

Table A

Priority reform one: Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

The strong partnership elements at Clause 32 are:

- Element A: Partnerships are accountable and representative
- Element B: A formal agreement in place, that is signed by all
- Element C: Decision-making is shared between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

| Action | Key achievements in 2023 |
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| Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) - Whole of Government | |
| Establishment of Closing the Gap Partnership Forum (Partnership Forum) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership Forum agreed the Partnership Agreement at the 30 August 2023 meeting, to enable Ngaweeyan Maar-oo membership of the Coalition of Peaks. • In August 2023, the former Minister for Treaty and First Peoples extended the term of the Partnership Forum by 18 months, to 30 June 2025. • Endorsement to establish a Closing the Gap Interdepartmental Working Group (CTG-IWG) to support Victorian Government coordination and implementation of the National Agreement. This includes taking a whole-of-Victorian Government approach to identifying system improvements to drive action on key Closing the Gap commitments and building a shared understanding across departments and agencies of outcomes and actions arising from Partnership Forum meetings. The CTG-IWG held its inaugural meeting on 10 October 2023 to discuss Terms of Reference, enhancing accountability for driving Closing the Gap progress and the Productivity Commission’s Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement). |
| Place-based Partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the 7 June 2023 meeting of Joint Council on Closing the Gap (Joint Council), Gippsland was endorsed as the Victorian location for a combined Place-based Partnership and Community Data Project. • DPC have been working with Ngaweeyan Maar-oo and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) to establish a working group to further scope the proposal in partnership with local communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in Gippsland. |
| Establishment of the First People’s Assembly of Victoria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 20 October 2022, the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria (First Peoples’ Assembly) and the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples signed off on the final two Treaty elements – the Treaty Negotiation Framework and Self-Determination Fund. • The First Peoples’ Assembly held its second general election in May-June 2023 and elected a new Chamber that is committed to progressing Statewide Treaty negotiations with the Victorian Government in this First Peoples’ Assembly Chamber’s term. • The First Peoples’ Assembly announced their Council board of Directors, providing direction for the work of the First Peoples’ Assembly. |
| Establish joined-up approach to five policy areas: (Clause 38) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice (JPP) • Social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB PP) • Housing (HPP) • Early childhood care and development (ECCD) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPC provided central coordination support for Victoria’s departmental representatives on the following policy partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The ECCD has met four times since establishment including 14 November 2022; 15-16 March 2023; 28-29 June 2023 and 10 October 2023. ○ The HPP held its second meeting on 29-30 November 2023. ○ The Languages Policy Partnership met three times since establishment including 20-21 March 2023, 21-22 June 2023 and 10-11 October 2023. ○ The JPP held its tenth meeting on 7-8 December 2024. Following on from its Strategic Framework endorsed in principle at the 7 June 2024 Joint Council, the JPP is finalising a Guidance and Reporting Template and the JPP Annual Report will be provided to Partnership Working Group (PWG) and Joint Council in 2024. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages (LPP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SEWB PP has met three times in 2023: 30-31 March; 2 August; and 9 November 2023. |
| <p>Partnership with Victoria's Implementation Partners to jointly develop Victoria's Implementation Plan</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government extended the Victorian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) in its current form to 30 June 2025. Extending the Frameworks will enable the Victorian Government to meet its commitments in Aboriginal Affairs under the National Agreement and allow appropriate time to develop a new Implementation Plan. The new Implementation Plan will be brought to Cabinet for endorsement before June 2025, and will be developed with the First Peoples' Assembly, Ngaweeyan Maar-oo and Aboriginal governance forums, ensuring involvement of First Peoples and alignment with Victoria's Treaty process. |
| <p>Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF)</p> | |
| <p>DTF continues to participate in and provide updates to Aboriginal Governance Forums and supports the opportunities provided to progress meaningful change through shared decision-making.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTF continues to be involved in the Treaty Interdepartmental Committee and is supporting DPC with preparations for the State to enter Treaty negotiations with the First Peoples' Assembly in good faith. DTF regularly engages with Ngaweeyan Maar-oo through quarterly meetings and directly to discuss opportunities to embed self-determination and actions towards Closing the Gap within DTF's remit. |
| <p>Department of Education (DE)</p> | |
| <p>Work in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) to implement and govern Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026 (Marrung)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marrung was developed in partnership with VAEAI, DE's principal partner in Koorie education. VAEAI and DE jointly oversee implementation and governance of Marrung, co-chairing the Marrung Central Governance Committee (CGC) and Marrung Regional Partnership Forums. Marrung outlines the Government's commitment to improving Koorie education outcomes and closing the gap in education achievement. As of June 2023, the DE has invested \$86.3 million and \$16.7 million ongoing into actioning Marrung. Sixty-nine per cent of Marrung's actions are on track, ongoing or completed, representing significant progress towards achieving the Plan's vision. At the regional level, VAEAI coordinates Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee (LAECG) engagement with Marrung Regional Partnership Forums, which each have an LAECG co-chair alongside the relevant DE Regional Director. Regional Partnership Forums bring together representatives from the Aboriginal community, DE and education providers, and report to Marrung CGC on Marrung implementation and local Aboriginal education issues. VAEAI is partnering with the DE to co-lead the Self-determination in Education Reform (SDER) consultation and co-design process, including co-chairing the governance groups overseeing the reform. VAEAI has also been a member of the Best Start, Best Life Taskforce Advisory Group since 2022, a forum chaired by the Minister for Children which provides advice and feedback to Government and DE on the design and implementation of the Best Start, Best Life reforms to the Victorian early childhood education sector. |
| <p>Active engagement with Aboriginal organisations in educational priorities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to representation by VAEAI, Marrung CGC also includes representation from statewide Aboriginal peak bodies, including the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited, the Koorie Youth Council and the Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance. In 2023, Marrung CGC membership was extended to include all Koorie caucuses to increase Koorie representation and voice. The Marrung CGC now has representation from the Aboriginal Justice Forum, Yuma Yirramboi, Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum, Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and Korin Korin Balit-Djak. VAEAI further facilitates Marrung Regional Roundtables, bringing together Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups with other local Aboriginal organisations to identify and address local Aboriginal education priorities. |
| <p>Development of Dhelk Wukang 2022-26, DE's Aboriginal Inclusion Plan</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dhelk Wukang 2022-2026, DE's fourth Aboriginal Inclusion Plan, aims to strengthen Aboriginal inclusion, self-determination and cultural safety at all levels within DE, including the Victorian Public Service and Government Teaching Service. The plan outlines the proactive steps DE is taking to |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <p>support tangible, positive structural change across its entire workforce – both in school and corporate settings – to ensure every departmental workplace is safe for Aboriginal people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key actions under Dhelk Wukang include establishment of Koorie Staff Network and the Wirnalung Ganai Champions network, now ‘Yarn Ngitj’. • The Koorie Staff Network (KSN) is a keystone initiative for strengthening the cultural safety of all Aboriginal department staff. Originally formed in 2018, the KSN is a peer-led group operated on the principles of self-determination. It aims to connect and support the inclusion of all Aboriginal employees across the department, including corporate VPS staff, Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) members, early childhood and allied health staff, and school-based staff such as principals, teachers and education support staff. In 2023, membership of the KSN grew from 170 to over 245 members, and the Network hosted its first two day in-person gathering since the pandemic. • As another commitment under Dhelk Wukang, DE’s Yan Ngitj community of Aboriginal inclusion ambassadors supports inclusion and culturally safe workplaces for Aboriginal employees across the department. In 2023, the network expanded to include school-based staff, as well as staff from central and regional offices, with membership growing from 55 in 2021 to 98 in 2022 and 150 in 2023. |
| Consultation with the Koorie Education Workforce to develop the Aboriginal Employment Plan 2020-26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Education Aboriginal Employment Plan 2020-26 was developed in close consultation with the statewide Koorie Education Workforce and aims to create change across the organisation and make DE an employer of choice for Aboriginal staff. The Plan includes goals to attract and retain Aboriginal employees to ensure the department has a workforce representative of the communities it serves. • Employment of Aboriginal staff (in schools and in the public service) was 0.3 per cent in 2022-23. DE is working alongside the Victorian Public Sector Commission to implement strategies to achieve Dhelk Wukang’s 2 per cent Aboriginal employment target. • DE is investing \$13.6 million in the Aspiring Koorie Teachers (AKT) Now initiative to attract and retain more Aboriginal people into the school workforce. AKT Now will provide wrap-around supports for Certificate IV Education Support, undergraduate Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and postgraduate education students who seek to enter Education Support or teacher roles, including paid placement in a Victorian Government school. The program will also provide financial incentives and other support to encourage former Aboriginal teachers to return to the teaching workforce. This has been partially completed. |
| Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) | |
| DTP continues to codesign Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) Partnership Agreements with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Land & Waters Aboriginal Council, and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTP’s co-designing partnership agreement pilots with RAPs – Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Land & Waters Aboriginal Council (TLaWC), and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. These agreements will enable more strategic, streamlined, and ongoing discussions regarding transport and planning activities occurring on their traditional lands and waters. DTP and TLaWC continue to progress their partnership agreement. |
| Department of Health (DH) | |
| Balit Durn Durn Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Suicide Prevention and Response Office within DH is working with the Balit Durn Durn Centre on the development of a new Victorian suicide prevention and response strategy. This includes working on an implementation plan and accountability framework. The Balit Durn Durn Centre is planning, in partnership with DH and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), for the future establishment of two new Aboriginal Healing Centres. • The Balit Durn Durn Centre has been funded to convene an Aboriginal community suicide prevention and response advisory group, comprising members of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing teams, Aboriginal community organisations and Aboriginal people with lived and living experience of suicide. • The 2022-23 State Budget allocated funding for in-depth analysis of Aboriginal suicides recorded in the Victorian Suicide Register and a review to improve real-time surveillance and response in partnership with the Coroners Court of Victoria. Current reporting via the Productivity Commission is only for jurisdictions which have adequate levels of Indigenous identification in line with national reporting guidelines. |

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| <p>Support VACCHO to deliver culturally appropriate preventive health initiatives aimed at reducing smoking, preventing diabetes, increasing healthy eating and active living, supporting improved maternal and child nutrition and health, supporting breastfeeding, and improved sexual and reproductive health, as well as reducing risk factors for cancer</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Victoria’s first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sexual and reproductive health plan 2022-2030. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The plan was released as part of Victoria’s sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis strategy 2022-2030 in October 2022. ○ The plan’s goal is to ensure Aboriginal Victorians are supported to access high-quality sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis services, that are inclusive, culturally sensitive and free from stigma, racism and discrimination. ○ The strategy and sub-plan development had key stakeholder consultation and collaboration from the Aboriginal Health sector. ○ The departmental advisory committee for sexual and reproductive health delivers and oversees the plans implementation with Aboriginal Health sector key stakeholders as representatives on this group. ○ Indicators for the monitoring of the plan are in development. • 2023/24 State Budget allocation of \$34.04 million for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to deliver Strengthening Lifelong Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing (Urgent Care Pathways) Initiative from 2023/24 to 2026/27. Urgent Care Pathways will improve the health of Aboriginal Victorians by redirecting treatment for potentially preventable hospitalisations from mainstream hospitals to ACCHOs. By shifting demand from acute health services and hospitals to ACCHOs who deliver culturally responsive, prevention-focussed health care, DH and the ACCHOs, are working towards closing the gap in Aboriginal health and wellbeing. • VACCHO and DH held a series of Urgent Care Pathways workshops analysing relevant health data and determined that ACCHOs in regions with high potentially preventable hospitalisations would be the ideal recipients of the funds. • At the Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Froum, ACCHOs also agreed that the preferred method for the Urgent Care Pathways funding allocation was a competitive one. |
| <p>Establish partnerships between Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) and Aboriginal community to support place-based responses to pandemic and infectious diseases and health promotion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPHUs have engaged and built partnerships with community and local stakeholders such as VACCHO and ACCOs to implement statewide programs and to co-design locally based public health initiatives. • Established key mechanisms to enable LPHUs and VACCHO to meet in partnership includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LPHU Aboriginal Health Community of Practice ○ Aboriginal health focused LPHU Director meetings ○ Informal network of LPHU Aboriginal health leads co-facilitated by DH and VACCHO • Engagement guidelines between the networked public health system (including LPHUs), VACCHO and ACCOs is being developed to support culturally safe engagement between stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In developing their inaugural LPHU population health catchment plans in 2023, LPHUs worked closely with Aboriginal communities and organisations to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify health priorities, challenges, and assets within the community. |
| <p>Continued partnership with VACCHO on the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework Steering Committee and funded to lead cancer screening efforts for Aboriginal Victorians under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VACCHO remain a key funded partner of the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework 2022-26 and sit across all governance levels of the Framework. VACCHO continues to work with all funded agencies and is the authorising body for all Aboriginal cancer screening initiatives. • In 2023-24, DH provided funding to VACCHO to implement expansion of the Beautiful Shawls Program to include 5 additional ACCOs and to increase access to culturally safe cervical screening services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and people with a cervix through provision of culturally appropriate education and resources. |

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| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) | |
| Establishment of the State-wide Caring for Country Partnership Forum (SCfCPF) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Forums were held during 2023, on Country and in person over 1.5 days. The first co-chaired and hosted by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in April 2023, the second co-chaired by Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation in September 2023. During the 2022-23 financial year, DEECA provided administrative support to the functioning and delivery of the Forums, in addition to funding 1 FTE secretariat role to the SCfCPF and continued to fund ABSTARR Consulting to deliver independent secretariat and policy support services to the Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus (TOCC) to allow for their collective engagement and partnership in the SCfCPF. Throughout 2023 the partnership committed to the evolution of the Forum by implementing agreed upon recommendations of the SCfCPF Independent Review undertaken in 2022. DEECA will support the TOC Caucus in addressing newly defined priorities through governance, a Forum Implementation Plan and supported delivery of the TOC Caucus workplan. |
| Begin regular Regional Partnership Forums made up of senior Traditional Owner Corporation (TOC) staff and senior DEECA regional staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Caring for Country Partnership forums were delivered to support five Traditional Owner groups in progressing self-determination during 2022-23: First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Taungurung Land and Waters Council, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. DEECA continued to support Traditional Owner groups in the preparation and delivery of the forums and coordinate DEECA and portfolio partner representation as requested. Priorities discussed at regional forums include sustainable funding models, formal recognition and cultural fire. While not all Traditional Owner groups wish to hold regional forums, DEECA actively engages directly on Country and through other portfolio or program specific governance arrangements to enable partnership building opportunities, monitored through the SCfCPF. |
| Continue to develop local Traditional Owner Self-Determination Plans with Traditional Owner groups and DEECA regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Owner lead Self-Determination Plans have not progressed during 2023. Some Traditional Owners have decided to defer the development of Self-Determination Plans to restructure them to better align with their On Country Plans. Others are constrained by other priority commitments, resulting in minimal uptake during 2023. Some overall progress and achievements to date include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Self-Determination Plan finalised, where the Traditional Owner Corporation (TOC) developed a self-determination 5-year timeline, including the formation of possum pelts into a possum-skin cloak to visually demonstrate their self-determination story. Four Self-Determination Plans drafted, which have not progressed to formal endorsement within the Traditional Owner Groups. Two TOCs have chosen to align self-determination priorities to their Country Plans rather than develop a separate Self-Determination Plan. Self-Determination Plans will only continue to be pursued based on Traditional Owner interest. |
| Continue to implement improvements to DEECA systems and processes to enable Aboriginal self-determination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational review of the SCfCPF and commenced development of an Implementation Action Plan to embed recommendations. Delivered a second annual survey monitoring Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA's progress in enabling self-determination. In 2022-23 there was an overall improvement in the positive level of satisfaction of TOCs with the department's progress in enabling self-determination, reaching 60 per cent, up from 50 per cent the previous year. Supported the Victorian Government and Traditional Owners increase of 10,540 square kilometres in land recognised under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 since 2020-21. Worked with Traditional Owners to increase cultural burns on public land from four burns in 2018-19, to 15 in 2021-22 and 20 in 2022-23. |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) | |
| Aboriginal Children's Forum continues to bring together ACCOs, Community Service Organisations and Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, the Aboriginal Children's Forum met twice, and the purpose and focus were to report on the implementation and monitoring of Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement. A refresh of Wungurilwil Gaggapduir has been agreed to align with the National Agreement, Yoorrook Justice Commission recommendations, support progression of Aboriginal-led service delivery reform and enhance share-decision making. The Aboriginal Children's Forum agreed to refresh its purpose to ensure it is fit for purpose to drive the children and families reform agenda. |

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| <p>Transferring decision making to ACCOs for Aboriginal children and young people</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Children in Care enables the Secretary to transfer decision making responsibility from Government to an Aboriginal agency for Aboriginal children. 2023 saw the single largest investment to expand the commitment to transfer decision making from government to an Aboriginal agency. In October 2023, the Community Protecting Boorais program was launched with VACCA and Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative to undertake investigation of report concerns of harm for Aboriginal children. This is enabled through the delegation of authority under Section 18 of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>. |
| <p>Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028 Agreement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Dhelk Dja governance structure ensures that the principles of shared decision making are at the heart of the 10 Year Agreement. The Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum met in April, July and November 2023. The Koori Caucus met an additional six times during this period, and the 11 Action Groups across Victoria continued to provide place-based, Aboriginal community-led approaches to drive local action to prevent and address family violence in partnership with key community stakeholders. Partnership Forum to support the development of culturally safe services and responses for Aboriginal people impacted by family violence. |
| <p>Governance arrangements for Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort; Every Aboriginal Person has a Home. The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework guides implementation and supports delivery of the strategic directions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint representation at the Closing the Gap National Housing Policy Partnerships group, with Aboriginal Housing Victoria a Co-Chair and representing the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF). The group is tasked to lead the Closing the Gap housing reform agenda at a National level. Homes Victoria participates across all levels of the <i>Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort, Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home</i> - the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (<i>Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort</i>) governance mechanisms which embeds shared decision making and outcomes to ensure self-determination is at the forefront. Aboriginal Housing Victoria is resourced to provide the secretariat functions for the AHHF and Implementation Working Group (IWG). The AHHF is the community engagement interface that supports <i>Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort</i> implementation and other related Aboriginal housing and homelessness approaches. The AHHF meets quarterly across different regions and is currently investigating avenues to strengthen its regional presence. Through the governance arrangements, 2023 has seen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commitment to sharing housing and homelessness data with all AHHF members. Delivery of the Big Housing Build 10 per cent net new social housing Aboriginal target. An increase in funding to support the capacity building of the sectors. Delivery of the Aboriginal housing reform resourcing to pilot two new Aboriginal-specific homelessness entry points. The release of the 2022 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit report which is under-going an analysis of the recommendations. Development of the 5-year <i>Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort</i> implementation plan. Early consultation and partnership towards the development of the Aboriginal Public Housing Transfer Pilot which will provide renters with more choice. The establishment of new AHHF sub committees to provide oversight of Aboriginal housing and homelessness initiatives and programs. |
| <p>The Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum (ASGF) is DFFH's overarching Aboriginal governance structure. It sets and oversees strategic directions in the context of all Aboriginal specific matters and in particular the departmental portfolio areas of child protection, family violence and housing. The ASGF provides a strategic link with other departments that have intersecting Aboriginal policy priorities and common clients. Representation includes all members of Koorie Caucus, the Secretaries of DFFH and DH and members of their senior executive teams. It also includes senior executives from the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS), DET, DPC and the National Indigenous Australians Agency. The ASGF met in three times in 2023, with the final forum committing to a refreshed Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027 to strengthen alignment to the Closing the Gap and other relevant Aboriginal strategies and frameworks. |
| <p>Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)</p> | |
| <p>Aboriginal Justice Agreement and associated governance structures</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the 24 year long Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), the following governance mechanisms function to monitor and implement the progress of key priorities. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established partnerships include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Aboriginal Justice Forum (AJF) ○ The Aboriginal Justice Caucus (AJC) ○ Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (RAJACs) ○ Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees (LAJACs) ○ Collaborative Working Groups (CWGs) • The AJF, AJC, RAJACs, LAJACs and CWGs continued to meet throughout 2023. • Supporting the AJC, DJCS continues to fund an independent secretariat (auspiced by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Associated Limited) to support the AJC, as well as full time Victorian Public Service Level 5 officers to support each of the nine RAJACs and their elected Aboriginal Chairpersons. |
| Closing the Gap Reference Group convened | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Closing the Gap Reference Group has been convened as a self-determining body to provide guidance and ideas about how to improve the custodial experiences of Aboriginal men in custody and improve outcomes for Aboriginal people. |
| Bail reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal organisations and community representatives engaged through the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Policy and Legislative Change Collaborative Working Group and the AJC on the bail reforms that passed Parliament on 17 October 2023. • DJCS received significant feedback from the AJC, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Djirra on the changes to the Aboriginal-specific considerations in the Bail Act. As a result of this engagement, the changes to section 3A will better reflect the experiences and circumstances of Aboriginal people heard about in consultation. |
| Evaluation of Public Intoxication Reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following decriminalisation of public intoxication on 7 November 2023, effort now shifts to monitoring and evaluation. Monash University has been confirmed as the justice evaluator. The evaluation will be co-directed by Professor Kylie Cripps, a Palawa woman, alongside a team of Aboriginal and diverse researchers with extensive experience on impacts of laws and law enforcement on Aboriginal people and other diverse communities. • In line with Yoorrook Justice Commission recommendation 30 in relation to decriminalisation of public intoxication, DJCS is committed to supporting transparent reporting on evaluation of the monitoring of police conduct to the greatest extent possible. |
| Development of dedicated Aboriginal Victims of Crime Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal people are overrepresented as victims of crime but are under-represented in accessing victim support services. The Victorian Government has committed to developing a dedicated Aboriginal victims of crime strategy to identify how the victim support system can better respond to the needs of Aboriginal victims. • The dedicated Project Control Group arrangements were endorsed by the AJC in August 2023, and will be formalised in terms of reference endorsed by all members of the Project Control Group. |
| Continued Aboriginal leadership in the implementation and delivery of the Stolen Generations Reparations Package, led by the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee, and Stolen Generations Reparations Independent Assessment Panel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Advisory Committee provides advice to DJCS on matters including policy, operations, communication and promotion of the Package. The Advisory Committee leverages its significant lived experience and diverse professional backgrounds to ensure that the process of implementing the Package continues to be community-led. • DJCS has also established the Stolen Generations Reparations Independent Assessment Panel (IAP) to ensure that Aboriginal people are involved in decisions about eligibility for the Package. The Panel is a non-statutory committee that decides if applications are eligible for the Package. The Panel also provides advice to DJCS on advance payments for terminally or critically ill applicants. • Panel members have been selected because they are members or descendants of members of the Stolen Generations; and/or have experience in law, policy development, advocacy, public administration, and decision-making on complex matters and/or redress schemes. • In 2023, four Advisory Committee meetings were held, as well as a total of 12 sittings of the IAP to assess applications for the Package. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) | |
| Recruitment principles in small business portfolio, such as the Small Business Ministerial Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Small Business Ministerial Council (SBMC) and Multicultural Business Ministerial Council (MBMC) are advisory councils that provide insights on small business issues for the Minister for Small Business. The SBMC's terms of reference specify that it will have at least one Aboriginal businessperson as a member. The appointment process for the above councils will commence in the first quarter of 2024. |
| Koorie Skills Working Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DE, in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), established the Koorie Skills Working Group to provide direction and advice to support improved outcomes for First Nations learners in further education and training. Following MoG changes, stewardship of the Working Group has transferred to DJSIR. |
| Department of Government Services (DGS) | |
| Women Leading Locally Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59 participants from the first round of the program graduated in August 2023, including 1 Aboriginal woman. The second round of the program commenced in June 2023 with 63 participants, of which four are Aboriginal women. |

Table B

Priority Reform Two – Building the community-controlled sector

National Agreement Clauses 118 and 119:

- a. There is sustained capacity building and investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, which deliver certain services and address issues through a set of clearly defined standards or requirements, such as an agreed model of care
- b. There is a dedicated and identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce (that complements a range of other professions and expertise) and where people working in community-controlled sectors have wage parity based on workforce modelling commensurate with need
- c. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations which deliver common services are supported by a Peak Body, governed by a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board, which has strong governance and policy development and influencing capacity
- d. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations which deliver common services have a dedicated, reliable and consistent funding model designed to suit the types of services required by communities, responsive to the needs of those receiving the services, and is developed in consultation with the relevant Peak body

| Action | Key achievements in 2023 |
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| Department of Premier and Cabinet – Whole of Government | |
| Sector Strengthening funding under the National Agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In August 2023, the Partnership Forum endorsed the allocation of \$540,000 from Victoria’s committed \$3.3 million sector strengthening funding to the delivery of a cross-sectoral Early Years Summit, which is set to take place in June 2024. • DPC will continue to work with Ngaweeyan Maar-oo on allocating funding from Victoria’s contribution to the virtual funding pool. This includes identifying and agreeing the projects to be funded across the priority sectors. |
| ACCO funding – Community Capability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023, DPC administered a range of grant programs providing funding to ACCOs for operations and program delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Koorie Youth Council 2021-25: supporting operations including staffing and administration, program delivery and delivery of the annual Koorie Youth Summit. ○ Koorie Heritage Trust 2022-25: supporting operations and the delivery of the Koorie Family History Service and the Koorie Oral History Program. ○ Connecting Home 2020-24: supporting operations and case management services for members of the Stolen Generations and their families. ○ Victorian NAIDOC events 2023: supporting delivery of Victorian NAIDOC week events in 2023. |
| Coordination of Victoria’s Expenditure Review under the National Agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tabling of Phase One and Phase Two Expenditure Review reports at Joint Council in November 2023 mark the completion of Victoria’s inaugural Expenditure Review. • Phase One of the Expenditure Review examined Victorian Government spending on First Peoples-specific programs and services (targeted expenditure). Phase Two of the Expenditure Review quantified First Peoples’ share of non-targeted expenditure on Government programs and services in three major areas of Government (child protection, justice and health). • DPC is working in partnership with Ngaweeyan Maar-oo to complete a second Expenditure Review in 2024, building on lessons learned from the two-phased Expenditure Review in 2023. |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| <p>DTF supports and engages with community housing organisations as part of the Victorian Government's key housing initiatives.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Treasurer and the Minister for Housing jointly administer the Social Housing Growth Fund which includes the Homes for Aboriginal Victorians Round funding program. This program provides grant funding to community housing organisations to work in partnership to deliver social housing for Aboriginal Victorians and supports the ACCO sector by enabling these organisations to become Registered Housing Agencies. In 2023, a fifth evaluation period was progressed with outcomes to be determined. DTF continues to work with Aboriginal Housing Victoria to identify opportunities to improve the rate of Aboriginal home ownership and support the objectives of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework. Delivery of the Victorian Homebuyer Fund provides additional support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants through a greater shared equity contribution. |
| <p>Department of Education</p> | |
| <p>Promoting and funding Aboriginal organisations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout 2023, DE continued to resource VAEAI to participate in Marrung governance mechanisms, including delivery of the Koorie Education Roundtables and sitting fees for Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Chairs on Marrung governance bodies. There are now 11 ACCOs delivering funded kindergarten services in Victoria, including recently established services delivered by Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative Incorporated and Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative Limited. In 2023, DE commenced a partnership with VAEAI to establish the VAEAI Early Years Engagement Program across Victoria to connect kindergarten services and educators with local ACCOs and Traditional Owners to strengthen their capacity to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in their programs. ACCOs are included on DE's Schools Mental Health Menu. The Menu recommends schools to engage and fund local ACCOs, where appropriate, to support Koorie learners' mental health and wellbeing. DE engages ACCOs, including the Victorian Aboriginal Advancement League and Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited to host regular Marrung CGC meetings and other events. DE's Social Procurement Strategy prioritises five social procurement objectives, one of which is 'Opportunities for Victorian Koorie People'. DE engages social enterprises and Victorian Koorie businesses for major construction projects and related services. In 2022-23, DE expended \$11.4 million on Victorian Koorie businesses. |
| <p>Department of Transport and Planning</p> | |
| <p>Prioritising Social Procurement for First Peoples Businesses</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In November 2022, DTP entered a Pilot Partnership with Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce. The one-year, \$250,000 Pilot leveraged Kinaway's expertise in strategic partnership management to create mutually beneficial procurement outcomes for Kinaway members and the portfolio. The Pilot, aligning with the Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self Determination Plan 2020-2023, worked towards better procurement outcomes for the portfolio and Victorian First Peoples owned business, including increased engagement, spend and contract awards. The Pilot contributed to an increase in the portfolio's First Peoples Procurement performance in the 2022-2023 financial year, and there was a reported increase in the cultural competence and confidence of Portfolio Buyers to engage First Peoples businesses, in addition to greater understanding of the First Peoples business sector. DTP was also able to leverage its relationship with Kinaway to connect Victorian First Peoples owned businesses with flood recovery response teams, following the October 2022 flooding events. Work is also ongoing beyond the Pilot to address First Peoples procurement barriers and to further increase the number of First Peoples businesses prequalified for portfolio works. |
| <p>Creating transport infrastructure to provide greater access to services for First Peoples</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of localised First Peoples Community initiatives were funded through DTP's Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program (FLTSP) to provide First Peoples greater access to services, this included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. DTP supported the co-delivery of the Inaugural Koorie Big Day Out, held in Shepparton. The career expo aimed at inspiring First Peoples students to dream big and achieve their aspirations. Partnering with Gippsland TAFE to provide a transport connection for VET students to access TAFE in Bairnsdale. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Celebrating First Peoples Culture and connection through the installation of the First Peoples artwork at Morwell and Traralgon station forecourts. ○ Partnering with the Melbourne Indigenous Transition School to deliver a pedestrian crossing and the co-creation of a culturally appropriate road safety program for school students. ○ Partnering with the Eastern Marr Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) and Worn Gundidj to upgrade Tower Hill Carpark. Opportunities provided include the co-design of EMAC entry signage to the carpark and utilisation of stone from local Aboriginal stone quarry to create safety barriers. ○ Three-year contract with Worn Gundidj to re-vegetate and maintain site. |
| Department of Health | |
| Partnerships between DH and VACCHO and other ACCOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Aboriginal Partnership Dashboard Working Group was established early 2023 to develop the framework and measures for data informed monitoring of key outcomes and actions of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Agreement 2023-2025. The Working Group also developed the DH Divisional Action plan reporting mechanisms and action tracker that supports departmental accountability for delivering the Action Plan. This collaborative working group reports to AHW Subcommittee of Executive Board and includes membership from VACCHO and VAHI. ● To support early intervention for Aboriginal children and their families, DH funded Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) to deliver specialist clinics for children where developmental issues are identified. ● Continued delivery of the Best Practice Aboriginal Forum on Reducing Tobacco and E-Cigarette Related Harms, an action under the Korin Korin Balit-Djak Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027, where ACCOs are provided opportunities to report on local initiatives, build capacity and share stories and progress in reducing smoking. The forum is currently being delivered as a series of webinars. ● In partnership with VACCHO, the Koori Maternity Services program continues to provide flexible, holistic and culturally safe antenatal and postnatal care which is central to improving outcomes and increasing participation in maternity care for Aboriginal women, women having Aboriginal babies and their families. ● In February 2023, the DH held consultations with 25 ACCOs across Victoria to commence the co-design process for a funding allocation model and outcomes-based reporting framework for social and emotional wellbeing. DH is now working with ACCOs to improve the way ACCOs report on social and emotional wellbeing outcomes that aligns with an outcomes-based funding model. |
| Development and piloting of outcomes-based funding model with peak body for Aboriginal community controlled health sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In May 2023, DH advised VACCHO of its core annual funding for four years. VACCHO commenced reporting against its strategic plan and outcomes framework. DH continues to work with VACCHO to plan a staged approach to transitioning ACCOs to self-determined, outcomes-based funding. |
| Continue to improve access to specialist appointments and medical care for Aboriginal people in rural and regional areas in collaboration with the Aboriginal community controlled health sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DH has made a commitment under the 10 Year Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Agreement to embed discharge plans and formal referral pathways across the healthcare sector by June 2025. To progress this, Aboriginal patients have been identified as a priority cohort under the Improving Clinical Handover Program, currently in a planning phase prior to pilot projects commencing in 2024. |
| Increase cancer screening expertise at VACCHO and strengthen data systems to improve cancer screening reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VACCHO continues to partner with funded agencies under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework 2022-26 to participate in capacity-building activities to promote cancer screening expertise within VACCHO and strengthen Aboriginal data sovereignty. |
| Continuation of funded activity by VACCHO to co-ordinate culturally safe strategies to reduce smoking prevalence amongst Aboriginal people and support ACCOs across Victoria to become smoke free. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional Development opportunities for clinical staff and Aboriginal Health Workers ● More ACCOs going smoke free. ● New Aboriginal Quitline website 2024. |

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| <p>Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) project at VAHS funded by Community Based Health Services is building the capability of ACCOs to fully utilise Medicare Benefits Schedule funding in the delivery of services and to support greater incentives for increased use of Aboriginal Health Assessments in the community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian Government has supported VAHS with project funding to bolster greater uptake in MBS billing to improve sustainable funding sources and incentivise greater access to MBS funded health assessments and treatments. • VAHS has updated its patient management system to better record patient details that are required for MBS billing and has trained its administrative staff to collect these administrative details at the first appointment. • VAHS has undertaken service wide training for clinical staff on the use of MBS and entry of data to ensure that any eligible items are billed correctly. • VAHS has developed a short training package that can be shared with other ACCHO's to identify and respond to any administrative system barriers that may be present so that the maximum use of MBS funding can be obtained to support client's access to necessary health assessments and health interventions. |
| <p>Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action</p> | |
| <p>Increase the number of projects and initiatives where Aboriginal people are accessing water for economic development and other self-determined purposes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022, the Victorian Government announced \$3.35 million over two years for the initial delivery of the 'Water is Life' roadmap and \$18 million for Traditional Owner-led projects. • In March 2022, Victoria reported for Closing the Gap that Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians held 4,298ML of water entitlements. As of 28 August 2023, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians held 7,592 ML. The increase in entitlements includes the following returns of water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2,000 ML of water to the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation in the Mitchell River, 200 ML at Buchan Munji and 500 ML in the Tambo River. ○ 2,500 ML of water to the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in the Palawarra/Fitzroy River system. • These water returns support the self-determination of Traditional Owners by providing opportunities to manage water in ways that best meet their needs. In addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1,360 ML has been set aside for Traditional Owners in northern Victoria as part of the Connections project. |
| <p>Strengthen Traditional Owner decision making in biodiversity</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued delivery of programs under the 2022 \$1.97 million allocation for funding across ten Traditional Owner-led and Aboriginal community group-led projects as part of the Caring for Country Grants program and Landcare for Country pilot program. The program aimed to increase the number of Traditional Owner groups involved in biodiversity planning and response. • Supporting the revegetation of public and private lands through the \$77 million Bushbank, which included \$3.7 million committed to the Bushbank First Peoples grant, and an extended offer of up to \$4.2 million under the First Peoples grant approved for eligible RAPs who did not receive funding during the initial first round. The Bushbank program is the most ambitious habitat restoration program in Victoria's history and one of the largest of its kind in Australia. • Supported six TOC to deliver 20 cultural burns in 2022-23. • Preparation is underway to transfer Neds Corner, which is Victoria's largest private conservation reserve, to its Traditional Owners, the First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation. This is a significant achievement for Trust for Nature, as it involves 30,000 hectares of freehold land that will be returned to the Traditional Owners • The three-year Bushfire Biodiversity Response and Recovery program concluded in June 2023, which supported the recovery of biodiversity and wildlife impacted by the 2019-20 Victorian Bushfires and improved capability of the sector to respond to and recover from future events. Key achievements with Traditional Owners include employment opportunities for at least 22 Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians including training to build capability for environmental restoration and the development of nature havens, including Wilsons Promontory and Neds Corner, through partnerships including Djaara and Bush Heritage as a legacy of the program. • In 2022-23, the Nature Fund allocated \$10 million to fund 22 organisations that were able to leverage significant co-funding through partnerships with a range of funders. Projects are delivering actions to provide long term benefits for a range of threatened species (both flora and fauna), and across a range of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems including wetlands. Traditional Owner projects include supporting Right |

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| | <p>Way Management of Reserves on Dja Dja Wurrung Country and monitoring and predator control to support White-Footed Dunnart and Long-nosed Bandicoot led by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Protecting Biodiversity program continued to fund actions for biodiversity and threatened species across key landscapes in Victoria throughout 2022–23 with a number of projects led or co-led by Traditional Owner groups. • Liwik Barring Landscape Conservation Area worked with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung’s Narrap Team to undertake extensive weed management work throughout Liwik Barring, across a number of waterways including Britannia Creek, Little Yarra River, Woori Yallock Creek and the Yarra River. The Weeds and Pests on Public Land program partnered with and engaged with 10 different Traditional Owner groups across Victoria in 2022-23 through the Program’s eight projects that focus on predator control (foxes), herbivore control (rabbits), and weed control and early eradication in various national and state parks in Victoria. • Yananyin Gadhaba is a signed partnership agreement between TLaWC and DEECA. Yananyin Gadhaba means “we walk together” in the Taungurung language. The agreement will enable the two partners to deliver better outcomes for biodiversity by strengthening bio-culturally informed care for Country. This initial agreement with TLaWC sets a precedent to support further agreement with Traditional Owner Groups. DEECA is currently developing a similar agreement with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. • The Yarra Strategic Plan, Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo 2022–32 seeks to protect the Yarra River corridor as one living and integrated entity for future generations from key threats, including climate change, while promoting opportunities for self-determination among the Birrarung’s Traditional Owners, the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. Through the Birrarung Council – the independent voice of the river – and shared governance arrangements established by the Wilip-gin Birrarung murrion (Yarra River Protection Act) 2017, Traditional Owner voices will continue to inform climate change responses implemented through Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo. |
| <p>Develop a sustainable funding model for Traditional Owner groups that elevates self-determination and the ability to submit to budget bids</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2023, the then Minister for Environment, Minister Stitt, committed to the TOC Caucus that DEECA would identify an alternate funding model that seeks to streamline both funding, reporting and governance to assist with easing the burden TOCs experience from the department when administering, delivering, and reporting on funds and grants. • DEECA has developed the Traditional Owner Funding Reform Implementation Plan. This plan aims to address current resourcing arrangements where TOCs are unable to move beyond an operational level of governance, preventing them from having decision-making power over ongoing strategies and policies that affect them. • DEECA is in the process of co-developing a streamlined agreement pilot with Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation, the pilot will then inform best practice guidance to create a replicable streamlined funding agreement process between DEECA and TOCs from June 2024. |
| <p>Develop a DEECA Learning and Development package with Traditional Owners to be utilised by TOCs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot program with the TLaWC concluded mid-2022. The package provided TLaWC staff access to 120 eLearning and seven face-to-face training courses to support the professional development of TLaWC staff at no cost. A review of the pilot is currently underway with the objective of extending the package to other TOCs and incorporating identified safety and wellbeing courses once a new Learning Management System is implemented and becomes available for external access in June 2024. Phase 2 of the program is scheduled to commence July 2024. |
| <p>Working with Aboriginal suppliers to identify how DEECA’s project and procurement processes incorporate cultural responsibilities and knowledge</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEECA has membership with Social Traders and Kinaway Chamber of Commerce. Kinaway also provides support and expertise in recognising and incorporating social enterprises and Aboriginal suppliers into the department’s supply chain. • Targeted communication is occurring to all departmental staff involved in procurement activity on DEECA's social procurement objective related to sustainable Victorian social enterprise and Aboriginal business sectors, where the outcome sought is increased purchasing from Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses. • As a partner agency with Kinaway, support was sourced on DEECA’s procurement approach to enable increased engagement with Aboriginal businesses, this includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentations Procurement governance meetings, working groups and various forums. ○ Engagement with Gippsland’s Aboriginal Self-Determination Reform Procurement Working Group to build procurement opportunities and facilitate support to First Nations businesses. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA delivered an upcoming online event with Kinaway for Indigenous Business Month, this is an all-staff event in November 2023 to support staff understanding of how they can support DEECA's commitment to self-determination by procuring from Aboriginal-owned businesses through the Kinaway Business Directory. |
| Prioritising Aboriginal suppliers when procuring goods and services: through the development of a DEECA Aboriginal Procurement Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA's Social Procurement Strategy 2022–2025 and prioritisation of Aboriginal procurement outcomes through targeted actions in Group Pupangarli Marnmarnepu Implementation Action Plans resulted in increased use of Aboriginal suppliers in procurement processes by 18 per cent over the previous year. Total spend with Aboriginal suppliers exceeded the target measure of 1%, increasing from 1.07 per cent 2021–22 to 1.26 per cent in 2022–23, representing a total spend of \$4.26 million with 53 Victorian Aboriginal businesses. During this period DEECA commenced the provision of data and analysis to improve engagement and tracking of spend with Aboriginal suppliers, enhanced monitoring of outcomes via monthly Executive Board procurement reports, active promotion of how to purchase from certified Victorian Aboriginal business and granting a standing exemption from some procurement processes for direct selection of an Aboriginal business for contracts with a value less than \$200,000. |
| Strengthening Traditional Owner decision making in sustainable water management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water is Life commits to a program of systematic change, which includes increasing Traditional Owner participation in water policy, management and decision-making. Five environmental-watering trials are underway as pilot projects, with Traditional Owners working with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and DEECA to develop Seasonal Watering Proposals. These will inform the development of fit-for-purpose guidelines and a framework for multi-year agreements between the Victorian Environmental Water Holder and Traditional Owners. Other investments in priority water policy areas have also furthered Aboriginal self-determination as the department has partnered with Traditional Owners to develop and implement key water policies, such as the Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy, The Yarra Strategic Plan – Burndap Birrarung Burndap Umarkoo, Waterways of the West Action Plan and the Rivers of the Barwon (Barre Warre Yalluk) Action Plan and the Victorian Waterway Management Strategy. |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | |
| Transformation of the Children and Families service system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition of Aboriginal Children to ACCOs: Rights and Aspirations project was finalised in late 2022. DFFH have engaged Children and families ACCOs to understand their aspirations relating to service delivery within the next five to ten years. This was to better understand what is required to build capacity and enable a full suite of services that would support all Aboriginal children to be managed by an ACCO. Future funding allocation to ACCOs will then be considered. Reporting on proportional funding in children and families service delivery in ACCOs is reported through the Aboriginal Children's Forum (ACF). The September ACF data indicates ACCOs currently receive 15 percent of child protection and family services funding. Social Services Reform – the new system will mean Victorian social service providers including ACCOs will have streamlined registration and reporting requirements, a common set of social service standards, and an independent regulator. |
| Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028 Agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2023-24 State Budget committed \$31 million to maintain Aboriginal-led family and sexual violence service delivery. The ongoing Aboriginal-led sexual Assault Support services funding has been provided for the continued delivery of these services by four ACCOs across six DFFH areas. New Aboriginal Access Points established in 2023. Aboriginal Access Points are a complementary service model to The Orange Door, providing an ACCO-led, culturally safe referral pathway for Aboriginal people impacted by family violence. |
| Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort – Aboriginal housing sector strengthening and capacity building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted investment across the Community Housing Sector Development fund, whereby funding is allocated to Aboriginal sector to deliver a range of support and capacity building projects: |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$411k Community Housing Brokerage role – funded to support partnerships between Community Housing Agencies and ACCOS and Traditional Owners to further social housing supply and build capacity. ○ \$850k Supporting Aboriginal Registrations – funded to employ a position to work alongside the Victorian Housing Registrar to support ACCOs and Traditional Owners on their housing registration journey. ● \$350k Local Government Partnerships Project, funded to support ACCOs and Traditional Owners in developing partnerships/agreements with Local Government organisations to support social housing delivery. |
| The Big Housing Build Social Housing Growth Fund has a delivery target of 820 net new social housing dwellings for Aboriginal Victorians. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Successful outcomes for Aboriginal community housing capacity building include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Housing Brokerage role – funded to support partnerships between Community Housing Agencies and ACCOs and Traditional Owners to further social housing supply and build capacity. ○ Feasibility project – funded to analyse ACCOs financial viability and business composition to become a registered housing provider ○ Supporting Aboriginal Registrations – funded to employ a position to work alongside the Housing Registrar to support ACCOs and Traditional Owners on their housing registration journey ○ Local Government Partnerships Project – funded to support ACCOs and Traditional Owners in developing partnerships/agreements with Local Government organisations to support social housing delivery. |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | |
| Community Grants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DJCS supports building of ACCOs through the provision of over \$35 million per annum in community grants to improve Aboriginal justice outcomes, with over 98 per cent of this funding going to ACCOs and businesses. ● DJCS supports the ACCO sector to undertake workforce development to build capacity of Aboriginal staff working in the justice sector through provisions in funding agreements such as for workforce development. ● DJCS has secured funding for Aboriginal Community Justice Panels to transition from a volunteer workforce to a professional service in Bendigo, Mildura and Shepparton locations. This funding will inform the service design of the professionalised services to be rolled out statewide, subject to funding. |
| Development of a Sector Strengthening Plan by the Justice Policy Partnership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On 7 June 2023, Joint Council agreed that the Justice Policy Partnership (JPP) would commence development of a Justice Sector Strengthening Plan in 2023 aimed at growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled law and justice sector. ● Victoria is participating in the JPP’s development of a Sector Strengthening Plan and has nominated to be involved in a Working Group to develop this. This plan would set out an ambitious long-term approach to strengthen ACCOs, including legal services and family violence prevention legal services. ● This Working Group is currently developing parameters for advancing the Justice Sector Strengthening Plan. |
| Continued support for Tarwirri Indigenous Lawyers Association | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DJCS continues to be the sole funder supporting Tarwirri, a membership body based in Victoria comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal professionals, law graduates and law students. Tarwirri aims to support and enhance the representation, professional profile, and excellence of its members within the Victorian legal landscape and the broader communities. |
| Justice Network Conference held in November 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Justice Network Conference held in November 2023, brought together over 160 frontline Aboriginal justice staff, from across the community and governments sectors. The two-day conference program included professional development, networking and learning opportunities which enables the sharing of best practice learnings from across the State. |
| Aboriginal Youth Justice continued support for ACCOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth Justice supports 14 funded ACCOs and agencies across Victoria to deliver key programs and services which aim to divert Aboriginal children and young people from Youth Justice and support them to address offending behaviour. DJCS continues to work with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector by providing brokerage funding, workforce and capability uplift. |
| Opening of Aboriginal Healing Unit at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in September 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Aboriginal Healing Unit focuses on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal women and supporting reintegration in a respectful, therapeutic way. Mentoring from Elders and Respected Persons help support the women building essential life skills in a safe space, for both |

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| | <p>those in remand and sentenced custody. Corrections and Justice Services (CJS) fund the ACCO Elizabeth Morgan House to deliver the therapeutic services for Aboriginal women residing there, and more broadly for Aboriginal women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. ACCHOs are engaged to deliver in-reach health services to Aboriginal adult women and young people in custodial settings. Dhelkya (Castlemaine) Health have contracted Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative to provide services at Tarrengower Prison.</p> |
| Community funding from Corrections and Justice Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrections and Justice Services provide funding to Dardi Munwurro to deliver Men’s Healing and Behaviour Change Programs in the community (also delivered in prison) and the VACCA to deliver Beyond Survival Men’s and Women’s Cultural Healing Programs. |
| Crime Prevention Initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DJCS provides funding to Aboriginal organisations under the Crime Prevention Innovation Fund to deliver and evaluate innovative community safety and crime prevention initiatives. • More than 20 per cent of the Innovation Fund supports projects led by Aboriginal organisations, including projects that help Aboriginal young people connect with culture, and deliver cultural programs that connect community members with the right supports. • Funding is also provided to Aboriginal organisations under the Crime Prevention Youth Engagement Grants, which supports young Aboriginal people to engage in prosocial activities, connect with their culture and community, and stay on the right track. • As part of the Crime Prevention Innovation Fund 2022-23, in 2023 Dardi Munwurro continued to deliver the Dardi Youth Foundations project, Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative Limited continued to deliver the Gulgurn Manja Gariwerd Academy Program and Aldara Yenara Australia Aboriginal Corporation continued to deliver the Bigauga Imilang Barparrik (Yesterday Today Tomorrow) project. • Through the Youth Engagement Program, Indigeeekare Services Pty Ltd continued to deliver the Community Youth Hub project while Sunbury Aboriginal Corporation continued to deliver the Dhan Gurrama-Y project. |
| Emergency Recovery Victoria’s Aboriginal Community Recovery grant funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of \$2.5 million was provided following the October 2022 Victorian floods to address Aboriginal community recovery needs and strengthen resilience against natural disasters. • At the state-wide Aboriginal Flood Relief and Recovery Forums held on 1 and 20 December 2023, 12 risks and issues identified by Aboriginal community leaders informed recovery actions in response to the October 2022 floods. The funding for the Aboriginal Culture and Healing Flood Recovery Grant program was released by DTF in June 2023. Earlier and timely provision of funds supports Victorian communities to recover and reduces severity of impacts and trauma. |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | |
| Funding for ACCOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.28 million to Traditional Owner Group Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation to establish a Community Revitalisation site in East Gippsland. • Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place is an ACCO that shares cultural knowledge and connection through native foods training, education and catering while supporting pathways to employment for Aboriginal people. Through the grant funding, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place has established a pre-employment support program, student coaching and mentoring services to engage community looking to join or re-join the workforce. |
| Engagement with Aboriginal Chambers of Commerce (Small Business Victoria) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together with the Aboriginal Economic Development unit within DJSIR, Small Business Victoria (SBV) holds regular monthly meetings with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce and with Ngarrimili to benefit from their business insights and enable better Small Business Victoria program design and program uptake by Aboriginal businesses. • The Minister for Small Business met with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce on 24 January 2023, to discuss priorities and opportunities for Aboriginal business in Victoria. |
| Aboriginal Business Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An engagement campaign was undertaken by a First Nations team member of SBV between September 2022 and February 2023. 83 Victorian Aboriginal-owned small businesses were contacted and direct engagement was held with 54 businesses. • Results of the survey informed better program design, including improvements to the Business Victoria dedicated Aboriginal business page. Results were shared across key DJSIR teams, including Aboriginal Economic Development and Employment. |

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| <p>Mental Wellbeing of Business Community Grants Program</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Mental Wellbeing of Business Communities Program, two Aboriginal business organisations received \$100,000 each to self-determine the design and delivery of a wellbeing project for their business communities. • Funding provided supported the creation and implementation of culturally safe activities, designed to engage Victorian First Peoples Business owners and their staff in activities that will deliver health and wellbeing outcomes. • Kinaway Chamber of Commerce created a cultural immersion health and wellbeing camp as well as the development of a series of webinars, presentations, workshops and basic training modules to engage business members via a range of tailored activities. • Ngarrimili created an online wellbeing resource and wellbeing packs available to First Nations businesses and creatives. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts were engaged to develop resources related to supporting the wellbeing and mental health of members and staff. The wellbeing packs were co-designed with Victorian Aboriginal businesses to ensure the needs of businesses were met. • Both Mental Wellbeing of Business Communities Program grants were fully acquitted as at 31 October 2023. |
| <p>Sector strengthening plans include actions that pertain to the prioritising of cultural activities and languages.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with VAEAI and Swinburne University as the lead teaching institution, Victoria offers the Certificate II and Certificate III in Learning an Australian First Nations Language and the Certificate IV in Teaching an Australian First Nations Language. Phase one of the program, designing the course materials, was due for completion at the end of December 2023. Phase two of the work has commenced and will include consultation and a co-design process with TAFEs, individual Koorie Units, Wurreker Brokers, Traditional Owner Groups and community groups for successful attraction of students and course delivery. |
| <p>Department of Government Services</p> | |
| <p>Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026 (VALGS)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VALGS Working Group met in November 2023, during which the Working Group agreed to focus on cultural competency and community sentiment as priority actions. • DGS is prioritising work with Reconciliation Victoria, in partnership with Working Group organisations, to survey councils to assess their awareness of VALGS and build base-line data to form the basis for monitoring VALGS implementation. The Working Group is also considering the development of an evaluation/performance framework for VALGS. |

Table C

Priority Reform Three – Transforming government organisations

National Agreement Clause 59:

- a. Identify and eliminate racism
- b. Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety
- c. Deliver services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people
- d. Increase accountability through transparent funding allocations
- e. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- f. Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

| Action | Key achievements in 2023 |
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| Department of Premier and Cabinet – Whole of Government | |
| Establish an Anti-Racism Taskforce which will identify and eliminate racism through a state-wide Anti-Racism Strategy (Strategy). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Anti-Racism Taskforce continues to provide expert advice on the development of the Strategy. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria was appointed as an ex-officio member to the Taskforce in March 2023. The Taskforce last provided feedback on the draft Strategy in September 2023. • Consultations to inform the development of the Strategy have included First Peoples and multicultural communities, representatives and Government stakeholders. The Strategy’s most recent Interdepartmental Committee meeting occurred in September 2023. • In mid-2023, the former Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Treaty and First Peoples wrote to all ministers to seek proposed actions from their portfolios to support the strategy. • The Anti-Racism Strategy continues to be under development with a planned launch in 2024. |
| Self-Determination Reform Framework (SDRF) Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPC coordinates reporting on whole of government SDRF action and commitments each year. Within DPC, all parts of the department are supported to embed self-determination principles and enablers into core policies, programs, business processes and delivery systems. • DPC has collected quarterly updates from each of DPC’s seven groups, including new bold and ambitious 2023 commitments developed with a focus on ensuring DPC is Treaty ready. • DPC has made modest progress under the SDRF in 2023, and continued reporting is required to ensure SDRF commitments reflect transformative change. |
| Establishment of the Yoorrook Truth and Justice Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023, the Victorian Government progressed implementing the two recommendations from the Commission’s first interim report, <i>Yoorrook for Purpose</i>. In response to Recommendation 1, in April 2023, the Victorian Government granted a 12-month extension to the Commission from June 2024 to June 2025. The Victorian Government is progressing a reform proposal to address Recommendation 2 which seeks to uphold the choices of First Peoples providing evidence to the Commission about how their information will be stored, accessed and used in the future. • In mid-2023, the Commission delivered its second interim report, <i>Yoorrook for Justice</i>, on the inquiry into the Victorian child protection and criminal justice systems. The Victorian Government developed a response to this report which was released on 3 April 2024. The response accepts 28 of the 46 recommendations either in full or in principle. The Victorian Government will further consider 15 recommendations. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the Commission’s inquiries into land and social injustices affecting First Peoples in Victoria, the Victorian Government responded to Notices to Produce and has provided extensive information to support hearings scheduled from March to June 2024. |
| Department of Treasury and Finance | |
| DTF is working to ensure its priorities under the Treasurer portfolio are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal Victorians. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTF is working to ensure new Early Intervention Investment Framework (EIIF) programs are effective and culturally safe for Aboriginal staff and clients. DTF is developing a cultural safety framework with VACCA to facilitate greater collaborative design between departments and service providers for new EIIF budget proposals. The Side by Side Partnership Addressing Disadvantage also works with VACCA, who play a key role in ensuring that supports provided to schools and families will be trauma-informed and culturally sensitive. DTF continues to apply cultural safety and self-determination principles to the budget process. Guidance was also provided to budget analysts to assist with analysing whether proposals for the 2023-24 State Budget were aligned with Victoria’s commitments to advancing self-determination. Resources are available to all DTF employees to support cultural safety, including an Aboriginal Cultural Capability Toolkit, Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal Employment and Inclusion Plan. Aboriginal cultural awareness training continues to be made available to DTF employees as part of DTF’s Aboriginal Employment and Inclusion Action Plan, supporting efforts to identify and eliminate racism. |
| Department of Education | |
| Employment and support of the Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DE employs a statewide Koorie Education Workforce (KEW) comprising over 140 Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) and Koorie Education Coordinators (KECs). The KEW supports schools in providing an inclusive environment for Koorie students, building local partnerships with Koorie communities, engaging with parents and families, and supporting Koorie learners to excel in their education. DE supports the professional learning and networking needs of the KEW through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Koorie Staff Network: A peer-led network that connects and supports First Peoples education staff by promoting Aboriginal inclusion and contributing to the department’s culturally safe work environment. Koorie Conversation Conference – the 2023 KCC had record engagement with over 142 KEW members attending (of approximately 144 total). The program is designed by a reference group comprising KEW members to meet the workforce’s self-identified professional and personal development needs. |
| Provision of anti-racism professional learning for department and education staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DE provides anti-racism training and professional learning opportunities to raise staff awareness about the impacts of racism and how to address racism in their school/work unit, including building effective bystander skills. In 2023 this included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-racism workshops: for Victorian Government school leaders facilitated by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, including Culturally Sustaining Schools and Schools Standing Up to Racism. An eLearning course: for corporate and school staff, hosted by the Australian Human Rights Commission. An online half-day anti-racism training pilot program for corporate and school-based staff delivered by Kind Enterprises in 2023 From 2020 to 2023, the department implemented a suite of training to boost Aboriginal cultural competency among corporate staff. This training was delivered by the Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT) and customised to the department’s context. Corporate staff can assess both Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training and Cultural Safety Training. The Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training program supports participants in understanding their own cultural safety proficiency journey and covers practices that staff can adopt to lead in promoting cultural safety in their teams and workplaces. In 2023, DE added new questions to the Attitudes to School Survey about student experiences of racism. This will support the department to better understand the extent of students’ experiences of racism and inform actions to eliminate racism in the system. |
| Adherence to Child Safe Standard One | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are required to comply with all Child Safe Standards including Child Safe Standard 1 (CSS1), which requires, “Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued”. This standard came into force from 1 July 2022 and applies to all schools, even if there are no students enrolled at the school who identify as Aboriginal. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must, at minimum, develop and maintain a publicly available policy or statement that describes what the school is doing to create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal students and their families. Schools are assessed on their compliance with CSS1 against two main sub-requirements: cultural safety and preventing racism. • The department has developed guidance to support schools to comply with CSS1, including highlighting the importance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion ○ Actively addressing racism ○ Partnering with Aboriginal communities ○ Regularly reviewing and assessing how the school supports cultural inclusion ○ Recognising key events and anniversaries • In 2023, 430 out of 532 schools assessed against CSS1 were deemed compliant. This represents 76 per cent compliance, compared 47 per cent compliance in 2022. |
| Rollout of Community Understanding and Safety Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST) program provides professional learning for school staff to increase their understanding of Koorie culture, history, and experiences. The training aims to ensure a strong foundation for culturally inclusive schools and practices, which can positively impact Koorie students' health and wellbeing. Wherever possible, CUST is delivered to schools by Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) in collaboration with a representative of the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. The training is intended delivered to the whole school community, including leadership, teachers, education support staff and the school council. As of end of 2023, school staff at 1,531 of the 1,790 Victorian Government school campuses have undertaken CUST. • In 2023, DE instigated the School-Aboriginal Community Partnerships Projects initiative which provides flexible funding to support local projects that further the learning and realise tangible outcomes from CUST or SDER Campfire Conversations, with a focus on increasing collaboration between schools and their local Aboriginal communities. 88 School-Aboriginal Community Partnership Projects were funded in 2023. • In addition to CUST, the department also delivers a specialist professional learning program for school leaders, Strengthening Professional Capability of Principals in Koorie Education (SPPIKE). To date, 368 educators have participated in SPPIKE across 163 schools. |
| Self-Determination in Education Reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Aboriginal self-determination and strengthening cultural safety is one of five key focus areas of the department's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. • The Self-Determination in Education Reform (SDER) consultation and co-design process was completed in 2023 with a total of over 3,000 people participating in over 180 Campfire Conversations about self-determination in education. These conversations have informed co-designed reform directions to improve learning and wellbeing experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal learners in Victoria. |
| Embedding Koorie perspectives in the curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established in 2023, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures Reference Panel (Reference Panel) is a committee co-chaired by VAEAI and the VCAA that meets regularly to collaborate on curriculum projects from instigation through to completion. The Reference Panel supported the revision of the Victorian Curriculum F-10 version 2.0, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority, and developed recommendations, including supporting the development of professional learning and resources for teachers. • The Koorie Curriculum Clusters Project (pilot) was instigated in 2023 to develop and strengthen teacher confidence and capability in working with their local Aboriginal community to co-design and deliver locally anchored curriculum resources that support the teaching of Aboriginal histories, cultures, and perspectives across the Victorian Curriculum F -10. Phase one of the project saw funding provided to RAPs in selected rural and regional localities to each work with a cluster of three schools to co-design curriculum resources that recognise and celebrate the Aboriginal lands on which the schools are located. |
| Department of Transport and Planning | |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| <p>Increased engagement with Transport and Planning First Peoples Staff Network</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated by DTP, the second annual Transport and Planning Portfolio First Peoples Staff Conference was held in Warrnambool on 29 - 31 March 2023. After a successful inaugural in-person Conference in 2022, the attendance increased at the 2023 Conference by a 75 per cent. The Conference is a key support and retention initiative of the Yani Bangal Careers Strategy and Cultural Safety Framework. It provides DTP's First Peoples staff a chance to connect and participate in cultural and professional development workshops. It also encourages relationship building to enable a peer-to-peer support network. A detailed communique highlighting insights from the Conference has been developed and will play a crucial role in shaping the design of the upcoming Conference scheduled for Quarter 2 of 2024. |
| <p>Advancing Cultural Safety Reforms on the transport and planning networks</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cultural Safety Framework and Action Plan aims to advance the cultural safety of First Peoples who work in or engage with the portfolio, and who use the transport and planning networks. The Framework's vision is for the First Peoples employees and transport users to thrive and feel culturally safe in the environments DTP manages. To achieve this, the Framework will commit the portfolio to actions centred on the four domains consistent with the VAAF and the Plan. The Framework enacts the portfolio's commitment to promoting cultural safety and supporting DTP's strategic goals of thriving places and connected communities. |
| <p>Providing First Peoples staff with appropriate support systems</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In March 2023, DTP commenced a 12-month pilot program with Girraway Ganyi Consultancy, a culturally appropriate Employee Assistance Program. Girraway Ganyi specifically cater for First Peoples employees, managers of First Peoples and employees working on Aboriginal Affairs within Government. Over the pilot period, a series of interactive workshops were scheduled to foster a deeper understanding of First Peoples cultural practices and promote a more inclusive and culturally safe workplace. Workshops were held specifically for First Peoples and their managers following the result of the Voice Referendum. These workshops were designed to provide practical insights into traditional First Peoples customs. They were also designed to provide a platform to facilitate dialogue and engage in meaningful discussions about the significance of cultural diversity and the positive impact in fostering an inclusive workplace culture. |
| <p>Grow and strengthen the First Peoples workforce across the Transport and Planning portfolio through increased access to scholarship programs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, the Yani Bangal First Peoples Scholarships Program (Program) continued to provide financial assistance to First Peoples enrolled in secondary school, TAFE and University in Victoria to complete their education. A key objective of the Program is to provide these students with career opportunities in the portfolio. The Program is funded by entities across the portfolio, contributing \$150,000 per annum shared funding pool. The Program has been extended by three years until 2026, with a significant emphasis on facilitating the transition of recipients into various employment opportunities. The scholarship awards are tiered from \$1,250 to \$15,000 per recipient, per annum. Increasing by 25 per cent for the forecasted additional three years, to account for the rising cost of living in Victoria. Under the program, a total of 65 scholarships have been awarded from 2020 to 2023, comprising of 60 secondary school, 2 TAFE and 5 University scholarships. In 2023, 14 secondary schools and 3 University students received scholarships. |
| <p>Department of Health</p> | |
| <p>Advancing cultural safety reforms, standards and reporting across hospitals and primary providers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-health have produced a cultural safety guide, in conjunction with Professor Richard Frankland and Koorreen Enterprises, titled "Yakeen Tharn (Dreaming Path) Working with First Nations People – A Cross-Cultural Safety Guide". The training is delivered monthly, with new starters completing the training within the first 90 days of commencement in their role. A post training survey is undertaken to confirm and record attendance and a yearly post training quiz is conducted to monitor the impact of the training. The Maternal and Child Health Nursing Scholarship program had a budget of \$670,000 for 2023. This enabled Federation University to support 50 Commonwealth supported places, La Trobe University to support 106 placements, and RMIT University to support 65 Commonwealth supported places this year. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| <p>Implement the Victorian Cultural Safety Framework and embed cultural safety in mainstream health responses with a priority on hospitals and response to public intoxication</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Statement of Priorities, which outlines requirements for all Victorian health services, includes a priority on improving Aboriginal health and wellbeing. From 2023-24, health services are asked to choose from a suite of goals and commit to deliverables under this priority. The Victorian Healthcare Association have been engaged to map cultural safety practice across Victorian health services to inform the delivery of culturally safe models of care, with a focus on Aboriginal patient identification, the role of Aboriginal Health Liaison Officers and discharge planning. Health Service Partnerships are also partnering with local Aboriginal organisations to develop projects across 2023-25 that address the specific needs of Aboriginal communities. • DH is working with six hospitals as part of an Aboriginal Cultural Safety in Hospitals Collaboration, which is focused on finding practical solutions to improve cultural safety in hospitals, with the first focus area being emergency departments. Work to date has included clinical consultations, community consultation and data analysis which will lead to the design and development of bespoke implementation plans that hospitals will implement from 2024. |
| <p>Implementation of the Aboriginal Leadership in Cultural Safety initiative (State Government funded) to support Aboriginal leadership and self-determination to improve the cultural safety of Victorian health services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VACCHO is exploring the feasibility of a cultural safety, and the development of cultural safety resources founded on Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing. • VACCHO has been funded as the Secretariat of the Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnership Forum as well as co-Chairing the Forum with the Minister for Health. |
| <p>Embedding cultural safety in mainstream health responses to public intoxication in alignment with the decriminalisation of public drunkenness reforms</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the new health-led response to public drunkenness, seven of the eight service providers contracted by the DH are ACCOs. • Cohealth is the only public intoxication response service provider that is not an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, providing outreach and sobering up services for anyone who is publicly intoxicated in metropolitan Melbourne. Ngwala Willumbong also provide an Aboriginal-specific outreach and sobering up services in the metropolitan Melbourne. • Service providers are required to ensure staff complete cultural safety training within the first three months of employment. This is mandated in the model of care and confirmed in the Service Framework. All services commissioned for the public intoxication response are contractually required to comply with the service framework per the terms of their agreements with DH. • Cohealth have produced a cultural safety guide, in conjunction with Professor Richard Frankland and Koorreen Enterprises, titled “Yakeen Tharn (Dreaming Path) Working with First Nations People – A Cross-Cultural Safety Guide”. • Cohealth’s cultural safety training is delivered monthly, with new starters completing the training within the first 90 days of commencement in their role. The training areas are summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understanding First Nations Peoples ○ Understanding the Policy and Practice context ○ Towards a deeper understanding of trauma and the need for cultural safety ○ Towards cultural safety • A post training survey is undertaken to confirm understanding, and a yearly post training quiz is conducted to monitor the impact of the training. • The layout and design of the sobering centres has been created with cultural safety in mind and there has been plenty of scope for providers to ensure the internal layout and fixtures are culturally safe. |
| <p>Grow and strengthen the Aboriginal workforce across the health sector through increased access to training through cadetships and scholarship programs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2023, Maternal Child Health Workforce Support Funding was provided to 15 organisations delivering the Victorian Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program across 17 sites. Allocating this funding to Aboriginal MCH sites contributed to the costs associated with workforce support and training, including recruitment and attraction strategies to attract MCH nurses into Aboriginal MCH services. Bursaries of up to \$5000 and Scholarships of up to \$7500 were also available to eligible Aboriginal students studying to become MCH nurses through the annual MCH nursing scholarship program implemented by Federation University, La Trobe University or RMIT University on behalf of the Department of Health. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In August 2023, registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners were authorised to administer vaccinations under instruction from an authorised prescriber, thus increasing their scope of practice in line with other jurisdictions. VACCHO's Registered Training Organisation was funded to provide training in an "Immuniser Program of Study" to existing registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners. |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | |
| Implement improvements to DEECA systems and processes to enable self-determination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, DEECA partnered with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to develop Pupangarli Marnmarnepu 'Owning Our Future' – Aboriginal Self-determination Reform Strategy (2020–2025) DEECA has developed an Implementation Action Plan and undertaken its annual reviews in 2023, which is embedded to support the delivery of Pupangarli Marnmarnepu with all groups across DEECA. A portfolio progress report against Pupangarli Marnmarnepu actions was tabled at the September 2023 Statewide Caring for Country Partnership Forum. DEECA recognises the inter-related nature of the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission and the preparation for and engagement with Victoria's Treaty processes. Through the Commission's recently commenced Land Injustice line of inquiry, DEECA has engaged in responding to Notice to Produce requests, written submissions and Government witness preparations. |
| Incorporate Government response from the First Principles Review for continuous improvement of DEECA engagement with Traditional Owners to enable Self-Determination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In July 2023 an internal audit project examined DEECA's structures and processes for engaging with Traditional Owners, including how DEECA monitors and responds to Traditional Owners' level of satisfaction with DEECA's engagement processes. DEECA is currently working to deliver key actions from audit recommendations. The DEECA Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Community Engagement Framework, developed and launched in November 2019, helps ensure its engagement activities with Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal Community are guided by best practice principles and in a culturally safe and competent manner. The revised Traditional Owner and Aboriginal Community Engagement Framework 2.0 is anticipated to be released in early 2024, subject to endorsement from both the DEECA Executive Board and the TOCC. |
| Include actions towards self-determination in the DEECA Group Business Plans and Executive annual performance plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment towards self-determination is embedded in DEECA business planning, policies, and programs. This includes the One-DEECA Strategic Framework and the recently launched DEECA Corporate Plan 2023-2027, which also sets the expectation that various business areas of DEECA will incorporate self-determination into their business planning processes. Executives (Deputy Secretaries, Executive Directors and Directors) have self-determination actions as Key Performance Indicators in their annual performance plans. |
| Deliver mandatory Cultural Safety Training package to DEECA staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA has prioritised the enhancement of Aboriginal Cultural Capability through targeted actions in Group Pupangarli Marnmarnepu Implementation Action Plans. The focus is on embedding culturally safe practices to create a culturally safe workforce and empowers DEECA staff to participate respectfully, ethically and effectively with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities they serve, and Aboriginal employees at DEECA. Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training sessions continued as a mandatory requirement for all staff, with targeted sessions for managers of Aboriginal staff as a priority. During 2022-23 DEECA delivered 66 Aboriginal Cultural Safety Training workshops to 730 DEECA staff. Traditional Owners and DEECA regions have partnered to deliver ongoing localised Aboriginal Cultural Awareness workshops, supporting staff cultural capability development. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barwon South West Cultural Competency Training in partnership with Wan Yaari Aboriginal Consultancy Service. As of 26 June 2023, 63 staff completed Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training with Wan Yaari with an additional 18 staff contributing to follow-up workshops. 100% of respondents said they would recommend training to others and 94% expressed interest in the follow-up workshop. Gippsland's bespoke two-tiered Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program facilitated both online with Traditional Owners and on Country training to 316 DEECA staff whose work has a footprint in Gippsland. Seven online cultural awareness sessions called 'Deadly 30' were delivered to over 370 DEECA staff on various topics in Grampians and Gippsland regions in 2023. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hume regions newly established cultural awareness training based on the 3-tier system of the DEECA Cultural Capability Framework, which delivered 15 sessions to 185 staff in 2023, with new sessions scheduled for 2024. |
| Identify ways in which Traditional Owner values can be better reflected in DEECA's planning systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022-23, an overall improvement in the positive level of satisfaction of TOCs with the department's progress in enabling self-determination was reported, reaching 60 per cent, up from 50 per cent. • DEECA introduced a new target of 70% Traditional Owner satisfaction with DEECA's progress in enabling self-determination, to come into effect in 2023-2024. This will be measured through an existing annual survey of Traditional Owners and reported through the department objective indicator. The new target is also embedded in DEECA's 2023-2027 Corporate Plan. • A recommendation from DEECA's internal Engagement with Traditional Owners audit released in July 2023, requires Groups to engage with the First People Self Determination Division during business planning processes to determine how to best embed Traditional Owner engagement and priorities into business as usual activity. A new process to embed Traditional Owner engagement and priorities, including Traditional Owner Agreement obligations, as part of the Department's business planning process is under development. |
| Identify the potential DEECA legislative improvements to support the principles of self-determination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEECA is undertaking significant work to deliver on the Government's commitment to renew Victoria's public land legislation, by replacing complex and outdated <i>Crown land Acts (the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, Forests Act 1958 and Land Act 1958)</i> with a <i>new Public Land Act</i> and refine the <i>National Parks Act 1975</i>. This will create a streamlined enabling legislative framework that will advance Traditional Owners' self-determination and enable the Minister and public land managers to protect and enhance the values of public land for the benefit of the community. Proposals are based on direct discussions with Traditional Owner groups, submissions to DEECA, workshops and recommendations of the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy, and ongoing engagement. • DEECA is currently exploring opportunities for legislative reform to remove barriers to self-determination and seeking legal advice on application of <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987</i> as well as considering the <i>Victorian Conservation Act 1972</i> as part of pursuing the development of a cultural covenant. DEECA will engage TOCs in this policy work. |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | |
| Transitioning greater control to Aboriginal Community control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Children in Care transfers decision-making power and responsibility from the DH Secretary to ACCOs relating to Aboriginal children, or their non-Aboriginal sibling, involved with Child Protection and placed on a final protection order. In November 2023, Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative became the third ACCO to become fully authorised under ACAC. • <i>Children and Health Legislation Amendment (Statement of Recognition, Aboriginal Self-Determination and Other Matters) Act 2023</i> (the Act) passed Parliament on 20 June 2023. The Act includes a strengthened legislative framework around binding decision-making principles for Aboriginal children and young people and engagement and participation of the child, family and community. • \$140 million funding committed through 2023-24 State Budget to support continued and expanded Aboriginal led children and families service delivery system in partnership with ACCOs. • Community Protecting Boorais program commenced on 21 October 2023. This Australian first initiative through VACCA and Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative allows authorised ACCOs to undertake investigations of Aboriginal children and young people notified to Child Protection. This embeds ACCO led support for families from first contact with the statutory system. |
| Work undertaken to improve cultural safety of mainstream services including Government departments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Measurement and Assessment Tool to measure the implementation and impact of cultural safety initiatives. A final report that was delivered in April 2023 has informed the development of the Aboriginal Cultural Workplace Measurement Framework. The tool is scheduled for launch in May 2024. • The Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2027 sets goal for DFFH to become an employer of choice for Aboriginal people where culture is prioritised. In 2023, the dedicated Aboriginal Engagement team, People and Culture Branch, implemented new starter check-ins for Aboriginal staff. They provide an opportunity for staff to raise any barriers and support early intervention, support, and retention. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023 DFFH approved the development of an internal Anti-racism Action Plan to be launched in 2024. The plan will focus on actions to address racism in all forms and promote cultural safety within the department. The Community Services and Self-determination Education Series is a tertiary-level Micro-Certificate (MicroCert) program in collaboration with the University of Melbourne to prepare departmental staff in treaty readiness. The program was launched in 2021. Over 450 learners completed one or more MicroCert's in 2023. Development of the child and young person wellbeing and risk guidance and tools is underway, anticipated for finalisation by June 2024. |
| Establishment of Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Branch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencing December 2023, Homes Victoria is bringing together a range of functions and programs to form a newly established Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Branch. These changes will see an increased Aboriginal senior leadership, with the creation of an Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Executive Director function that will support the elevation of the Aboriginal portfolio response to support the delivery of the Closing the Gap priority reform agenda. |
| Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028 Agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalisation and implementation of the Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan, to embed inclusion, access and equity in The Orange Door Network. The Strengthening Cultural Safety in The Orange Door project aims to build culturally safe and responsive services and workplaces for Aboriginal clients and workers in The Orange Door Network. Cultural Safety Project leads continue to be recruited to deliver on the project. Cultural Safety Project Leads have commenced training delivery and cultural safety assessment activities. |
| Implement changes to the eligibility age for the Victorian Seniors Card from 60 to 50. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government is progressing work to reduce the eligibility age of the Victorian Seniors Card for First Peoples residing in Victoria from 60 to 50 years of age. The Victorian Government engaged VACCHO to hold consultations with community about the changes to the eligibility age and to consider how access to cards could be facilitated. The findings of consultations and a proposed implementation plan will be presented to the Aboriginal Strategic Governance Forum Koorie Caucus for consideration in early 2024. |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | |
| Strategies to effect structural transformation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Justice Agreement (Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja): The current and fourth phase of the AJA Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja is being evaluated in 2024. Aboriginal Youth Justice strategy (Wirkara Kulpa): Action to address over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system is being progressed through Wirkara Kulpa (2022-2032), the first Aboriginal youth justice strategy, developed in partnership with the AJC under the umbrella of the AJA. Implementation of Tranche 1 Actions are well underway, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishment of Aboriginal Youth Justice Hubs to provide place-based, Aboriginal-led services to children and young people establishment of Balit Ngulu (an initiative within the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service providing appropriate legal advice and representation to Aboriginal children and young people, as well as diverting Aboriginal children and young people from the justice system and supporting their empowerment and resilience within its service areas) increasing pre-charge diversion and cautioning opportunities; and commencement of case management review panels. DJCS is developing an Intersectionality Strategy that provides an approach to consider issues and actions from an intersectional perspective. |
| Large-scale, independent systemic reviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System: The independent Panel conducting the Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System handed its report to Government in December 2022. A sub-committee of the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Collaborative Working Group (R&R CWG) was established in 2023 to guide and oversee development and implementation of Cultural Review initiatives. The final report of the Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System and the Government's response was released on 24 March 2023. The Review identified significant cultural and safety issues across the corrections system and made 86 recommendations for reform. The government supports the reform directions set out in the Review and acknowledges long-term change will be required to ensure our prisons, people and communities are safe. |

Victorian 2023 Closing the Gap Tables

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, DJCS successfully implemented several Cultural Review reforms in consultation with the Aboriginal community, including providing culturally safe rehabilitation support for Aboriginal women by opening a dedicated Aboriginal Healing Unit at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC); and appointing new health providers in public prisons from 1 July 2023 which provide access to regular Aboriginal health checks, equivalent to those available in the community. Establishment of Truth and Justice Response Unit to support the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission. |
| Development of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training is mandated for all bail justices. This training was delivered in 2018 and again in 2023. The training program was developed and delivered by an Aboriginal consultancy. It will be reviewed to ensure currency and accuracy under the bail laws to come into effect in March 2024. New training has been introduced, such as White Privilege and Acknowledgment of Country programs, and eight-week micro-learning program has been piloted that extends the learnings from the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training. Funding for Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority to develop and deliver cultural awareness training to its staff in 2024. |
| Commencement of the Healthcare Services Quality Framework for Victorian Prisons 2023 on 1 July 2023 with enhanced cultural safety requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Healthcare Services Quality Framework came into effect 1 July 2023 and enables the delivery of reliable, safe and high-quality health services in the Victorian prison system. It does this by articulating the standard of care expected to be delivered by health service providers in prisons and the unique requirements of delivering care in the prison system. The Framework incorporates new cultural safety standards with requirements to engage with local ACCHOs to enhance service delivery and support continuity of care for Aboriginal people leaving custody. On 6 March 2024, the Victorian Ombudsman tabled the 'Investigation into healthcare provision for Aboriginal people in Victorian prisons' report including findings about the Healthcare Services Quality Framework. In submissions to the investigation, VACCHO, VALS and the AJC outlined what is different about the care provided by ACCOs compared to mainstream services. |
| Increased number of Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers across the prison system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 State Budgets increased the number of Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers across the prison system by nine to a total of 27 positions, as well as establishing four Aboriginal Engagement Advisors roles who provide support to Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and build relationships with community organisations. The draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy was presented to the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Collaboratively Working Group on two occasions, which allowed Aboriginal community stakeholders to guide and inform the approach of the Strategy. The final Strategy has been endorsed by the Aboriginal Justice Caucus and Commissioner Victoria in 2024. |
| Strategy for Aboriginal Community-led Emergency Recovery and inclusion of Aboriginal Culture and Healing line of recovery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) has developed the Strategy for Aboriginal Community-led Recovery. This Strategy is ERV's whole-of-agency commitment to embedding Aboriginal self-determination, enabling Aboriginal Victorians as key-decision makers in recovery processes. Emergency Recovery Victoria has included Aboriginal Culture and Healing as a separate line of recovery (alongside the recovery domains of social, economic, built and natural environment). This is in commitment to supporting healing and promoting cultural safety in recovery practices to strengthen recovery outcomes. The release of the Strategy, which was publicly launched on 7 July 2023, is a first of its kind in Australia and is a formative step in transforming systems within emergency management in Victoria (related to recovery) to account for First Peoples in emergency recovery processes. |
| Delivery of the Victims Legal Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victims Legal Service (VSL) commenced service delivery on 14 March 2023 and is delivered in partnership through Aboriginal legal service providers (Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Djirra), Victoria Legal Aid, and community legal centres. The Victims Legal Service supports victims of crime with financial assistance and compensation matters. Cultural safety is a foundational element of the Victims Legal Service. The VSL has inclusive practice standards, including cultural safety standards, which aim to improve cultural safety for both Aboriginal service users and Aboriginal employees working within the VSL. The VSL currently provides legal information and assistance to victims of crime in making financial assistance applications. In 2024, the VSL will be expanded under an Australian Government pilot program to support victim-survivors to protect their confidential communications and to support |

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| | Aboriginal women in reporting sexual offences to police. This part of the pilot will be delivered in partnership through Djirra. The VLS is working towards the pilot being operational by March 2024. |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | |
| Whole-of-department activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for 50 DJSIR staff to undertake the Treaty MicroCert program in 2023 delivered by the University of Melbourne as part of Yuma Yirramboi implementation. • Holding Yarning sessions in 2023 with 174 DJSIR staff in attendance to provide a deeper understanding of the current Treaty landscape in Victoria. • Cultural safety training to staff through the Koorie Heritage Trust. A total of 35 in-person and online training sessions were held, with 350 staff successfully completing the training. • Engagement of VACCHO to deliver 5 cultural safety training sessions in 2023 to enhance staff understanding of how to work effectively with Aboriginal people. • DJSIR's Social Procurement Strategy was updated in 2023. It supports the direct and indirect sourcing of social benefit suppliers, improving social, economic, and environmental outcomes. The strategy prioritises the objectives within the Victorian Government's Social Procurement Framework and applies to all procurement activities undertaken by DJSIR. DJSIR's Social Procurement Strategy priority objectives include supporting opportunities for Aboriginal people. |
| Geelong Aboriginal Employment Action Research report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deakin University is contracted to conduct research in the Geelong region that will inform a culturally safe employment model for Victoria's Aboriginal communities. They will undertake qualitative data research with community members, employers, providers and Government through interviews, yarning circles, focus groups and questionnaires. The aim is to provide a Geelong Aboriginal Employment Action Research report summarising findings, including case studies, strategies for success and recommendations. |
| Aboriginal Business Information on Business Victoria website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Aboriginal Business Support landing page was redesigned in consultation with the Aboriginal Economic Development unit in 2023 and provides information for and about Aboriginal business and business owners in Victoria. |
| National Meeting of Small Business Ministers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of the Minister for Small Business attended a national meeting of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for small business on 6 October 2023. The agenda included a showcase from jurisdictions for Indigenous Business Month. Victoria's presentation highlighted actions under the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy and outcomes under small business portfolio programs. |
| Department of Government Services | |
| The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM)'s Ochre Strategy – For Our Generations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDM is in the final stages of drafting its Ochre Strategy – For Our Generations (2024-2028). This will replace BDM's previous Coolamon Strategy 2017-2021, and builds on the Strong Identity, Strong Spirit program achievements. It will embed principles of self-determination, ensure culturally safe service delivery and increase birth registrations and birth certificate possession for all Aboriginal community members who are born, married or pass in Victoria. |
| The Koorie Records Unit within the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) promotes awareness of Victorian Government records about Aboriginal Victorians within the PROV collection and aims to improve accessibility of these records to First Peoples in appropriate and culturally respectful ways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Koorie Records Unit provides dedicated services and support for First Peoples, including Stolen Generations survivors and their families, wishing to access historic Victorian Government records relating to themselves and their families. This includes a Koorie Reference Service in collaboration with the National Archives of Australia's Victorian office, as Victorian Aboriginal Affairs records are held in both collections. The Koorie Index of Names (KIN) is an ongoing project to index records in the PROV collection to help locate references to Victorian Aboriginal people in archival records relating to family and community. The existing KIN database is no longer fit for purpose and a project to develop a new search interface for KIN is underway. • Descriptive metadata for a number of record series relating to the period of the Aboriginal Protectorate (1838-1949) has recently been added to the PROV online catalogue, increasing accessibility of these records to researchers. • A project has commenced to include and increase the visibility of information for researchers using the PROV collection about cultural sensitivity and re-use of records relating to Aboriginal people in the PROV collection. |

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| <p>Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the Social Procurement Framework.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Victorian Government’s Social Procurement Framework sets out a scalable and consistent whole of government approach to social procurement, applied when government departments and agencies purchase goods, services and construction. • Opportunities for Victorian Aboriginal people is an objective of the Social Procurement Framework, with two outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ purchasing from Victorian Aboriginal businesses; and ○ employment of Victorian Aboriginal people by suppliers to the Victorian Government. • The Victorian Government recently awarded a significant contract to head contractor TVN On-Country, a 70% Indigenous-owned and operated company to construct the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence, a First Nations-led education, sporting and gathering place. This is the largest contract awarded by the Victorian Government to a company owned and operated by Indigenous Victorians. TVN On-Country also partner with Indigenous suppliers and subcontractors to support regional economic growth. |
| <p>Amendments to the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> was amended to explicitly include Traditional Owners as part of the definition of municipal community. • Local Government Victoria is progressing legislative reforms to stamp out inappropriate councillor behaviour and improve overall councillor conduct. These proposed reforms will support more diverse people to nominate for council elections by creating a more positive environment. |

Table D

Priority Reform Four – Shared access to data and information at a regional level

Clause 72 of the National Agreement: Government Parties commit to implementing the data and information elements, including to:

- a. share available, disaggregated regional data and information
- b. establish partnerships to improve collection, access, management and use of data
- c. make data more transparent by telling people what data they have and how it can be accessed
- d. build capacity of organisations and communities to collect and use data.

| Action | Key achievements in 2023 |
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| Department of Premier and Cabinet – Whole of Government | |
| Develop modelling of the trajectories for each socioeconomic target alongside the anticipated year when parity will be achieved. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPC investigated options to develop local modelling of the trajectories for socioeconomic targets. As a starting point, a data profile project was delivered in 2022 to map available data to enhance understanding of the drivers of outcome area 12 (overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system). DPC prepared an analysis of Victoria’s performance when the Productivity Commission periodically released data in 2023 noting that socioeconomic targets are set as ‘national targets’ and require a collaborative approach from all jurisdictions to achieve them. The Productivity Commission commissioned the Australian National University (ANU) Centre for Aboriginal and Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) to undertake a Review of the Methods for Assessing Progress on Closing the Gap in 2023/24. The Review explored three options for calculating adequate state and territory contributions to meeting national targets. Victoria is supporting consideration of recommendations prior to implementation later in 2024. |
| Conduct a mid-term review of the VAAF and VGAAR to ensure alignment with Closing the Gap targets align | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DPC conducted a desktop mid-term review of the VAAF to identify alignment and differences between the VAAF measures and Closing the Gap targets. Some of the data sources for VAAF measures have been substituted or supplemented to address limitations and improve measurement. |
| All departments to negotiate sector wide data access and sharing agreements that prioritise long term investment in ACCO data management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian Government departments have continued to progress work to increase data accessibility including preparing and sharing data packs with respective Aboriginal governance forums and ACCOs. Further work is underway to support and resource ACCOs to build capacity and expertise in data collection, management, and analysis. |
| Establishing formal data sharing partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the 7 June 2023 meeting of Joint Council, Gippsland was endorsed as the Victorian location for a combined Place-based Partnership and Community Data Project. The Department of Premier and Cabinet have been working with Ngaweeyan Maar-oo to establish a working group to further scope the proposal in partnership with local communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in Gippsland. |
| Department of Education | |
| Sharing data about Koorie learners with Koorie stakeholders in education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marrung Project Control Board (PCB) conducts regular deep dives into progress against Marrung actions, reporting to Marrung CGC. The Marrung CGC conducts data-focused meetings once annually. Data is presented and made available to all members, including |

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| | <p>representatives of Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal caucuses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an attendance data collection system for implementation across sessional kindergarten services from 2025 is well progressed. Data will be collated, analysed and shared with service providers including ACCOs to inform ongoing work to improve access and engagement in preschool. • DE is preparing for engagement with the Yoorrook Justice Commission line of inquiry into education in 2024, including responsive and timely data provision. |
| Alignment with Aboriginal Data Sovereignty Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DE is committed to continuing to strengthen alignment with Aboriginal Data Sovereignty principles across the organisation. The department has held several internal workshops to build awareness and capability in Aboriginal data sovereignty, is represented on the Whole of Victorian Government Data Sovereignty Community of Practice and has established an internal DE Data Sovereignty Community of Practice to identify opportunities to strengthen data sovereignty across the system. • DE is moving towards improving data collection using a student-centred model and following the principles of Aboriginal data sovereignty. Opportunities to integrate and privilege Aboriginal narratives and other culturally responsive modes of data are currently being explored. |
| Department of Transport and Planning | |
| Quarterly reporting to Ministers on First Peoples procurement and employment data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTP provides quarterly procurement reports on progress against the Government's commitment to Aboriginal Affairs to ensure that there is accountability for publicly made commitments. Reports are reviewed by the DTP's First Peoples Self Determination Steering Committee. Highlights from these reports include increase in First Peoples board representation, VPS grade, tenure, self-identified and anonymous First Peoples across DTP and its agencies and entities. • The portfolio reports on all procurement engagements with First Peoples businesses under the Social Procurement Framework. This includes direct and indirect employment outcomes and workforce participation on Victorian Major Transport Infrastructure Projects. • DTP has seen yearly growth in expenditure with First Peoples businesses in recent years (shown below) and continue to work to address further First Peoples procurement reform, including the consideration of a policy/strategy for First Peoples Procurement, and the priority consideration of prequalification applications from First Peoples businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 19/20: \$1,489,810 ○ 20/21: \$1,339,300 ○ 21/22: \$2,897,530 ○ 22/23: \$7,877,089. |
| Department of Health | |
| Support VACCHO to deliver a digital transformation of the Victorian Aboriginal health sector including embedding of telehealth, improved client and referral management systems and development of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Information System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DH is supporting VACCHO to deliver the Care on Country pilot, which aims to improve access to culturally safe, specialist outpatient services for Aboriginal people in regional areas. Under the service delivery model, ACCO sites are supported to engage telehealth coordinators to facilitate appointments with health services and to implement ICT upgrades as required. The pilot began in 2023, with participating ACCOs and health services brought on board, and telehealth coordinators engaged. The pilot will continue into 2024, alongside an evaluation to assess the success of the model and opportunities for scaling. |
| The review and refinement of the Koori Maternity Services (KMS) minimum dataset, in partnership with VACCHO and the KMS workforce, will include the establishment of an agreed format and processes for data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of the Koori Maternity Services (KMS) minimum dataset, in partnership with VACCHO and the KMS workforce is currently underway and expected to be completed by mid-2024. All Aboriginal Maternal Child Health services delivering services to clients are now able to use the Child Development Information System to record their consultation and client data. These records are part of the single state-wide client database, providing improved continuity of care and reducing duplication of records. |

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| reports back to KMS providers (health services and ACCOs) | |
| Strengthened data monitoring of Statewide Aboriginal cancer screening participation through the Victorian Cancer Screening Data Monitoring Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the Victorian Cancer Screening Framework (2022-26) Screening partners embed Data Sovereignty as an important aspect of Aboriginal Self-Determination and promote Aboriginal control of data, including how data is used and its place in storytelling, at every opportunity. In 2023-24, VACCHO have received funding from DH to lead a project to implement Indigenous Data Sovereignty Readiness Assessment and Evaluation toolkit to support data governance practices for cancer screening. |
| Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | |
| Explore what Indigenous Data Sovereignty, as committed to in the Government's Self-Determination Reform Framework, means to Traditional Owners within Victoria in relation to DEECA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEECA is amending processes to provide Traditional Owners with access to information on the State's land and waters through a new Pathway to Indigenous Data Sovereignty Policy. DEECA has reframed how it uses Indigenous Data and the organisation understands that this is a key step to shifting the power imbalance, genuinely enabling self-determination, and aligning with the expectations of Traditional Owners that the information about them rightfully belongs to them. DEECA Executive Board endorsed the Pathway towards Indigenous Data Sovereignty Policy (Pathway) in July 2023. The implementation of the Pathway has now commenced, which will include the integration of data sovereignty into Aboriginal Cultural Capability training for DEECA staff. |
| Department of Families, Fairness and Housing | |
| Establishing formal data sharing partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key comprehensive data is shared through the ACF and its recently established data working group, to better inform decision-making and priorities. Data sharing processes with ACCOs to ensure local utilisation and appropriateness are being established. |
| Increase access and ownership of Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced data sharing process through the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum. This offers access to specific Aboriginal housing and homelessness data to support the implementation approach of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework. Data is provided at a local and statewide level to support the identification of data trends and local needs. Work is underway to refine the data produced to inform the broader Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework implementation. Homes Victoria is sharing the data provided to the AHFH to the various Aboriginal governance groups. DFFH is developing a shared approach for all relevant Aboriginal governance mechanisms across DFFH/DH. This work enables the various ways in which Aboriginal data sovereignty principles can be applied to governance and management of DFFH/DH associated Aboriginal partnership forums and related groups. |
| Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028 Agreement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Safety Victoria provided an update to the Dhelk Dja Data Pack to Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum in July 2023. The next Dhelk Dja Data Pack will be brought in 2024 and will include several enhancements. The Dhelk Dja Action Group Data Sharing Project commenced in July 2023. The project is piloting a method to address ongoing family violence data needs for Dhelk Dja Action Groups. |
| Department of Justice and Community Safety | |
| Continued monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of AJA4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AJA4 outlines a range of measures and indicators developed by the AJF, and expectations for the monitoring and evaluation of commitments and principles under the Agreement. This contributes to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of AJA4 and provides AJA partners with information on progress, strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned. All actions under the AJA must be presented to the Aboriginal Justice Caucus before it can be marked as 'completed'. |

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| <p>Regional data sharing through AJF papers, Collaborative Working Groups or regional level frameworks and initiatives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At AJFs 64, 65 and 66 March, July and October 2023, the following data was provided as standing updates, and was distributed across the Forum’s membership and regional networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corrections Victoria - Complaints of Alleged Mistreatment, Leave Permits, Use of Oleoresin Capsicum Spray ○ Corrections Victoria - Incarceration and Self Harm Incidents – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples ○ Victoria Police - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Complaints and Allegations Data ○ Youth Justice comprehensive data pack - including Trend Analysis, Female Data, Complaints and Program Data. • Additionally, a yearly data pack is prepared and provided to AJF that outlines trend data and profile information on Aboriginal people in prison and under supervision of Community Correctional Services as at 30 June each year. • In 2023, program data was also shared at each R&R CWG to demonstrate the volume of work that continues to occur at an operational level. The paper focus on three main areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health initiatives (the number of people accessing Aboriginal health checks and culturally appropriate, holistic health care in prisons) ○ Remand and Short Sentence initiatives (the number of people involved in programs) ○ Program and Transition initiatives (the number of people involved in programs). • One of the main functions of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (RAJAC) network is to bring community and Government together in collaboration at a regional level to share information, data, emerging trends, issues and solutions. RAJAC members use their knowledge of issues in their region to advocate for program and service changes, provide advice and expertise in the development and implementation of place-based initiatives, and to ensure systemic issues are identified and responded to. Four RAJAC meetings for each nine regions were held throughout 2023. • Community Correctional Services General Managers, Prison General Managers and the Commissioner for Youth Justice attended RAJAC meetings throughout 2023 and shared regional data with the committees. |
| <p>Crime Statistics Agency’s Aboriginal Data Indicators</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July 2023, DJCS developed a set of interactive data visualisations for key Aboriginal Justice Indicators. The Aboriginal Justice Indicators were identified through consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders and contain information relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their interactions with Victoria Police, including data on alleged offenders, victims of crime, and parties involved in family violence incidents. • The Crime Statistics Agency has developed an expanded set of statistics related to First Peoples in Corrections Victoria custody that will be released to the public for the first time in early 2024. This will improve transparency and accessibility of these statistics. These statistics will be published monthly ongoing. |
| <p>Contribution to national deaths in custody dashboard and implementing additional information sharing step</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023, the Commonwealth Attorney-General wrote to all states and territories requesting agreement to expedite reporting processes of Aboriginal deaths in custody. • Victoria’s communication protocol for deaths in custody includes the next of kin, followed by the Co-Chairs of the AJC. This protocol effectively delivers real-time information sharing with the family and Aboriginal community. • In 2023, Victoria honoured its commitment to further expedite reporting and implemented an additional information-sharing step. After family and community are notified, Victorian authorities email the Australian Institute of Criminology directly with the deceased’s information, including Indigenous status, so this can be published. • Information is de-identified when published. There are caveats to ensure users understand that data may be subject to change, depending on matters such as confirmation of Indigenous status and Coroner’s findings on whether death was ‘in custody’. |
| <p>Running of MARAM In-Focus Skills Workshops to provide practical skills and knowledge focusing on using the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Child Information Sharing Scheme</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MARAM In-Focus Skills Workshops: Young people and Family Violence was designed to provide MARAM aligned capability uplift for all youth justice organisations funded by DJCS. Representatives from 13 ACCOs were invited to the workshops, including Dardi Munwurro, VACCA, and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Limited. • The workshop was piloted in August 2023, and ran fortnightly through October to mid-November. In total 140 staff from youth justice funded organisations completed the workshop. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The workshop provided practical skills and knowledge focusing on using the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Child Information Sharing Scheme and exploring safe, sensitive and respectful engagement with young people using and experiencing family violence. |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | |
| Data sharing with the Yuma Yirramboi Koori Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, DJSIR shared Jobs Victoria data regarding the impact and effectiveness of employment services for Aboriginal Victorians with the Yuma Yirramboi Koori Council. |
| In partnership with VAEAI, DJSIR undertook extensive consultations with Indigenous leaders across Victoria's TAFE network to discuss the trends and qualitative factors underpinning First Nations participation and engagement in Vocational Education and Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation sessions with Indigenous leaders across Victoria's TAFE network, held across May 2023, were underpinned by key participation and enrolment, student outcomes, preferred courses, location and gender data and insights. |
| Department of Government Services | |
| Victorian participation in the second National Data Sharing Work Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DGS coordinated Victorian participation in the second National Data Sharing Work Program (Nov 2022 – June 2023) under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing, which included an item on the National Agreement. |
| Enhance data development and sharing across Government on community infrastructure provision in discrete indigenous communities to support target 9b of the National Agreement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DGS worked in partnership with DEECA, and DPC to support data development and sharing across government on community infrastructure provision in discrete indigenous communities to support target 9b of the National Agreement. The project team, comprised of Commonwealth, state and territory governments and Coalition Peaks representatives, developed a list of indicators to underpin reporting against electricity and drinking water services. The project team then developed a data discovery template for the indicators, based on the Office of the National Data Commissioner's foundational metadata attributes, to assist jurisdictions find relevant data assets and assess suitability. |
| Maggolee website, developed by Reconciliation Victoria, is a resource for local councils to work more closely with Aboriginal communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site includes information on policy and programs, protocols and cultural awareness, key contacts, relevant local data, news and events. Reconciliation Victoria held a Maggolee self-determination awards ceremony on 27 May 2023. |