

# Closing the Gap

## What's next for Victoria?

Have your say

VICTORIA  
State  
Government

The national **Closing the Gap** agenda and the **Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF)** are being refreshed in 2018. These are **important documents**. They **guide Aboriginal policy and funding** and say **how government will be held accountable** for outcomes in Aboriginal affairs.

### What are the frameworks now?

#### Closing the Gap

In November 2008, the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments signed the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap)*.

The current priority areas are:

1. **Life expectancy**
2. **Infant mortality rates**
3. **Children's reading, writing and numeracy**
4. **School attendance**
5. **Employment**
6. **Year 12 attainment**
7. **Early childhood education.**

2018 marks the 10th anniversary of Closing the Gap, and the expiry of four of the seven targets.

### How are we going?

Reports for Closing the Gap and the VAAF show varying performance. While some targets have been met, other targets are not on track. It is clear that the current agendas are not achieving the desired outcomes for Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

#### The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

The current VAAF (2013-2018) adopts a similar framework to Closing the Gap, but it was developed to reflect the Victorian context.

It includes targets that are not in Closing the Gap, such as child protection and youth justice.



1. **Maternal and early childhood health and development.**



2. **Education and training.**



3. **Economic participation.**



4. **Health, housing and wellbeing.**



5. **Safe families and communities, and equitable justice outcomes.**



6. **Strong culture, engaged people and connected communities.**

## What's next?

As part of its commitment to self-determination, the Victorian Government will be led by Aboriginal Victorians around what the new Closing the Gap and VAAF agendas should look like.

Many Aboriginal Victorians have already shared their views on what the priority areas and targets should be, and who should set, implement and measure these.

Some of the feedback we have heard so far is below:

Key theme	What we have heard
<b>Community-led, place-based decision making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Decisions about the funding, design and delivery of Aboriginal policies and programs should be made by Aboriginal communities at the local level</li></ul>
<b>Aboriginal-led accountability of government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Independent, community-led oversight of government spending and outcomes should occur, such as through a Koori Ombudsman</li></ul>
<b>Cultural confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Connection to culture and cultural strengthening initiatives must be supported in all aspects of Aboriginal affairs</li></ul>
<b>Upholding community decisions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Uluru Statement from the Heart, including Makaratta and an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, should be accepted</li></ul>
<b>Structural racism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The government, organisations and the broader community should be held accountable for barriers that prevent Aboriginal participation and inclusion</li></ul>
<b>Funding reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Aboriginal organisations need flexible, long-term funding</li></ul>

## Have Your Say

There are many ways you can have your say on the new Closing the Gap and VAAF agendas:

### ❖ **Attend an open community forum**

The Victorian Government is holding community forums during March – May 2018 across **Barwon South West, Grampians, Loddon Mallee, Hume and Gippsland** regions. These are open to Aboriginal community members, organisations, services and government representatives working with Aboriginal communities. Dates and locations are at [engage.vic.gov.au/closingthegapvic](http://engage.vic.gov.au/closingthegapvic)

We will return to each region in June 2018 to share a Concept Draft of the new VAAF.

### ❖ **Visit our website:**

- Complete an **online survey** at [engage.vic.gov.au/closingthegapvic](http://engage.vic.gov.au/closingthegapvic)
- Upload a **written submission**

### ❖ **Meet with us**

You can **meet with us one-on-one or in a group setting** at a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for you. To arrange a time, call Elly Patira from Aboriginal Affairs Policy, on (03) 8392 5387 or 0409 735 916

### ❖ **Write a submission**

Post a submission to:

Elly Patira, Assistant Director, Aboriginal Affairs Policy  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Level 3, 1 Treasury Place  
East Melbourne VIC 3002