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## PLAN





*There needs to be opportunities  
for everyone to have their voices  
heard and be listened to.*

Community forum participant, Geelong

# The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023

The goals, objectives, measures and self-determination guiding principles and actions within the VAAF set a clear direction for how government will **'Plan'**, **'Act'**, **'Measure'** and **'Evaluate'** to progress change across government, address inequity and deliver stronger outcomes for and with Aboriginal Victorians.

## Our purpose

The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (the VAAF) provides an ambitious and forward-looking agenda for Aboriginal affairs. The VAAF has two key purposes:

1. It is the Victorian Government's overarching framework for working with Aboriginal Victorians, organisations and the wider community to drive action and improve outcomes.
2. It sets out whole of government self-determination enablers and principles, and commits government to significant structural and systemic transformation.

Since 2006, Victoria has implemented whole-of-government frameworks to address the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

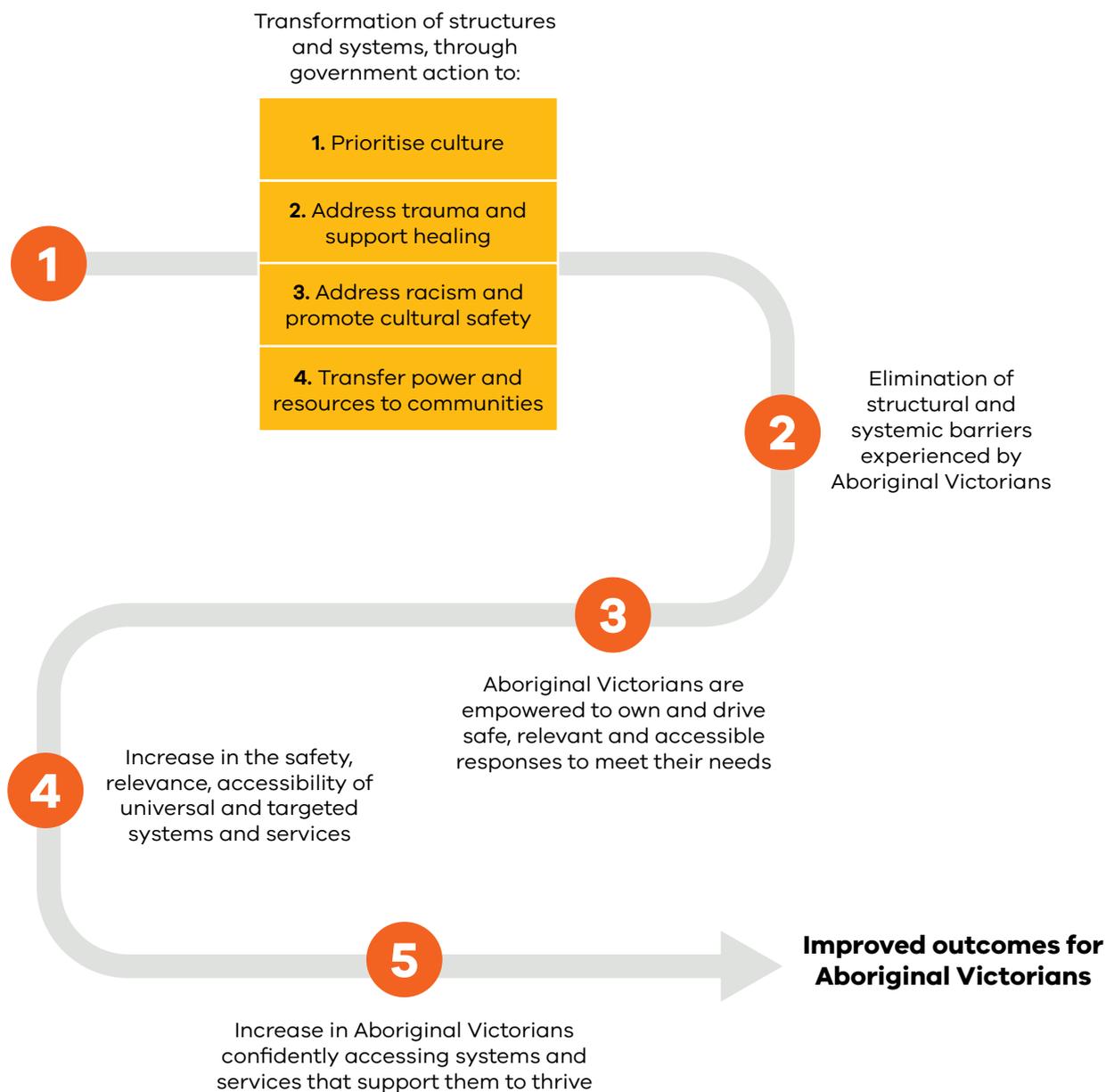
Victorians. This has included the national Closing the Gap agenda since its commencement in 2008. These frameworks have reflected the Victorian context, including the unique voices, strength, resilience and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Past government reporting in Aboriginal affairs focused on 'how Aboriginal people are faring'. While this VAAF still has a focus on measuring improvements in people's lives, it has transitioned to a new approach that enables community to hold government to account. The VAAF recognises that to achieve positive outcomes, we must fundamentally change the way governments work with Aboriginal people.

*All community should have a voice: children, young people, Elders.*

Community forum participant, Robinvale

## VAAF action logic



## Our shared vision

Our shared vision is that: 'All Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives.'

There has been significant investment and policy development contributing to strengthened cultural, economic, political and social outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Despite these efforts, much more needs to be done.

This vision acknowledges that Aboriginal aspiration extends *beyond* closing the gap towards long-term generational change and improved outcomes for all Victorian Aboriginal people, families and communities. It reflects our move away from just measuring life expectancy towards what Aboriginal people *expect* out of life.

We know that Aboriginal people know what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. Self-determination is the human right that underpins this vision and our collective efforts under the VAAF.

*Self-determination makes you feel like you should be happy, safe and content to live where you want. For you to have access and be treated equitably, but also for your mob too.*

Community forum participant, Lakes Entrance



## Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

**Our shared vision:** 'All Aboriginal Victorian people, families and communities are healthy, safe, resilient, thriving and living culturally rich lives.'

### Self-determination enablers: What we'll do

- Prioritise culture
- Address trauma and support healing
- Address racism and promote cultural safety
- Transfer power and resources to communities

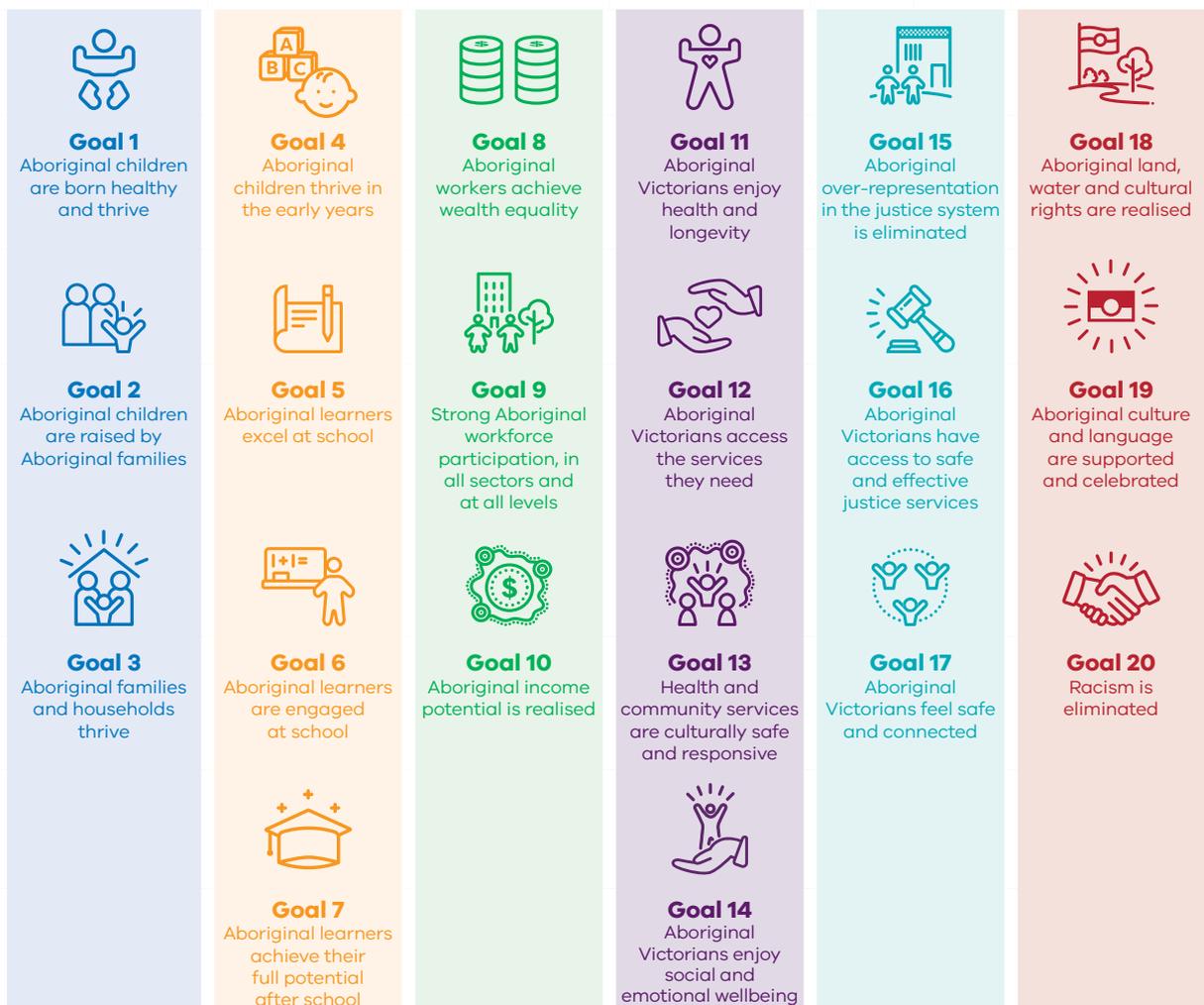
### Self-determination guiding principles: How we'll do it

- Human rights
- Cultural integrity
- Commitment
- Aboriginal expertise
- Partnership
- Investment
- Decision-making
- Empowerment
- Cultural safety
- Equity
- Accountability

### Domains



### Goals



## The journey so far

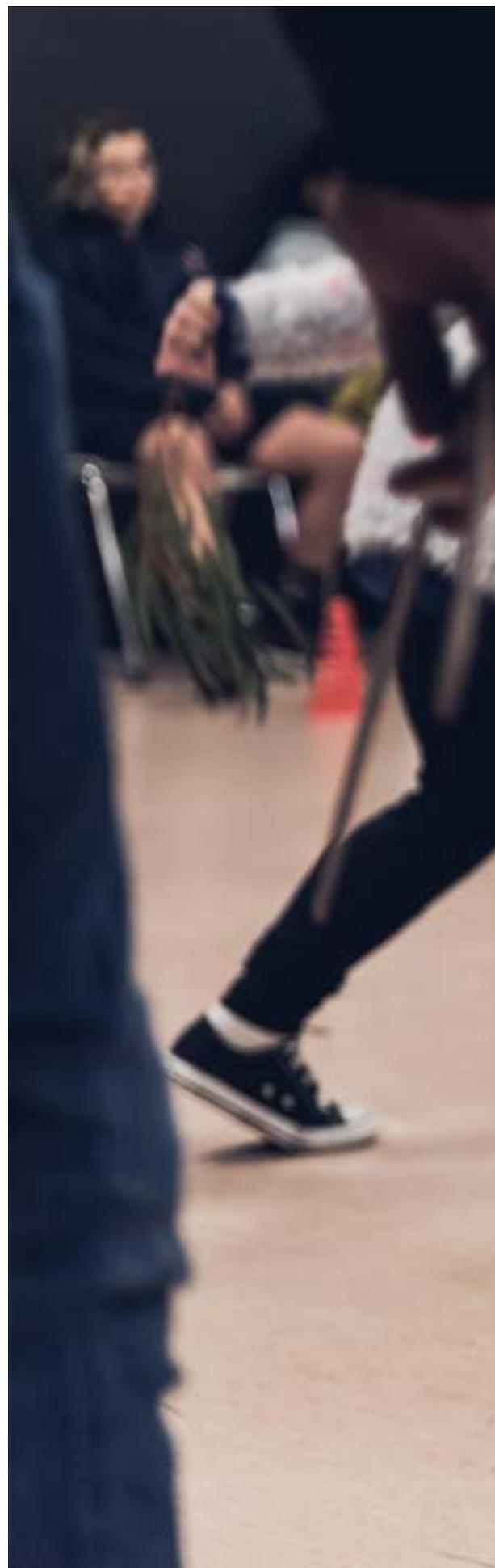
Victoria is leading the way on self-determination by ensuring Aboriginal Victorians are at the heart of decision-making on the matters that affect their lives.

2018 marked ten years since the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments signed the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap). The Victorian Government has undertaken extensive community engagement across the state to understand community perspectives on the previous national Closing the Gap agenda and the VAAF to ensure that Victoria's approach reflects Aboriginal voices.

More than 600 Aboriginal Victorians shared their wisdom and expertise on what the VAAF should look like. Open community forums and workshops were held throughout 2018 in 20 metro and regional communities across six regions: Loddon Mallee, Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume and Melbourne.

We heard from Elders, community members, Aboriginal organisations, mainstream services and government representatives. Conversations were held in a range of settings, including Aboriginal co-operatives, gathering places, community halls, sporting clubs and health services. There was a diversity of voices and experiences within the communities we visited, as well as common themes and aspirations. A summary of the community engagement activities can be found at *Appendix 1*.

In addition to the perspectives and voices of Aboriginal Victorians heard through community engagement, the VAAF builds on the reform and advocacy that has occurred in Aboriginal affairs and the contributions of generations of Victorian Aboriginal leaders.





*The government needs to be accountable to respecting and really listening and tuning into what the options are.*

Community forum participant,  
Lakes Entrance

# Some of the key milestones in Aboriginal affairs since 2006



## March 2015

The Victorian Government commits to **self-determination** as the new policy framework to guide Aboriginal affairs in Victoria.

## June 2016

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak representative organisations from across Australia release the **Redfern Statement**, calling for a more just approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and for the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to address unacceptable disadvantage experienced by First Peoples.

## 2018

COAG agrees to launch a **refresh of Closing the Gap** and considers new national targets.

**Victoria undertakes wide community engagement on the VAAF** responding to the call from Aboriginal Victorians to further embed self-determination within policy design and promote community-led priority setting.

## May 2016

The call for treaty by Aboriginal Victorians is heard. The Victorian Government holds the **first Victorian Treaty Forum** to bring together Victoria's Aboriginal communities and discuss how to advance self-determination, a treaty and an Aboriginal representative body.



## May 2017

The **Uluru Statement from the Heart**, released by delegates of the First Nations National Constitutional Convention, calls for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Australian Constitution, and a Makarrata Commission to supervise an agreement making and truth-telling process between governments and First Nations.



## 2018

The **Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission** is established to strengthen independence for Aboriginal Victorians on the pathway to treaty and ensure they remain at the heart of the process. In June 2018, **Victoria passes Australia's first treaty legislation**. The *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* requires government to work with the Aboriginal Representative Body to establish the entities, rules and resource base necessary to support future treaty negotiations.



## The VAAF complements existing strategies

Aboriginal communities and organisations are working in partnership with government to embed self-determination and improve outcomes across a range of government policies, strategies and reforms.

Across Victoria, there are many community-led and culturally responsive initiatives and strategies underway that embed Aboriginal self-determination, and strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal organisations, mainstream organisations and government.

These strategies are about advancing Aboriginal self-determination and ensuring the voices of Aboriginal Victorians are at the heart of decision-making across policies, programs and practices throughout our state.

### The VAAF links existing strategies

Rather than replacing or redirecting existing strategies, the VAAF provides the overarching whole-of-government framework to link this work. The VAAF acknowledges, aligns with and champions these existing initiatives and strategies.

As the overarching framework for Aboriginal affairs, the VAAF provides broad accountabilities for all areas of government, and provides a consistent foundation that complements the objectives and outcomes of existing strategies.

While existing strategies may have more detailed goals and specific targets related to their individual areas of accountability, the VAAF includes broad aspirational goals and directions that work towards achieving equity of outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

### The VAAF allows us to monitor progress and challenges across all areas of life

There are many different and complex factors that affect the lives of Aboriginal Victorians. These factors don't exist in isolation – the realities and outcomes experienced in one part of a person's life and identity influence the outcomes experienced in other aspects of their life.

The VAAF, and the Victorian Government, acknowledges the inter-relationship between outcomes, and sets goals and objectives across all areas of life. The VAAF also allows us to critically assess the diverse social structures and policies in place as well as the accessibility of services, acknowledging their impact on outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Reporting against each of the VAAF's goals and objectives will, over time, give us a clearer picture of the progress government and community are making in partnership across all areas of life for Aboriginal Victorians, as well as the challenges we still need to address.



**The VAAF's relationship with existing strategies**

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023					
<p><b>1. Children, family &amp; home</b></p>	<p><b>2. Learning &amp; skills</b></p>	<p><b>3. Opportunity &amp; prosperity</b></p>	<p><b>4. Health &amp; wellbeing</b></p>	<p><b>5. Justice &amp; safety</b></p>	<p><b>6. Culture &amp; Country</b></p>
<p>Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children</p> <hr/> <p>Wungurilwil Gaggapduir: Aboriginal Children and Families Agreement</p> <hr/> <p>Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement 2018-2028, Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families</p>	<p>Education State Reform Agenda</p> <hr/> <p>Marrung: Aboriginal Education Plan 2016-2026</p> <hr/> <p>Early Childhood Reform Plan</p> <hr/> <p>Education State schools initiatives</p> <hr/> <p>Skills First</p>	<p>Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy 2013-2020</p> <hr/> <p>Tharamba Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-2021</p>	<p>Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal Health, Wellbeing and Safety Strategic Plan 2017-2027</p> <hr/> <p>Balit Murrup: Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework 2017-2027</p> <hr/> <p>Absolutely Everyone: State Disability Plan 2017-2020</p>	<p>Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja: Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement – Phase 4</p>	<p>Safer Together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria</p> <hr/> <p>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Aboriginal Heritage Amendment Act 2016</p> <hr/> <p>Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010</p> <hr/> <p>Water for Victoria</p> <hr/> <p>Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018*</p>

\*The Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018 relates to all domain areas.