Concept Draft

What we have heard: a potential approach for the next Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF)

June 2018
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1. **Acknowledgment of Aboriginal Victoria**

We proudly acknowledge Victoria’s Aboriginal communities 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 respect to their Elders past and present.

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

We acknowledge self-determination as a human right and commit to working towards a future of equality, justice and strength.

Finally, we acknowledge that, while the majority of Aboriginal Victorians are strong in their culture and identity, there are long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation and dispossession. We have heard from you that the establishment of structures and systems has specifically excluded Aboriginal people and their laws, customs, culture and traditions, leading to systemic and structural racism. We acknowledge that the impact and structures of colonisation still exist today.

2. **Purpose**

This concept draft was developed by Aboriginal Affairs Policy in the Department of Premier and Cabinet and aims to reflect what we have heard from community across numerous engagement forums. It provides an overview of what we have heard about the potential approach and structure for the new Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF), as well as actions, targets, indicators and measures that you would like to see included.

The new VAAF is planned for release in September 2018. To help us get it right, we would appreciate your feedback, discussions and comments by 6 July. If you would like to discuss this document or the future framework, please call Taryn Lee, Director, Aboriginal Affairs Policy 03 9651 2168.

We want to hear your opinions, critiques and suggestions about what is in this document. Have we heard you correctly? How can we make the VAAF more effective? Which parts are relevant or not so relevant? What have we missed? What would you like to see measured that is not in this draft? We want to get this right, so that the new VAAF is relevant and meaningful to all Aboriginal Victorians.

Throughout the document, you will see this symbol to signify particular sections that we would appreciate your feedback on. While we seek your thoughts on the whole document and proposed approach, these particular sections are important points and we want to check with you that we are heading in the right direction.

You can also submit written submissions via our website: [https://engage.vic.gov.au/closingthegapvic](https://engage.vic.gov.au/closingthegapvic)
3. The journey so far

Thank you to the nearly 400 Aboriginal Victorians across the state who shared their time, expertise and personal stories on what the new Closing the Gap and VAAF agendas should look like.

In January 2018, we held a Statewide Discussion in Melbourne, where nearly 160 people from community, Aboriginal organisations and government gathered to provide advice on the future of the Closing the Gap and VAAF agendas.

From March to May 2018, we took this conversation to the regions. We held open community forums and one-on-one meetings in 18 communities across the Barwon South West, Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume and Gippsland regions.

We listened to community members, Elders, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, mainstream service providers and government representatives. We held conversations in Aboriginal co-operatives, community halls, sporting clubs and health services, and over a cuppa.

After each forum we prepared a report back to make sure we reflected participants’ views. Each Report Back shaped our proposed approach to the new VAAF.

You can read more about what community members told us in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and Closing the Gap refresh – Community Engagement Report Back Summary.

We recognise this is one of many engagement processes that Aboriginal Victorians have participated in. We acknowledge the extensive community engagement throughout generations of Aboriginal affairs policy in Victoria, as well as the expertise of Aboriginal governance bodies that advise government on key strategic directions.
4. What you told us

There is a diversity of voices and stories within Aboriginal Victorian communities. However, strong themes emerged from our engagement in metro and regional areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key theme</th>
<th>What was said</th>
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| Community-led, place-based decision making | - Decisions about the funding, design and delivery of Aboriginal policies and programs should be made by Aboriginal communities at the local level, e.g. through ‘community cabinets’  
- Government engagement with Aboriginal communities must be genuine and ongoing  
- New targets should be set by Aboriginal communities, be culturally relevant, place-based, and measured against Aboriginal standards, not non-Aboriginal standards |
| Aboriginal-led accountability of government | Independent, community-led oversight of government spending and outcomes should occur, such as through a Koori Ombudsman or Senate estimates committee-style process |
| Cultural confidence | - There needs to be a strengths-based approach in Aboriginal affairs  
- Connection to culture and cultural strengthening initiatives must be supported across the whole of government |
| Choice and cultural safety | - Community should be able to choose where they receive services and care, regardless of whether this is an Aboriginal or mainstream service  
- Mainstream services should be culturally-safe and Aboriginal-led |
| Upholding community decisions | The Uluru Statement from the Heart, including Makarrata and an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, should be accepted |
| Structural racism | The government should address barriers that prevent Aboriginal participation and inclusion |
| Funding reform | Aboriginal organisations need flexible, long-term funding |
| Data sovereignty | Data sovereignty and ownership of local data is critical. Holding this information and knowledge, and setting the research agenda, helps build community capability |
| Land rights | Management and control of land by Aboriginal people is essential, not just access |
| Human rights | A human rights-based approach is critical. This includes the respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment of the rights of Aboriginal people |
| Other priorities | - health and wellbeing  
- mental health  
- alcohol and other drugs  
- cyberbullying  
- education  
- employment and training  
- economic development  
- family violence  
- justice and youth justice  
- post-prison support  
- disability  
- aged and palliative care  
- housing and homelessness  
- child protection and kinship support  
- retirement legislation  
- LGBTIQ support  
- community programs for women, men, young people and Elders  
- confirmation of Aboriginal identity |
5. What we heard about a draft framework

You have told us that:

The **vision** should be that all Aboriginal Victorians:

- are able to confidently access quality, culturally safe and relevant universal and targeted services necessary to thrive
- are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living in culturally rich, strong Aboriginal families and communities.

The framework’s **guiding principle** should be Aboriginal self-determination.

You would like this to be **enabled** through government committing to strategic actions to:

- Prioritise culture
- Confront structural racism
- Address trauma and support healing
- Transfer power and resources to Victorian Aboriginal communities

The **goal** you want to see achieved is the elimination of structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity.

The **indicators** of success you want to measure are:

1) Global indicators of experiences of racism, as well as access to, and trust in, services and systems
2) Specific indicators of the safety and cultural relevance of structures and systems
3) Specific indicators of the accessibility of those systems and services

The **outcome** you want to achieve is that Aboriginal Victorians experience equity and thrive across the following domains:

You would like government to be held **accountable**, including through a publicly available annual report tabled in Parliament and also by an Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism.

Have we heard you correctly?
6. A potential model for change based on what we heard

During community forums we heard that a key issue with the current VAAF is that it presents a life-course approach, with measures centring largely on behavioural risk factors. Community have told us that the problem with this approach is that it implies that Aboriginal behaviour alone drives outcomes, positioning Aboriginal Victorians as solely responsible for their own disadvantage.

Community has asked that the new VAAF specifically recognise the impacts of colonisation, including that Victoria’s structures and systems were established with the specific intent of excluding Aboriginal people and their laws, customs and traditions. This has resulted in, and entrenched, systemic and structural racism against Aboriginal Victorians.

Community feedback suggests that the new VAAF should focus on transforming the structural and systemic drivers of inequity for Aboriginal Victorians, guided by the principle of Aboriginal self-determination. Community have made clear that there are four strategic action areas that government should commit to in order to undertake this transformation. These are that government should address trauma and support healing, confront structural racism, transfer decision-making power and resources, and prioritise culture.

You have told us that transforming structures and systems will help support improved outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians in a number of ways:

- **Prioritising culture** would recognise that connection to family, community and culture is critical to the wellbeing and positive self-identity of Aboriginal Victorians. You have asked government to support and strengthen cultural and community networks, recognising that continuity of cultural identity is a key enabler in Aboriginal Victorians achieving positive outcomes.

“Self-determination has to come from strong culture first and foremost. People need to be able to regain their culture and traditions before they can self-determine. Need to reconnect with own language and stories to pursue it from that foundation” *(Participant, Seymour community forum)*
• **Addressing structural and systemic racism** would support universal systems and services to be more safe, relevant, accessible and responsive to Aboriginal Victorians, and enable Aboriginal Victorians to make decisions that impact their lives from an empowered position.

> “Racism and unconscious bias of the mainstream community needs to be a focus/target.”  
> *(Participant, Ballarat community forum)*

• **Addressing trauma and supporting healing** would help to overcome the long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation experienced by Aboriginal Victorians. You have told us that this is important because the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, families and communities is fundamental to how they engage with the structures and systems that support them to thrive.

> “Self-determination is not only a community project, but also a personal journey. There is still a lot of trauma to overcome, both personally and at a community level.”  
> *(Participant, Seymour community forum)*

• The **transfer of decision-making power and resources** would enable Aboriginal communities to lead the development and implementation of culturally safe and relevant responses to reduce inequity and support Aboriginal people, families and communities to thrive.

> “Government needs to understand what a community-led approach means – not just organisations, all [Aboriginal] people.”  
> *(Participant, Mildura community forum)*

You have told us that if structures and systems are transformed in these ways, Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities will be best supported to confidently access quality, safe and relevant systems and services that are needed in order to be healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and culturally confident. You have made clear that this, in turn, will help drive improved outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

7. You would like government to be held accountable by an Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism

Community have told us very clearly that it is not enough for government alone to hold itself accountable for improving outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Aboriginal Victorians want independent, community-led oversight of both outcomes and investment in Aboriginal affairs. Community also spoke about the importance of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and mainstream services being accountable to their local Aboriginal community.

Many Aboriginal Victorians also told us that targets cannot just be national and state level targets; they need to be localised. Disaggregation of data at a local level is required so community is empowered to hold services and systems accountable.

You have told us that government should work with community to develop an Aboriginal-led evaluation and review mechanism to ensure independence, transparency and accuracy of reporting, and support community-led decision-making in response to evaluation findings. You have also told us that you want to government to continue tabling an annual report in Parliament but that it be reviewed by an Aboriginal-led mechanism.

Do we have this right?
8. The framework’s **guiding principle** should be Aboriginal self-determination

The refresh of the VAAF is driven by government’s commitment to Aboriginal self-determination. It builds on key policies, strategies and reforms across government to embed self-determination and improve outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Aboriginal communities and organisations have worked in partnership with government to realise self-determination through the following initiatives:

- **Education**: Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016 – 2026
- **Health**: Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027
- **Mental health**: Balit Murrup: Aboriginal Social Emotional Wellbeing Framework 2017-2027
- **Justice**: development of phase four of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- **Family violence**: 10 Year Indigenous Family Violence Plan
- **Children and families**: Wungurilwil Gapgapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement
- **Economic development**: Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy
- **Land & cultural heritage**: Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010; Aboriginal Heritage Act 2007
- **Treaty**: Aboriginal Community Assembly; Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission; and Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018.

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

While self-determination means different things to different people, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) gives us a useful definition. It describes self-determination as: the ability for Indigenous people to freely determine their political status, and the ability for Indigenous people to pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It also describes self-determination as a right that relates to groups of people, not individuals.

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

During community forums, we asked participants: *“What does self-determination mean to you?”*

Community members told us that self-determination encompassed a spectrum of rights that were necessary for them to develop economically, socially and culturally, based on their own cultural values and way of life. This includes rights to:

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

*“Self-determination is about community voice, led by community, measured by community, relating to the whole community.”*  
*Participant, Mildura community forum*
Why self-determination?

There are three reasons why self-determination should be the guiding principle:

1) **It works** – Aboriginal Victorians hold the knowledge and expertise about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. Local and international evidence shows us that self-determination is the key policy approach that has produced effective and sustainable outcomes for Aboriginal people.

2) **It’s a human right** – Australia is a signatory to international law instruments that affirm the right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples.

3) **It’s what mob want** – Aboriginal Victorians have consistently and long called for self-determination as the key enabler for Aboriginal people, families and communities to thrive.

9. You would like government to **enable** self-determination by transforming systems and structures

The government has committed to self-determination as the guiding principle in Aboriginal affairs.

Government cannot define or control self-determination, but it does control many of the systems and structures that enable it. During community engagement, we also asked participants: “**What does government need to do to enable self-determination?**”

We heard clearly from community that government must act to transform the current systems and structures through, for example:

- supporting community-owned and community-controlled initiatives
- listening to, and acting upon, the identified needs of communities
- respecting Aboriginal people as drivers of change and decision-makers
- changing policies which have disempowered Aboriginal communities
- providing mechanisms and supports for Aboriginal Victorian people, families, communities and organisations to own policy development and implementation
- undertaking genuine and ongoing dialogue between community and government
- developing an Aboriginal-led mechanism to assess government decisions and spending.

Community told us that it was **the responsibility of government to transform its systems and structures to support self-determination** and that this should include **prioritising culture**, **confronting structural and systemic racism**, **addressing trauma and supporting healing**, and **transferring power and resources**.

*Have we got your proposed enablers right? Is there something you want added or removed?*
This page sets out potential government action areas that community identified as necessary to enable self-determination and transform the structural and systemic drivers of inequity for Aboriginal Victorians.

### Potential Self-Determination Enablers

- Prioritise culture
- Confront structural racism
- Address trauma and support healing
- Transfer power and resources

### Potential Strategic Action Areas

1. Acknowledge and support Aboriginal elders
2. Celebrate the diversity and strength of Aboriginal culture
3. Support the protection and promotion of Aboriginal languages
4. Promote culture as a protective factor
5. Embed cultural values into policy and practice
6. Ensure evaluation mechanisms with weighted value for cultural connection
7. Be guided by the expertise and strength of Aboriginal cultural knowledge

- Strengthen Aboriginal leadership and representation
  - Examine options for improving the Budget process
  - Embed a human rights-based approach
  - Address racism in laws, policy, practice, systems and institutions
  - Data sovereignty
  - Co-own policy and practice development with Aboriginal Victorians
  - Educate staff about the impacts of colonisation, privilege and unconscious bias
  - Funding reform for Aboriginal organisations
  - More transparency in universal and targeted funding

- Proportional investment into early intervention
  - Redress historical and contemporary discrimination and developing a new relationship of trust
  - Embed trauma-informed policy and practice

- Negotiate terms for the transfer of power and resources
  - Local, placed-based decision-making
  - Self-determining Aboriginal structures at local and state level
  - Aboriginal control of resource allocation
  - Ongoing capacity strengthening
  - Aboriginal accountability mechanisms

*Have we heard these potential action areas right? Are there actions you would like added or removed?*
10. Potential indicators and measures of success

This page provides an outline of how indicators and measures will be used to hold government accountable for system transformation to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

The goal you want to see achieved is the elimination of structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity

The indicators of success you want to measure are:
1) global indicators of experiences of racism, as well as access to, and trust in, services and systems
2) specific indicators of the safety and relevance of Victoria’s systems and services
3) specific indicators of the accessibility of Victoria’s systems and services

1) Global Indicators: experiences of discrimination and racism; trust in services and ability to have a say; and barriers to accessing support and services

These are currently measured through the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey. However, further work and negotiation with the Commonwealth is required to report more frequently and accurately.

2) Victoria’s systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant

These indicators will look at the safety and cultural relevance of structures and systems, including universal and targeted services. Victoria’s systems must promote Aboriginal strength and diversity.

3) Aboriginal Victorians can confidently access those systems and services

These indicators will measure whether Aboriginal Victorians are able to confidently access structures and systems. This is based on the understanding that the safer and more culturally relevant the structures and systems, the greater the ability of Aboriginal Victorians to access those structures and systems.

The outcome you want to achieve is that all Aboriginal Victorians experience equity and thrive in all areas of life

If structures and systems are transformed in these ways, Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities will be best supported to confidently access safe and relevant systems and services that are needed in order to be healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and culturally confident.

The range of targets and measures demonstrate a shift in focus towards a strengths-based approach. This will allow us to measure progress towards achieving individual, family and community aspiration. To support this approach it is also critical to measure areas of inequity and disadvantage to hold government accountable and guide future action and policy.
11. Overview of potential domain areas

Global Indicator 1
Experiences of discrimination and racism

Global Indicator 2
Trust in services and ability to have a say

Global Indicator 3
Barriers to accessing support and services

Learning & Skills
- Indicators: The education, learning and training systems are safe and culturally relevant, and Aboriginal Victorians can confidently access these systems
- Outcome: All Aboriginal learners experience equity and reach their learning aspirations and potential

Children, Family & Home
- Indicators: The child protection, out-of-home-care, housing and family support systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant, and Aboriginal children and families can confidently access these systems and services
- Outcome: All Aboriginal children and families experience equity, thrive and are connected to culture and kin

Health & Wellbeing
- Indicators: The health systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant, and Aboriginal Victorians can confidently access these systems and services, including screening, prevention, aged care, disability and mental health services
- Outcome: All Aboriginal Victorians experience equity of health outcomes, are thriving, healthy and connected to culture

Economic Development & Land
- Indicators: The employment, business and public sector systems are safe and culturally-relevant and Aboriginal Victorians can confidently access these systems and services
- Outcome: All Aboriginal Victorians experience equity in outcomes regarding economic development, economic wellbeing and employment

Justice & Safety
- Indicators: The justice and safety systems and structures are culturally relevant, and Aboriginal Victorians have safe interactions with the justice system and access to support
- Outcome: All Aboriginal Victorians are safe, experience equity of justice outcomes and remain connected to community and culture
Chapter one – Children, Family & Home

The goal is to eliminate structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity within Victoria’s child protection, out-of-home care, housing, and family support systems.

Global Indicators: experiences of discrimination and racism; trust in services and ability to have a say; and barriers to accessing support and services

Indicator: The child protection, out-of-home-care, housing and family support systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant

- Strong Koori Maternity Services and Aboriginal Maternal Child Health services
- ACCO Case management of Aboriginal children under care and protection orders
- Aboriginal families feel connected to culture
- Aboriginal children in out-of-home care under the direct authority of an ACCO
- Integrated Family Service funding to Aboriginal organisations

Indicator: Aboriginal children and families confidently access these systems and services

- Child Protection system: Reunifications and re-substantiations
- Housing system: Public housing waiting time for Aboriginal clients
- MCH and Family Support: Engagement with maternal and child health services at key age milestones
- Cultural Support Plans
- Repeat periods of homelessness
- Family violence and child protection notifications
- Placement with an Aboriginal relative or carer
- Participation in homelessness services
- Engagement with family support services

The outcome to achieve is that all Aboriginal children and families experience equity, thrive and are connected to culture and kin.

Potential Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

- Strong and healthy families: Aboriginal children stay in Aboriginal families
- Supported families: Aboriginal households have adequate resources
- Secure, stable housing: Aboriginal Victorians have secure and stable housing
- Aboriginal children are born healthy and strong
Chapter two – Learning & skills

The goal is to eliminate structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity within Victoria’s education, learning and training systems

Global Indicators: experiences of discrimination and racism; trust in services and ability to have a say; and barriers to accessing support and services

Indicator: The education, learning and training systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant

Aboriginal students reporting high resilience
Aboriginal students feeling safe and more connected to schools
Aboriginal students reporting bullying and psychological distress at school
Aboriginal students’ views on teacher empathy
Schools that teach an Aboriginal language to all students
Schools with Aboriginal people on the school council

Indicator: Aboriginal Victorians can confidently access those systems and services

Kindergarten participation
Retention to Year 12
Attendance
Aboriginal children enrolled and attending 3 and 4 year old kindergarten
Aboriginal students staying to Year 12 or equivalent
Aboriginal students attending school

The outcome to achieve is that all Aboriginal learners experience equity and reach their learning aspirations and potential

Engaged learners
Excelling learners
Successful post-school pathways
Aboriginal young people achieve their learning potential to Year 12
Aboriginal students excel in literacy and numeracy
Aboriginal young people achieve successful post school pathways
Chapter three – Health & Wellbeing

The goal is to eliminate structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity within Victoria’s health system

Global Indicators: experiences of discrimination and racism; trust in services and ability to have a say; and barriers to accessing support and services

Indicator: The health systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant

- Racism in the health system
- Access and choice to high quality and culturally safe health care
- Aboriginal staff employed in Victoria’s universal health care system
- Aboriginal community support during times of crisis

Indicator: Aboriginal Victorians confidently accessing health systems and services

- Screening and Prevention
  - Regular health screens

- Health and Aged Care
  - Avoidable and preventable deaths
  - Leaving hospital against medical advice

- Disability and Mental Health
  - Access to disability support services
  - Aboriginal children, youth and adults receiving clinical mental health services

- Access to aged care or residential health services

The outcome to achieve is that all Aboriginal Victorians experience equity of health outcomes, are thriving, healthy and connected to culture

Strong spirit and healthy communities

- Aboriginal Victorians that report their health status as ‘excellent or very good’
- Improved cancer survival rates and reduced chronic disease
- Reduction in psychological and psychosocial distress and self-harm
- Reduced rates of smoking, obesity and harmful drug or alcohol use
Chapter four – **Justice & Safety**

The **goal** is to eliminate structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity within Victoria’s justice and safety systems

**Global Indicators:** experiences of discrimination and racism; trust in services and ability to have a say; and barriers to accessing support and services

**Indicator:** The justice and safety systems and structures are safe and culturally relevant

- Feeling safe in the community
- Police and cultural awareness
- Career pathways for Aboriginal Victorians across the justice system

Aboriginal Victorians employed in the justice system across:
- Police officers
- Court staff and custodial officers
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations

**Indicator:** Aboriginal Victorians have safe interactions with the justice system and access to support

- Fair treatment
  - Aboriginal children and young people processed by police
  - Aboriginal young people cautioned (as opposed to charged) by police
  - Access to diversion programs
  - Community orders vs. custodial sentences

- Relevant Support
  - Access to family violence specialist services
  - Reduce people returning to prison within two years of release
  - Reduce family violence recidivism

The **outcome** to achieve is that all Aboriginal Victorians are safe, experience equity of justice outcomes and remain connected to community and culture

**Potential Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians**

**Equitable justice**

- Equity for Aboriginal Victorians under justice supervision and held in remand

**Safe families and communities**

- Reducing family violence reports and hospitalisations
- Employment post-release from prison
Chapter five – Economic Development & Land

The goal is to eliminate structural and systemic barriers that drive inequity within Victoria’s employment, business and public sector

Global Indicators: experiences of discrimination and racism; trust in services and ability to have a say; and barriers to accessing support and services

Indicator: The employment, business and public sector systems are safe and culturally relevant

- Registered Victorian businesses with an Aboriginal Reconciliation Action Plan
- Employment of Aboriginal people in the Victorian Public Service
- The cost of inequality and growth of the Victorian Aboriginal GDP
- Procurement from Aboriginal businesses in the Victorian Public Service
- Time to achieve Recognition and Settlement Agreements for Traditional Owners

Indicator: Aboriginal Victorians are able to confidently access those systems and services

- Employment
  - Full-time employment and workforce participation
- Job and Business Support
  - Aboriginal jobseekers supported into work
- Land Entitlements
  - Positive native title determinations and Recognition and Settlement Agreements
  - Increase Traditional Owner Land Management Agreements and Co-management Agreements

The outcome to achieve is that all Aboriginal Victorians experience equity in outcomes regarding economic development, economic wellbeing and employment

Potential Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

- Supported households: Aboriginal households are prosperous (median household income and equivalised income)
- Home ownership: Aboriginal Victorians own their homes
- Connection to Country: Aboriginal Victorians have a strong connection to country and land
12. Will this align with the national Closing the Gap agenda?

As you are aware, the national Closing the Gap agenda is also being refreshed this year because many of the national targets expire in 2018.

Throughout the Commonwealth’s refresh process in 2018, we have continued to advocate for self-determination and Aboriginal control of the national agenda and have been guided by your voice and priorities. We have advocated at the national level on key issues that you have raised during community engagement forums, in particular addressing structural racism, supporting trauma and healing, adopting strengths-based targets and enabling place-based solutions.

While Victoria is working with the Commonwealth to seek alignment between the new VAAF and the new national agenda, we are strongly committed to self-determination and to Victorian Aboriginal communities driving our Victorian framework. It is vital that the VAAF reflects the unique issues and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal Victorians.

It is suggested that the proposed accountability mechanism for the VAAF (discussed on page 6) could also monitor Victoria’s progress towards national targets and commitments.