 months



Goal 3: Aboriginal families and households thrive



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. 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.

While the number of family violence incidents reports have risen steeply over the last 10 years, this may not necessarily indicate increased prevalence of family violence, but may be due to policy and practice changes as well as improved recording. Aboriginal women have historically faced and continue to face unique barriers to reporting family violence.

In family violence reports made to police in 2018 involving an Aboriginal affected family member, 81.2 per cent had been the subject of a previous family incident report.

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

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

demonstrate the importance of a culturally-safe and responsive family support service, as well as the need for a targeted approach to reducing incidences of family violence through early intervention and prevention.

The Victorian Government is working with Aboriginal communities and services through the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way - Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* to drive community-led responses that aim to ensure Aboriginal people are stronger, safer, thriving and living free from violence.

Affected family member

An 'affected family member' is the alleged victim; the individual who is deemed to be affected by events occurring during the family incident.

Other party

The alleged perpetrator involved in a family incident is referred to as the 'other party'. The other party could be a current partner, former partner or a family member.

Family violence incidents by an Aboriginal other party



Family violence incidents against an Aboriginal affected family member

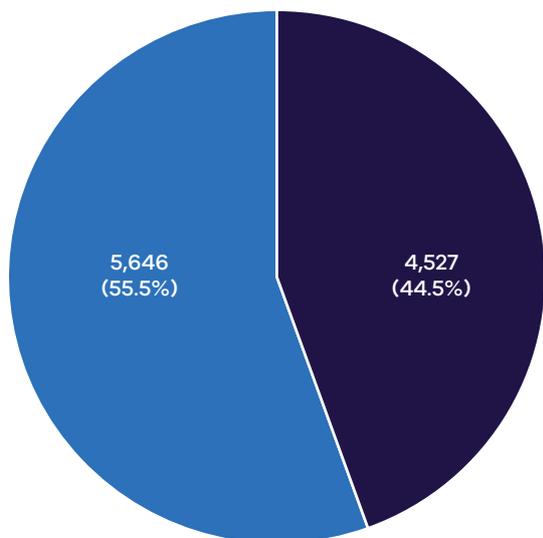


3.1 Reduce the incidence and impact of family violence affecting Aboriginal families

Exposure to family violence is a significant driver of demand for child protective services. In 2017-18, family violence was cited in 44.5 per cent of all child protection reports concerning Aboriginal children and young people (4,527 notifications).

Child protection notifications for Aboriginal children, 2017-18

- Family violence not cited
- Family violence cited



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

Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund

The Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund provides annual grant funding to support Aboriginal community-led, culturally-appropriate projects that reduce family violence through prevention and education.

In October 2018, the Victorian Government doubled its investment in the Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund, increasing the original funding to \$1.1 million per annum. Following a competitive grant application process, 46 projects across Victoria received funding from the 2018-19 round to deliver initiatives throughout 2019.

These family violence prevention projects will reach Aboriginal women, men, children and young people, and Aboriginal families.

Preventing the Cycle of Violence (PCV) Aboriginal Fund

The PCV Aboriginal Fund is an Aboriginal-led and designed program, funded by the Victorian Government, that provides \$2.71 million over two years (2018-20) for Aboriginal communities and their organisations to implement projects and initiatives aimed at the prevention or early intervention of family violence.

Through this initiative, 11 Aboriginal-led family violence prevention and early intervention projects have been selected through a competitive grant process to receive funding over the 2018-20 period.

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. One way of measuring financial security is to estimate the proportion of households living on less than 50 per cent of the Victorian median income per household member.

The proportion of Aboriginal households experiencing financial insecurity has decreased by 6.7 per cent since 2006, however this proportion remains significantly higher than the Victorian average at 64.9 per cent in 2016.

Further, 15.7 per cent of Aboriginal adults reported 'running out of food and not having money to buy more during the previous 12 months' according to the 2017 VicHealth Survey compared to 6.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

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

According to the ABS Census of Population and Housing, the proportion of Aboriginal households experiencing rental stress has increased by 3.9 per cent since 2006. Rental stress and affordable housing remain concerns for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Income, rental stress and reliable access to food

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

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2006	71.6%	50.0%
2011	68.2%	50.0%
2016	64.9%	50.0%

Proportion of households experiencing rental stress

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2006	36.9%	37.6%
2011	39.1%	38.2%
2016	40.8%	39.5%

Proportion of adults who did not run out of food and could afford to buy more, in the last 12 months

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2017	84.3%	93.9%

3.2 Increase income and housing security for Aboriginal households

Housing is a key social determinant of health and wellbeing for Aboriginal Victorians.

In 2016, 783, or 1.6 per cent of Aboriginal Victorians, reported experiencing homelessness on the night of the Census. While this is a decrease from 2.1 per cent in 2006, estimates of homelessness based on Census data will likely be an underestimation due to a range of factors. Nonetheless, these figures suggest that Aboriginal Victorians are experiencing homelessness at least 4.5 times the rate of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Another indicator of housing security is the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians accessing homelessness services. In 2017-18, 116,872 Victorians presented at a specialist homelessness service. Of these, 9,428 or 8.1 per cent, identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, representing 16.9 per cent of all Aboriginal Victorians. During the same period, Aboriginal Victorians accessed homelessness services at 11.8 times the rate of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

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

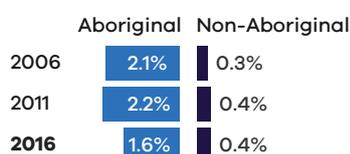
Although increasing engagement with homelessness services is important from a service delivery perspective, this growth also likely points to an increase in the number of Aboriginal Victorians who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.

Furthermore, 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.

These statistics demonstrate the importance of culturally-safe and coordinated housing and support services for Aboriginal Victorians to break cycles of homelessness, and appropriate housing options to reduce the rate of those living in overcrowded dwellings.

Homelessness and accessing homelessness services

Proportion of Victorians who are homeless



Proportion of Victorians accessing homelessness services



Overcrowding

Proportion of Aboriginal Victorians living in overcrowded dwellings



Action the Victorian Government is taking

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting Aboriginal families to ensure all Aboriginal children and young people are safe, resilient, thriving and living in culturally-rich, strong Aboriginal families and communities.

The Victorian Government is increasing investment in maternal child health to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal mothers and babies through several key initiatives. **Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children** is guiding investment in maternal and child health, including partnering with Koorie communities to co-design an **Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health Initiative service model**. The model focuses on delivering culturally-responsive, flexible and high-quality maternal and child health services through both ACCOs and mainstream service providers, and will be expanded over the next three years.

Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement is guiding action from government, Aboriginal communities and community service organisations to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care alongside working towards a future where all Aboriginal children and young people are safe and living in Aboriginal families and communities.

Under this agreement, the Victorian Government is gradually **transitioning case management of Aboriginal children in care** from government and non-Aboriginal organisations to ACCOs.

The Victorian Government has recently committed a further \$13.6 million over two years to support this project, building on the initial \$53.3 investment in the *2018/19 Victorian Budget* to support implementation of Wungurilwil Gapgapduir.

Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way - Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families is guiding work to create a future where Aboriginal people, families and communities live free from violence. Aboriginal communities in Victoria have consistently led the way in developing strategic priorities and actions to prevent family violence. A strong focus on early intervention and prevention has seen the Victorian Government double its investment in the **Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund** to \$1.1 million per annum to provide grant funding to support Aboriginal community-led, culturally-appropriate projects that reduce family violence through prevention and education. Aboriginal-led partnerships are driving further reforms, including through the **Aboriginal Children's Forum** and the **Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum**.

Action is also underway to ensure **secure, culturally-safe and coordinated housing and support services for Aboriginal Victorians** to break cycles of homelessness, facilitate family reunification and promote safety. The Victorian Government is partnering with Aboriginal Housing Victoria to develop an **Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework** to improve housing outcomes for all Aboriginal Victorians across the course of their lives. As part of these reforms, the Victorian Government is working with Aboriginal organisations to design wraparound services for Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness and family violence.

Learning & skills



Our shared commitment:

Every Koorie person achieves their potential, succeeds in life, and feels strong in their cultural identity.

—

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

Culturally-supportive and responsive learning spaces are vital for creating an environment where Aboriginal students feel supported to achieve their learning aspirations and excel.



Goal 4: Aboriginal children thrive in the early years



4.1 Optimise early childhood development and participation in kinder

The last 10 years have seen a steady rise in the number of Aboriginal children and families participating in early childhood education.

Maintaining access to these programs, and ensuring mainstream services are culturally-safe and inviting for Aboriginal families, is key to addressing developmental vulnerabilities in the years before school.

Four-year-old Aboriginal children are enrolled in kindergarten in the year before school at a high rate and on par with their non-Aboriginal peers¹, and the number of three-year-old Aboriginal children participating in Early Start Kindergarten is steadily growing. This means more Aboriginal children are experiencing the benefits of early learning and development than ever before, which is likely to have a positive impact on reading and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal learners in coming years.

The increase in kindergarten enrolment reflects the Victorian Government's action to improve access to early childhood services such as

Measure 4.1.1 Number and proportion of eligible children enrolled in a funded four-year-old kindergarten program in the year before school

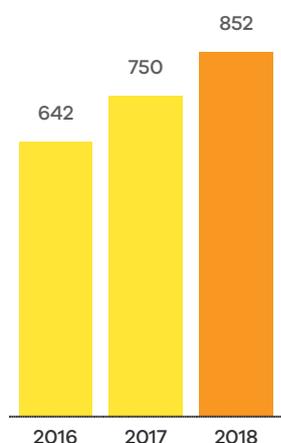
Measure 4.1.2 Number of children funded to participate in Early Start Kindergarten

Measure 4.1.3 Proportion of children vulnerable on one or more domain on the Australian Early Development Census

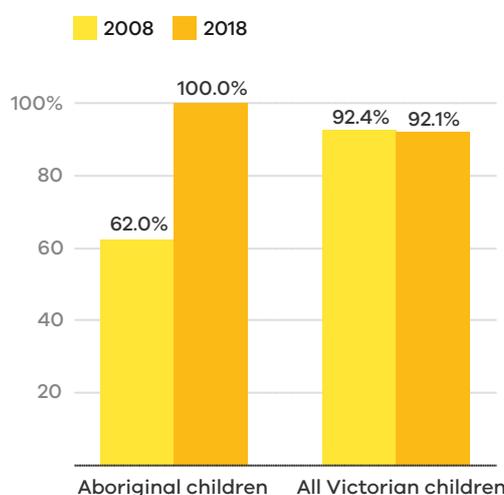
supported playgroups and kindergarten programs, while recognising and supporting Aboriginal families as the first educators of their children.

Despite these gains, Aboriginal children are more than twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains of the Australian Early Development Census² in their first year of education compared to non-Aboriginal children. This reiterates the need to ensure early childhood education is inclusive and culturally-safe to ensure Aboriginal children can meaningfully participate.

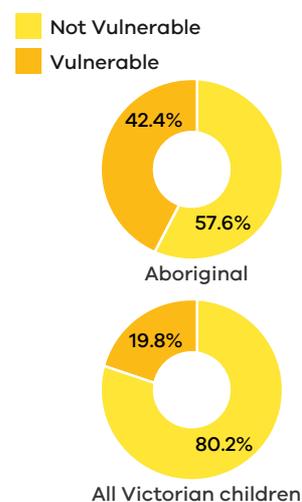
Aboriginal children enrolled in Early Start Kindergarten (n)



Kindergarten enrolment (%)



Developmental vulnerability (%), 2018



1. ABS population estimates based on the 2011 Census have been used to calculate the 2018 Aboriginal kindergarten participation rate to maintain consistency with previous years and to reflect the rate published in the Victorian Budget 2019-20 Budget Paper No. 3. The Department of Education and Training has since recalculated this rate using rebased population estimate based on the 2016 Census. Using this data, the 2018 Aboriginal kindergarten participation rate is 92.4 per cent. Backdating data from previous years to show the trend is not currently possible but will be included in 2020 reporting.

2. The domains of developmental vulnerability include physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; communication skills and general knowledge.

Goal 5: Aboriginal learners excel at school



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

For Aboriginal students, there have been substantial improvements in Literacy in Years 3 and 5 from 2008 to 2018, as well as in Numeracy in Year 9 in the same period. This shows a very positive trend that Aboriginal student performance in NAPLAN is continuing to improve in Victoria. Despite these improvements, Aboriginal students continue to be represented in the top three bands for NAPLAN at a substantially lower rate than their non-Aboriginal peers in all school years. Furthermore, Aboriginal children's rate of learning for both Numeracy and Literacy decelerates sharply between Years 3 and 7.

This signals the need for increased learning support, particularly during the transition from primary school to secondary school.

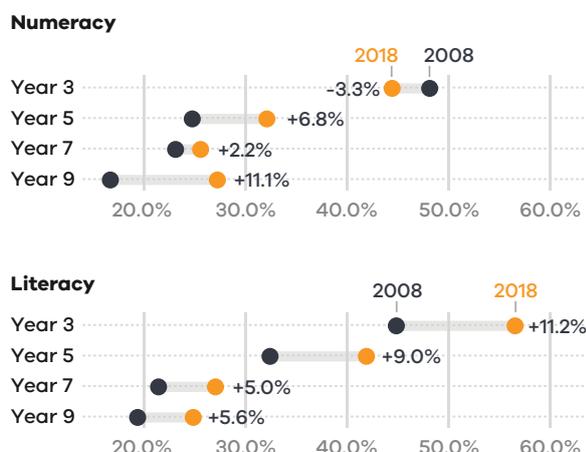
It is important to note that NAPLAN data does not provide a full picture of Aboriginal achievement at school, but can provide useful information on school performance in supporting Aboriginal students.

Measure 5.1.1 Percentage of students in top three bands - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPALN) in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9

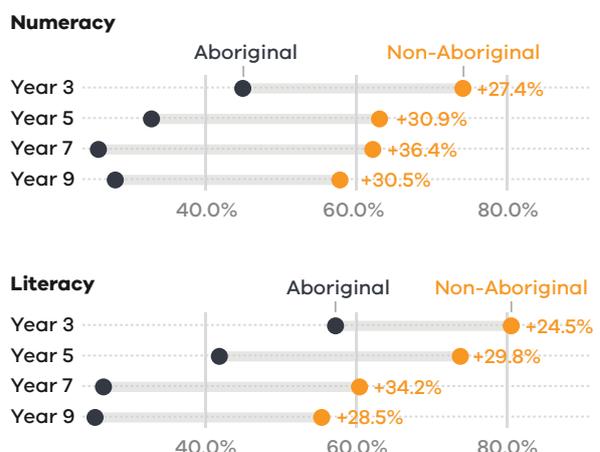
Additional support for Aboriginal students

Aboriginal students from Prep to Year 6 who are not meeting expected levels in Literacy and/or Numeracy are provided with additional supports through the **Koorie Literacy and Numeracy Program**. In 2018 this program supported 1,784 Aboriginal learners across 598 Victorian Government schools.

Proportion of Aboriginal students in top three bands for NAPLAN, 2008 and 2018



Proportion of students in top three bands for NAPLAN by Aboriginal status, 2018



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

It is important for children and young people to feel connected and supported in their school environment. While Aboriginal children in all year levels reported feeling less connected to their school in 2018, the difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children is relatively low. Broadly, students report high levels of connectedness in primary school, which drops substantially by Years 10 to 12.

Improving school connectedness for Aboriginal secondary school students requires learning environments to be inclusive and culturally-safe. Action is underway under **Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 (Marrung)** to improve the inclusivity and cultural safety of schools, including through Aboriginal language programs and cultural understanding and safety training.

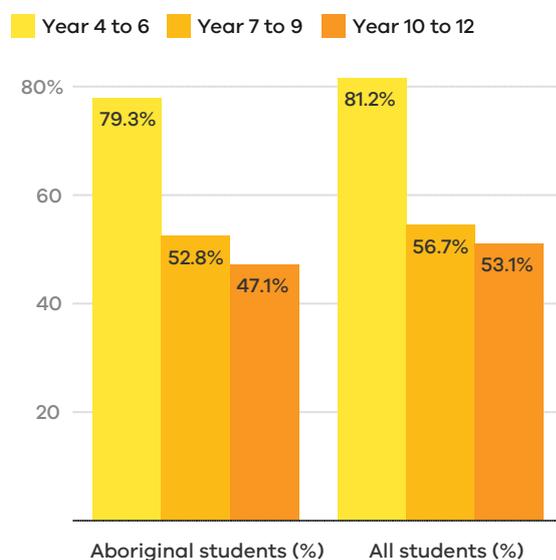
Making learning environments more inclusive and safer could also help to reduce absenteeism, which remains high for Aboriginal children across all years.

Measure 5.2.1 Proportion of students who feel connected to their school

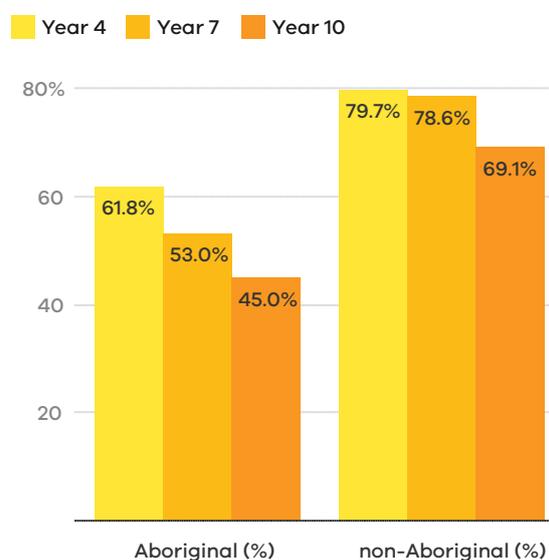
Measure 5.2.2 Student attendance rates in government schools



Proportion of students who feel connected to their school, 2018



Student attendance rates in Government schools, 2018



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

In 2018, Aboriginal students in all school year levels experienced higher rates of bullying than their non-Aboriginal peers, and concerningly, more than a quarter of Aboriginal students in Years 7 to 9 reported having been bullied.

A key part of reducing Aboriginal students' experience of bullying and ensuring they are safe at school is promoting opportunities for Aboriginal communities to participate in decision-making within schools, including through representation on school councils, as well as schools attracting and retaining Aboriginal teachers.

As at June 2018, 0.3 per cent of all school-based fulltime equivalent (FTE) education positions were staffed by Aboriginal Victorians. Aboriginal Victorians are well represented in education support roles (0.7 per cent) but are underrepresented in teaching and principal roles (0.2 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively) given 0.8 per cent of Victorians identify as Aboriginal.

Another important element to ensure Aboriginal students feel safe and connected is schools undertaking cultural understanding and safety training. At the end of 2018, 23 per cent of all Victorian government schools had undertaken this training, and all Victorian government schools will have undertaken the training over the next three years.

An increasing number of Victorian schools and early childhood services are also working with community to deliver Aboriginal language programs. Language programs can play a key role in strengthening students' pride and connection to culture and identity as well as increasing non-Aboriginal students' awareness of and respect for Aboriginal culture.

Descriptive measure 5.2.3 Number of Aboriginal people on school councils

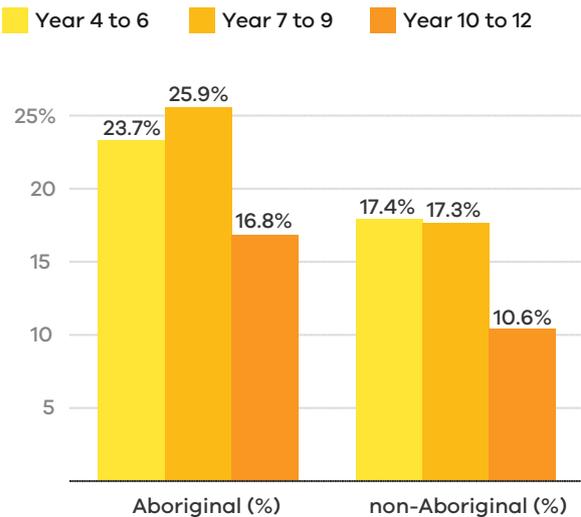
Measure 5.2.4 Proportion of students who report experiencing bullying at school

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

Proportion of students who reported experiencing bullying at school by Aboriginal status and year of schooling, 2018



Cultural safety indicators 2018

Number of Aboriginal people on school councils	164	Number of schools teaching an Aboriginal language	14
Number of school-based Aboriginal education workers (FTE positions) (at 30 June 2018)	189 (0.3%)	Number of government schools having undertaken cultural understanding and safety training	339 (23%)

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

Supporting Aboriginal languages

Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 (Marrung) commits to increasing the number of Aboriginal language programs in Victorian kindergartens and schools, in partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages.

As part of the Early Childhood Language Program, Aboriginal languages will be taught in around 30 Victorian early childhood services. Additionally, in 2018, 14 Victorian Government schools delivered Aboriginal language programs to over 1,800 students including Bruthen Primary School who won the 2018 Victorian Education Excellence Award for Outstanding Koorie Education.

This is being accompanied by support to build the Aboriginal language teacher workforce. Language initiatives in schools are introduced with the support of Aboriginal teachers and Elders following the approval of Traditional Owners and consultation with local communities and can support the reclamation and revival of Victorian Aboriginal languages.

The Victorian curriculum also includes Aboriginal perspectives as a cross curriculum priority for all schools.

In 2019, the Department of Education and Training celebrated the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages by supporting Aboriginal teachers from schools and Certificate III participants to attend PULiMA Indigenous Languages and Technology Conference.

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

Cultural Understanding and Safety Training

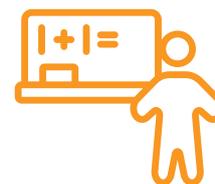
As part of Marrung, the Victorian Government is working to create a culturally-safe, high quality education system. Increasing cultural competency in learning environments through Cultural Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) is a key part of Marrung.

CUST is delivered in close collaboration between the Victorian Government, VAEAI and other ACCOs who provide advice on how to embed local Aboriginal perspectives, cultures and histories into the school curriculum.

This initiative seeks to ensure a learning system where Aboriginal cultures, knowledges and experiences are celebrated by all. It also seeks to build stronger relationships between schools and the Aboriginal community and ensure that all schools are safe, responsive and respectful of Aboriginal students and their families so that all Aboriginal learners are engaged and excelling throughout their schooling years.

By the end of 2018, 339 Victorian Government schools had undertaken CUST (23 per cent of all Victorian Government schools). The training will be taken up by all Victorian Government schools over the next three years.

Goal 6: Aboriginal learners are engaged at school



6.1 Increase Year 12 or equivalent attainment

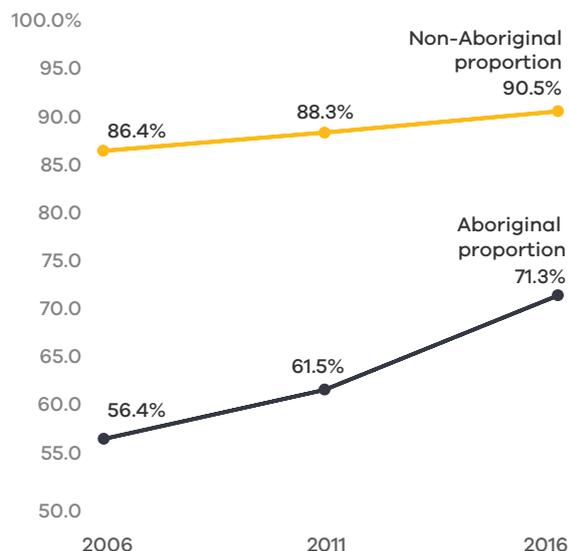
More Aboriginal young people are staying in school and achieving increasingly better educational outcomes.

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.

Despite this positive trajectory, there continues to be disparity in apparent retention rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners. However, the gap is improving, narrowing from 26.2 per cent to 17.4 per cent between 2010 and 2017.

Proportion of young people aged 20-24 with Year 12 or equivalent

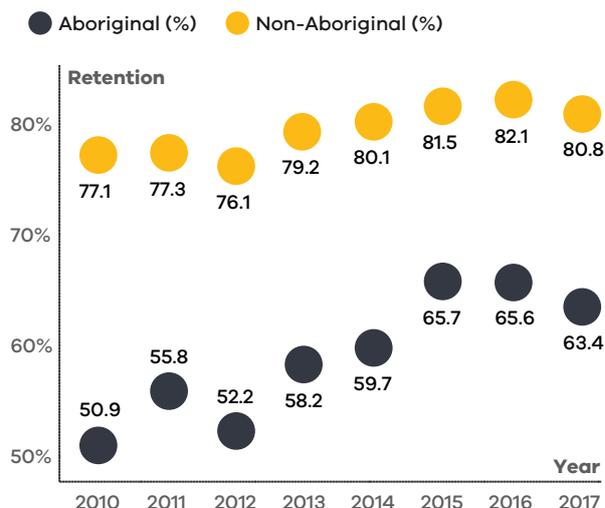


Measure 6.1.1 Proportion of young people aged 20-24 with Year 12 or equivalent

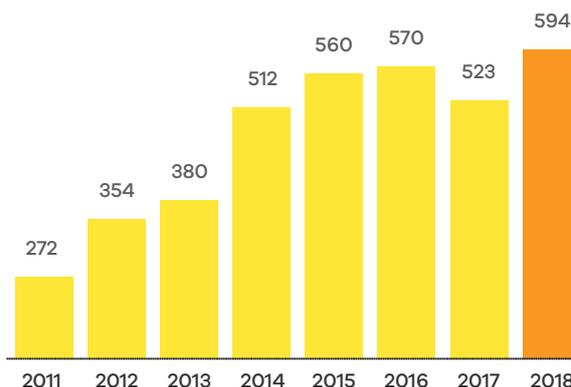
Measure 6.1.2 Apparent retention rates for students in Years 10 to 12

Measure 6.1.3 Number of Aboriginal students who complete the VCE, VCAL or VET in Schools Certificate

Apparent retention rates for students in Years 10 to 12



Number of Aboriginal students who complete the VCE, VCAL or VET in Schools Certificate



Goal 7: School leavers achieve their potential



7.1 Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education

The proportion of young Aboriginal people engaged in education, training or employment has grown significantly across the last decade.

According to the On Track survey, in 2018 Aboriginal Year 12 completers were more likely to go on to do a Bachelor degree, apprenticeship or traineeship or be employed and were less likely to be looking for work than they were in 2009.

Of the 65 per cent of Aboriginal Year 12 completers surveyed in 2018 that went on to further education and training, half undertook a Bachelor degree at university, while half chose vocational education and training.

Measure 7.1.1 Destinations of Year 12 completers

Compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, young Aboriginal Year 12 leavers are more likely to go on to do an apprenticeship, traineeship, certificate, diploma or be employed, rather than go to university, straight after finishing Year 12.

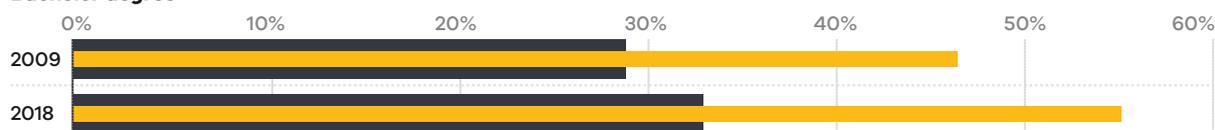
Destinations of Year 12 completers

■ Aboriginal ■ Non-Aboriginal

Apprenticeship/ traineeship



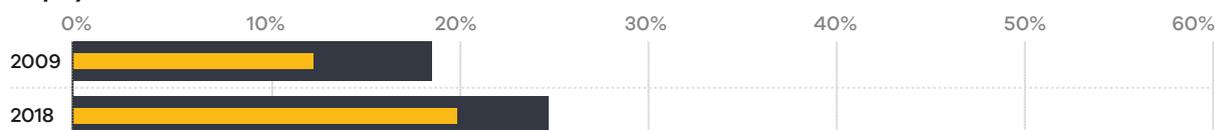
Bachelor degree



Certificates / diplomas



Employed



Looking for work or not in labour force, education or training

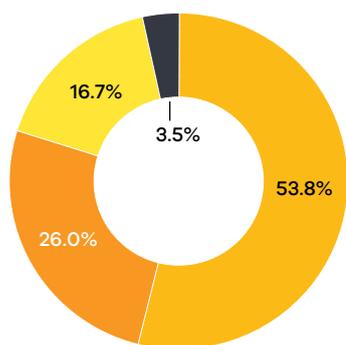


7.1 Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education

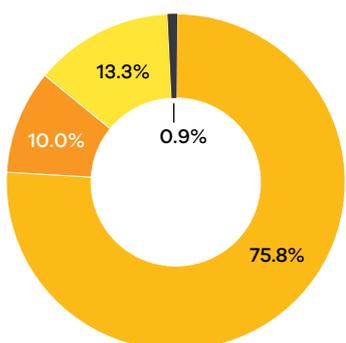
In 2016, just over half (53.8 per cent) of young Aboriginal people were fully engaged in full-time education and training and/or employment. However, this is 22.0 per cent lower than for non-Aboriginal young people.

Proportion of 17-24-year-old school leavers participating in full-time education, training and/or employment, 2016

- Fully engaged in education, training or employment
- Not engaged in education, training or employment
- Partially engaged in education, training or employment
- Not stated



Aboriginal



Non-Aboriginal

Measure 7.1.2 Proportion of 17-24-year-old school leavers participating in full-time education and training and/or employment

Supporting young Aboriginal people into careers

The Department of Education and Training is developing resources to support employers to provide workplace learning (Work Experience, Structured Workplace Learning, School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships and Volunteering) opportunities to students. The main purpose for these resources are to:

- engage and encourage employers to provide meaningful workplace learning opportunities to all students
- provide guidance and support to ensure that employers provide a fair, inclusive and safe working environment, comply with legal regulations and obligations and meet the needs of all students regardless of circumstance or background.

The resources will include information that is universal to all students as well as specific information to support employers to provide opportunities for Aboriginal students. The resources will be available in November 2019 and will be disseminated to industry and employers, schools and relevant stakeholders.

7.1 Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education

In 2018, 3,615 Aboriginal Victorians aged 18-24 were participating in VET studies, while 287 Aboriginal Victorians of this age group were participating in university studies. Since 2016, this represents a 24.2 per cent increase in university participation for Aboriginal Victorians and a 4.1 per cent increase in VET participation over the same period.

The proportion of the Aboriginal population aged 18-24 participating in VET studies in 2018 was more than twice the rate of their non-Aboriginal peers (44.6 per cent and 20.2 per cent, respectively), while participation in university studies was around the same (3.5 per cent and 3.1 per cent).

In 2018, 731 Aboriginal Victorians aged 18-24 completed VET studies, while 60 Aboriginal Victorians completed university studies. Since 2016, this represents a 71 per cent increase in university completions for Aboriginal Victorians and a 25.0 per cent increase in VET completions over the same period.

Participation

For this Report, participation is defined as the number or proportion of Victorians aged 18-24 who were enrolled in courses at a university or vocational education training (VET) provider within a given calendar year.

Completion

For this Report, completion is defined as the number or proportion of Victorians aged 18-24 who completed and were awarded tertiary qualifications at a university or VET provider within a given calendar year.

VET

For this Report, VET includes: Technical and further education (TAFE) institutes; Community education providers; Enterprise providers and private training providers. Schools based VET is excluded.

University

For this Report, a university includes education training providers that are accredited to deliver courses at Level 7 (bachelor degree minimum) of the 2013 (current) Australian Qualification Framework.

Measure 71.3 Tertiary education participation and completion:

- **71.3a:** VET participation rate
- **71.3b:** university participation rate
- **71.3c:** VET course completion rate
- **71.3d:** university course completion rate

Participation of 18-24-year-olds in VET and University

	Enrolments (n)	Enrolments as a proportion of the population aged 18-24 (%)
VET		
2016, Aboriginal	3,474	44.5%
2018, Aboriginal	3,615	44.6%
2016, Non-Aboriginal	157,351	26.2%
2018, Non-Aboriginal	128,125	20.2%
University		
2016, Aboriginal	231	3.0%
2018, Aboriginal	287	3.5%
2016, Non-Aboriginal	20,315	3.4%
2018, Non-Aboriginal	19,855	3.1%

VET and University completions for 18-24-year-olds

	Completions (n)	Completions as a proportion of the population aged 18-24 (%)
VET		
2016, Aboriginal	585	7.5%
2018, Aboriginal	731	9.0%
2016, Non-Aboriginal	38,451	6.4%
2018, Non-Aboriginal	38,843	6.1%
University		
2016, Aboriginal	56	0.7%
2018, Aboriginal	60	0.7%
2016, Non-Aboriginal	6,690	1.1%
2018, Non-Aboriginal	5,678	0.9%

7.1 Increase the proportion of Aboriginal young people in work or further education

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. However, the proportion of Aboriginal people with a Certificate III level qualification or above is still 16.2 per cent lower than non-Aboriginal Victorians.

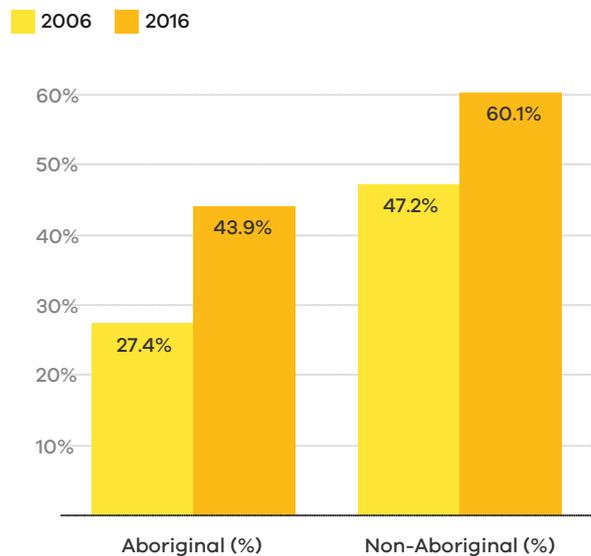
In 2018, after completing their training, 85.4 per cent of all Aboriginal VET graduates were employed and/or pursuing further study, a small increase from 2016 and very similar to their non-Aboriginal peers.

The Victorian Public Service is providing a key employment pathway for Aboriginal Victorians. Between December 2017 and June 2019, 157 Aboriginal Victorians were employed in the Victorian Public Service as graduates or cadets. Of these, 116 (73.9 per cent) have completed or are on track to complete their respective employment program.

Measure 71.4 Proportion of 20–54-year-olds with qualifications at Certificate III level or above

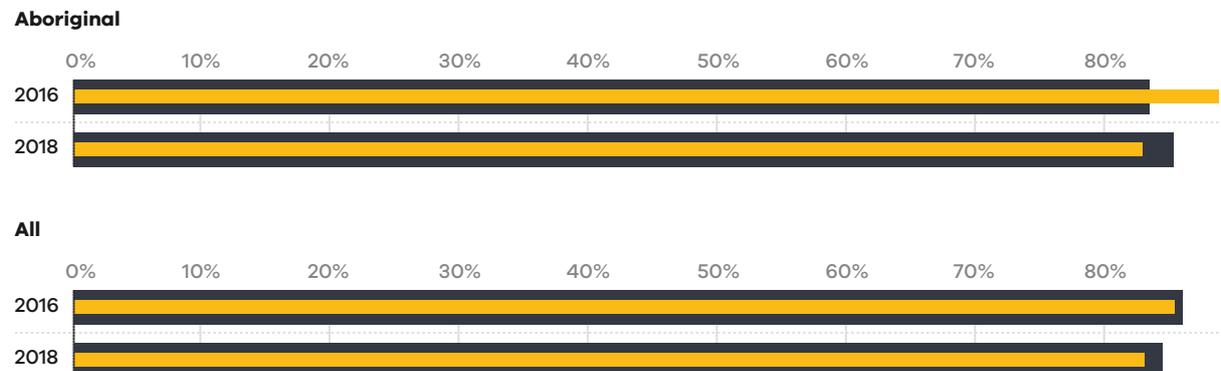
Measure 71.5 Proportion of 20–54-year-old government-funded and total VET graduates employed and/or in further study after training

Proportion of 20–54-year-olds with qualifications at Certificate III level or above



Proportion of 20–54-year-old government-funded and total VET graduates employed and/or in further study after training

■ Total VET graduates employed and/or in further study (%) ■ Government-funded VET graduates employed and/or in further study (%)



Action the Victorian Government is taking

The Victorian Government is driving action to ensure that all Aboriginal Victorians achieve their learning aspirations through **Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026**.

Marrung covers a range of priority areas including a positive climate for learning and development, driving innovative ways to improve outcomes in local communities, as well as professional leadership in ensuring success of Aboriginal learners, and achieving excellence in teaching, learning and development at all stages. Action across these areas will ensure Aboriginal children thrive in their early years, are engaging at school, and are supported to excel and achieve their full potential.

When students are engaged in class, they learn more. Marrung sets out strategies for raising literacy and numeracy achievement and offers a roadmap for delivering inclusive, culturally-competent and responsive curriculum to all Aboriginal students.

Marrung's success relies on the active involvement of local Aboriginal communities and education services providing culturally-safe learning environments. Marrung has been developed with and continues to be governed by key Aboriginal organisations including principal partner VAEAI.

In early childhood education the Victorian Government is continuing to **support Aboriginal children to attend kindergarten** through providing three and four-year-old children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten a week. The Victorian Government is also taking a community-led approach to ensure inclusive and culturally-safe spaces for Aboriginal children and families. From 2019, 30 kindergartens will be funded to deliver an Aboriginal languages program through the **Early Childhood Language Program**.

In schools, Marrung is driving a range of improvements for Aboriginal learners, including through providing additional needs-based funding targeted to Aboriginal primary school students, efforts to improve attendance and a focus on building inclusive school environments for Aboriginal students.

To provide improved support for Aboriginal learners undertaking further education and training, the Victorian Government, in partnership with VAEAI, is developing options to **support Aboriginal learners to engage and participate successfully in VET**, including through the redesign of the existing Aboriginal VET workforce.

The Victorian Government is also delivering **Free TAFE for Priority Courses**, covering tuition fees for priority courses for students who are eligible for government-subsidised training. This includes 40 non-apprenticeship courses and 20 apprenticeship pathway courses which will benefit Aboriginal learners.



Opportunity & prosperity



Our shared commitment:

Building opportunity and economic prosperity for all Aboriginal Victorians.

—

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 ensuring Aboriginal Victorians are represented at all levels, across all sectors and pursuits.



Goal 8: Aboriginal workers achieve wealth equality



8.1 Increase Aboriginal household income in line with the Victorian median

8.2 Increase Aboriginal home ownership in line with the Victorian average

The income and home ownership levels of Aboriginal Victorians are steadily improving, and more Aboriginal workers are achieving their economic aspirations across a range of financial indicators.

In the 10-year period spanning 2006 to 2016, median household income for Aboriginal Victorians has increased from around \$40,000 to over \$60,000 per annum. This means that half of all Aboriginal Victorian households earned more than \$60,000 per annum. In the same period, the gap in both median household income and estimated median equivalised household income³ has decreased between Aboriginal Victorians and non-Aboriginal Victorians (from 25.4 to 15.6 per cent, and 37.6 to 30.3 per cent respectively).

Measure 8.1.1 Median household income and median equivalised household income

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

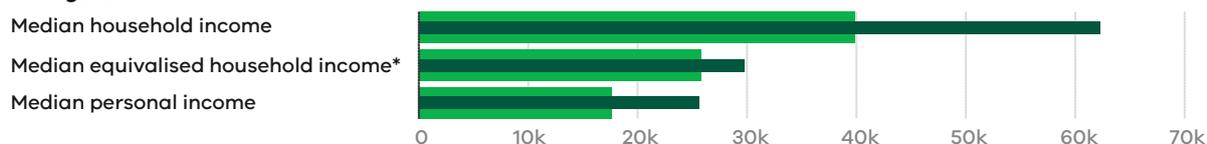
Further, over 2006 to 2016 the proportion of home ownership for Aboriginal Victorians has increased by around three per cent, while over the same period the proportion for non-Aboriginal Victorians has decreased by around four per cent.

Despite making significant headway towards income and wealth equality, Victoria still has some way to go until economic parity is achieved. In 2016, the median weekly personal income for Aboriginal Victorians was \$167 below parity, and the rate of home ownership was 1.5 times higher for non-Aboriginal Victorians.

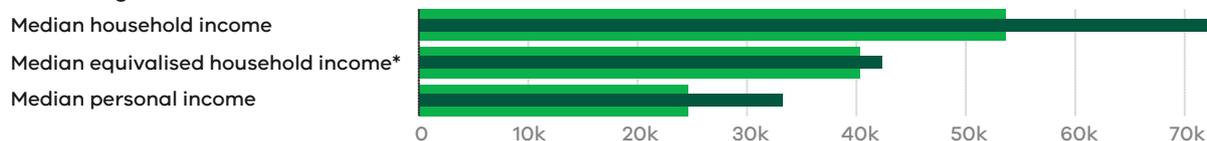
Household and personal income

■ 2006 ■ 2016

Aboriginal



Non-Aboriginal



*Median equivalised household income data is for 2004–05 and 2014–15. All income data is median annual income.

Home ownership

■ 2006 ■ 2016

Aboriginal



Non-Aboriginal

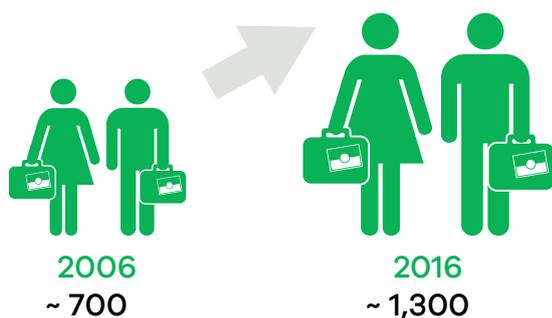


3. Equivalised household income is total household income adjusted by the number of people in a household to more accurately compare household income.

8.3 Increase Aboriginal business ownership and support Aboriginal entrepreneurs

Rates of Aboriginal business ownership in Victoria are rapidly increasing. In 2006, there were approximately 700 Aboriginal business owner managers; by 2016, that increased over 80 per cent to around 1,300. This increase is far in excess of the rate of population growth, indicating a higher proportion of Aboriginal Victorians are starting businesses.

Number of Victorian business owner managers who are Aboriginal



Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd

Kinaway's purpose is to provide business support and advice to Victorian Aboriginal business people and help improve the visibility and networks of Aboriginal businesses to strengthen relationships and create opportunities. The Victorian Government funded Kinaway to develop an Aboriginal business directory to support both government and the private sector to procure Victorian Aboriginal businesses.

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

Procuring Aboriginal Businesses in the Victorian Public Sector

Government can play an important role in driving demand for purchasing from Aboriginal business. Under *Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-2021* the Victorian Government has committed to a one per cent procurement target from 2019-20.

From July 2018 to June 2019, the Victorian Government engaged in contracts with 94 Victorian Aboriginal businesses, Traditional Owner Group entities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO), to the value of \$17 million. This represents 0.4 per cent of government procurement from small to medium enterprises.

Under the Social Procurement Framework and Tharamba Bugheen several other activities are also underway to further promote government procurement from Aboriginal service providers and businesses, including reviewing procurement and funding policies and guidelines and practices across whole of government.

8.3 Increase Aboriginal business ownership and support Aboriginal entrepreneurs

Blooming Businesses

In March 2019, 30 Aboriginal women attended a workshop at Mount Evelyn to learn about running a bushfood business.

The event took place on International Women's Day and focused on providing insight and information for the development and growth of businesses that produce products and services from Aboriginal bushfood and botanicals.

Speakers included high-profile Aboriginal bushfood and botanicals businesswomen, Aunty Dale Chapman and Sharon Winsor, who shared tips on establishing and sustaining a bushfood business.



Ngarrimili: Igniting and Nurturing Aboriginal Excellence

Aboriginal Victorians who are stepping out into business ownership are being supported by four organisations funded by the Victorian Government through Tharamba Bugheen and LaunchVic to provide culturally-safe business tools, programs and workshops.

One such organisation, Ngarrimili, received \$492,500 to run **Project Ngarrimili: Igniting and Nurturing Aboriginal Excellence** - a partnership between Strong Brother Strong Sister and Impact Co.

Meaning 'to dance' in Wadawurrung, Ngarrimili inspires and nurtures entrepreneurial excellence within Aboriginal communities across Victoria via three programs:

- Ignite: a series of workshops to ignite local Aboriginal people to pursue entrepreneurship.
- Accelerate: workshops to support pre-revenue start-ups led by Aboriginal people to articulate and validate their concepts.
- Enhance: an incubator program for Aboriginal-led ventures designed to support cultural wellbeing and commercial needs through technical know-how.



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



9.1 Increase Aboriginal workforce participation

The Victorian Government funds several training and employment linkage programs to support Aboriginal job-seekers. In August 2016, funding of \$39.2 million for 38 new employment services through the Jobs Victoria Employment Network (JVEN) was announced.

Under the first JVEN funding round, five targeted services for Aboriginal job-seekers received a total of \$5.6 million to support 480 job placements. In addition, 16 multi-target applications received a total of \$17.1 million for programs that included Aboriginal job-seekers as a target group.

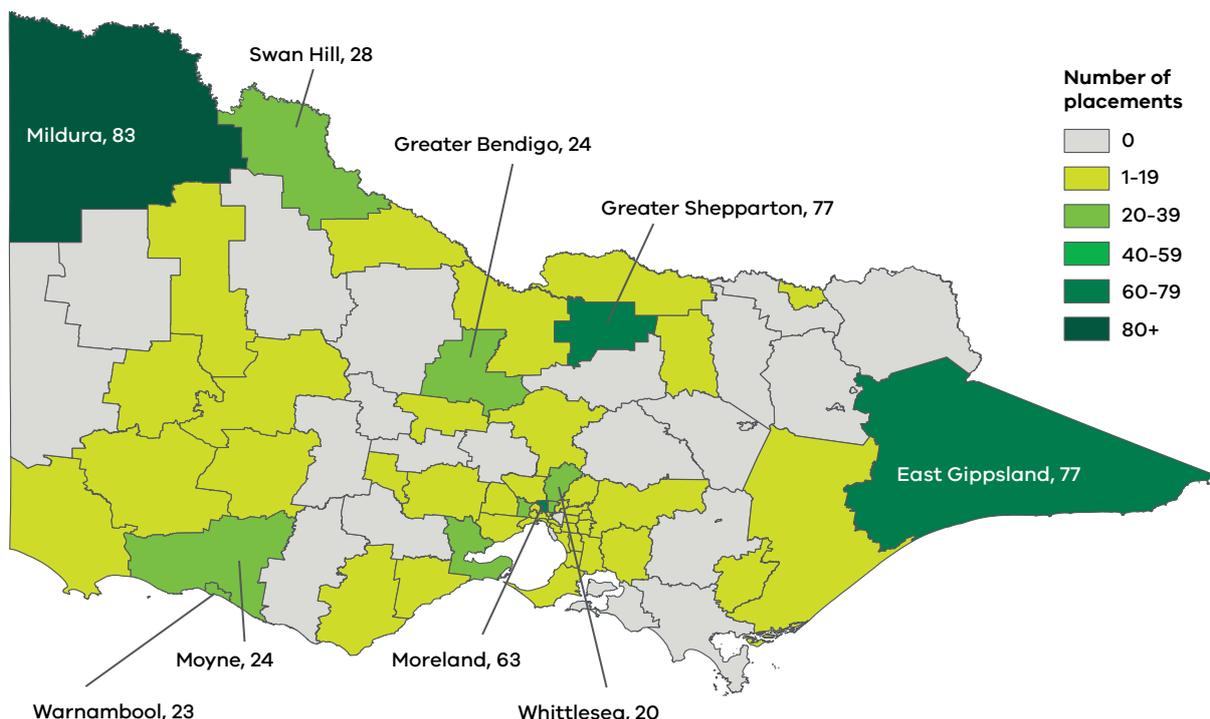
Since 2016, Jobs Victoria has supported over 700 Aboriginal job-seekers into work placements across 36 sites Victoria-wide. The largest number of Aboriginal job placements are in regional areas including Mildura, East Gippsland and Greater Shepparton. Of job-seekers completing placements with Jobs Victoria, over half have commenced employment.

Measure 9.1.3 Aboriginal jobseekers supported into work

Geelong Aboriginal Employment Agreements

14 organisations in the Geelong region have signed up to an Aboriginal Employment Agreement. The Agreements include three overall goals for organisations to achieve:

- increasing the number of Aboriginal people employed in each organisation
- adopting an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Reconciliation Action Plan, Inclusion Plan or equivalent
- adopting an Acknowledgement of Country protocol.



9.1 Increase Aboriginal workforce participation

In the 10-year period spanning 2006 to 2016, the employment to population ratio for Aboriginal Victorians has increased by around three per cent, indicating a greater proportion of the Victorian Aboriginal population is employed.

Between 2006 and 2016, the proportion of employed persons aged 15-64 working full-time has remained relatively similar to that of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Workforce participation⁴ results over this period are particularly promising for older Aboriginal people aged 55-65 years, who increased their workforce participation by around 13 per cent. This indicates that Aboriginal Victorians are remaining in the workforce longer. However, relative to non-Aboriginal older people, Aboriginal Victorians are still leaving employment before reaching retirement age at a higher rate.

Measure 9.1.1 Employment to population ratio

Measure 9.1.2 Proportion employed in full-time versus part-time or casual employment

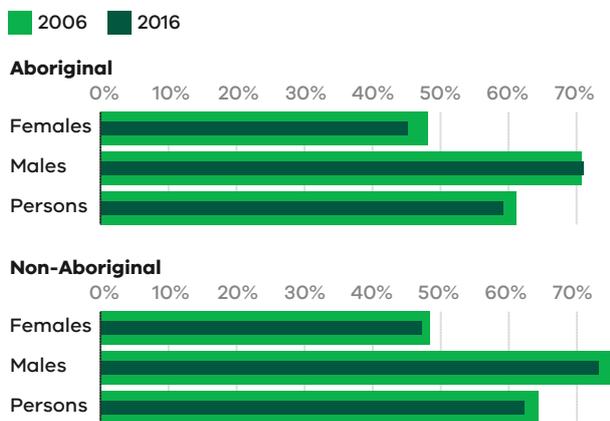
Results are also promising for young Aboriginal Victorians aged 15-24 who increased their workforce participation rate by around six per cent between 2006 to 2016. Workforce participation for non-Aboriginal young people decreased by around four per cent over the same period.

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.

Employment to population ratio



Proportion of workers employed full-time



4. In this Report, workforce participation is defined as the proportion of the working-age population aged 15-64 who reported being either employed or unemployed but looking for work in the ABS census.

Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative

The Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative (AWDI) was designed in partnership with ACCOs and the Victorian Government to develop models for streamlined and flexible investment in line with commitment to the principles of self-determination.

ACCOs can access this investment to meet the needs of the sector and support growth of the community services workforce.

AWDI values Aboriginal knowledge and the expertise within the sector and acknowledges that ACCOs are best placed to develop programs to meet their workforce growth and training needs and how success will be measured.

Through AWDI, over 250 ACCO workers will undertake community service qualifications across Victoria to significantly uplift skills and qualifications across the sector. AWDI is supported by the Department of Health and Human Services, Family Safety Victoria and the Department of Education and Training with investment through the Regional and Specialist Training Fund.

9.2 Increase workforce participation for Aboriginal women

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

Between 2006 to 2016, workforce participation for Aboriginal Victorians increased across all age groups. This indicates the positive workforce participation trend for Aboriginal Victorians is widely distributed across the population.

These trends are also promising because for several age groups and for Aboriginal women, workforce participation is increasing for Aboriginal Victorians at a faster rate than for non-Aboriginal Victorians.

However, workforce participation for Aboriginal Victorians who live in regional and remote areas has not seen the same level of progress. Workforce participation in these areas for Aboriginal Victorians is much lower compared to metropolitan areas. This indicates the need to target workforce strategies to Aboriginal Victorians in outer regional and remote areas.

Despite making headway, there remains a significant gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians across all measures of workforce participation.

Measure 9.2.1 Workforce participation of women

Measure 9.3.1 Workforce participation by age, disability status and regional versus metropolitan

Aboriginal Businesswomen Landmark Research Project

The Project was commissioned in 2019 to inform how government can improve support for Aboriginal women at different stages of their business journey.

Led by a team of Victorian Aboriginal women, the project engaged with Aboriginal businesswomen through surveys, in-depth case studies and a networking event.

The engagement found that Aboriginal businesswomen are often motivated by making an impact in their communities, including by creating employment opportunities and involving other Aboriginal women in their supply chains. These findings will contribute to the development of the new Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy.

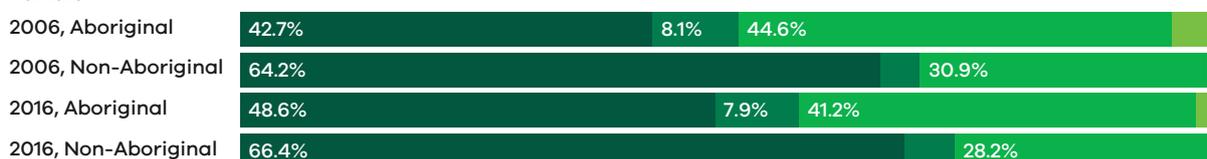
Workforce participation by gender

■ Employed ■ Unemployed ■ Not in the labour force ■ Not stated

Male



Female



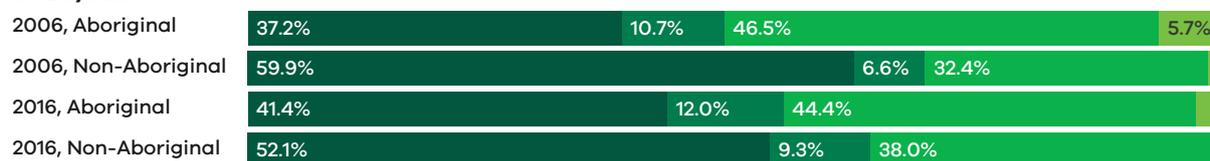
9.3 Increase workforce participation for Aboriginal young people, people with a disability and people living in regional areas

Workforce participation by age

■ Employed ■ Unemployed
■ Not in the labour force ■ Not stated

Measure 9.3.1 Workforce participation by age, disability status and regional versus metropolitan

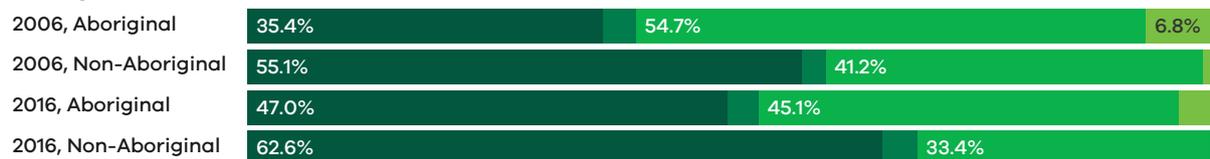
15–24 years



25–54 years



55–64 years



65 years and above



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

Workforce participation for persons with a disability

■ Employed ■ Unemployed ■ Not in the labour force ■ Not stated

2006



2016



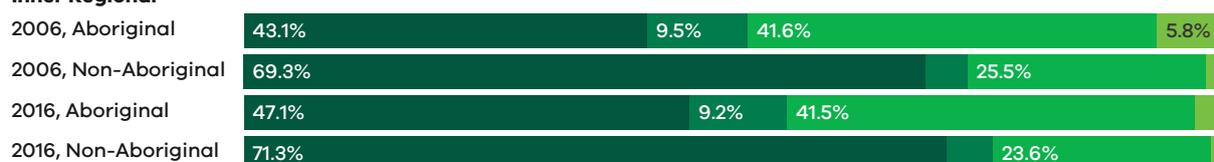
Workforce participation by remoteness

■ Employed ■ Unemployed ■ Not in the labour force ■ Not stated

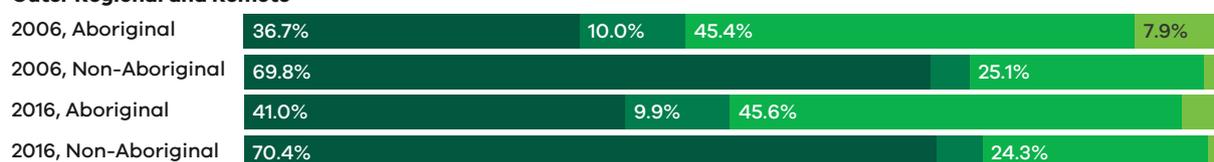
Metropolitan



Inner Regional



Outer Regional and Remote



9.4 Increase Aboriginal leadership and representation across all sectors and levels

Aboriginal Victorians are employed across all sectors of the Victorian economy. It is important to highlight growth areas for employment for Aboriginal Victorians to continue to plan for a future of prosperity.

In 2016, the health care and social assistance industry was the largest employer of Aboriginal Victorians, accounting for 15.4 per cent of Aboriginal jobs. This was followed by public administration and safety, construction and retail trade. A greater proportion of Aboriginal Victorians are also employed in the public sector.

Of the highest earning industries with job growth, Aboriginal Victorians are most under-represented in the professional, scientific and technical services industry and the financial and services industry, accounting for only 4.0 and 1.8 per cent of Aboriginal employment respectively. This demonstrates the need to promote more opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians in high earning industries with job growth, such as through industry scholarships, particularly for young Aboriginal people entering the workforce.

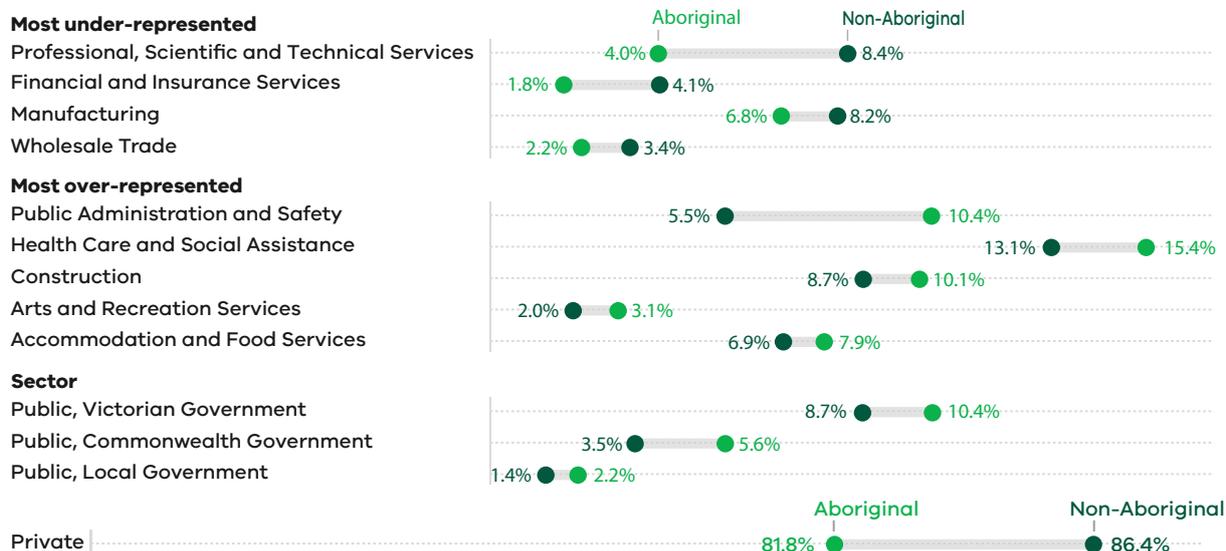
Measure 9.4.1 Aboriginal employment by sector, industry and occupation, with analysis by growth industry

Regarding occupation, over 2006 to 2016, the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians working in skilled occupations generally increased, while the proportion working in unskilled occupations generally decreased. However, relative to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, Aboriginal Victorians remain significantly under-represented in skilled occupations.

Segmentation across occupation and sector is likely to reflect divergent educational and employment opportunities. For example, Aboriginal Victorians are much more likely to undertake vocational education compared to other Victorians leading to often different career pathways.

Living in regional areas is also likely to affect occupational choices with a larger number of jobs available in the social services sector relative to professional or private sector jobs more common in metropolitan areas.

Aboriginal employment by industry and sector, 2016

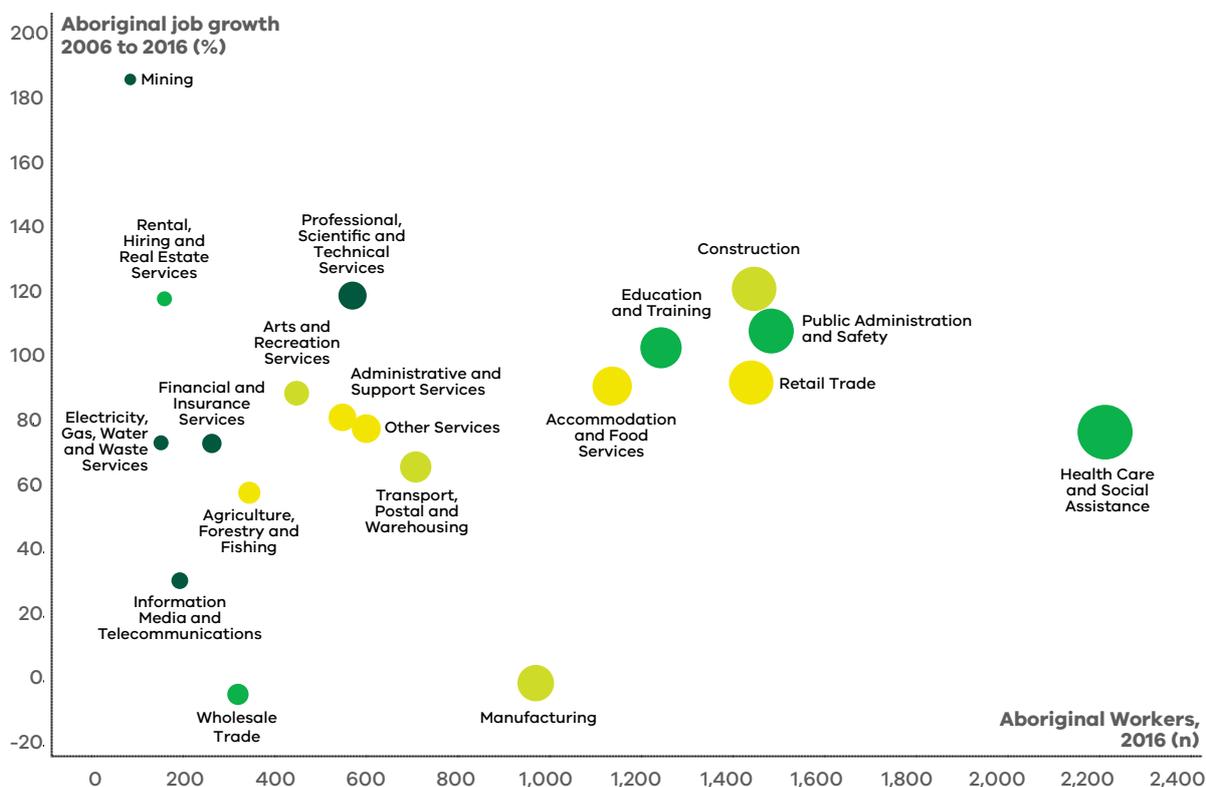


9.4 Increase Aboriginal leadership and representation across all sectors and levels

Industry participation of Aboriginal Victorians by industry growth, 2006-2016

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

- Highest income
- Above average income
- Below average income
- Lowest income



Aboriginal employment by occupation, 2006-2016

- Labourers
- Community and Personal Service Workers
- Machinery Operators and Drivers
- Technicians and Trades Workers
- Sales Workers
- Clerical and Administrative Workers
- Professionals
- Managers

2006, Aboriginal	15.7%	14.7%	8.8%	15.0%	8.3%	14.3%	14.8%	8.5%
2006, Non-Aboriginal	9.9%	8.4%	6.6%	14.3%	10.3%	15.3%	21.4%	13.9%
2016, Aboriginal	12.9%	16.4%	7.6%	14.6%	9.8%	13.0%	16.2%	9.4%
2016, Non-Aboriginal	9.1%	10.6%	5.9%	13.4%	9.8%	13.5%	23.8%	13.9%

9.4 Increase Aboriginal leadership and representation across all sectors and levels

In 2017, the Victorian Public Sector (VPS) adopted a five-year Aboriginal employment strategy, *Barring Djinang 2017-2022*. Its 16 initiatives include a strong focus on enhancing career options and experiences of Aboriginal staff members.

The strategy includes a two per cent Aboriginal staff target for the VPS. At June 2018, there were 553 Aboriginal staff in the VPS which equates to around 1.2 per cent of all public sector employees. Of these, 59 Aboriginal staff, or almost 11 per cent were in leadership roles across government.

The strategy to increase Aboriginal employment in the VPS is complemented by efforts to put Aboriginal voices at the centre of strategy and policy leadership. In 2018, 85 Aboriginal people were on Victorian Government boards, which equates to around 1.2 per cent of all board appointments.

Aboriginal leadership and staffing across the VPS in 2018

Aboriginal staff in the VPS	553
Aboriginal staff as a proportion of the VPS	1.2%
Aboriginal staff in leadership roles in the VPS	59 (10.7% of all Aboriginal VPS staff)
Aboriginal people on government boards	85 (1.2%)

Measure 9.4.2 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

Supporting Aboriginal employment in the public and community sector

The Victorian Government is committed to investing in and supporting Aboriginal staff in the public and community sector.

The Aboriginal Future Leaders Program seeks to support and maximise Aboriginal professional development as key to realising the public and Aboriginal community sector's Aboriginal leadership talent and potential. The Program, delivered for the first time in 2018, provided individual and group coaching sessions tailored to emerging Aboriginal community and public sector leaders.



Goal 10: Aboriginal income potential is realised



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

Aboriginal people, organisations and businesses are making valuable contributions to Victoria's diverse economy, with an aggregate income of approximately \$750 million per year. The economic impact of achieving workforce and income parity would mean the entry of an additional 3,600 Aboriginal workers into the workforce. This has the potential to grow Victoria's Aboriginal income by approximately \$360 million per annum.

While workforce participation rates have increased over the last 10 years, there remains a considerable pay gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians. On average, according to the 2016 census, Aboriginal Victorians earn around 16 cents less per dollar than non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Opportunity cost of not having Aboriginal workforce and income parity



to the Victorian economy

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

This pay gap is potentially influenced by a multitude of factors including family responsibilities, differences in employment by occupation and industry, discriminatory employment practices and gender inequality.

Support for Aboriginal workers and Aboriginal businesses holds enormous promise for the wider economy and is a fundamental step in realising the significant creative and financial potential of Aboriginal Victoria. In addition to benefiting the economy, realising Aboriginal income potential can also lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians in other domains including health and wellbeing and family life.



Action the Victorian Government is taking

The Victorian Government is making several significant investments to support First Nations' economic aspirations and strengthen the economic position of Aboriginal communities.

The Victorian Government has committed to several **employment targets across a range of sectors**, including major infrastructure projects, the Victorian Public Service, and through indirect procurement opportunities. Some of these include:

- Level Crossing Removal Projects have a 2.5 per cent Aboriginal labour hours target.
- Melbourne Metro Tunnel Project sets a 2.5 per cent Aboriginal employment target.
- Barring Djinang adopts a two per cent Aboriginal employment target for the Victorian Public Service.
- The Social Procurement Framework and procurement target under Tharamba Bugheen encourages government buyers to support Aboriginal businesses, which in turn supports the Aboriginal workforce as Aboriginal businesses are more likely to employ Aboriginal people.

The Victorian Government is working with Aboriginal Housing Victoria to deliver the **HomesVic Aboriginal Victorians Shared Equity Program**. The extension of this program will make home ownership more affordable for 40 eligible Aboriginal Victorians. Aboriginal Housing Victoria have a vital role in promoting the scheme and assisting Aboriginal Victorians with the application process.

Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-2027 is the Victorian Government's initiative to provide targeted support to the Aboriginal business sector. The strategy forms part of a wider Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy that emphasises economic participation and development as a vital foundation for Aboriginal self-determination.

Through Tharamba Bugheen, Aboriginal businesses are being supported to reach their potential with a range of services, programs and grants. The Victorian Government is working closely with key service delivery partners, such as **Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Ltd** and **LaunchVic grant recipients**, to make sure that Aboriginal businesses have access to support and advice that meets their needs. There is also a strong focus on improving the visibility and networks of Aboriginal businesses and strengthening entrepreneurial culture and business expertise.

The **Aboriginal Economic Broker Grants Program** has funded five organisations to employ an Aboriginal Economic Broker to work within their organisations to support Aboriginal economic development in their community.

Guided by the self-determination principles, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions will soon commence work to develop a new **Aboriginal economic partnership entity** that will advise government on relevant policy and program development. The future partnership entity will oversee the review of Tharamba Bugheen and the current **Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy 2013-2020**, as well as work with government to develop a new Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy as of 2020-21.



Health & wellbeing



Our shared commitment:

*Self-determining, healthy and safe
Aboriginal people and communities.*

—

Enjoying good health and wellbeing is fundamental. While many Aboriginal Victorians report good health, there remain areas for improvement. Together, government, service providers and communities must take significant steps to ensure that all Aboriginal Victorians have access to high-quality, culturally-safe and responsive health care services.

Improving health outcomes and having a good quality of life will ensure all Victorian Aboriginal communities can thrive.



Eighty

DEADLY

RIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE CO-OP DENTAL DIVISION





Goal 11: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy health and longevity

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

Life expectancy is not the only way to measure health and wellbeing, but it is an important indicator of overall health and access to health services.

Life expectancy at birth was on average 77.9 years for Aboriginal women and 74.4 years for Aboriginal men who were born between 2011 and 2015. While there have been some fluctuations in life expectancy rates over time, it has generally been improving. Life expectancy at birth in 2011-15 is on average two years higher for Aboriginal women and men compared to estimates in 2006-10 and 2001-05 respectively.

Despite gains, the latest estimate of the life expectancy gap (2011-15) between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians remains approximately seven years.

In 2014-15, 36.9 per cent of Aboriginal Victorians rated their own health as 'excellent' or 'very good', which is slightly down from 2004-05 (39.7 per cent). There also remains a significant disparity when compared to the reported health status of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

Measure 11.1.1 Life expectancy at birth, by sex

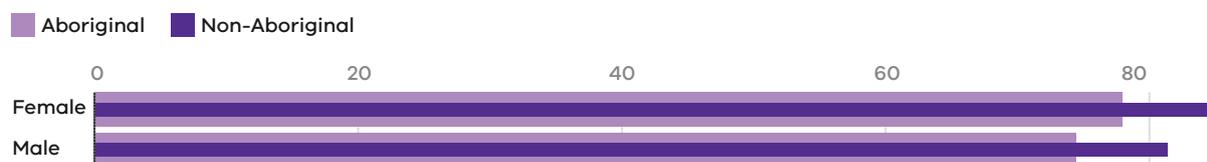
Measure 11.1.2 Proportion reporting 'excellent or very good' health status, by sex*

Measure 11.1.3 Rate of daily smoking, by sex*

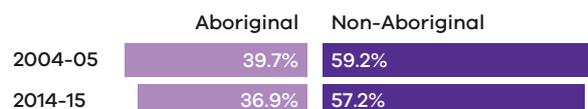
Providing culturally-safe and responsive health and wellbeing services is essential to ensuring Aboriginal Victorians feel empowered and comfortable to access preferred services.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in Australia. While the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians who smoke daily is still high (39.8 per cent in 2014-15), there has been a longterm downward trend in daily smoking (down from 47.0 per cent in 2004-05). The declining prevalence of smoking among young people is an encouraging signal that trends are set to decline further. According to the 2017 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, in 2014-15, 56.1 per cent of Aboriginal young people aged 15 to 24 in Australia had never smoked; up from 44.3 per cent in 2002.

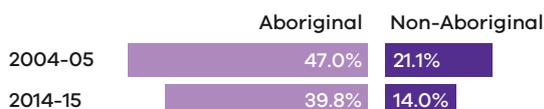
Life expectancy at birth, 2011-15



'Excellent' or 'very good' self-reported health status



Daily smoking



*Gender disaggregation not available at time of reporting.

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

Increasing access to primary health care is essential for supporting equitable health outcomes. Getting the right primary health care at the right time can prevent hospitalisations later on.

In the last 10 years, the rate for all categories of potentially preventable hospitalisations has increased for Aboriginal Victorians. Most notably the hospitalisation rate for chronic conditions has increased by almost 85 per cent.

Hospitalisation for a potentially preventable cause includes:

- Vaccines that could have prevented hospitalisation (like measles)
- Acute conditions (like an ear infection)
- Chronic conditions (like complications from diabetes).

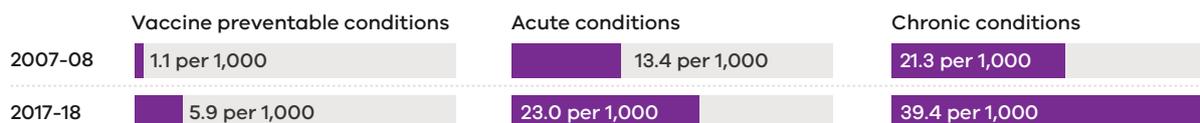
Measure 11.1.4 Rate of hospitalisations for potentially preventable causes (vaccine preventable, acute, chronic and all)

For Aboriginal Victorians, barriers to accessing health services and preventative care can include the high cost of care, availability, insurance coverage and a lack of culturally-responsive care.

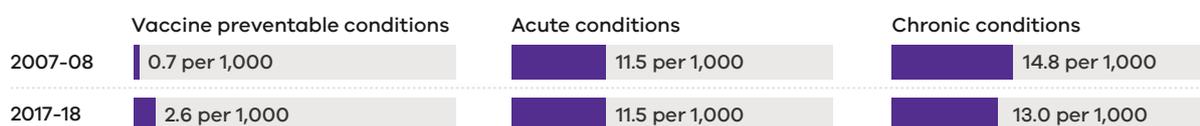
Achieving equitable health outcomes means having timely access to affordable health and culturally-safe services. Addressing barriers to accessing services and increasing accessibility to a range of culturally-appropriate services are essential to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

Rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations per 1,000 persons

Aboriginal



Non-Aboriginal



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

Prevention and Early Intervention Coordination across Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs)

The Victorian Government is supporting reform within the Aboriginal health sector to better coordinate early intervention and prevention services with Aboriginal Victorians. Working hand in hand with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), the Victorian Government has provided funding over three years to support the roll out of Prevention and Early Intervention Coordinator (PEIC) roles in ACCHOs.

PEICs are working with ACCHOs and their staff to enhance their capability to undertake and record Aboriginal specific health checks with client referrals to culturally-appropriate pathways for prevention programs and healthcare. These health checks act as an initial screening that provide pathways into evidence-based, culturally-safe prevention programs.

As part of this initiative, VACCHO is also developing a dedicated data dashboard enabling each organisation to monitor the number of Aboriginal Health Assessments to capture and extract data around smoking rates, cancer screening participation, sexual health checks and other prevention areas.

The ACCHOs are the custodians of this data and it informs their responses to a range of prevention priorities. Access to data is at the discretion of the organisations involved in its capture.

Measure 11.1.4 Rate of hospitalisations for potentially preventable causes (vaccine preventable, acute, chronic and all)

Aboriginal Life!

The Aboriginal Life! Program is helping to prevent type two diabetes and cardiovascular disease by providing specialised culturally responsive services to Aboriginal Victorians. Funded by the Victorian Government and coordinated by Diabetes Victoria, the Aboriginal Life! Program is a culturally-appropriate lifestyle modification program that aims to reduce the incidence of type two diabetes and cardiovascular disease in Aboriginal Victorians.

Government is also working with VACCHO to identify a new approach to diabetes and cardiovascular prevention for Aboriginal Victorians, with the recommendation for a new community-led, strength-based model anticipated in 2020.



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

Between 2008-09 and 2017-18, the rate of emergency department presentation for alcohol or drug-related harm increased for Aboriginal Victorians from 20.4 to 29.3 per 1,000 persons. In 2017-18 the rate for Aboriginal Victorians was approximately five times the rate of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

The rate of emergency department presentations for alcohol or drug-related harm for young Aboriginal people also increased from 19.9 to 35.8 per 1,000 persons. However, as an individual may present to an emergency department multiple times for the same reason in a 12-month period, it is not possible to attribute the number of presentations to the number of Victorians who attended emergency departments with this data.

While it is possible that this increase reflects a better recording of Aboriginal status in hospital records, it also highlights the need for increased community-based drug and alcohol support services.

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

The data does show an increase in service provision of specialist alcohol and other drug treatment for Aboriginal Victorians. Between 2008-09 and 2016-17, the number of clients completing treatment per 1,000 persons increased from 64.7 to 89.0 per 1,000 persons.

Measuring access to specialist alcohol and other drug treatment services is an important indicator of access to support that may help prevent more serious or acute mental health issues.

Rate of alcohol and drug related presentations to emergency and alcohol and drug treatment, per 1,000

Aboriginal	2008-09	2017-18
All ED presentations	20.4 per 1,000	29.3 per 1,000
Youth ED presentations (15-24 years)	19.9 per 1,000	35.8 per 1,000
Clients receiving alcohol & drug treatment	64.7 per 1,000	89.0 per 1,000

Non-Aboriginal	2008-09	2017-18
All ED presentations	4.5 per 1,000	5.7 per 1,000
Youth ED presentations (15-24 years)	9.5 per 1,000	4.1 per 1,000
Clients receiving alcohol & drug treatment	7.3 per 1,000	9.3 per 1,000

Goal 12: Aboriginal Victorians access the services they need



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

Between 2007-08 and 2017-18, the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians who received a health check or assessment increased for all age groups.

Health checks can help a person understand their health needs and identify potential risk factors and care options.

The largest increase in participation at an annual health check was for those aged 55 and above (which increased from 7.5 per cent in 2007-08 to 25.7 per cent in 2017-18).

Over the last 10 years, the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians aged 0-14 who had a health check increased from 1.5 per cent to 16.9 per cent.

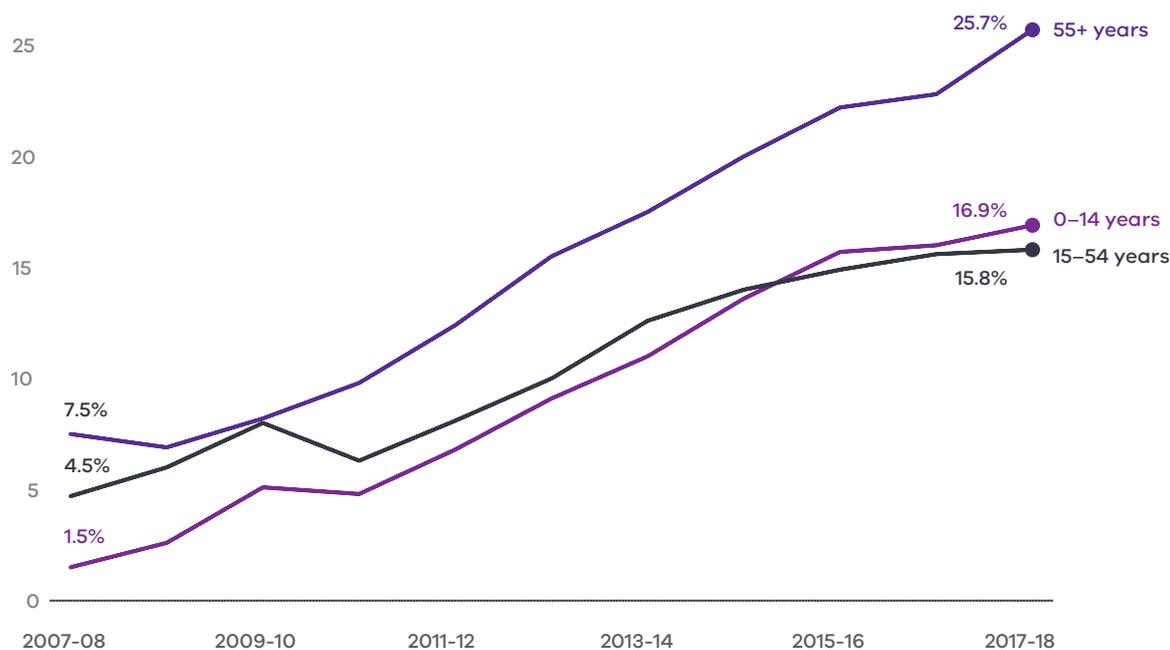
Measure 12.1.1 Proportion who received a health check or assessment, by age

Measure 12.1.5 Number and proportion of people aged 55 years or over who had an annual health assessment

Measuring annual health checks is an important indicator of access to preventative health care. For Aboriginal Victorians, this increase highlights widespread improvements that may support further improvements in health outcomes over time.

Increases in health checks for Aboriginal Victorians reflects the work of ACCHOs who continue to provide culturally-safe and appropriate health services to community.

Aboriginal participation at annual health check



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

Cancer does not discriminate against race, gender, social position or wealth. While broadly in Australia there has been a reduction in cancer mortality, this success is not shared by Aboriginal people. We must continue to ensure that cancer prevention, detection and management services are available, accessible and appropriate for Aboriginal Victorians.

Between 2012 and 2016, there were 942 cancer diagnoses for Aboriginal Victorians (an average of 188 diagnoses per year).

In the five-year period 2012-16 inclusive, the incidence rate of cancer in Aboriginal Victorians was 57.7 and 49.9 per 10,000 for men and women, respectively, which is considerably higher than the incidence rate of cancer in non-Aboriginal men and women (34.7 and 28.6 per 10,000 respectively).

Compared to non-Aboriginal Victorians, the incidence rate of certain cancers were higher for Aboriginal Victorians:

- Lung cancer (2.7 times higher for men and 4.4 times higher for women)
- Liver cancer (3.2 times higher for men and 3.3 times higher for women)
- Head and neck cancer (1.7 times higher for men and 2.1 times higher for women)
- Cervical cancer (2.7 times higher for women).

Measure 11.1.5 Incidence of selected cancers
Measure 12.1.2 Participation rates for cancer screening

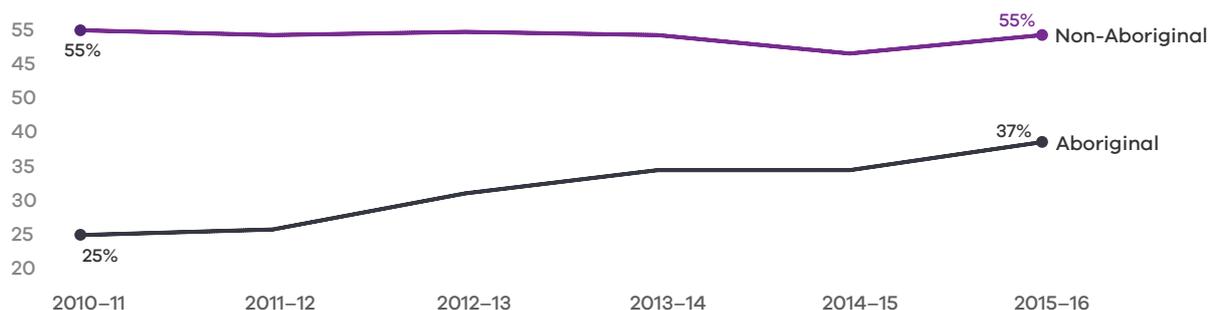
For Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians, four cancer types were most common between 2012-16: lung, breast, bowel and prostate cancers.

Under exposure to screening and delayed detection is a significant driver of the survival gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians in cancer treatment. Participation in cancer screening is vital for ensuring earlier detection and improved health outcomes.

Between 2010-11 and 2015-16, the proportion of Victorian Aboriginal women aged 50-69 participating in the BreastScreen Australia breast cancer screening program increased from 25.2 per cent to 36.8 per cent. Over the same period of time, the proportion of Victorian non-Aboriginal women remained relatively the same at 55.1 and 54.5 per cent, respectively.

A range of other cancer screening programs exist (such as cervical, bowel and prostate screening), however available data was not of sufficient quality to report by Aboriginal status in Victoria.

Breast cancer screening participation in Victoria, 50-69 year olds (%)



Rates are age-standardised according to the 2011 Census rebased population estimates and projections

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

The Aboriginal Women's Breast Screening Shawl pilot project

The pilot is a strength-based and Aboriginal community-led initiative that responds to challenges in providing a culturally-safe service to Aboriginal women. With support from DHHS and Deakin University, VACCHO and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) led the project in partnership with BreastScreen Victoria.

The project aims to improve Aboriginal women's experience with breast screening. Key objectives included designing a shawl featuring local Aboriginal artwork, supporting Aboriginal women to screen together as a group and increasing the cultural competence of BreastScreen Victoria staff. The project has been successful in improving Aboriginal Women's experience during a breast screen, and will be replicated by ACCOs across the state in 2019-20.

Measure 11.1.5 Incidence of selected cancers

Measure 12.1.2 Participation rates for cancer screening

Improving Cancer Outcomes for Aboriginal Communities

The Improving Cancer Outcomes for Aboriginal Communities Working Group is a coalition of experts, bringing together diverse knowledge and perspectives. Established in partnership with VACCHO, the Working Group aims to drive action to reduce the incidence, mortality and morbidity associated with cancer that is disproportionately experienced by Aboriginal people in Victoria.

The Working Group has commissioned the Menzies School of Health Research to conduct a desktop review on the knowledge and evidence for priority issues in the cancer care system.



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

Aboriginal Victorians with a disability often face additional barriers to achieving health and wellbeing. The successful transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) must be informed by and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal Victorians.

It is difficult to know how many Aboriginal Victorians require disability support services, due to limited data which accurately reflects the prevalence and spectrum of disability amongst Aboriginal peoples. According to the 2016 ABS Census, 3,897 Aboriginal people in Victoria 'require assistance with core activities'.

At June 2019, the NDIS identified 3,403 Aboriginal Victorians as potential candidates for NDIS support. Of these, 45.5 per cent (1,550 clients) had been assessed and successfully transitioned to an NDIS plan, representing 2.4 per cent of Victorian NDIS participants with a plan. While the NDIS continues to roll-out, users of disability services continue receiving support under the National Disability Agreement.

Currently, there is no publicly available data to ascertain the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians with a disability who have strong social support networks. However, we anticipate that this will be included in next year's Report.

The NDIS is driving significant change to interactions and relationships between disability services and clients. These changes add to the uncertainty and complexity of an already challenging service system for many Aboriginal people with a disability.

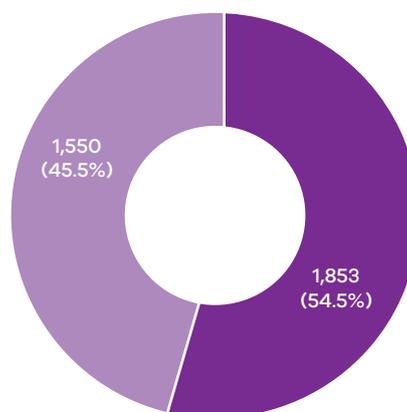
Ensuring disability services are accessible, responsive and safe for Aboriginal people with a disability and their families is integral to ensuring a high quality of life for Aboriginal Victorians with a disability.

Measure 12.1.3 Proportion and number accessing disability services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme

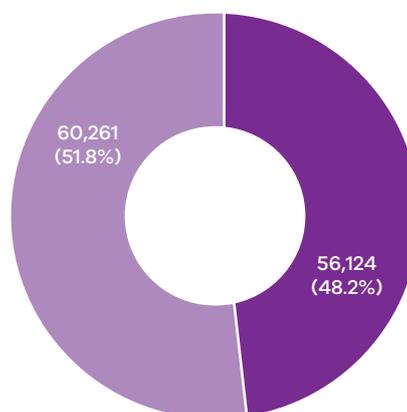
Measure 14.1.4 Proportion of Aboriginal Victorians with a disability who have strong social support networks

Transition to NDIS

- In pathway to transition to NDIS
- Transitioned to NDIS with approved plan



Aboriginal



Non-Aboriginal

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

Supporting Aboriginal Elders and older people to access health and community services promotes greater independence, cultural and social inclusion and quality of life.

The proportion of Aboriginal Victorians aged 50 and above accessing aged care services⁵ has increased between 2007-08 and 2017-18 from 4.5 to 7.6 per cent.

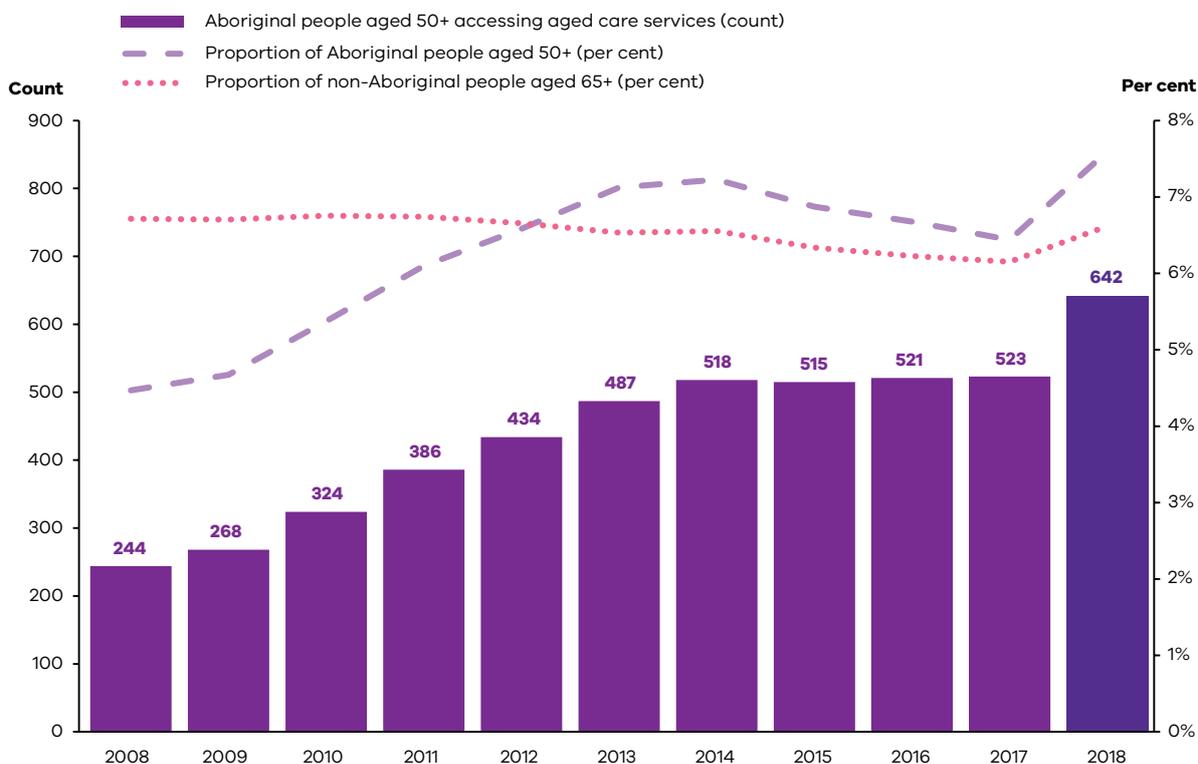
Over the same period, the proportion of non-Aboriginal Victorians aged 65 and above accessing aged care services has remained relatively stable at 6.7 and 6.6 per cent, respectively.

Measure 12.1.4 Number and proportion accessing aged care services

In addition to the mainstream aged care programs reported in Victoria, there were 124 placements under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program in 2017-18, which provides culturally-appropriate care for Aboriginal Victorians in locations close to their communities.

Maintaining health and wellbeing as people get older is important and can dramatically impact on a person's ability to remain independent and to experience a full life.

Number and proportion accessing aged care services



5. Aged care services are provided to assessed Aboriginal Victorians aged 50 years and older, and provided to assessed non-Aboriginal Victorians aged 65 years and older.

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

Indigenous cultures worldwide have always had sex, sexuality and gender (SSG) diverse peoples living within their communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SSG diverse peoples have a unique set of strengths and needs.

The Victorian Aboriginal community has a proud history of supporting Aboriginal SSG peoples with the first ever known Aboriginal out and proud network, OutBlack established in the early 1990s, providing safe spaces and community events for Victorian Aboriginal SSG people.

In 2018 around 60 participants attended *Nanyubak Yapaneyeputi: Dreaming together* retreat on Yorta Yorta Country in Shepparton to celebrate diversity and talk about what it means to be both Aboriginal and LGBTI.

The program included cultural activities, self-care, workshops, wellness and pampering sessions.

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

The objectives of the retreat were to:

- Strengthen resilience, engagement and inclusion for Aboriginal LGBTI community members
- Promote Aboriginal LGBTI networks
- Promote a sense of pride in being both Aboriginal and LGBTI

Participants identified a number of priorities for Aboriginal LGBTI health, wellbeing and safety into the future.

Designing for Diversity

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that service delivery is inclusive and affirming for all Victorians.

Designing for Diversity has been developed by DHHS as a framework for embedding responsiveness and inclusive practice for LGBTI communities, Aboriginal people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse and faith communities, refugees and asylum seekers, people with a disability, and people of all genders.

This framework is underpinned by the recognition that a person's needs require an understanding of a broad range of personal and social characteristics, including religion, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, culture, language and communication requirements or disability. It also involves acknowledging contextual differences such as socio-economic status, geographic location and visa status.

The initiative is an important strategy in fulfilling the Victorian Government's commitment to person centred services and care, supporting local solutions and advancing quality, safety and innovation in health and human services.



Goal 13. Health and community services are culturally-safe and responsive



13.1 Increase the cultural safety and responsiveness of services

The most recently available data from a 2010-11 study of 755 Aboriginal Victorians aged 18 and above found that almost three in 10 Aboriginal adults had experienced racism in health settings within the previous 12 months.

Culturally-safe and culturally-responsive health services are vital to ensure Aboriginal Victorians are getting the health care that they need - whether that be from an Aboriginal organisation or a mainstream service. One way of supporting a culturally-safe health service is for government to support a skilled Aboriginal workforce.

ACCHOs play an important role in service provision as they provide culturally-safe and appropriate services which has been shown to be an important factor for Aboriginal people when choosing to access and use services.

The number of Aboriginal Victorians employed in the health and social services sector has increased substantially, almost doubling between 2006 and 2016.

In 2016, 2,213 Aboriginal Victorians were employed in the sector. This represents 0.6 per cent of all Victorians employed in the sector. Achieving population parity (0.8 per cent) would require an additional 738 Aboriginal Victorians employed in the health or social services sector.

Measure 13.1.1 Proportion reporting experiences of racism in the health system

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

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework reflects the government's commitment to ensuring services for Aboriginal Victorians are free from racism and discrimination. It has been designed to create environments where Aboriginal service users and staff feel safe and there is no challenge to their identity.

The framework, launched in June 2019, was developed in partnership with Aboriginal communities and organisations and Aboriginal staff from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Proportion of Aboriginal Victorians reporting racism in health system, 2010-11	29%
Number of Aboriginal people employed in health or social services sector, 2016	2,213 (0.6%)



13.1 Increase the cultural safety and responsiveness of services

Leaving a hospital against medical advice provides indirect evidence of the extent to which health services are responsive to Aboriginal patient needs.

Discharge against medical advice may result in poorer health outcomes and increase the risk of hospital readmission.

In 2017-18, Aboriginal Victorians were discharged from hospitals against medical advice at a rate of 13 per 1,000 people, which is over five times the rate of non-Aboriginal Victorians. This demonstrates the importance of culturally-responsive care in Victoria's health system.

Further work is required to better understand Aboriginal client experiences of racism across the health service system at different stages and in different parts of the system and how this impacts outcomes.

Feedback on patient experiences of health care services are important for shaping health services and policy.

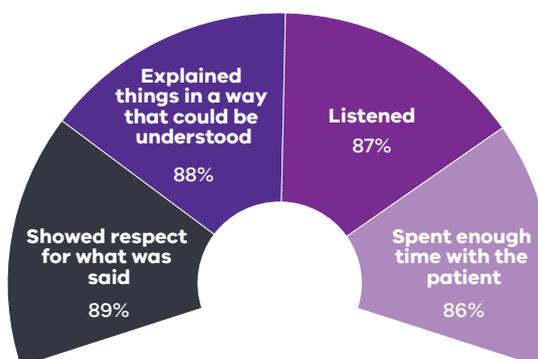
The most recently available data for Victoria is drawn from the 2012-13 Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey in which the majority of Aboriginal Victorians reported positive experiences with their GPs, including feeling heard and respected.

Measure 13.1.2 Proportion reporting positive client experience of GP services

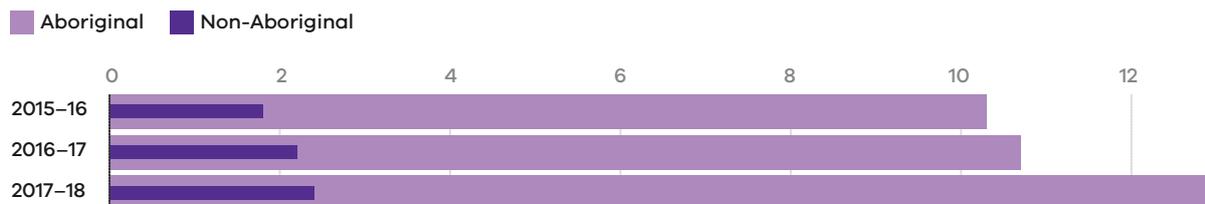
Measure 13.1.3 Hospitalisations where patients left against medical advice/were discharged at own risk

These factors enable Aboriginal Victorians to be active participants and give informed consent regarding their healthcare, and are likely to contribute to an increased feeling of cultural safety and improved health outcomes.

Proportion of Aboriginal Victorians reporting positive GP experiences, 2012-13



Discharged against medical advice, per 1,000



Hospitalisations where patients left against medical advice/were discharged at own risk.

Goal 14: Aboriginal Victorians enjoy social and emotional wellbeing



14.1 Improve Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing

Mental illness accounts for one of the largest and fastest growing categories of disease in Victoria. Mental ill-health can have devastating effects on individuals, families and communities, with one in every two people experiencing a mental illness in their lifetime.

In 2014-15, 35.8 per cent of Aboriginal Victorians aged 15 and above reported 'high' or 'very high' levels of psychological distress, an increase of 4.3 percentage points since 2011-13.

At the same time, there has been a worrying increase in the rate of self-harm related presentations to emergency departments for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Victorians presented at hospital emergency departments for self-harm at 4.7 times the rate of non-Aboriginal Victorians and rates are increasing, particularly among young people.

Many Aboriginal Victorians have strong social support they can draw on in times of crisis, with over 90 per cent reporting they were able to get help from someone outside their household if they needed it. Strong social support and connections with family and friends are important to maintaining mental health.

Measure 14.1.1 Proportion reporting 'high or very high' levels of psychological and psychosocial distress

Measure 14.1.3 Proportion reporting strong social networks they can draw on in times of crisis

However, sometimes clinical support is needed. In 2016-17, Aboriginal Victorians accessed mental health care services at approximately 3.7 times the rate of non-Aboriginal patients.

This highlights the importance of providing appropriate services to support improved mental health indicators under an Aboriginal-led understanding of social, cultural and emotional wellbeing.

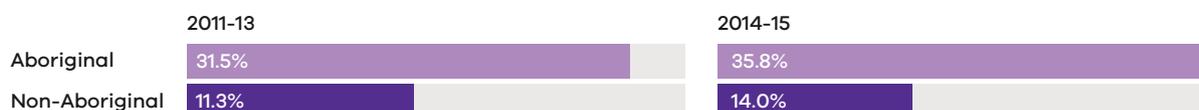


Mental Health indicators

Able to receive support in time of crisis from outside household



Psychological distress reported as 'high' or 'very high'



14.1 Improve Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing

Mental Health indicators

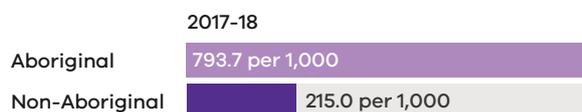
Self-harm related emergency department presentations (all ages)



Self-harm related emergency department presentations (15-24 year old)



Accessing clinical mental health services



Measure 14.1.2 Rate of self-harm related emergency department presentations (by 15-24 years old, and all)

Measure 14.1.5 Number of Aboriginal Victorians receiving clinical mental health services

The impact of the Aboriginal Liaison Officer in the Coroner's Court

Disproportionate rates of Aboriginal suicide are widely known and documented, including that the suicide rate for Aboriginal people is double the national average. However, to date, Victorian data has been unreliable.

In response, the recently created Aboriginal Liaison Officer role in Victoria's Coroner's Court system is leading reforms to achieve accurate Aboriginal suicide data. This is possible through better identification of Aboriginality status and providing culturally-sensitive support to Aboriginal families who have experienced the tragic loss of a family member.

VACCHO will be collaborating with the Coroner's Court to meet the pressing need for data and evidence as a first step to take action to reduce the high number of suicide deaths in Aboriginal communities across Victoria.

Improving Mental Health Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

Four mental health projects are delivering integrated, culturally-safe mental health services for Aboriginal Victorians across three focus areas: adult mental health, child protection and corrections. Delivered by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation in partnership with a local public health service, the four projects include:

- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC), in partnership with Ballarat Health, is supporting parents who have mental illness with children in, or at risk of entering, the child protection system.
- Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS), in partnership with Mildura Base Hospital and Mallee Family Care, is supporting clients in the justice system.
- Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative (Wathaurong), in partnership with Barwon Health, is supporting Aboriginal adults with moderate to severe mental illness who are experiencing social disadvantage.
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), in partnership with St Vincent Health, Austin Health, and Northern Area Mental Health Service, is supporting Aboriginal adults with moderate to severe mental illness.

To improve access to culturally-responsive services, the Victorian Government allocated \$20.2 million in 2016/17 over three years for four consortia demonstration projects to test new service models for Aboriginal Victorians with moderate to severe mental illness, trauma and other complex health needs. All four project sites are reporting positive client outcomes due to strengthened partnership between services, improved coordination of care and a steady increase in client referrals into the service.



Action the Victorian Government is taking

The Victorian Government, in partnership with Aboriginal communities, community organisations and mainstream service providers, is driving action to improve the health and safety of Aboriginal Victorians through **Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027**.

The strategic plan adopts an approach based on cultural and social determinants of health and is guided by the principle of self-determination.

Under the plan, government and partners are progressing several actions to empower communities to deliver culturally-safe health services that meet the needs of Aboriginal Victorians. Significantly, the Victorian Government is transitioning most Aboriginal-specific funding from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to Aboriginal organisations, and supporting these organisations with funding for corporate infrastructure improvements.

Korin Korin Balit-Djak also focuses on improving Aboriginal Victorians' health and longevity, including through:

- the Optimal Cancer Care Pathway for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and cultural competency training in cancer services
- funding for disability advocacy initiatives being delivered in partnership between disability advocacy organisations and ACCOs
- initiatives to improve nutrition including the 'Aboriginal Rethink Sugary Drinks' campaign and accredited training in early years nutrition for Aboriginal health workers increasing sport and recreation opportunities for Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care, including Aboriginal sporting carnivals
- 34 additional alcohol and other drugs workers.

Other actions include the **Cultural Safety Framework** to create culturally-safe environments across the mainstream health sector and the **Aboriginal Health and Human Services Workforce Strategic Action Plan** to support and increase the Aboriginal health workforce.

The Victorian Government acknowledges that the best health and wellbeing outcomes are achieved when Aboriginal communities lead the development, delivery and evaluation of the policies and services that affect them. DHHS is embedding Aboriginal leadership and decision making at all levels, to strengthen accountability and transparency to Aboriginal communities, and capture the diversity of Aboriginal voices.

Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal Victorians is a key commitment of the Victorian Government, being driven by **Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027**. The framework provides a self-determination and culturally based approach to improving mental health outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, aligning with a holistic and interconnected Aboriginal view of health which embraces social, emotional, physical, cultural and spiritual dimensions of wellbeing. Current action underway includes:

- funding Aboriginal clinical and therapeutic mental health positions in 10 ACCOs
- supporting 10 Aboriginal mental health trainee positions
- funding for four mental health demonstration projects between an ACCO and a local public health service to deliver integrated, culturally-safe mental health and wellbeing services.

The **Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System** currently underway will provide recommendations about other action government can take to realise the shared vision of self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities.

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, legal and cultural rights.

Most Aboriginal people will never become involved in the criminal justice system. However, those who do are more likely to experience ongoing involvement with the system. 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 15: Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system is eliminated



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

Most Aboriginal young people will never have any engagement with police. Furthermore, only a small proportion of Aboriginal young people who come into contact with police progress to formal involvement with the courts and youth justice system.

While the number of Aboriginal young people in detention in Victoria remains small, the proportion of Aboriginal young people in detention has increased.

On an average day in 2017-18, there were 20 Aboriginal young people and 109 non-Aboriginal young people in detention. The proportion of Aboriginal young people on remand in detention has also increased from 50.0 per cent in 2007-08 to 55.0 per cent in 2017-18.

Increases in youth detention rates are also driven by an increase in remand-based detention. Aboriginal young people in 2018 were less likely than they were in 2008 to be cautioned and are more likely to be held in remand or receive detention-based sentences.

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

Koori Youth Crime Prevention Grants

Koori Youth Crime Prevention Grants support local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in 25 locations around Victoria to deliver a range of community-based programs. These programs aim to build protective factors in Aboriginal young people to reduce the risk of negative contact with the criminal justice system, and include Elder mentoring, breaking down barriers between young people and Victoria Police, cultural and family strengthening and employment readiness.

Youth justice supervision

Aboriginal young people

	Community based supervision (n)	Community based supervision (per 10,000)	Detention (n)	Detention (per 10,000)	Proportion of those in detention that are on remand (%)
2007-08	100	122.8	14	17.7	50.0%
2017-18	99	109.5	20	21.9	55.0%

Non-Aboriginal young people

	Community based supervision (n)	Community based supervision (per 10,000)	Detention (n)	Detention (per 10,000)	Proportion of those in detention that are on remand (%)
2007-08	675	12.7	53	1.0	54.7%
2017-18	477	8.3	109	1.9	53.2%

Note: all data refers to the daily average number. See Appendix data tables for caveats and data quality statements.

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

Between 2008 and 2018, the number of Aboriginal young people processed by police as unique alleged offenders decreased by 31.5 per cent. On average, Aboriginal young people are more likely to come into contact with police at a younger age than their non-Aboriginal peers. Between 2008 and 2018, the proportion of alleged youth offenders aged 10-14 was consistently higher for Aboriginal Victorians compared to non-Aboriginal Victorians. In 2018, 43.0 per cent of unique youth alleged offenders who identified as Aboriginal were aged 10-14 compared to 27.8 per cent of non-Aboriginal unique youth alleged offenders.

Of those who do commit offences, most commit low-level crime and grow out of this behaviour. However, entrenched contact with the justice system remains an ongoing concern for

Measure 15.1.1 Number, rate and age profile of unique youth (10-17 years) alleged offenders processed by police

Measure 15.1.3 Proportion of first-time youth alleged offenders (10-17 years) cautioned by police

Aboriginal young people due to the multitude of systemic inequalities and structural barriers faced by Aboriginal Victorians.

The proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal first-time youth offenders receiving a caution from police has declined significantly between 2008 and 2018. Cautions are an important diversionary response that can prevent further involvement in the justice system.

Victoria Police Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program (AYCP)

The AYCP is a five-year program, funded under the Community Safety Statement, to increase and enhance the use of cautioning and diversion options to intervene early and address the issue of over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the criminal justice system.

Due to commence in Bendigo, Echuca and Dandenong, the program uses a community-led, co-designed model of practice and implementation strategies agreed to by the Aboriginal Justice Caucus.

Working with community to embed self-determination will ensure contemporary best practice in Aboriginal youth cautioning. This includes resources developed to enhance the cultural awareness and capability of local police to support the implementation of the AYCP, and critical baseline criteria and governance processes to support program monitoring and an evaluation framework to measure progress. An evidence base on the effectiveness of restorative justice approaches and police-community partnerships will inform future direction.

Youth in the justice system

Aboriginal young people

	Unique alleged youth offenders aged 10-17 (n)	Unique alleged youth offenders aged 10-17 (per 10,000)	Proportion of first time youth offenders aged 10-17 who received a caution (%)	Proportion of alleged youth offenders aged 10-14 (%)
2008	707	862.8	69.0%	41.2%
2018	484	534.1	55.0%	43.0%

Non-Aboriginal young people

	Unique alleged youth offenders aged 10-17 (n)	Unique alleged youth offenders aged 10-17 (per 10,000)	Proportion of first time youth offenders aged 10-17 who received a caution (%)	Proportion of alleged youth offenders aged 10-14 (%)
2008	11,089	209.1	78.8%	32.9%
2018	4,529	77.4	59.4%	27.8%

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

Aboriginal women are among the fastest growing prison cohorts in Victoria. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of Aboriginal women in contact with the justice system has increased substantially. This coincided with an approximately 70 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal women processed by police as unique alleged offenders.

Between 2007-08 and 2017-18, the number of Aboriginal women under community-based supervision almost tripled (an increase of approximately 186 per cent) and the number of Aboriginal women in prison more than quadrupled (an increase of approximately 333 per cent).

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

While Aboriginal women represent a relatively small cohort in the justice system, they remain significantly and increasingly over-represented. On an average day in 2017-18, Aboriginal women accounted for approximately one in eight female prisoners.

Adult women - Unique alleged offenders processed by police

Aboriginal women



Non-Aboriginal women

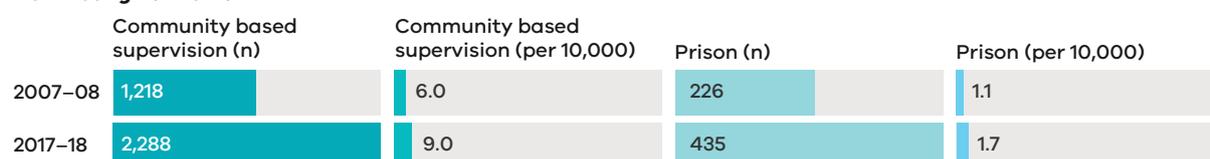


Adult women - Corrections supervision: Community-based corrections and prison

Aboriginal women



Non-Aboriginal women



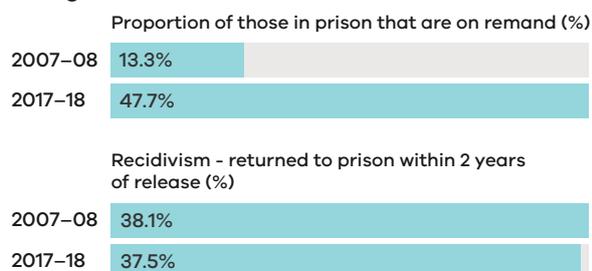
15.2 Decrease the number and eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal women in the justice system

Increasing rates of incarceration are partly being driven by a higher proportion of Aboriginal women held on remand. On an average day in 2017-18, remand accounted for almost half of Aboriginal women in prison and around 40 per cent of non-Aboriginal women in prison. In contrast, over the same time period, the proportion of Aboriginal women who returned to prison within two years of release has decreased slightly.

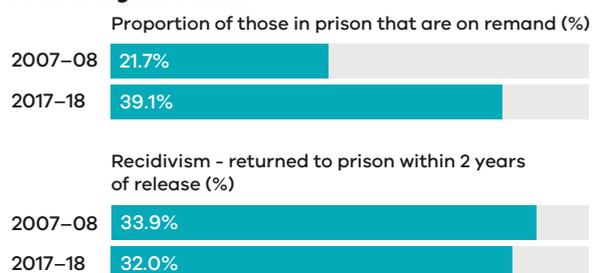
Imprisonment has a disproportionate impact on social outcomes for women and their families. This highlights the importance of cultural and gender appropriate diversionary support options, vital to ensuring that rates of recidivism among Aboriginal women continue their downward trend.

Adult women - Remand and recidivism

Aboriginal women



Non-Aboriginal women



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

Koori Women's Diversion Program

The Koori Women's Diversion Program aims to reduce Aboriginal women's involvement with the criminal justice system by providing intensive and holistic case management. This includes practical support to ensure women are connected to the services they need, supported to get to appointments, and reconnected to culture as a source of therapeutic strength, healing and self-esteem.

During 2018-19, the Koori Women's Diversion Program supported more than 70 Aboriginal women. Outcomes for women in the program vary according to their needs but include accessing stable accommodation, receiving treatment for physical and mental health issues, ceasing alcohol and drug use, re-engaging with children and extended family, receiving support to exit violent relationships, reconnecting with culture and community, and no further contact with the justice system.

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

The number and rate of Aboriginal men in the Victorian justice system continues to increase.

Between 2008 and 2018, the number of Aboriginal men in contact with Victorian Police increased by around 62 per cent and the number of Aboriginal men under community-based supervision or in prison more than doubled (an increase of approximately 183 per cent and approximately 160 per cent, respectively).

In 2018, Aboriginal men were over-represented as alleged offenders processed by police at around seven times the rate of non-Aboriginal Victorians. Furthermore, on an average day in 2017-18, Aboriginal men made up approximately one in every 12 men in prison.

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 Aboriginal men under corrections supervision in prison and community corrections

Adult men - Unique alleged offenders processed by police

Aboriginal men

	Unique alleged offenders (n)	Unique alleged offenders (per 10,000)
2008	1,300	1,101.6
2018	2,102	1,222.6

Non-Aboriginal men

	Unique alleged offenders (n)	Unique alleged offenders (per 10,000)
2008	34,327	173.2
2018	43,786	178.0

Adult men - Corrections supervision: Community-based corrections and prison

Aboriginal men

	Community based supervision (n)	Community based supervision (per 10,000)	Prison (n)	Prison (rate per 10,000)
2007-08	270	233.8	221	191.4
2017-18	764	451.6	574	339.3

Non-Aboriginal men

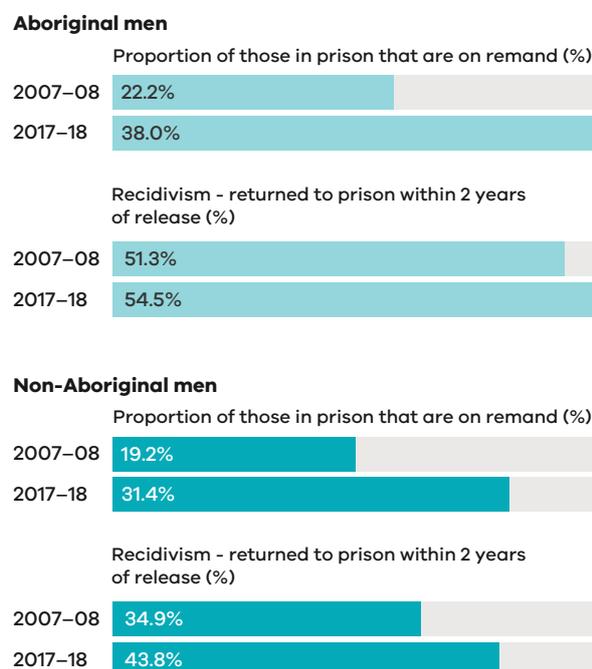
	Community based supervision (n)	Community based supervision (per 10,000)	Prison (n)	Prison (rate per 10,000)
2007-08	5,602	28.6	3,704	18.9
2017-18	10,826	44.5	6,097	25.1

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

Similar to the youth and women’s cohorts, the increasing rates of incarceration of Aboriginal men is partly driven by a higher proportion of offenders being held on remand. On an average day in 2017-18, unsentenced (remanded) prisoners accounted for 38.0 per cent of Aboriginal men and approximately 31 per cent of non-Aboriginal men in prison.

While rates of recidivism vary considerably year to year, in 2017-18 over half of Aboriginal male offenders re-entered prison under sentence within two years of release.

Adult men - Remand and recidivism



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

Dardi Munwurro Journeys Program

The Journeys Program was developed by Dardi Munwurro to engage and empower young Aboriginal men with the aim of diverting them from contact with the criminal justice system. The program builds on protective factors, such as community and cultural connection, through ongoing relationships with positive role models and mentoring relationships with Elders.

Key elements of the program include:

- intake and assessment to build trust with the young person and their family
- an intensive three-day camp to focus on healing, self-esteem, cultural knowledge, connection to Country and community and taking responsibility
- fortnightly group sessions that focus on skills development, education, role modelling, behavioural change, anger management, healthy relationships, healthy lifestyles, emotional intelligence, managing emotions, sexual health, and conflict management
- supported transition and program exit.

A recent evaluation found the Journeys Program was achieving a range of positive outcomes for participants including increased cultural knowledge and pride in their Aboriginality, increased connection to community, reduced anti-social behaviour, re-engagement with education, increased self-esteem and confidence, increased connections to support services, healthier relationships and healthy lifestyle choices.

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



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

Culturally-appropriate prevention, early intervention, diversion and support services are critical to addressing Aboriginal over-representation in the criminal justice system and helping to break cycles of offending.

In particular, community-based and community-led services can connect Aboriginal Victorians to culture and promote positive outcomes.

In 2017-18, 373 Aboriginal Victorians received intensive bail support through the Courts Integrated Services Program. Due to current limitations, there is a lack of available data to report on the proportion of Aboriginal adults receiving intensive bail support. Processes are being established for reporting from 2020.

Young offenders are not just the perpetrators of crime. They also represent a highly traumatised population, and trauma-informed care has become a pillar of the youth justice response.

In 2017-18, 29 Aboriginal young people (aged 10-17) received intensive bail support through the Koori Intensive Support Program in Victoria, representing 59 per cent of all Aboriginal young people released on bail in the same period. Providing intensive bail support to Aboriginal young people is one way to reduce cycles of re-offending.

Due to current limitations in government data collection processes, there is a lack of available data to measure the number of Aboriginal youth accessing community support programs through youth justice community services (measure 16.1.3). Reporting on these measures is due to commence in 2020.

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

Koorie Community-based Youth Justice Program

There are 23 Aboriginal Youth Justice Workers based in 13 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and one not-for-profit organisations throughout Victoria. These workers provide preventative, early intervention and case management services for Aboriginal children and young people at risk of Youth Justice involvement or subject to a Youth Justice Order.

The program provides a range of community-based supports, including one to one support, and culturally-based activities that keep Aboriginal children and young people connected and strong in their culture and communities.

Goal 17: Aboriginal Victorians feel safe and connected



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

The Victorian Government is committed to increasing cultural competence across the justice system, including the police force, so that Aboriginal Victorians feel safer in their communities.

Victoria Police will continue to support learning, training and resources through the roll-out of the **Koori Family Violence Police Protocols** and other cultural training packages.

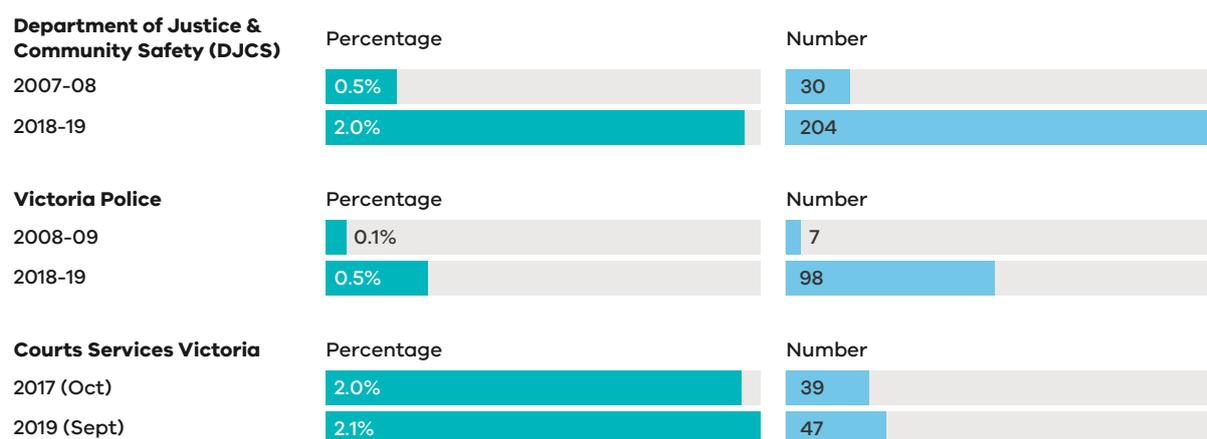
Increasing Aboriginal staffing within the police force is another important mechanism for strengthening cultural competency of Victoria's police. The number of Aboriginal Victorians employed with Victoria Police has increased 13-fold from just seven Aboriginal staff in 2008-09 to 98 Aboriginal staff in 2018-19. As of June 2019, Aboriginal staff represent 0.5 per cent of all Victoria Police staff.

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

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

The number of Aboriginal Victorians employed with the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) has grown by 580 per cent from just 30 Aboriginal staff in 2007-08 to 204 Aboriginal staff in 2018-19. As of June 2019, Aboriginal staff represent 2.0 per cent of all DJCS staff. In September 2019, 47 Aboriginal staff were employed with Court Services Victoria - representing 2.1 per cent of all staff. This is a marginal increase from 39 staff in October 2017 (2.0 per cent).

Aboriginal staff employed across the justice system



Note: Prior to July 2014, Court Services Victoria staff were counted as part of the DJCS.

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

Developing a culturally-aware police force

Victoria Police Recruits, including Protective Services Officers, all receive Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training during Week 1 and Week 4 at the Police Academy. Between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019, 1,241 Police Recruits and 176 Protective Service Officers undertook the training.

In addition, a review of the existing Victoria Police Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Package identified opportunities to enhance training to uplift the capability of frontline members to effectively engage with Aboriginal Victorians to improve policing outcomes.

Victoria Police engaged an Aboriginal Educator to review the training against Victorian Aboriginal historical and contemporary issues, and to capture and explore the role of police in past policies and practices in an effort to break down barriers and strengthen police and Aboriginal community relationships. This includes working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to enhance culturally-competent policing responses.

The refreshed training was delivered to Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers across 10 locations in May and June 2019, with 153 members undertaking the new training.

A Train the Trainer session has been planned to enhance the confidence and competence of the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers to deliver the training ongoing. A training code will enable Victoria Police to monitor the number of police officers who undertake the training from 2020.

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



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

The Victorian Government is also committed to making the justice system more responsive to reduce the incidence of Aboriginal Victorians as victims of crime. It is critical that we build up trust in the justice system so that Aboriginal Victorians feel protected by this system. Historical injustices have meant there is mistrust amongst some Aboriginal communities in reporting crime and accessing victim support.

Approximately three in five Aboriginal Victorians reported feeling safe walking alone in their local area after dark in 2014-15. This may indicate that families and communities provide a strong sense of safety for Aboriginal Victorians.

However, around one in five Aboriginal Victorians had experienced physical or threatened violence in the previous 12 months in 2014-16. This is approximately five times the rate reported by non-Aboriginal Victorians.

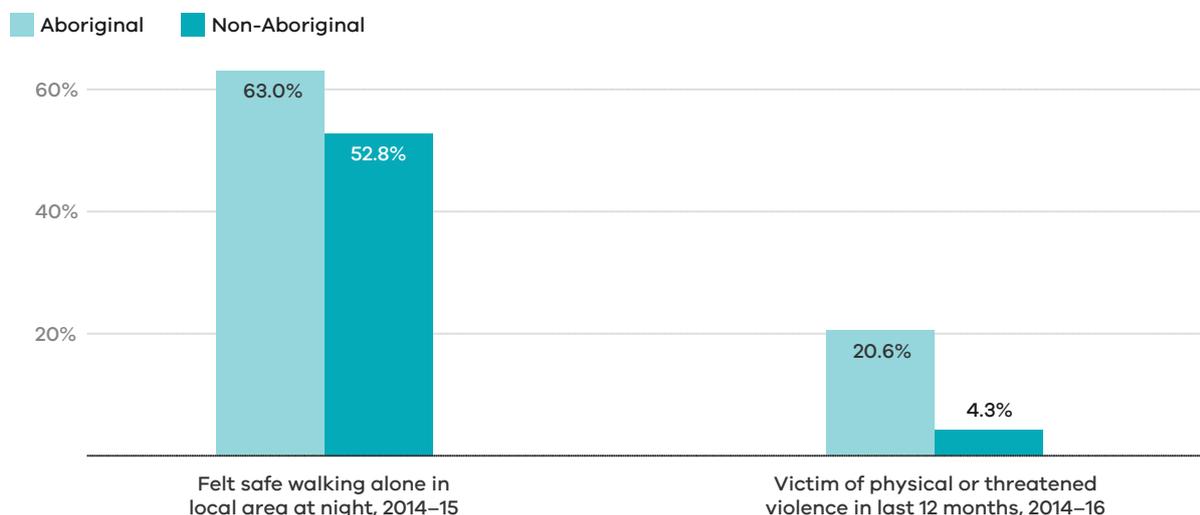
This highlights the importance of ensuring current government initiatives, such as the Community Safety Statement 2019-20, are culturally-responsive to the needs of Aboriginal Victorians to ensure all Victorians feel safe in their home and in their community.

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



Community safety



Action the Victorian Government is taking

The Victorian Government is driving action to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal Victorians in the justice system and ensure an equitable justice system that is providing better justice outcomes for Aboriginal people, their families and communities.

The vision for **Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja - The Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4** is for Aboriginal people to have access to a justice system that is shaped by self-determination, and protects and upholds their human, civil, legal and cultural rights.

Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja also prioritises action that will help build Aboriginal Victorians' trust in the justice system and ensure the Victorian justice system is safe and effective for Aboriginal Victorians.

A range of initiatives support these aims, including Victoria Police Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, Aboriginal Victims Assistance Support Workers, Koori Courts, Aboriginal Case Managers in Community Corrections, Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers in prisons, and Aboriginal Liaison Officers in Youth Justice Centres. Other action includes a pilot service model to deliver a culturally-specific restorative justice response for Aboriginal young people, and consistent cultural support planning for young Aboriginal people involved with both child protection and youth justice systems.

The **Aboriginal Justice Caucus** has been critical in strengthening partnerships between the Aboriginal community and the Victorian Government to drive effective and self-determining change under Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja.

Action is also underway to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal women and men in the justice system. Key actions include the **Koori Women's Place** - a culturally-safe space where women facing the challenges of family violence can come together and feel supported, heard and understood - the **Koori Women's Diversion Program**, and the construction of six **transitional housing units** for Aboriginal women that will accommodate those at risk of homelessness when exiting prison.

In addition, the Victorian Government supports **Ngarra Jarranounith**, a residential healing and behavioural change program for men who have used or are at risk of using violence, as well as the **Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place**, a residential program supporting Aboriginal men to complete Community Corrections Orders.

The **Yawal Mugadjina Cultural Mentoring Program** also commenced in 2018-19. Yawal provides culturally-tailored mentorship to Aboriginal people exiting prison to support their transition and reintegration back into their communities. The program provides participants with cultural support from Elders and Respected Persons in prison, and ongoing community support upon release through the Local Justice Worker Program.

Additional Victorian Government action includes a strong focus on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the justice system, primarily through an **Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy**, which is in the early stages of development. This will be developed in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders, including young people, to ensure that connection with culture, family, Elders and communities is recognised as the foundation for young Aboriginal people to thrive and reduce their involvement with the youth justice system.

Other actions include the new **Koori Youth Justice Taskforce**, being led by the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, which will identify opportunities to improve cultural responsiveness and reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the youth justice system, as well as the **Maggolee Mang Program** in Parkville and Malmsbury designed to support young Aboriginal people to maintain connection to culture and community while in custody.



Culture & Country



Our shared commitment:

The promotion of the rights and responsibilities under section 19(2) of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Victorian Aboriginal communities and peoples are culturally diverse, with rich and varied languages, traditions and histories. Aboriginal Victorians continue to strengthen and grow with the resurgence of language, lore and cultural knowledge.

The richness and diversity of Aboriginal history and culture in Victoria, and the resilience and strength of past and present Aboriginal communities and peoples, is something for all Victorians to acknowledge and celebrate.



Goal 18: Aboriginal land, water and cultural rights are realised



18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

Aboriginal Victorians hold distinct cultural rights, including the right to maintain their spiritual, material and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

Formal recognition

In Victoria there are three different processes through which Aboriginal people can seek the formal recognition of the State as Traditional Owners of their ancestral Country:

- Native title determination under the *Native Title Act 1993*
- Traditional Owner settlement under the Victorian *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*
- Registered Aboriginal Parties under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Heritage Act)*.

Native title is recognised across 14,899 square kilometres of land, while a further 30,766 square kilometres of land is recognised under Traditional Owner Settlement Act agreements.

The area of Crown land with native title determinations and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreements has increased dramatically since the enactment of the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* and is expected to continue to rise as Traditional Owner groups negotiate new settlements.

Area of Crown land with native title determinations and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreements



Measure 18.1.1 Area of Crown land with native title determinations and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreements

Traditional Owner Settlement Act

The *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (TOS Act)* provides a framework for the Victorian Government to recognise Traditional Owners and their rights to public land.

In 2018, an agreement was reached between the Taungurung people and the State. While this is yet to commence, the total number of agreements reached under the TOS Act is three.

New settlements continue to be negotiated under the TOS Act. Barengi Gadjin Land Council, which represents Traditional Owners from the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples, is negotiating a settlement agreement to complement their 2005 native title determination.

Two Traditional Owner groups, Eastern Maar and First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee, are currently pursuing TOS Act agreements alongside native title determinations.

The Government is committed to working in partnership with Traditional Owners to adjust policies, practices and support mechanisms to ensure that more TOS Act agreements can be reached at a faster rate.

18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

Registered Aboriginal Parties

Under the Heritage Act, Traditional Owner groups can be formally recognised in Victoria as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). RAPs are organisations that hold decision-making responsibilities under the Act for protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in a specified geographical area. The Heritage Act recognises Aboriginal people as primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

RAPs have responsibilities under the Heritage Act relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage, including:

- determining Cultural Heritage Permit applications
- evaluating Cultural Heritage Management Plans
- making decisions about Cultural Heritage Agreements
- entering into Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreements with public land managers.

There are 11 RAPs in Victoria which cover approximately 66 per cent of the state.

Measure 18.1.1 Area of Crown land with native title determinations and/or Recognition and Settlement Agreements

Right People for Country

The Right People for Country program supports Traditional Owner groups to make agreements about:

- boundaries and extent of Country
- group membership, representation and engagement.

Traditional Owners design and lead the agreement-making process and reach their own agreements about 'right people for Country' matters. Support is matched to the need of Traditional Owner groups, and includes access to independent facilitators, skills training and support to visit and map country.

These agreements can support Traditional Owner groups in applying to be a RAP and to negotiate settlements under the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* and the *Native Title Act 1993*.

Supporting strong Traditional Owner groups and improving government engagement

The government is coordinating two projects which aim to facilitate better outcomes for Traditional Owners of areas where formal recognition does not yet exist:

- The Victorian Government Traditional Owner Engagement Project (Engagement Project)
- The Traditional Owner Self-Determination Scheme (Scheme)

The Engagement Project aims to understand and improve the way Victorian Government agencies work with Traditional Owners of such areas, while the Scheme will resource a range of activities to support strong self-determining Traditional Owner groups, as well as engagement with formal recognition processes. Funding of \$3 million over four years in the *2018/19 Victorian Budget* will be available through the Scheme. From late 2018 to mid-2019, extensive engagement was undertaken with Traditional Owners for these projects.

18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

In 2016, the Victorian Government responded to renewed calls from the Victorian Aboriginal community to advance a treaty process with Aboriginal Victorians as an important component of self-determination. Over the next two years, Aboriginal Victorians were engaged online, through widespread regional community consultations and statewide forums on their aspirations for the treaty process.

In January 2018, an independent Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner was appointed to lead the establishment of the Aboriginal Representative Body, to be known as the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (Assembly), in conjunction with community. In June 2018, Victoria made history by passing Australia's first ever treaty legislation. The Treaty Act sets the foundation for a strong, modern treaty-making process in Victoria and cements government's commitment to the treaty process.

In June 2018, the government and the Commissioner announced the launch of the Treaty Community Engagement Program (Program). To date, the Program has provided nearly \$2 million to over 30 Aboriginal organisations across Victoria, with more grants to come. These grants have gone to both formally and non-formally recognised groups, highlighting the importance placed by the government on equitably supporting the engagement of all Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians in the treaty process.



Measure 18.1.2 Work of the State in advancing the treaty process

The Program supports Traditional Owner groups, non-formally recognised groups and other Aboriginal organisations and businesses to:

- engage with Victorian Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal Victorians on key matters relating to the treaty process
- gain practical insights into how self-determination and treaty can strengthen Victorian communities
- build capacity amongst Traditional Owners and other Victorian Aboriginal groups in preparation for the next phase of the treaty process.

In August 2019, the government announced the Traditional Owner Nation-Building Support Package. The package will provide \$13.6 million over two years to support nation-building and treaty readiness for Traditional Owners in formally and non-formally recognised areas.

Between 16 September and 20 October 2019, Aboriginal Victorians cast their vote, electing Victorian Traditional Owners to the inaugural Assembly. The Assembly is made up of 32 seats and is intended to fulfil the role of the Aboriginal Representative Body under the Treaty Act. In this capacity, the Assembly represents the voice of Aboriginal people in Victoria and will work in equal partnership with the State in establishing the elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations.

The Victorian Government will continue to work with Aboriginal Victorians through this process to advance treaty.

18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

For Aboriginal people, 'Country' does not just mean the geographical features of a landscape; it relates to all aspects of an Aboriginal person's existence - culture, spirituality, language, law, family and identity.

Caring for Country is especially important to Traditional Owners who have a cultural responsibility to protect land, waterways and natural resources from harm, and to sustain the wellbeing of the landscape.

Aboriginal cultural heritage land management agreements

One avenue for recognising Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights is through the establishment of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreements (ACHLMAs). ACHLMAs are designed to facilitate a proactive, holistic approach to managing and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage and landscape. Since 2017, one RAP has entered into an ACHLMA, and three have submitted a notice of intention to enter into an ACHLMA.



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

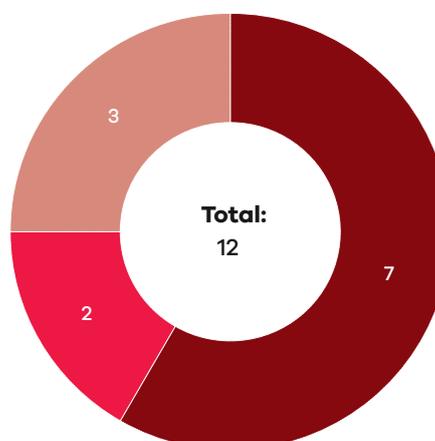
Measure 18.1.4 Number of Whole of Country Plans published

Whole of Country Plans

Whole of Country Plans are overarching, long-term visions, developed by Traditional Owner groups, that set out clear goals and priorities, principles of engagement and measures of success in caring for Country. In 2018, two new Whole of Country Plans were published, bringing the total in Victoria to nine. An additional three Whole of Country Plans are currently in production in 2019.

Whole of Country plans published or in production in 2019

- Published prior to 2018
- Published in 2018
- In production in 2019



18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

Cultural Burning

Traditional Owners from different parts of Victoria have been working closely with Forest Fire Management Victoria to revitalise cultural burning practices. Cultural burning assists in maintaining the land for future generations and reconnecting Aboriginal people with their history and culture.

Between January 2018 and June 2019, Traditional Owners conducted 10 cultural burns with the support of Victorian Government agencies.

In 2018, the Victorian Government launched *The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy* to assist in facilitating future cultural burns by Traditional Owners groups.

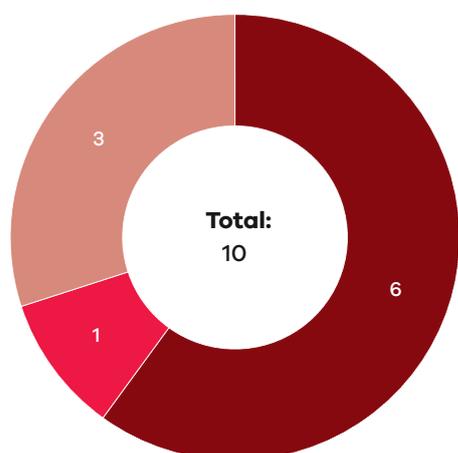
Measure 18.1.6 Number of cultural burns conducted

Measure 18.1.7 Number of formal partnership agreements for planning and management between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies

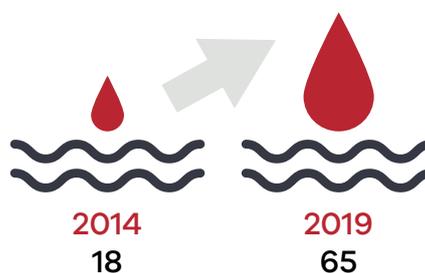
As of June 2019, there are 65 active and ongoing partnership agreements between Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups and key water catchment agencies to promote Aboriginal values and traditional ecological knowledge in water planning and management. This remains an area of significant growth; of these 65 active and ongoing partnership agreements, at least 47 were established over the last five years.

Number of cultural burns conducted, 2018 and 2019

- January–June 2018
- July–December 2018
- January–May 2019



Formal partnership agreements between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies

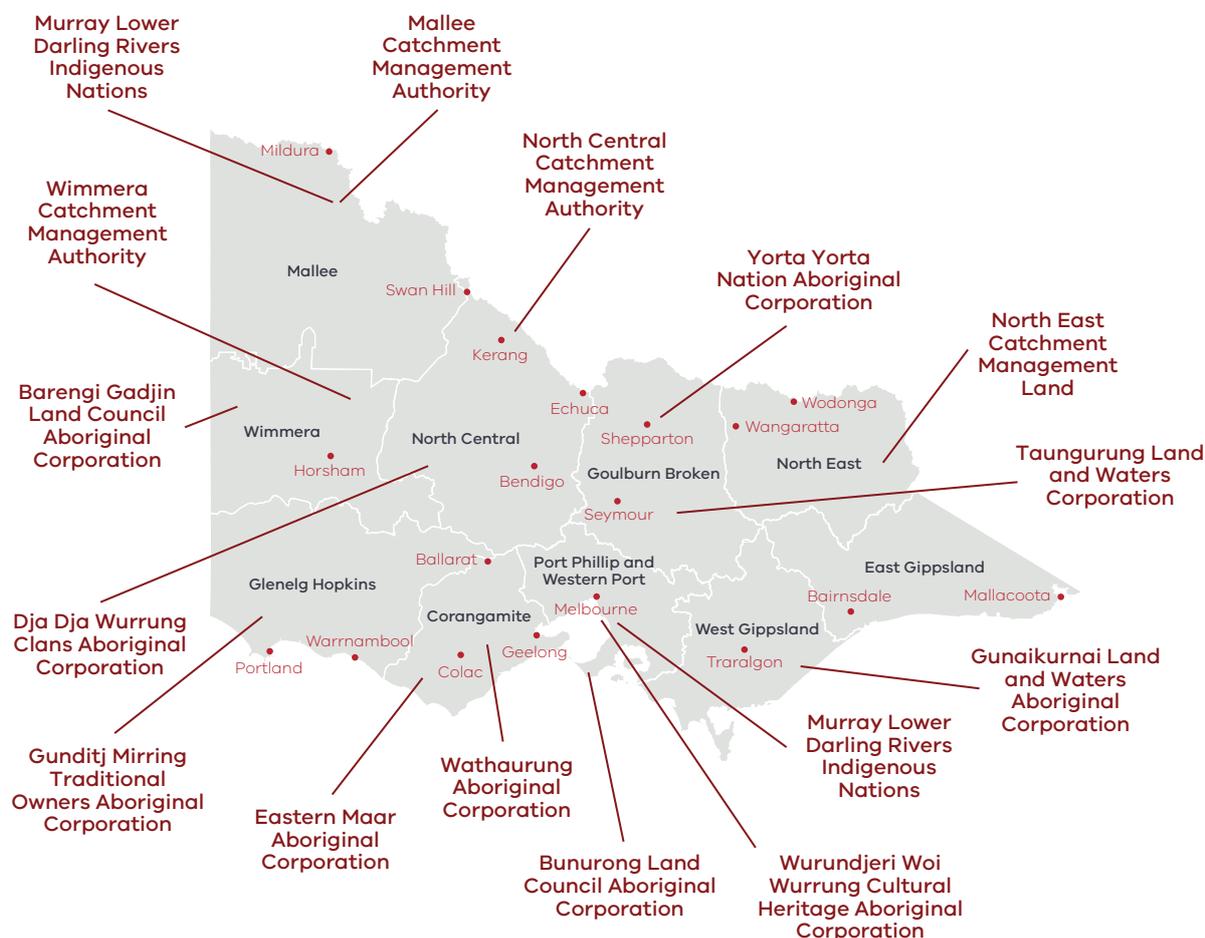


18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

To increase Traditional Owners' and Aboriginal Victorians' involvement in the water sector, 23 Aboriginal Water Officer positions have been funded across 16 locations in Victoria. Aboriginal Water Officers work in partnership with Traditional Owner Corporations, Aboriginal communities and water agencies to build strong and collaborative relationships, contributing to better environmental outcomes and economic benefits for local Aboriginal communities.

Measure 18.1.7 Number of formal partnership agreements for planning and management between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies

Locations of Aboriginal Water Officers across Victoria



18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

Aboriginal Access to Water for Economic Development Program

Nine Traditional Owner organisations have received funding to develop feasibility studies and business cases on water-related projects to support Aboriginal access to water for economic development.

The projects will test the feasibility of aquaculture, bush foods, native plants, waterbased education services and water access across Victoria.

The outcomes and findings from the projects will inform a roadmap which aims to outline how Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians can gain access to water for cultural, economic, social and spiritual purposes.

The pilot projects have been co-designed between Traditional Owners, the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Measure 18.1.7 Number of formal partnership agreements for planning and management between Aboriginal communities and key water and catchment agencies

Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Killara Kooyang Water Project

Gunditji Mirring secured funding for the Killara Kooyang Water Project in October 2018 through the Aboriginal Water Program's Economic Development Initiative. The Economic Development Initiative aims to identify the range and scale of economic opportunities that arise for Aboriginal enterprises from access to water.

Gunditj Mirring's on-ground project will pilot the access and use of water for an aquaculture facility in the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

Work has progressed on the design of the pilot aquaculture facility in the Bull Paddock at the Lake Condah Mission. Along with piloting a kooyang (short finned eel) farm, the project also includes growing a native food garden and aims to be 'off the grid' by installing a solar and battery system.

Several Gunditjmara have been selected to work on the project as research assistants along with representatives from Deakin University. Through successful completion of training they will gain qualifications in both construction induction, and animal ethics and handling.

18.1 Increase the recognition and enjoyment of Aboriginal land, water and cultural heritage rights

Joint Management Plans

As genuine partners, the Victorian Government and Traditional Owners have set a new direction for working in collaboration to manage Country. Joint Management Plans recognise and respect Aboriginal land, water and cultural rights and work to embed Aboriginal knowledge in the everyday management of parks and reserves.

In 2018, the Victorian Government entered into its first Joint Management Plans with Gurnaikurnai and Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner groups. Together, these plans cover approximately 940.7km² of land and include the management of 16 parks and reserves.

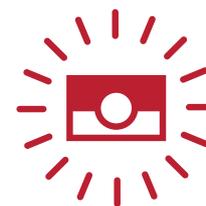
Already, Joint Management Plans are leading to new and innovative approaches to land management, such as using traditional language when talking about and naming Country, working with fire agencies to broadly implement cultural burning practices, employing Traditional Owners as park rangers in jointly managed parks and reserves, and enhancing visitor experiences through increasing Traditional Owner interpretation and guiding services.

Through joint management, Traditional Owners are being supported to maintain their cultural responsibilities in caring for Country, as has been the responsibility of their ancestors for thousands of years.

Measure 18.1.5 Number of Joint Management Plans and area of land covered



Goal 19: Aboriginal culture and language are supported and celebrated



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

Connectedness to culture and community strengthens individual and collective identities, and promotes positive 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.

Of those who participated in the 2014-15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS), more than 50 per cent of Aboriginal Victorians reported being involved in selected cultural events, ceremonies or organisations in the last 12 months.

Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs)

LANs bring Aboriginal people together at the local level to set priorities, develop community plans, improve social cohesion and empower Aboriginal Victorians to participate in community life. These voluntary community networks provide a safe and welcoming space for Aboriginal community to connect, share, learn and lead. LANs provide a critical and effective channel to engage and celebrate the diversity within Aboriginal communities.

Since the launch of the *Victorian Local Aboriginal Network Five Year Plan 2016-2020*, LANs have been supported to meet with other LANs to increase knowledge sharing, contributing to the achievement and evaluation of local priorities.

Approximately 1,400 people engaged in LAN activities for the 2018-19 financial year.

Measure 19.1.1 Participation in community events which celebrate Aboriginal culture

Ricci Marks Awards

The Ricci Marks Awards originated in 1997 as the Aboriginal Young Achievers Award, but was renamed in 2004 in memory of Ricci Marks, a recipient of the award in 2000.

The annual Awards evening presented two recipients \$5,000 each, and recognised two other young people as Rising Star Award winners with \$1,500 each.

Both awards recognise the individual achievements and aspirations of young (16-25 years) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Victorian community, through training, education, arts, sport, culture and leadership. It both encourages and enables future participation in these initiatives.

2019 Ricci Marks Awards were given to Ashley Paxton and Staycee Charles for their respective work in the fields of mental health and environmentalism. Ms Paxton is Victoria's youngest registered Aboriginal psychologist, working as a mentor and promoting healing in community. Ms Charles is a climate change advocate working with the Seed Indigenous Climate Network.

The Rising Star recipients were Courtney Ugle and Bianca Lauricella. Ms Lauricella is a talented netballer and school captain at Horsham Special Development School. Ms Ugle is the female football development coordinator at Essendon Football Club and works with Djirra's Young Luv program.

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

BAGURRK

BAGURRK is a ground-breaking First Nations theatre project that will bring to life the stories of generations of Victorian Koorie women.

Through the work, the ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, in partnership with Yalukit Marnang, will celebrate the untold stories of Victorian Koorie women from before colonisation to the present day. BAGURRK will pay tribute to the tenacious women who defied great odds to keep their families, community and culture alive.

In 2019, ILBIJERRI was awarded funding for BAGURRK as recipient of the Victorian Government's first Creative State Commission.

Measure 19.1 Participation in community events which celebrate Aboriginal culture

Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll

The Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll captures the stories of more than 100 Aboriginal people past and present, who have made outstanding contributions to the state.

The 2018 Induction night was held on 10 October at ZINC, Federation Square and was attended by approximately 300 government representatives, community members, Aboriginal stakeholders and Honour Roll inductees and their families.



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

Past government policies of dispossession and assimilation have led to a decline in Aboriginal cultural practice and language transmission.

Despite this, the strength and resilience of Aboriginal Victorians has helped maintain language and culture, which continue to be practiced and passed onto future generations.

The year 2019 has been declared the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages in an effort to protect and promote Indigenous languages around the world. The International Year of Indigenous Languages is an opportunity to continue raising awareness and take further action to improve the preservation and promotion of Aboriginal languages in Victoria.

The Victorian Government is collaborating with Traditional Owners, organisations and communities across Victoria on a range of activities to support the use and revival of Aboriginal languages.

Key activities include:

- Developing accredited training in learning and teaching an endangered Aboriginal language.
- Integrating Aboriginal language programs into schools and early childhood services across the state.
- Working with Traditional Owners to produce up to five documentaries highlighting the importance of language and Aboriginal place names.
- Delivering Aboriginal Place names workshops across Victoria to promote the importance of language and to collaboratively consider Aboriginal language when assigning names to roads, features and localities. As of July 2019, six workshops have been held across Victoria since 2018 and have brought together over 260 attendees.
- Working with Traditional Owners to name meeting rooms across metropolitan and regional office locations.
- Sponsoring the River of Language exhibition at the Melbourne Museum.

Measure 19.1.2 Investment in Aboriginal language and culture revitalisation programs

Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language and Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language

In 2018, 19 Aboriginal Victorians commenced the Certificate III in Learning an Endangered Aboriginal Language, a pilot program delivered by the Victorian School of Languages (VSL) in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), and the Victorian Government.

The program has been developed around a student empowerment model, designed to give participants the understanding, skills and resources to build knowledge of their own traditional languages by engaging with their community, while incorporating early wordlists and grammar found in historical records. Students undertaking the Certificate III work with Elders and community on transcription, translation and language reclamation activities.

Work is currently underway to develop Certificate IV in Teaching an Endangered Aboriginal Language to help strengthen the Aboriginal language teacher workforce.

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

Supporting members of the Stolen Generations

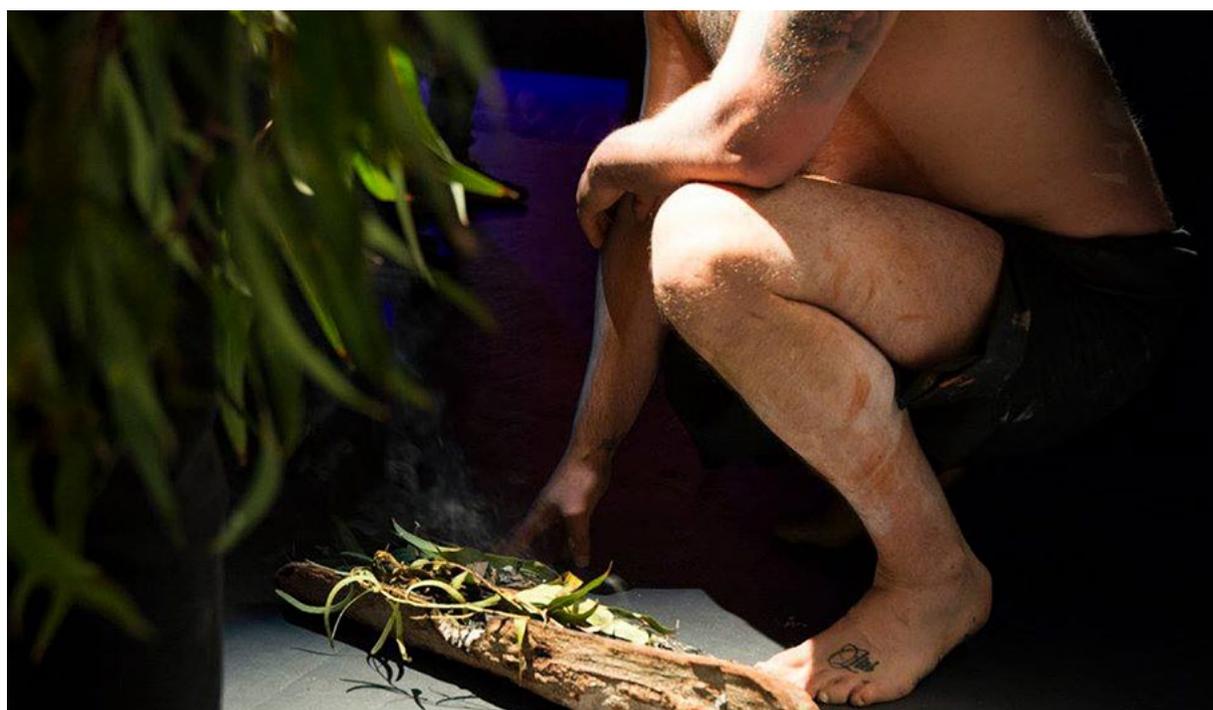
For Aboriginal Victorians, particularly members of the Stolen Generations, understanding their histories and stories is not only a vital part of identity and pride, it also provides an opportunity to address past and ongoing trauma and support healing.

In 2018/19, the Victorian Government invested \$1.38 million in the **Healing the Stolen Generations Program**. The program aims to boost case management services for Stolen Generations survivors and their families through providing opportunities to heal from the trauma of their past and supporting members in their ability to control and plan for their own future.

In 2018/19, the Victorian Government also invested an additional \$2.23 million over four years in the Koorie Heritage Trust to boost support for self-determination and to celebrate Aboriginal culture in Victoria.

This funding supports the Koorie Heritage Trust to extend their Koorie Family History Service, assisting members of the Aboriginal community, the Stolen Generations and their descendants to trace their family history, access family history records and cultural information. Funding also supports the Koorie Heritage Trust to build the retention and revival of Victorian Aboriginal history through the Oral History Project, which seeks to preserve, protect and promote the Aboriginal cultural heritage of Victoria.

These initiatives form part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing recommendations from the 1997 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, and recognises that knowing who you are and where you come from is an essential part of identity and pride for Koorie people.



Goal 20: Racism is eliminated



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.

Based on the latest available data from the NATSISS in 2014-15, 37 per cent of Aboriginal Victorians reported feeling unfairly treated at least once in the previous 12 months because of their Aboriginal identity. This highlights the need to continue tackling racist attitudes toward Aboriginal Victorians that remain pervasive within our community.

Racism manifests in many forms including systemically through structures that exclude the participation of Aboriginal Victorians in everyday life. Eliminating racism - in all forms, at all levels - is the responsibility of all Victorians. It is everyone's duty to work towards a fair and equitable Victoria.

Complaints under the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* relating to Aboriginal Victorians has decreased from 15 in 2016-17 to nine in 2017-18.

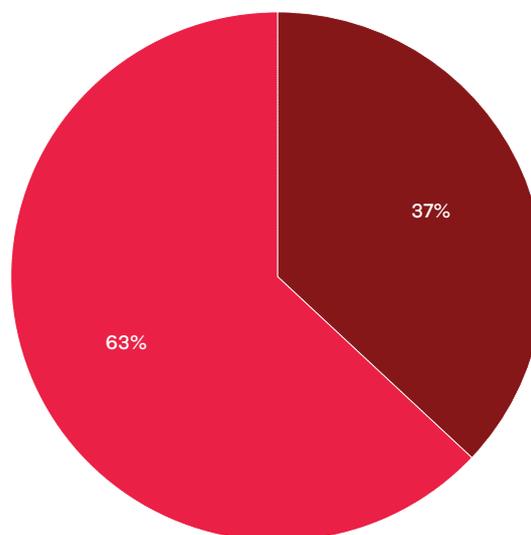


Measure 20.1.1 Proportion of Aboriginal people who report having experienced racism in the previous 12 months

Measure 20.1.2 Prevalence of racist attitudes against Aboriginal Victorians held by the Victorian community

Proportion of Aboriginal Victorians who reported experiencing racism in the past 12 months in 2014-15

- Reported feeling unfairly treated in the previous 12 months because they were Aboriginal
- Did not report feeling unfairly treated in the previous 12 months because they were Aboriginal



20.1 Address and eliminate racism

Deadly Questions

In 2018, the Victorian Government launched the award-winning Deadly Questions media campaign to build awareness amongst all Victorians of the rich and diverse cultures of Aboriginal Victorians. The campaign provides Aboriginal Victorians a platform to tell their stories and amplify their voices and also plays an important role in ensuring all Victorians understand the progress and significance of the treaty process.

The Deadly Questions website (deadlyquestions.vic.gov.au) contains videos and written content from Aboriginal Victorians in response to a range of questions posed by the Victorian public. Since its launch, the Deadly Questions website has received over 600,000 page visits and close to 4,000 questions have been asked.

Beyond this, the campaign has had significant reach, with over 48,000,000 online impressions. Advertising has been used throughout the state, across digital platforms, billboards, radio, television and print media.

Measure 20.1.2 Prevalence of racist attitudes against Aboriginal Victorians held by the Victorian community

The campaign has had success in gaining community support for Victoria's treaty process. After Deadly Questions had been in the public domain for just over 12 months, independent research found that there was increased support for moves towards a treaty, including:

- 51 per cent of surveyed Victorians agreed that "the State should formalise new relations with Aboriginal Victorians", 35 per cent had a neutral response, with 14 per cent in disagreement.
- 49 per cent of surveyed Victorians agreed "a treaty between Aboriginal Victorians and the State Government would be a good thing for Victoria", 37 per cent had a neutral response, with 14 per cent in disagreement.

Deadly questions . com.au

You ask. Aboriginal Victorians answer.





Appendix

Next Steps

The VAAF is Victoria's state plan for Closing the Gap and achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians by undertaking systemic and structural transformation to enable self-determination.

At the national level, the Victorian Government continues to work with all jurisdictions and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations to develop a National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

As part of these conversations, we will work to ensure the National Agreement on Closing the Gap complements the VAAF so that government efforts at both the state and national level are aligned.

Future annual reports will include information about how Victoria is tracking against its commitments under the VAAF and the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. This will ensure we are providing consistent information on the Victorian Government's efforts to improve outcomes and are accountable to Aboriginal Victorians at both the state and national level.



About this Report and the collation of data

This Report provides the latest available information about how the Victorian Government is progressing against the six domains and 111 measures in the VAAF. The majority of data reported provides an assessment of progress from 2008 (or closest to) until 2018-19. Where data is available, the baseline year is 2008 as this was the year in which the National Indigenous Reform Agreement was established.

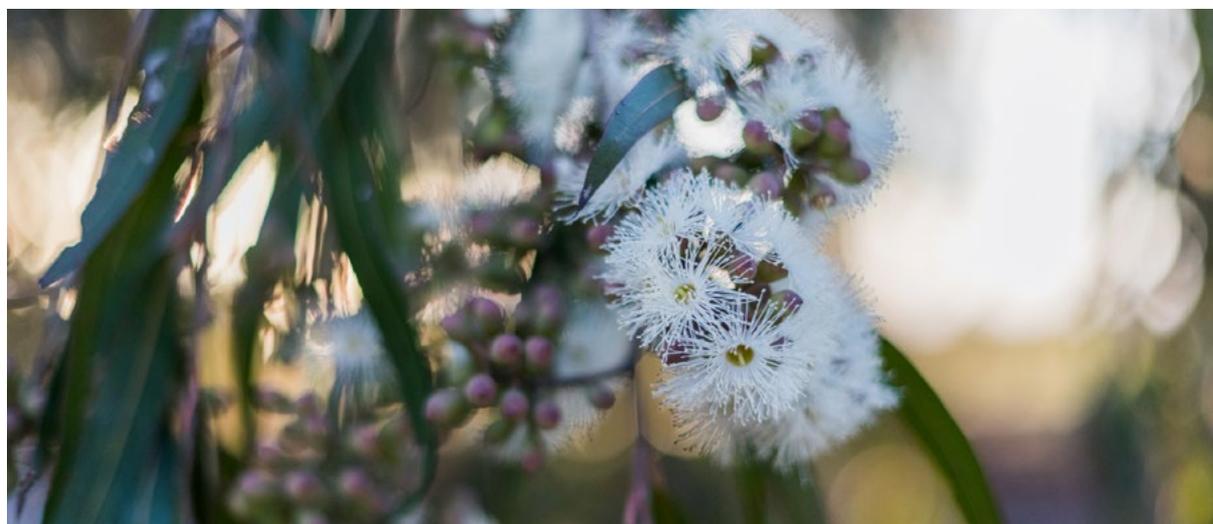
As a first preference, the data has been sourced from annual administrative collections. If this is not available, survey data has been used, for example for most non-service related measures not directly collected and reported on by the Victorian Government. This data has primarily been sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) and Health Survey (NATSIHS) for Aboriginal Victorians; and General Social Survey (GSS) and National Health Survey (NHS) for comparison with non-Aboriginal Victorians. The use of survey data means the latest year of available data varies across the Report, particularly given the latest NATSISS and GSS data is from 2014-15.

It should be noted that some of the data reported against the VAAF measures do not directly align with the measure definition due to the limitation of data published in the public domain.

Improving Aboriginal data quality and accessibility

Government is striving to improve the quality, accessibility and use of Aboriginal data. As a first step, we are working to enhance Aboriginal status across a range of outcome measures used in the VAAF. This is critical because Aboriginality is often missing or reported inconsistently in key datasets which inhibits the government's ability to understand and accurately report on how Aboriginal Victorians are faring on key outcomes.

Government is also working on the commitment in the VAAF to improve data access, transparency and narration through developing a data dashboard to publish disaggregated data from the annual Report. We are in the preliminary design phase and will seek to implement what we heard during community engagement on the VAAF; better data access and a more empowering narrative. It is anticipated the data dashboard will be available from 2020.



Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	NATSIHS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey
ACAC	Aboriginal Children in Care	NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
ACARA	Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority	NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
ACCHO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation	NDA	National Disability Agreement
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation	NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
ACHLMA	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Land Management Agreement	NHS	National Health Survey
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Partnership Agreement	Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap 2019-2029
Assembly	First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria	PCV	Preventing the Cycle of Violence
AWDI	Aboriginal Workforce Development Initiative	PEIC	Prevention and Early Intervention Coordinator
AYCP	Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program	RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
BADAC	Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative	SHS	Specialist Homelessness Services
COAG	Coalition of Australian Governments	SHSC	Specialist Homelessness Services Collection
Coalition of Peaks	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations	SSG Diversity	Sex, Sexuality and Gender Diversity
CUST	Cultural Understanding and Safety Training	TOS Act	Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	Treaty Act	Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
DJCS	Department of Justice and Community safety	VAAF	Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework
FTE	Full-time equivalent	VACCHO	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
GSS	General Social Survey	VACL	Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
Heritage Act	Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006	VAEAI	Victorian Aboriginal Education Alliance Incorporated
JVEN	Jobs Victoria Employment Network	VAHS	Victorian Aboriginal Health Services
KMS	Koorie Maternal Services	VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
LAN	Local Aboriginal Network	VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex	VET	Vocational Education Training
MCH	Maternal and Child Health	VPS	Victorian Public Sector
MDAS	Mallee District Aboriginal Service	VSL	Victorian School of Languages
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy		

Image: Aunty Zeta Thomson giving Welcome to Country at Aboriginal Justice Forum 54.
Photo: David Callow

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