The shield is the central image of the design which is symbolic of the strength and pride the Victorian Government shares with its community about the unique cultural heritage of Indigenous Victoria.

The design inside the shield displays the crossing of paths, representative of the Victorian Government and the Indigenous people of Victoria working together to improve the quality of life for all Indigenous Victorians.

The pathways leading from the shield symbolise all the pathways reaching out to the Victorian community with the orange pathways being the more populated areas, while the dotted pathways lead to our more remote communities within Victoria. As all pathways lead back to the shield, this displays the fact the Victorian Government is coming together as one with the community.
Throughout this Report, the term “Indigenous” is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms “Aboriginal”, “Koori” and “Koorie” are retained in the names of programs and initiatives, and, unless noted otherwise, are inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Last year over 1,200 Indigenous babies were born in Victoria. Their journey into adulthood will certainly have its challenges, as we are still working towards our goal of closing the considerable gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous Australians. What this 2008-09 Indigenous Affairs Report makes clear, however, is that these children, and those born after, will be making this journey with much more support and opportunity than ever before.

From the expansion of maternity services targeting Indigenous mothers and children; through the Wannik Koorie Education Strategy being implemented in schools; to work underway to identify better economic opportunities for Indigenous Victorians; through continued initiatives to reduce Indigenous numbers in the justice system; to Victoria’s new Native Title Settlement Framework; and the final roll out of the Local Indigenous Networks – we are making progress.

In some areas, in fact, we are seeing rapid change – the provision of free kindergarten access for Indigenous 3 year old children having resulted in the number of Indigenous children in kindergarten increasing from 84 in 2008 to 197 in 2009. This is a crucial step forward, given that research confirms that children from disadvantaged backgrounds gain so much from early childhood education and development. By participating in kindergarten, they are not only more likely to be ‘school ready’, complete Year 12, and gain meaningful employment; but less likely to be in contact with the criminal justice system and, instead, lead safe and fulfilling lives.
There are, of course, other areas in which the rate of progress has not been as rapid; while a small number remain of concern and are receiving particular attention. Clearly, there is more work to be done and, in some areas, it will take a generation to close the gap in outcomes. This Report, however, sets out aspirational targets that we aim to achieve by 2013, 2018 and 2023 — targets based on the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework and which reflect the long term commitment that is necessary for this generational change to occur. The new COAG national partnerships, which the framework predated, are also helping to accelerate the pace of Victorian reform.

This Report confirms that a solid start has been made, with equally solid objectives in our sights. Trends against the majority of targets adopted are heading in the right direction and the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs will continue to keep up the momentum during 2009-10.

It is up to all Victorians, however, to help provide the opportunity for current and future Indigenous generations. An equally vital part of the Government’s task, then, is to educate and inform — to urge every health professional, teacher, or employer that Indigenous children encounter in their lifetime to respect Indigenous culture and the resilience of Indigenous people; to develop a better understanding of the factors that contribute to Indigenous disadvantage; to help each Indigenous child build a foundation that will equip them for life.

The Hon Rob Hulls MP
Deputy Premier
Chair, Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs
In 2006, the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (VIAF) outlined for the first time priority areas that would have the greatest impact on closing the gap in life expectancy and other inequalities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians.

This Report is an important checkpoint on the current performance against each indicator and progress towards the goal of equality.

I am pleased to report advancement in most of the measures we have put in place. I am confident that, with continued hard work, together with Indigenous Victorians, the gaps across all measures will be closed over time.

The Report highlights action taken to ensure quality early childhood and education for Indigenous children and young people through initiatives such as Dardee Boorai and Wannik, the Koorie Education Strategy.

Critical to closing the gap is tapping into the resourcefulness of Victoria’s Indigenous people. Together, Government and community can build on existing strengths to create a better future.

Over the past year, I have travelled around Victoria and witnessed positive action taking place, such as:

- the Deadly in Gippsland conference, where I was impressed with the motivation and commitment of Local Indigenous Network members from across Gippsland, and the support of the Bass Coast Shire and the Gippsland Regional Management Forum; and
- Charcoal Lane, a social enterprise with Mission Australia providing training programs, employment pathways for Indigenous and disadvantaged young people.
The 38 Local Indigenous Networks across the State are a successful initiative. The Networks provide opportunities for all Indigenous people to have a say on issues, big and small, that are of concern to themselves, their children and families. Over 1000 people are already involved, creating a momentum for all of us to turn disadvantage into opportunity, and possibility into reality.

Progress in Victoria also relies on the good work of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in areas as diverse as maternity and early childhood development, heritage and Native Title, health, welfare, education, training, housing, justice, family violence, and employment. Victoria has a well developed and committed Indigenous community service sector.

Victoria has the world’s oldest living culture and we are committed to build on this resilience and continue to strengthen Victoria’s vibrant and dynamic Indigenous communities.

The Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the lives of Indigenous Victorians.

In October 2006, the Victorian Government released the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (VIAF) to underpin and define efforts across government and the community to raise life expectancy and quality of life for Indigenous Victorians.

The VIAF identified three areas where sustainable, long-term improvements were required:
- safe, healthy and supportive family environments with strong communities and cultural identity
- positive child development and prevention of violence, crime and self-harm
- improved wealth creation and economic sustainability for individuals, families and communities.

The VIAF further specifies the following Strategic Areas for Action:
1. Improve maternal health and early childhood health and development
2. Improve literacy and numeracy
3. Improve Year 12 completion or equivalent qualification and develop pathways to employment, further education and training
4. Prevent family violence and improve justice outcomes
5. Improve economic development, settle native title claims and address land access issues

Each Strategic Area for Action contains indicators against which progress is measured. The 23 indicators have been selected as valid markers to longer term change to improve the lives of Indigenous Victorians.

The Strategic Areas for Action and indicators are monitored through the Performance Management Framework.

The Performance Management Framework supports and guides development, implementation and review of the Strategic Areas for Action and progress to achieve the goal and priority outcomes of the VIAF. It also supports departments and agencies to develop a better understanding of the interactions underlying Indigenous disadvantage and identifying the interconnectivity between the VIAF initiatives.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This Report details key actions taken by the Victorian Government in 2008-09 financial year and measures performance against all of the 23 indicators.

The Report includes a demographic profile of Victoria’s Indigenous community, Indigenous governance arrangements and highlights the key partnership arrangements between individual departments and Indigenous communities. The Report highlights the alignment between Council of Australian Governments objectives and the outcomes sought by the VIAF.

A feature of this year’s Report is a focus on a particular area of the VIAF – Early Childhood Development and Education. The early years and schooling experience are vital to improving the life prospects of all children and young people. Improving the educational outcomes for Indigenous young people is essential to breaking the cycle of disadvantage.
Major achievements during the year have included:

- The Premier signed a ‘Statement of Intent’ to reduce the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians by 2030.
- The Deputy Premier announced the new Victorian Native Title Settlement Framework would become the preferred method for negotiating native title settlements in Victoria, subject to Commonwealth funding.
- The Victorian Native Title Settlement Framework sets out policy parameters for state negotiations with Traditional Owners. It will result in a quicker resolution of claims, stronger partnerships with Indigenous Victorians and better outcomes including increased economic opportunities.
- 24 young Indigenous students were awarded $5,000 Wannik Education Scholarships to support them to complete their VCE or equivalent.
- From January 2009, up to 10 hours per week of kindergarten is free for all Indigenous 3 and 4 year old children.

- The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council appointed three new Registered Aboriginal Parties:
  - Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc (appointed 22 August 2008)
  - Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (appointed 19 September 2008)
  - Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (appointed 21 May 2009)

The VIAF Strategic Areas for Action run across multiple areas of Government and in 2008-09, the major components of this whole-of-government work included:

- The State Services Authority produced the Indigenous Public Sector Employment Strategy. This strategy outlines actions to increase the number of Indigenous public sector employees.
- Delivery of the 2008 Indigenous Statewide Forum in October.
2008-09 STATE BUDGET

Accelerating literacy and numeracy programs and providing individual education plans were key initiatives in the 2008-09 State Budget.

The Victorian Government committed $30.8 million over five years to improve education outcomes for Indigenous children in schools by expanding the number and providing greater training to Indigenous school staff, providing scholarships for high achievers and establishing individual education plans for Indigenous students. Other Budget initiatives included:

- $4.4 million over four years towards development of a new Aboriginal Heritage Information System to provide online access for planners and developers to heritage data and reduce the time and cost for preparation of Cultural Heritage Management Plans.
- $4.1 million over four years to enhance care for Indigenous children in the child protection system and their families through more supervision and support for Indigenous children with complex needs in residential care.
- $3.8 million over three years for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to increase management expertise and increase awareness of their services.

$2.1 million over four years to establish an Indigenous Youth Employment Program, to deliver flexible employment help and support to Indigenous young people.

$0.5 million to establish a new Koorie County Court.

$0.4 million to support current initiatives and develop a long term strategy to train existing and identify future Indigenous community leaders.

The 2008-09 Family Violence Budget Package built on the substantial work undertaken in partnership with the Indigenous communities. Over $8 million of the $24.7 million reform package was for Indigenous specific initiatives.

2009-10 STATE BUDGET

The 2009-10 State Budget built on the Victorian Government’s ongoing commitment to improving health outcomes, economic prospects and equality for Indigenous Victorians.

The Victorian Government allocated $57.97 million over four years for initiatives to focus on smoking, nutrition and physical fitness; key contributors to poor health and the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Victorians.

This funding will be used to improve access to primary health and hospital services, support young people in the transition to adulthood, and build the Indigenous health workforce. A further $1.0 million will be provided to expand Koorie Maternity Services at three locations.

Stolen Generations Victoria received $6.2 million to continue its important work in supporting the needs of and advocating for Victorian Indigenous people who were removed from their families as children.

The Koori Business Network received $1.0 million for 2009-10, to assist Indigenous business people.

The Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Program received funding of $0.8 million for 2009-10.

The Government committed $0.7 million to Indigenous Leadership and Capacity Building initiatives and $1.0 million over the next two years to facilitate planning approval for projects involving Aboriginal cultural heritage.
A Strong and Vibrant Culture

Indigenous culture and heritage is a fundamental part of Victoria’s identity. By working with Indigenous communities we can provide more opportunities for all Victorians to recognise, respect and celebrate their contributions.

Indigenous Australian cultures are the oldest living cultures in the world. The land that is now called Victoria has an Indigenous history that goes back many thousands of years. It is estimated that there were between 20,000 and 60,000 people speaking more than 30 languages when European settlers first arrived. Indigenous heritage is an important part of the identity of Indigenous Victorians and the collective history and identity of Victoria.

Demographics

The 2006 Australian Census shows there are approximately 33,000 Indigenous people living in Melbourne and regional Victoria. This is approximately 0.65% of the total Victorian population.

There are distinct Indigenous communities in Victoria, which are based on location, language, cultural groups, and extended familial networks.

Figure 1: The change in number of Indigenous persons by local government area 2001-06

Sources: 2006, ABS, Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profile, Table 981
2001, ABS, Census of Population and Housing, Usual Resident Profile, Table 9958
As a percentage of the total population, the locations with the greatest concentration of Indigenous people outside the Melbourne metropolitan area are: Mallee (including Mildura, Swan Hill, and Robinvale), Goulburn (Shepparton) and East Gippsland (Bairnsdale).

The demographic profile of the Victorian Indigenous community is distinctly different to the profile of the non Indigenous community – it shows higher rates of population growth, a higher percentage of young people and young families.

Between 2001 and 2006, the annual growth rate of the Indigenous population of Victoria was 3.9%.

The difference between Indigenous and non Indigenous demographic profiles is at its sharpest in Victoria’s rural communities, particularly small towns.

More than half of Indigenous Victorians are aged below 25 years, and more than a third are aged below 15 years. This difference in age structure reflects several factors, including higher fertility rates and lower life expectancy.

As shown in Figure 2, 11.8% of Indigenous Victorians are aged 0-4, 12.6% are aged 5-9, 12.4% are aged 10-14 years and 10.5% are aged 15-19 years, indicating that almost half (47.3%)\(^1\) of Victoria’s Indigenous population is aged between 0 and 19 years.

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\(^1\) Sum of 0-4, 5-9, 10-14 and 15-19 years.
Building and sustaining partnerships with Victoria’s Indigenous communities is a core element of the VIAF.

**Representation and Engagement**

*Premier’s Aboriginal Advisory Council and Representative Arrangements*

The 2006-07 Budget committed funding to develop new community engagement and representative arrangements.

The result is a three-tier structure that comprises 38 Local Indigenous Networks, 8 Regional Indigenous Councils, and the Premier’s Aboriginal Advisory Council.

**Figure 3:** VIAF Partnership Coordination and Management Framework.

- **Community Leadership**
  - Premiers Aboriginal Advisory Council (PAAC)
  - 8 Regional Indigenous Councils (RIC)
    - To be formed in 2010
  - 38 Local Indigenous Networks (LIN)

- **Government Leadership**
  - Premier
  - Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs
  - Secretaries’ Group on Aboriginal Affairs
**Premier’s Aboriginal Advisory Council**

The Premier’s Aboriginal Advisory Council (PAAC) provides the Victorian Government with high level advice on policy and issues impacting Indigenous Victorians. PAAC provides the opportunity for Indigenous representatives to advise the Premier on the priorities, aspirations and needs of Victorian Indigenous communities and how to improve engagement with Indigenous communities to achieve better outcomes.

PAAC provides an opportunity for Victoria’s Indigenous communities to engage with the State Government at its most senior level. The PAAC complements existing Indigenous consultative arrangements in other portfolios and broad-based community consultations on specific initiatives. In 2008-09, the Premier’s Aboriginal Advisory Council met twice in October 2008 and June 2009. In 2008-09, members of the PAAC were:

**Government:**
- The Hon John Brumby MP (Chair)
- The Hon Rob Hulls MP (Deputy Chair)
- The Hon Richard Wynne MP

**Local Indigenous Networks – Regional Representatives:**
- Joanne Badke, Loddon Mallee
- Michael Bell, Barwon South West
- Bradley Brown, North and West Metropolitan
- Tammy Bundle, Gippsland
- Timothy Chatfield, Grampians
- Bea Edwards, South Metropolitan
- Karen Milward, Eastern Metropolitan
- Robert Whybrow, Hume

**Peak Representatives:**
- Alf Bamblett, Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited
- Lionel Bamblett, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
- Ray Mahoney, Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation

Local Indigenous Networks

All 38 Local Indigenous Networks are now in place and the 8 Regional Indigenous Councils are to be established in 2010. The Local Indigenous Networks focus on increasing the participation of Indigenous people in civic and community life and improving social cohesion and strengthening relationships. Support is being provided to build local capability so that Indigenous communities are better able to solve problems that they face and develop local solutions. Local Indigenous Networks are producing local community plans which will capture the priorities, aspirations and needs of communities. Important service providers, including community and Indigenous organisations and local government will be involved in producing the plans.

Through the plans, Indigenous people will be better able to participate in broader community planning processes and get their views and aspirations heard through the Regional Management Forums and the PAAC. Local Indigenous Networks are supported by Indigenous Community Engagement Brokers in each region.

**Want to know more?**

Go to: [www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au)

**To find the Indigenous Community Engagement Broker in your region, go to: [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/av](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/av) and follow the link to Indigenous Governance Arrangements.**
Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs

In 2006, to ensure a coordinated effort across the whole Victorian Government, a Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs was established to direct the implementation of the VIAF. The actions specified in the VIAF are driven and overseen by the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs.

The Taskforce comprises:
- Deputy Premier (Chair)
- Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
- Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development
- Minister for Community Services
- Minister for Education
- Minister for Finance
- Minister for Health
- Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation.

The Taskforce:
- oversees Government action in the context of the VIAF and the emerging Council of Australian Governments reform agenda, including cross-portfolio activity which seeks to address multi-dimensional disadvantage
- identifies specific priorities for policy and program action
- ensures that representative and engagement arrangements for Indigenous Victorians create an effective partnership with government
- monitors the effectiveness of Government strategies to address Indigenous disadvantage.

Since the development of the VIAF and the establishment of the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs, the Victorian Government has overseen a number of significant improvements and reforms. The whole-of-government approach has included research to build the evidence base, investment, communications and local place based approaches. This is underpinned by collaboration and consultation with Indigenous communities. The Taskforce also helps to position Victoria as an active contributor to national reform through the Council of Australian Governments.

Victorian Government Departmental Partnerships

There are a number of partnerships between departments, agencies and Indigenous communities. Considerable community and public sector effort has gone into developing and implementing these partnerships and related plans. Some of the major partnerships are described here.

Aboriginal Justice Agreement
Department of Justice

The Aboriginal Justice Agreement, launched in 2000, is a formal agreement between the Victorian Government and the Indigenous communities. It deals with the ongoing issue of Indigenous over representation in all levels of the criminal justice system. It aims to improve access to justice related services and promote greater awareness in Indigenous communities of civil, legal and political rights.

In 2006, the Victorian Government renewed its commitment to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement by launching a second phase, AJA2. This second phase is built on a strategic framework of prevention, early intervention, increased diversion and reduced re-offending to halt the progression of young Indigenous Victorians into the justice system.

Key strategies in 2008-09 under the VIAF are:
- Wannik: An education strategy for Koorie students
- Dardee Boorai: The Victorian Charter of safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal children and young people
- Victorian Native Title Settlement Framework
- State Services Authority Review of Indigenous Public Sector Employment

Want to know more?
Go to: www.dpcd.vic.gov.au
Click on the Indigenous link, and follow the links to the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs
Yalca: A Partnership in Education and Training for the New Millennium, Koorie Education Policy
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association has a 20 year relationship with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. All education strategies and programs developed for and by Indigenous people are expected to support the partnership’s aims.

Wannik - Learning Together, Journey to Our Future
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

In February 2008, the Minister for Education launched Victoria’s education strategy for Indigenous students, Wannik Learning Together, Journey to Our Future. Wannik was developed in partnership between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association.

Fundamental to Wannik is the fostering of a new culture of high expectations for Indigenous students, and systemic reform across government schools to deliver the best possible education to meet these expectations.

Wurreker Strategy
Skills Victoria, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development


Indigenous Partnership Framework 2007-10
Department of Sustainability and Environment

The Department of Sustainability and Environment’s Indigenous Partnership Framework weaves Indigenous perspectives into all aspects of the department’s business. Acknowledging the intrinsic connection that Victoria’s Indigenous people have to their country, the department uses the framework as a guiding policy for action.

The Aboriginal Services Plan 2008-10
Department of Human Services

The Aboriginal Services Plan 2008-10 outlines commitments by the Department of Human Services to improve outcomes for Indigenous people. Developed in consultation with representatives of Indigenous communities and organisations, it builds on the successes of the 2004 plan and targets.

Indigenous Public Sector Employment Strategy
State Services Authority

In June 2009, the State Services Authority completed the Indigenous Public Sector Employment Strategy. This strategy outlines actions to increase the number of Indigenous public sector employees.
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) provides important support for the VIAF through its work with the Indigenous community in governance, leadership and capacity building, strengthening cultural heritage protection and social and economic participation.

Major AAV whole-of-government activities during 2008-09 included exploring how government can better support communities in building and strengthening culture, as well as development of the Local Indigenous Networks.

Community Organisations

Victoria has more than 200 Indigenous, community run organisations, many of which provide support and services to Indigenous people and communities. Indigenous community leaders are highly active in a range of areas from health and wellbeing, sport and culture, to advocacy and justice.

Achieving the sustainable improvements sought through the VIAF is reliant on partnerships between these organisations, the Victorian Government and the broader Victorian community.

Council of Australian Governments

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has affirmed its commitment to Closing the Gap between Indigenous people and other Australians over a generation (COAG 2007).

COAG’s commitment is to a partnership with Indigenous people to achieve the Closing the Gap reforms in health, housing, early childhood development, education and employment spheres.

Victoria recognises delivery of reforms requires the development and maintenance of strengthened partnership arrangements with Indigenous people and communities.

COAG Targets

For the first time, Australian Governments have set specific targets to address Indigenous disadvantage.

The six key targets are:
- Close the life expectancy gap within a generation.
- Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade.
- Ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous 4 year olds in remote communities within five years.
- Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade.
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.
- Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

On 26 February 2009, the Prime Minister made his first annual statement to Parliament on the Commonwealth Government’s Closing the Gap strategy.

This annual statement outlined the whole-of-government approach to Closing the Gap, as well as detailing COAG National Agreements and Partnerships and engagement with corporate Australia.

Want to know more?

Go to:
www.dpcd.vic.gov.au
Click on the Indigenous link, and follow the links to Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
National Partnerships

COAG National Agreements and Partnerships signed by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments:

- Early Childhood Education National Partnership
- Homelessness National Partnership
- Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership
- Indigenous Economic Participation National Partnership
- Indigenous Health National Partnership
- Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership
- Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities National Partnership
- National Affordable Housing Agreement
- National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development
- National Disability Agreement
- National Education Agreement
- National Healthcare Agreement
- Preventive Health National Partnership
- Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership
- Social Housing National Partnership.

Implementation responsibility for National Agreements and Partnerships is with relevant departments and agencies.

At the COAG Meeting on 2 July 2009, all governments agreed to additional reporting, on progress on implementation of the Closing the Gap reforms. The first of these reports will come to COAG in late 2009.

All States and Territories will report on progress in implementing the Indigenous specific and mainstream National Partnerships agreed in each of the following areas – early childhood, schooling, health and housing.

National Integrated Strategy

The National Integrated Strategy for Closing the Gap in Indigenous disadvantage, which COAG endorsed, identifies how investment of additional funds under existing COAG agreements will make a difference in addressing Indigenous disadvantage.

As part of the Integrated Strategy, the Commonwealth Government will provide an additional $46.4 million over four years to fund work undertaken by national data agencies, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, to improve the evidence base and address data gaps.
Urban and Regional Strategy

Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage will require concerted effort by all governments in urban and regional communities, as 75% of Indigenous Australians live in these locations.

At the COAG meeting on 2 July 2009, COAG endorsed an Urban and Regional Strategy for Indigenous Australians, which commits all governments to coordinate and target the substantial funding provided under mainstream and Indigenous specific programs to address Indigenous disadvantage in urban and regional locations.

Want to know more?
Go to:
www.coag.gov.au
www.socialinclusion.gov.au
Click on the link Australian Government Initiatives page, and follow the link closing the gap for Indigenous Australians

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2009

The Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2009, produced by the Productivity Commission, is the fourth report in a series commissioned in 2002, to provide regular reporting against key indicators of Indigenous disadvantage. The 2009 Report was released on 2 July 2009.

The headline indicators of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework are:
- post secondary education – participation and attainment
- disability and chronic disease
- household and individual income
- substantiated child abuse and neglect
- family and community violence
- imprisonment and juvenile detention.

The reports will continue to provide governments and the broader community with an understanding of the progress being made to address Indigenous disadvantage. The priorities and direction set by the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage framework are consistent with those of VIAF Strategic Areas for Action and align with the Closing the Gap targets adopted by COAG.

Want to know more?
Go to:
http://www.pc.gov.au
Follow the links to Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage 2009 Report
Measuring Performance of the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework

The VIAF is a long term strategy designed to address Indigenous disadvantage that is intergenerational in its nature. Given the 15 year timeframe the VIAF adopts, it is important that the strategies that underpin it are carefully monitored and the decision making that shapes them is regularly refined, on the basis of solid evidence. The VIAF has set Strategic Areas for Action and indicators but a key component of achieving progress against these priority areas is the adoption of measurable targets.

Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework Targets

The Government has endorsed targets to be met by 2013, 2018 and 2023 against each Strategic Change Indicator and to track progress against the VIAF priority outcomes. Importantly the targets recognise the agreement all governments have made through COAG to address Indigenous disadvantage and are consistent with the COAG targets.

All Victorian Government departments have committed to work collectively and in partnership with Indigenous communities to achieve significant improvements against the indicators, and to achieving performance targets in 2013, 2018 and 2023. The performance targets are based on actual improvement for Indigenous people against a baseline of 2007-08 performance for the general population.

Our ability to measure changes in outcomes over time varies. For some indicators, it is recognised that current data is limited, or under revision or not yet available. All departments will, over time, improve data collection to ensure performance can be measured and monitored.

It is important to note that there are many other Victorian Government programs that make significant contributions to the quality of life of Indigenous Victorians that are not directly covered by the VIAF. Such areas include housing services, specific Indigenous health programs and mainstream government programs that are sensitive to the needs of Indigenous Victorians.

Information on the contribution made by the programs operating outside the immediate objectives of the VIAF can be found in departmental annual reports and publications.

This 2008-09 Indigenous Affairs Report measures progress made towards the 2013 targets. All targets are listed at Appendix B.
Figure 4: Progress against the VIAF indicators

Figure 4 provides a summary of progress across the VIAF. It is measured across four categories – areas of improvement, areas that are steady, areas of concern and areas where available data does not allow a clear trend to be determined. Many aspects of progress relate to one another, and it is important to understand those links when assessing overall progress.

Changes in methodologies, small numbers and the availability of data mean that it is not possible to evaluate if there has been improvement over time for some indicators. Through the COAG reform process, both Commonwealth and State Governments have agreed that the improvement of Indigenous data is a high priority.

The VIAF is a long term strategy designed to address Indigenous disadvantage that is intergenerational in its nature. Given the 15 year timeframe that the VIAF adopts it is important that trends over several years are monitored given there may be variability from one year to the next.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Progress</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas of improvement</strong></td>
<td>Percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500g</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased enrolments in kindergarten for 3 and 4 year old Indigenous children</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased school attendance in primary and secondary school for Indigenous students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased reading and numeracy levels at Years 3, 5, 7, 9 in national testing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased completion of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increased Indigenous participation in State funded employment programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decreased proportion of Indigenous adults remanded in custody</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decreased proportion of Indigenous people who are convicted within two years of their previous conviction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decreased the number of times Indigenous young people (aged 10-17 years) are processed by police</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Areas that are steady | Proportion of Indigenous children attending Maternal and Child Health Services at key age milestones |
| | Proportion of Indigenous young people (aged 10-17 years) cautioned when processed by police |
| | Proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands |
| | Workforce participation by Indigenous people in the public sector |
| | Proportion of board members of large Indigenous organisations having undertaken rigorous governance training |
| | Proportion of Indigenous co-operatives and other organisations meeting their statutory obligations |
| | Rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Progress</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas of concern</strong></td>
<td>Increased smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decreased transition to Year 10 for Indigenous students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area where data does not allow a clear trend to be determined</strong></td>
<td>Indigenous perinatal mortality rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Successful transition of Indigenous young people aged 18-24 years to employment and/or further education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police response to and action taken on any Indigenous family violence incident reported and repeat police call outs for Indigenous family violence incidents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the areas of concern, the Victorian Government recognises that further work is currently underway to address outcomes for Indigenous people, through initiatives including the *Victorian Tobacco Control Strategy 2008-2013* (see page 34), the *Wannik Koorie Education Strategy* (see pages 48 and 50) and the second phase of *Aboriginal Justice Agreement, AJA2* (see page 64).
Focus on Education and Early Childhood Development

Supporting children and their families in the early years of development and learning is a key strategy to ensuring successful future outcomes for all children.

Each child is central to Indigenous society, representing the present and the future, providing a link to the spirituality and ancestry of Indigenous culture and is responsible for the continuity of cultural identity. ²

Significant early childhood research clarifies the importance of the early years and the positive impact on a child’s future when early risk factors are identified and strategies implemented to reduce these factors.

The active involvement of parents in their children’s learning and development, promotion of good health and safety is directly related to improved outcomes for each child.

The Victorian Government recognises that success for children and young people is intricately tied to opportunities and programs that start in early childhood and support them through their lives.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has implemented strategies and programs to ensure Indigenous children have the best start in life and every opportunity to successfully complete their education.

Demographics

Victoria is home to 14,578 Indigenous children age 0-17 years, representing 1.2% of all children residing in the state.³ There is a marked difference between the age structure of the Indigenous population, of approximately 33,000 and the total population. Children make up close 45.0% of the Indigenous population in Victoria, almost double the proportion of children in the total population (23.0%).⁴ A greater proportion of Victoria’s Indigenous children live in regional Victoria (55.0%). The Loddon Mallee region has the highest percentage of Victoria’s Indigenous children (16.6%), followed by the Northern Melbourne Metropolitan region (13.9%) and the Southern Melbourne Metropolitan region (13.5%).

Figure 5: Proportions of Indigenous young people (aged 15-24) in local government areas 2006


³ This percentage is the lowest in the nation, below the national percentage of 4.6%.

⁴ 2006, ABS, Census of Population and Housing.
CASE STUDY

*Bubup Wilam Early Years Learning, Thomastown*

*Bubup Wilam* commenced operation in September 2009 to nurture strong, proud and clever children in a culturally rich and supportive educational environment, in partnership with families.

The vision is to provide a thriving, Indigenous family based, early childhood centre that creates strong foundations for lifelong learning, health and wellbeing. *Bubup Wilam* emphasises the child’s cultural, emotional, educational rights and needs.

The Centre is being developed through a partnership between local Indigenous communities, the City of Whittlesea and Commonwealth and State departments. The initiative includes a project officer to support implementation of the *Bubup Wilam* interim site.

The Centre will be managed for the initial 12-18 months by an early years service provider prior to a planned transition to Indigenous communities control and governance of the centre.

The Whittlesea Indigenous Community and the *Bubup Wilam Management Committee* together successfully opened the Centre in Term 3. This is a marker for realising their vision to provide a thriving Indigenous family based early childhood centre that creates strong foundations for lifelong learning, health and wellbeing.

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**Early Childhood Development**

The experiences of early childhood have lifelong implications for our health, wellbeing and development, including our ability to become productive, socially and emotionally adjusted members of society.

**Best Start**

The *Aboriginal Best Start* projects have been established to ensure that local Indigenous communities and organisations are given every possible opportunity to influence outcomes for their children and families.

Best Start is a prevention and early intervention project that aims to improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of all Victorian children from conception through to transition to school. There are 30 *Best Start* sites, six of which are *Aboriginal Best Start* sites.

All *Best Start* sites are expected to develop partnerships with their local Indigenous communities and implement strategies that are culturally relevant and respectful of their needs and aspirations.

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**Indigenous Kindergarten Program**

In 2009, 197 Indigenous 3 year old children were enrolled in a funded kindergarten program, an increase from the 84 children reported for 2008. 579 Indigenous children participated in a funded kindergarten program in the year before school (4 year olds), an increase from the 525 children reported for 2008.

The Indigenous kindergarten program has Koorie Early Childhood Field Officers who work with kindergarten programs and other early years services to encourage culturally inclusive programs for Indigenous children and their families. Field Officers:

- increase the participation of Indigenous children in kindergarten
- promote the values of kindergarten programs within Indigenous families and communities
- promote cultural awareness and provide access to resources for all kindergarten programs
- liaise between Indigenous families and kindergarten programs.

The 2007-08 State Budget allocated $2.7 million over four years to provide up to 10 hours per week of kindergarten free for 3 year old Indigenous children with a concession card.

From January 2009, up to 10 hours per week of kindergarten is free for all Indigenous 3 and 4 year old children.

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**In Victoria, the Government provides funding for every 3 and 4 year old Indigenous child to attend kindergarten.**
In Home Support Program for Indigenous Families

The In Home Support Program builds on the service delivery strengths implemented through Koori Maternity Services as children move through infancy into the next stages of early childhood (up to five years of age). This provides an integrated approach to optimising outcomes for all Indigenous parents/families and young children, building on a universal platform but delivering additional supports where these are most needed and most likely to be effective.

Six organisations with existing Koori Maternity Services have been funded to implement the In Home Support Program.

These sites are:
- Mildura Aboriginal Corporation Incorporated, Mildura
- Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, Shepparton
- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative, Bairnsdale
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Fitzroy
- Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, Geelong
- Swan Hill Aboriginal Health Service, Swan Hill.

The objectives of the In Home Support Program are to:
- improve the health, development, learning and wellbeing of Indigenous babies and children from birth to 3 years of age
- strengthen, support and improve parenting capacity for Indigenous parents and their families
- promote social connections and links with community and community services.

Many services with kindergarten programs work with the local school to help families and children move easily into primary school.
Home Based Learning Program

The Mildura Aboriginal Corporation and Swan Hill Aboriginal Health Service were the first two sites funded to provide Home Based Learning as an extension of the In Home Support Program.

The objectives of Home Based Learning are to:
- promote parents as primary educators of their children
- assist families to provide enhanced home learning environments to increase parental understanding of a child’s learning
- develop parental strategies that assist learning
- complement a child’s learning at kindergarten
- increase school readiness of children.

The In Home Support and Home Based Learning programs use the Parenting Support Resource for Home-visiting Practitioners, which was developed by the Parenting Research Centre to inform their activities with Indigenous parents and families. Quarterly professional development sessions for all program staff have been implemented, including Family Partnerships Training and Keys to Care-giving which is co-facilitated by Queen Elizabeth Centre and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. Individual, site based, biannual program management meetings have also been established.

The next steps are to:
- identify an appropriate minimum qualification or training course for program staff
- revise the program guidelines
- publish the Parenting Support Resource for Home-visiting Practitioners Kits
- develop and implement a program evaluation framework.

The ability to read, write and perform mathematics is essential in day to day life and for educational opportunities and employment prospects. Early school experiences can have a lasting improvement on a person’s attitude to education and training.

Want to know more?
Go to:
Dardee Boorai

Dardee Boorai: the Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People is a statement of commitment by the Victorian Government and Victorian Indigenous communities to work together to give Indigenous children and young people every opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential in life.

Launched in December 2008, Dardee Boorai is Australia’s first charter for Indigenous children and young people and literally means Strong Children in the Gunnai language. The Charter affirms the strength and resilience of Victoria’s Indigenous cultures, communities and families while acknowledging that there are areas where more could be done to improve outcomes.

A specific requirement under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, Dardee Boorai has been developed in recognition of the impact of past removal policies, particularly the Stolen Generations of Indigenous children, forcibly removed from their families by State and Territory Governments.

The first of the 12 Dardee Boorai principles provide the foundation for the Charter and acknowledge that families are central to Indigenous children’s health, welfare, safety, development, learning and wellbeing.

To ensure that Charter principles are enshrined in Victorian Government policy and programs, Dardee Boorai has been included in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities reporting framework for government departments and agencies.

The commitment to spell out key actions and measures of progress in improving the lives of Indigenous children and young people will be supported by a 10 year plan for Indigenous children and young people, which is currently under development.

The Charter principles are being actively promoted, particularly amongst children and young people. For example, a Dardee Boorai Art Award is being coordinated through schools, TAFE institutes and early childhood services.

The Art Award is designed to help students discuss and examine the themes of Dardee Boorai, recognising the strength and resilience of Victoria’s Indigenous cultures. The Award is open to Victorian children and young people up 18 years of age and artists are asked to interpret the theme ‘Strong Aboriginal Children.’

Want to know more?

Go to:

Dardee Boorai
www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/aboriginalcharter
School Education

The Victorian Government recognises the holistic approach of education and aims to develop capacities and talents of students, so they have the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills and values for a productive rewarding life.

Wannik: Koorie Education Strategy


Wannik represents a collaboration where the system will reposition the education of Indigenous students within schools through strong leadership that creates a culture of high expectations and individualised learning.

Launched by the Minister for Education in February 2008, Wannik was developed following recommendations from the most comprehensive review of Indigenous education ever undertaken in Victoria and in consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

The overarching principle of Wannik is to deliver the best possible education for Victoria’s Indigenous students.

Actions undertaken through Wannik

Koorie Pathways Schools

The four new Koorie Pathways Schools (Payika College in Swan Hill, Ballerst Murrup College in Glenroy, Two Rivers College in Mildura, and Woolum Bellum College in Morwell) opened in April 2009.

These schools are transition schools designed to provide individualised assistance and support to Indigenous students aged 12-16 who are not engaged in their mainstream school or who are at serious risk of disengagement.

Koorie Pathways Schools provide students with tailored educational and welfare support and create a pathway back to mainstream schooling, training or employment.

Koorie Workforce Reform

A Consultation Paper outlining the Management Position on the Restructuring of the Koorie Support Workforce was released in August 2009 for final comment following consultation with workers, regional staff, unions, VAEAI and other stakeholders.

The approach has been modified as a result of feedback received during the consultation. Implementation of the new structure and the transition process for existing workers began in late October 2009.

Koorie Literacy Coaches

Fifteen new Koorie Literacy Coaches, employed to offer intensive professional development to teachers, have been trained and allocated to schools with significant numbers of Indigenous students. These schools are currently developing specific targets for improved literacy outcomes for their Indigenous students.

Reaching literacy and numeracy benchmarks in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 is an important foundation for building skills. These skills are vital to ensure students are able to fully participate in society once they leave school.
Wannik Senior Scholarships

Scholarships, valued at $5000 each, were awarded to 24 Indigenous students in April 2009. The scholarships are awarded to acknowledge the recipients’ sound academic achievement and involvement in Indigenous communities.

Up to ten Year 10 Indigenous students demonstrating aptitude in science and mathematics are able to access a fully funded place at ASSETS C21: Aboriginal Summer School for Excellence in Technology and Science. This residential summer school, being held in Adelaide in December 2009, is designed to promote excellence in technology and science among young Indigenous people.

Wannik Youth Transition Support Initiative

Three extra Indigenous Youth Transition Workers funded through Wannik have been employed in Morwell, Shepparton and Darebin. The workers have a specific focus on Indigenous students at risk of disengagement from education.

Individual Education Plans

Nearly two-thirds of all Indigenous students now have an Individual Education Plan. To assist with the continued implementation of the plans, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is preparing a resource kit for schools and regions outlining best practice in respect of the construction of Individual Education Plans.

School for Student Leadership

The Gnurad-Gundidj School for Student Leadership campus was officially opened by the Minister for Education in May 2009. Gnurad-Gundidj is adjacent to Mount Noorat near Camperdown in Victoria’s Western District.

After consultation with the local Indigenous community, this name, which represents both the Indigenous name of the local area and an interpretation of the statement ‘belonging to this place’, was agreed.

The opening of the Gnurad-Gundidj leadership school is consistent with a key aim of Wannik – to support and encourage high-achieving Indigenous students by implementing a residential and cultural identity program in conjunction with VAEAI, targeting Indigenous students from Year 9 onward.

The School for Student Leadership and Wannik have entered into an agreement where the costs of Indigenous students attending the school have been fully funded. Koorie educators will also be available when students are in attendance and schools with Indigenous students in their population will be encouraged to give them priority in the selection process. 20 Indigenous students have attended the school over the course of 2009.

Managed Individual Pathways

The Managed Individual Pathways initiative has been expanded beyond Years 10 to 12 to include Years 8 and 9 for all Indigenous students.

Managed Individual Pathways are an important tool for keeping students engaged because they ensure students have thought about and developed a plan for progressing through secondary education and into employment, further education and training.

Expanded Partnership with Dare to Lead

Wannik has agreed to partner with the Dare To Lead Project to provide extensive principal and teacher professional development. Included in this are school ‘collegial snapshots’ where experienced educators analyse the practices of a school in relation to Indigenous education and stakeholder perceptions.

If students miss as little as eight days in a school term, by the end of primary school they will have missed a year of education.

Student absence is not an issue which can be dealt with solely by the school. It requires the support of both parents and the community if it is to be successfully addressed.
SECTION 2

Expanding What Works Program

The What Works Program has assisted Drouin Primary School to develop a school community partnership process with the local Indigenous community over the last 12 months. This program is now working with Lakes Entrance Secondary College on a similar process and will also work with two metropolitan schools in the near future.

Wannik Tutorial Assistance Scheme

The Wannik Tutorial Assistance Scheme runs two major programs as part of the Government’s commitment to reforms in education:

- **Wannik Tutorial Assistance** involves in class tuition which aims to supplement mainstream teaching resources to improve literacy and numeracy attainment of Indigenous students in Years 4, 6 and 8; and
- **Wannik Senior Tutorial Assistance** aims to maximise educational opportunities for eligible Year 9, 10, 11 and 12 Indigenous students and to improve their educational outcomes.

Demand for Senior Tutorial Assistance has exceeded expectations. Over $1.0 million in extra funding has been provided to this program in 2009, to cater for the four-fold increase in the take up of tutoring in Years 9-12.

Scholarship Program for Indigenous Educators

Wannik has established and funded 10 scholarships for Indigenous educators to complete their teaching training.

Wannik Homework Centres

There are 18 Homework Centres for Indigenous students currently running across Victoria. They provide support to Indigenous students and are based in schools and community cooperatives.

Support for the Munarra Program

The partnership between Wannik and the Commonwealth Government has provided support to the Munarra Youth Futures Project based in Shepparton.

The project is managed through the Rumbalara Football and Netball Club and includes experienced teachers, high-profile sports people and respected community role models with education and training backgrounds.

The project team supports and assists young people and their families with goal setting, personal development and career counselling and will mentor and guide young people.
Youth Transition

*Wannik* is collaborating with youth transitions programs to support disengaged young people aged 15-19 to gain a sustainable education, training or employment.

Youth Transition Support Workers assist disengaged young people with tailored assistance. Three additional Youth Transition Support Workers, who will have a specific focus on Indigenous students at risk, have been employed in areas of high need. This initiative, being developed through the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, will ensure strong transition from school to further education, training and employment for Indigenous young people.

Literacy and Numeracy

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is working on a number of key areas: literacy and numeracy, student wellbeing, professional development for staffing and leadership teams, Regional Directors and regional *Wannik* Implementation teams.

CASE STUDY

**Gippsland Literacy Pilot Project**

**Making the Links: skills for success for Indigenous students**

In 2008–09 the Gippsland Region and four schools in Morwell explored how effective the Reading Recovery intervention principles and practices were in supporting the literacy outcomes of Indigenous primary school students.

A secondary purpose was to determine if the intervention strategy was successful in establishing partnerships and improving student and family engagement with the school.

All students involved in the project made gains in literacy outcomes and feedback indicated that skill levels, attitudes and self confidence of the students improved in almost all cases.

In discussion with principals, teachers, Koorie educators and families, each group responded that this particular pilot had been extremely positive in improving outcomes for students, engaging Indigenous families in the schooling of their children and enhancing and clarifying the role of the Koorie educator.

Want to know more?

Go to: www.education.vic.gov.au/wannik or email: wannik@edumail.vic.gov.au
**Strategic Area for Action 1: Improve Maternal Health and Early Childhood Health and Development**

**INDICATOR 1.1**
Reduce reported smoking and alcohol use in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers.

**MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

In 2007-08, the percentage of Indigenous women admitted to hospital from one month prior to delivery who were current smokers has increased to 40% from 38% in 2006-07 (Figure 6).

In 2009 the Perinatal Morbidity Statistics System began collecting data on tobacco use by all mothers. This data will be available for the first time in late 2010.

There is currently no reliable data available for reported alcohol use in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers.

**TARGET BY 2013**
Reported smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers will be reduced to 25%.

**Why is this important?**
Smoking is a risk factor for adverse events in pregnancy and is associated with poor perinatal outcomes such as low birth weight (less than 2500 grams), preterm birth, foetal growth restriction, congenital anomalies and perinatal death.

Low birth weight infants are at greater risk of dying during the first year of life and are prone to ill health in childhood. Smoking is also associated with increased risk of miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy.5

**What action has been taken?**

Reduce smoking in pregnancy

The Department of Human Services has funded the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) to manage a three year action research project to develop, implement and evaluate a multifaceted, holistic intervention aimed at reducing smoking amongst Indigenous women during pregnancy.

The project will provide training and organisation support to build the capacity of the Indigenous health workforce to deliver smoking reduction and cessation interventions. It will also develop and deliver a Group Support Program to build capacity, self-esteem, skills and knowledge among pregnant Indigenous women and young mothers. This project is funded for $400,000 over three years.

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5 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework, Indicator 2.19.

6 Caution should be taken when interpreting this data as not all babies subsequently identified as Indigenous have an Indigenous mother. This database does not identify the smoking status of a non-Indigenous mother with an Indigenous baby.
The Victorian Tobacco Control Strategy 2008-2013 was released in December 2008 and includes a specific target to reduce smoking prevalence among Indigenous Victorians from 50% to 40% by 2013. In 2009 a Taskforce was established to lead implementation of the strategy with membership from organisations involved in tobacco control, research and evaluation, primary, maternal, and Indigenous health. An Aboriginal Advisory Group has also been established as a sub-group of the Taskforce to inform the development and implementation of smoking prevention and cessation initiatives for Indigenous Victorians including components assisting pregnant women to quit. The Aboriginal Advisory Group will also manage Victoria’s commitments under the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes which has a specific focus on ‘Tackling Smoking’ supported by a new funding commitment of $6.6 million over four years to support Indigenous communities to reduce smoking rates. A detailed Victorian Aboriginal Tobacco Action Plan will be developed to coordinate Victorian action under the Tobacco Control Strategy.

The Victorian Government is working to put in place a seamless continuum of services for Indigenous parents and their young children aged 0-5 years through Koori Maternity Services (antenatal-postnatal), Aboriginal Best Start through Maternal and Child Health Services and In Home Support in areas with large numbers of Indigenous families.

Koori Maternity Services

Indigenous women participating in the Koori Maternity Services programs will be offered support to stop smoking throughout their pregnancy and after their child is born. Access to antenatal care is one of the critical factors in positive maternity outcomes for mothers and babies.

In Home Support

This initiative assists Indigenous families to strengthen and support their parenting capacity. Support is provided in a way that is respectful of cultural identity and promotes family wellbeing. This program also supports Indigenous women who are pregnant or have children to quit smoking.

Reduce alcohol use in pregnancy

While it is difficult to collect data about alcohol consumption by pregnant Indigenous women, there are a number of services in place to assist with reducing alcohol use in pregnancy. During 2008-09, work commenced on the development of a Koori Alcohol Action Plan. The Plan is considering targets and actions directed at reducing alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Funded by the Department of Human Services, the drug and alcohol service at the Royal Children’s Hospital provides drug and alcohol counselling and medical services to women with a drug dependency and their newborn babies.

There are a number of women’s alcohol and other drugs services attached to hospitals across the state.

VACCHO (through funding provided by the Premier’s Drug Prevention Council) has developed Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies for Koori Communities resource for use by Indigenous women.

Want to know more?

Go to:
www.vaccho.org.au

Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework Report 2008

Indicators:
2.19 Tobacco Smoking During Pregnancy; and
2.20 Risky and High Risk Alcohol Consumption.
**Strategic Area for Action 1: Improve Maternal Health and Early Childhood Health and Development**

**INDICATOR 1.2**
Reduce the Indigenous perinatal mortality rate.

**MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

The 2007 Indigenous perinatal mortality rate increased to 20.4 per 1000 births compared with 15.8 in 2006 (Figure 7).

This compares to the 2007 non-Indigenous rate of 9.8 per 1000 births.

**TARGET BY 2013**

The Indigenous perinatal mortality rate will reduce to no more than 16 per 1000 births.

**Why is this important?**

Perinatal mortality measures the rate of stillbirths (foetal deaths of more than 20 weeks gestation or 400g) and neonatal deaths (deaths of live born infants within 28 days of birth).

Causes of perinatal mortality include preterm birth, foetal growth restriction, congenital malformations, specific obstetric complications and maternal complications. Particular risk factors for babies of Indigenous mothers include under-utilisation of antenatal services and younger mothers (aged under 20 years).

The higher rate of perinatal deaths of Indigenous babies is evident in Victorian and national data. In Victoria small numbers are involved therefore the numbers can fluctuate from year to year and no reliable trend can be determined in the short term.

The current data presented in Figure 7 only includes babies of Indigenous mothers. Data on babies with non-Indigenous mothers and Indigenous fathers was collected from January 2009 and will be available in late 2010.

**Figure 7: Perinatal mortality rate per 1000 births, by Indigenous status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous Mothers</th>
<th>Non Indigenous Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Perinatal Morbidity Statistics System*[^1]

[^1]: Excludes terminations of pregnancy for psychosocial reasons.
What action has been taken?

The Koori Maternity Strategy is working to decrease perinatal mortality through actions such as increasing access to culturally inclusive care in early stages of pregnancy through to the postnatal period.

The program is provided through 11 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and includes the employment of Indigenous health workers and midwives.

Increasing access to antenatal care, postnatal support and hospital liaison for births is essential to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for Indigenous mothers and babies. The Koori Maternity Strategy also works to increase Indigenous women’s knowledge, participation and satisfaction with their pre and postnatal care.

Under the 2008-09 Indigenous Early Childhood Development National Partnership, an additional $3.8 million over five years has been invested in Koori Maternity Services to establish three new Koori Maternity Services, to expand four existing services in areas where there is significant growth in the Indigenous population, to increase the skills of the Koori maternity workforce and expand the number of Indigenous midwives and Aboriginal Health Workers.

Three Koori Maternity Services which currently provide only health promotion and service coordination functions will be augmented to provide clinical and midwifery services. These are located in Bairnsdale, Swan Hill and Wodonga.

An expansion proposal is being negotiated with Mildura Aboriginal Corporation operative to broaden the range of antenatal care and health promotion activities and provide for expanded postnatal domiciliary care. Early planning is underway to establish a new service in the western suburbs of Melbourne which is a growth area for Indigenous populations.

Work is also under way to expand sexual and reproductive health services to young people in Indigenous communities.

Want to know more?

Go to:

www.vaccho.org.au

Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework Report 2008 Indicator 1.20 Perinatal mortality
Strategic Area for Action 1: Improve Maternal Health and Early Childhood Heath and Development

**INDICATOR 1.3**

Decrease the percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500 grams.

**MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

In 2007 the percentage of Indigenous women giving birth to babies with a birth weight below 2500 grams was 12.5% compared with 6.5% for non Indigenous women (Figure 8).

**TARGET BY 2013**

Decrease the number of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500 grams to 13%.

**Why is this important?**

Low birth weight is an indicator of the general health of a newborn baby and a key determinant of infant survival, health and development. Low birth weight babies are at greater risk of disease and death as infants and children, as well as higher risk of developing conditions such as cardiac disease and kidney disease leading to renal failure as adults.

Babies born to Indigenous mothers are on average lighter than babies born to non Indigenous mothers, whether full-term or preterm, although Indigenous women are more likely to have preterm babies.

Only babies of Indigenous mothers are included in the present data set. Data on babies with non Indigenous mothers and Indigenous fathers was collected in January 2009 and will be available in late 2010.

**Figure 8: Babies with birth weight below 2500 grams, by Indigenous status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous mothers</th>
<th>Non Indigenous mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What action has been taken?

The Koori Maternity Services program provides support to reduce the number of low birth weight babies by:

- health promotion targeting young Indigenous women (including pregnant teenagers) and their extended families regarding importance of antenatal care
- continuity of care from antenatal through birthing and postnatal care
- strong engagement and commitment of birth hospitals to connect with Koori Maternity Services to minimise trauma and/or culturally inappropriate practices
- Indigenous health workers and trusted health professionals accepted by the community who understand and respect cultural practices and values relating to pregnancy and birthing.

Want to know more?

Go to:
www.vaccho.org.au

Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework Report 2008 Indicator 1.20 Perinatal mortality

INDICATOR 1.4

Increase Indigenous 3 year old and 4 year old kindergarten participation.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

In 2009, 197 Indigenous 3 year old children were enrolled in a funded kindergarten program, an increase from the 84 children reported for 2008. In 2009, 579 Indigenous 4 year old children were enrolled in a funded kindergarten program in the year before school, an increase from the 525 children reported for 2008 (Figure 9).

Why is this important?

Kindergarten provides developmentally appropriate programs that further the social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development of children.

International and Australian research shows that participation in a kindergarten program helps children establish foundations to assist them in life. Kindergarten provides developmentally appropriate programs that further the social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development of children.

School readiness includes having the cognitive ability to learn and social skills to be able to follow directions, be sensitive to others and not to be disruptive in class which are required to ensure a smooth start to school life.

TARGET BY 2013

75% of Indigenous 3 year old children will be participating in funded kindergarten programs. The gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous 4 year old children participating in funded kindergarten programs will be closed.

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8 Enrolment data in kindergarten and school relies on the identification of children’s Indigenous status by their parents.

9 The methodology calculates the number of Indigenous children enrolled in funded kindergarten in the year before school (four year olds) as a proportion of the number of Indigenous children in the population. The number of Indigenous children enrolled in Prep the following year is used as a proxy for the number of Indigenous children in the population, as there is no annual estimate of this cohort currently available.

What action has been taken?

There are significant opportunities to improve the educational opportunities of young Indigenous children, through helping parents provide better home learning environments, providing kindergarten programs for children, and by helping Indigenous families and communities take up these opportunities.

Changes made by the Victorian Government in 2007 have greatly improved kindergarten accessibility for Indigenous children including:

- the extension of free kindergarten to encompass all Indigenous 3 year olds regardless of whether parents or guardians hold a concession card
- the kindergarten fee subsidy was extended to all 4 year old Indigenous children regardless of whether parents or guardians hold a concession card
- from January 2009, all Indigenous 3 year old and 4 year old children are able to access 10 free hours of kindergarten per week.

Most Indigenous children attend local mainstream kindergartens. The Koorie Early Childhood Education Program includes a Statewide Coordinator, 11 Koorie Early Childhood Field Officers and preschool assistants to support Indigenous children in the settings they attend. These officers play an active role in encouraging and supporting the access and participation of Indigenous children and their families in local kindergartens.

Aboriginal Best Start

Aboriginal Best Start projects have been established to ensure that local Indigenous communities and organisations are given every opportunity to influence outcomes for their children and families.

Some Indigenous children may experience factors that place their health, wellbeing and psychosocial development at risk. These projects are designed to empower communities and families and develop broad cross-sector partnerships across all early years services to improve outcomes for Indigenous children and their families.

Want to know more?

Go to: www.beststart.vic.gov.au
SECTION 3

Strategic Area for Action 1: Improve Maternal Health and Early Childhood Health and Development

INDICATOR 1.5
Reduce the rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
In 2008-09, the rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations per 1000 children was 54.9 (Figure 10).

TARGET BY 2013
Reported Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 51 per 1000.

Why is this important?
All Indigenous children in Victoria require a nurturing and supportive family and community to enable them to achieve their full potential. For vulnerable children who are exposed to child abuse and neglect it is important that they are protected and supported so they can have the best chance in life.12

A child protection substantiation is the determination that a child or young person is ‘in need of protection’, following a period of investigation of the subject matter of a report and information arising through that investigation.13 Reducing the rate of substantiations can be achieved by strengthening and supporting Indigenous families.

Victoria has a very high rate of child protection substantiations among Indigenous children compared with non Indigenous children.14 However, this may be reflective of processes that mean more children at risk are being identified.

The rate of child protection substantiations is an important measure of the overall safety and wellbeing of children.

12 Victorian Government Health Information 2009.
13 As defined in Section 162 of the Children Youth and Families Act 2005.
14 The Australian Institute for Health and Welfare cautions against comparing substantiations across jurisdictions as legislation, policy and practice variations impact on rates of substantiation.
What action has been taken?

A range of universal specialist and targeted assistance is available to assist Indigenous families care for children through Koori Maternity Services, Aboriginal Best Start and Child FIRST.

The Victorian Government is working closely with the Indigenous communities, especially with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of child protection and related services.

Indigenous families in the child protection system are supported through culturally inclusive services including the Aboriginal Family Decision Making Program, the Aboriginal Family Preservation and Restoration Programs and the Aboriginal Child Specialist Advice and Support Service.

Aboriginal Family Support Innovation projects aim to divert a significant proportion of Indigenous families notified to child protection services to community-based services. Their support strengthens families and aims to minimise circumstances that lead to re-notifications of Indigenous children and young people and the progression of families into the child protection system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate per 1000</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
<th>All children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: Rate per 1000 children aged 0-16 years in substantiations by Indigenous status

Want to know more?

Go to:
www.vacca.org
Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework Report 2008
Indicator 2.15 Child protection
SECTION 3

Strategic Area for Action 1: Improve Maternal Health and Early Childhood Heath and Development

INDICATOR 1.6

Proportion of Indigenous children attending Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH) at key age milestones.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

In 2007-08, the percentage of Indigenous children accessing MCH services at key ages and stages is lower, compared to non Indigenous children (Figure 11).

There is a drop in Indigenous children accessing MCH services at 8 months of age and a further decrease at 12 months of age (Figure 12).

TARGET BY 2013

The gap in participation at MCH Service key age and stage visits, between Indigenous and non Indigenous children will be at least halved.

Why is this important?

To close the gap in life expectancy and quality of life for Indigenous Victorians, babies must be provided with the best possible start to life. The early years are critical to the long term health and development of all children. Improving outcomes for Indigenous mothers and babies is one of the Victorian Government’s highest priorities.

The MCH Service is a highly valued universal service that helps and supports young children and their families. It is jointly funded by state and local government and delivered by local government.

The MCH Service makes contact with new mothers within a few weeks of birth. This occurs by virtue of a legislated requirement for hospitals to notify all births to the relevant local council and for the council to send a nurse to visit the mother’s home.

The MCH Service provides a comprehensive and focused approach for the promotion, prevention, early detection and intervention of the physical, emotional and social factors affecting young children and their families.\(^{15}\)

What action has been taken?

The MCH Service exists for all children from birth to school age and their families. The Koori Maternity Services program is provided through 11 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. Koori Maternity Services provide continuity of care from antenatal through to birthing and postnatal care, including engagement with MCH Services, In Home Support and seamless transition between maternity care and these services, together with other support services.

MCH Services are in 20 municipalities across Victoria providing an outreach service to Indigenous communities. This has led to an increase in the participation rates for Indigenous children in the MCH Services from 79.8% in 2006-07 to 86.8% in 2007-08 at the 2 week visit stage.

The Victorian Aboriginal Health Service based in Fitzroy has been funded to provide MCH Services for children and families who access other services from that location.

10 Best Start sites (including two Aboriginal Best Start sites) have nominated ‘increase participation in the MCH service’ as one of their three indicators in their action plans. All partnerships are required to give priority to engagement with Indigenous communities and organisations in their area.

17 *Best Start* sites (including three *Aboriginal Best Start* sites) have prioritised ‘increase rate of breastfeeding’ as one of the indicators in their action plans.

13 *Best Start* sites (including two *Aboriginal Best Start* sites) have nominated ‘increased rate of children who participate in physical activity’ as a priority in action plans.

Supported playgroups at *Best Start* sites have been an effective strategy to support priority target population groups, including Indigenous children and their families or carers to access services. Playgroup facilitators have successfully linked children and families into MCH services.

**CASE STUDY**

The Welcome Baby to Country project is a contemporary concept based on the Aboriginal tradition of ‘Tandurrum’, which was a ceremony performed by the Traditional Owners to recognise and welcome other visiting Indigenous people and families upon entering their traditional lands and country.

In this specific context, the Welcome Baby to Country Ceremony facilitated a positive and inspiring engagement of Traditional Owners and the broader Indigenous community to celebrate the birth of Indigenous babies in the Wimmera/Mallee region, focus attention on children’s needs and achievements and acknowledge the role of parents, carers and families in their growth and development.

The Welcome Baby to Country project was a joint initiative between Barengi Gadjin Land Council, Delkaia Aboriginal Best Start project and Horsham Rural City Council.

The project was also successful in increasing the engagement of relevant support services with Indigenous parents, carers and families and in providing an opportunity to supply information, resources and assistance on children’s needs and health and wellbeing issues.

This initiative won the 2008 Minister for Children and Early Childhood Education’s Early Years Award.

Want to know more?

Go to:
SECTION 3

Strategic Area for Action 2: Improve Literacy and Numeracy

INDICATOR 2.1

Improve school attendance rates for Indigenous students.

As part of the national agenda to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous children, the Victorian Government is participating in the development of a new Indigenous Education Action Plan which will include targets for improved attendance. In addition, the Victorian Government has set itself a more challenging timeframe than is expected to be agreed nationally, effectively halving the time taken in achieving parity in attendance rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

In 2008, the average attendance rate\(^\text{16}\) for Indigenous primary school students in government schools was 88.8%, compared with 87.3% in 2007 (Figure 13).

In 2008, the average attendance rate for Indigenous secondary school students in government schools was 83.7% compared with 82.2% in 2007 (Figure 14).

\(^{16}\) The attendance rate data for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Victorian Government schools relates only to those schools that reported at least one Indigenous enrolment.

TARGET BY 2013

There will be no gap in attendance for Years Prep to Grade 6 between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

There will be no gap in attendance for Years 7-10 between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Why is this important?

Education in Victoria is compulsory. All children aged between 5 and 16 must go to school every day that school is open. Attending school every day is important not only to learning and development, but also to allow children and young people to build and maintain friendships.

\[\text{Figure 13: Average attendance rate for primary school students in government schools}\]

\[\text{Figure 14: Average attendance rate for secondary school students in government schools}\]
What action has been taken?

New Student Engagement Policy Guidelines titled ‘Effective Schools are Engaging Schools’ were released in March 2009.

The Student Engagement Policy outlines a school community’s shared expectations in the areas of student engagement, attendance and behaviour.

Each school’s policy will support the rights, and articulate the expectations of every member of the school community to engage in and promote a safe and inclusive educational environment.

The policy builds the school’s capacity to respond to student circumstances, in cases where a student begins to disengage from their learning, regular attendance is not consistent or positive behaviours are not demonstrated. The Engagement Policy enables schools to outline a series of processes, actions and consequences developed in consultation with the school community.

Student engagement and wellbeing is one of the three key student outcomes that schools are accountable for under the School and Network Accountability and Improvement Frameworks.

The goals and targets set by the school and the network to strengthen student engagement and wellbeing reflect the school and networks overall vision and values and articulate their strategies for improvement.

Wannik outlines a number of actions targeted at improving student engagement and, in turn, improving attendance rates.

These initiatives include:
- the expansion of an Indigenous specific version of the It’s Not OK to Be Away attendance strategy
- expanding the Managed Individual Pathways initiative into Years 8 and 9 for Indigenous students at risk of disengaging from school
- supporting regions, networks and schools to build on effective programs already delivering improvements in attendance and engagement, including breakfast programs and the development of community meeting spaces.

Want to know more?
Go to:
SECTION 3

Strategic Area for Action 2:
Improve Literacy and Numeracy

INDICATOR 2.2

Improve literacy and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Indigenous students.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Detail on Indigenous student performance against the NAPLAN Band targets is summarised on Page 49.

TARGET BY 2013

The following targets are based on the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests which are conducted in May each year for all students across Australia in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in the same year level are assessed on reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

As part of the national agenda to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous children, states and territories have committed to halve the gap in literacy and numeracy by 2018. In order to achieve and improve on these national targets the Victorian Government has set itself aspirational timeframes and milestones to guide action over the next 5 years.

For Year 3 Reading, the gap in the percentage of students in bands 1 or 2 between Indigenous and non Indigenous students will be reduced by 75%.

For Year 5 Numeracy, the gap in the percentage of students in bands 3 (or below) or 4 between Indigenous and non Indigenous students will be reduced by 75%.

For Years 3, 5 and 7 Reading and Numeracy, the percentage of Indigenous students in the top two bands will increase by 10%.

For Year 9 Reading and Numeracy, the percentage of Indigenous students in the top two bands will double.

Why is this important?

High-quality school education and literacy and numeracy outcomes are key determinants of choice and opportunity for young people throughout their lives.

There are nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for literacy and numeracy at a particular year level. These standards replace the previous national literacy and numeracy benchmarks.

In this context, ‘minimum acceptable standard’ means a critical level of literacy and numeracy without which a student will have difficulty making sufficient progress at school.

Whilst it is important to note that the data source for determining literacy and numeracy performance changed in 2008, and the two sets are not directly comparable, there are strong indications of significant progress in closing the literacy and numeracy gap in recent years.

For instance, in 2002 the gaps for Years 3, 5 and 7 reading were 14.1, 21.4 and 23.7 percentage points respectively.

The current 2008 data is the first year in the new data series and forms the new base for future reporting.¹⁷

¹⁷ 2008 data for Indigenous students was subject to measurement error of between +2.2 and +3.6% and as such actual gaps in performance between Indigenous and non Indigenous students may be smaller or greater than indicated in graphics.
**Figure 15:** Year 3 Victorian students reaching national minimum standards for reading and numeracy: 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 16:** Year 5 Victorian students reaching national minimum standards for reading and numeracy: 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 17:** Year 7 Victorian students reaching national minimum standards for reading and numeracy: 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>96.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 18:** Year 9 Victorian students reaching national minimum standards for reading and numeracy: 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Note:** Year 9 reading and numeracy data is available for 2008 only. Note that because the Year 9 cohort is smaller, errors of ~+4.5 apply to these data, and as such the gaps may be correspondingly smaller or greater than they appear from the tables.
What action has been taken?

Under Wannik, 15 Koorie specific Literacy Coaches have been funded for 2009-10. This is in addition to the 45 general Literacy Coaches funded for this period.

In 2009, the Government established two tutorial schemes for primary and secondary Indigenous students who require additional assistance with literacy and numeracy.

The Government has recently announced that it is allocating an additional $13 million to the Wannik strategy, specifically to close the gap in literacy and numeracy outcomes by expanding the Wannik Tutorial Assistance Scheme for primary students.

In particular, assistance will be widened to include students in all year levels from Year 2 to Year 6. Eligibility will be broadened so that the proportion of Indigenous students receiving assistance will increase from 5% to 40%. Individual students will also receive more hours of assistance than in the past.

Importantly, the program will also put in place the structures to ensure a personalised learning loop for each student, to ensure that the tutoring is geared to individual needs, and that the classroom teacher is both aware of and links with the progress made.

In addition, during 2009 the following coaching initiatives have continued across Victoria:
- Teaching and Learning
- Ultranet.

Two hundred Teaching & Learning Coaches and 50 Ultranet Coaches were funded for 2009. All Coaches form part of the Victorian regional school improvement teams and work with teachers in identified schools for specified periods of time.

Coaching takes place in teachers’ classrooms with the goal of improving the quality of teaching in literacy, mathematics and science and supporting high quality use of the Ultranet for planning and delivery of curriculum online.

The aims of the initiatives are to improve:
- student learning outcomes, especially in the areas of literacy, mathematics and/or science, for students in identified schools
- teacher knowledge and skills related to effective literacy, mathematics and science teaching
- teacher capacity in the use of ICT, particularly for online curriculum planning, assessment and delivery in preparation for the Ultranet
- school capacity to support improved student learning outcomes.

A significant number of Indigenous students in Victoria will benefit from the funds made available through the COAG National Partnership Agreement for Low Social Economic Schools and National Partnership Agreement on Literacy and Numeracy.
### Table 1: Selected Achievement of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in Numeracy and Reading, by Indigenous Status\(^{19}\)\(^{20}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 Reading</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 1</td>
<td>8.3% (+/-2.5)</td>
<td>2.0% (+/-0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 2</td>
<td>19.8% (+/-3.6)</td>
<td>7.9% (+/-0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
<td>16.3% (+/-2.9)</td>
<td>25.2% (+/-0.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 6 and above</td>
<td>6.8% (+/-2.2)</td>
<td>22.1% (+/-0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 Numeracy</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 5</td>
<td>16.6% (+/-4.1)</td>
<td>25.8% (+/-0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 6 and above</td>
<td>4.4% (+/-1.7)</td>
<td>17.2% (+/-0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 Reading</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 7</td>
<td>10.2% (+/-3.2)</td>
<td>20.8% (+/-0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 8 and above</td>
<td>2.6% (+/-1.2)</td>
<td>10.7% (+/-0.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 Numeracy</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 3 and below</td>
<td>13.1% (+/-3.4)</td>
<td>2.8% (+/-0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 4</td>
<td>27.7% (+/-5.1)</td>
<td>13.4% (+/-0.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 7</td>
<td>5.4% (+/-2.2)</td>
<td>17.4% (+/-0.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 8 and above</td>
<td>1.7% (+/-1.1)</td>
<td>8.7% (+/-0.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7 Reading</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 8</td>
<td>4.6% (+/-1.8)</td>
<td>18.6% (+/-0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 9 and above</td>
<td>0.9% (+/-0.9)</td>
<td>8.0% (+/-0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7 Numeracy</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 8</td>
<td>4.6% (+/-1.7)</td>
<td>19.1% (+/-0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 9 and above</td>
<td>2.0% (+/-1.0)</td>
<td>12.8% (+/-1.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 9 Reading</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 9</td>
<td>3.9% (+/-1.9)</td>
<td>15.8% (+/-0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 10</td>
<td>0.5% (+/-0.6)</td>
<td>5.9% (+/-0.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 9 Numeracy</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 9</td>
<td>3.4% (+/-2.0)</td>
<td>16.3% (+/-0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 10</td>
<td>0.9% (+/-0.8)</td>
<td>8.4% (+/-1.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that the scale for each year level is divided into ten bands to cover the full range of student achievement in the tests. The bands map the increasing complexity of the skills assessed by NAPLAN. Six of the bands are utilised for reporting student performance at each Year level. The Year 3 report shows Bands 1 to 6, the Year 5 report shows Bands 3 to 8, the Year 7 report shows Bands 4 to 9, and the Year 9 report shows Bands 5 to 10.

For each year level, a minimum standard is defined and located on the common underlying scale. The minimum standards are as follows:
- Year 3: Band 2
- Year 5: Band 4
- Year 7: Band 5
- Year 9: Band 6

These standards represent increasingly challenging skills and require increasingly higher scores on the NAPLAN scale.

Want to know more?

\(^{19}\) NAPLAN results are reported using five national achievement scales, one for each of the NAPLAN assessment domains of Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy. Each scale consists of ten bands, which represent the increasing complexity of the skills and understandings assessed by NAPLAN from Years 3 to 9. Six of these bands are used for reporting student performance in each year level.

\(^{20}\) The average age and years of schooling are determined as at the time of testing. The percentages of students represented in the tables have been rounded and may not sum to 100. Exempt students were not assessed and are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard. Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the year level, as reported by schools, which includes those absent and withdrawn.
SECTION 3

Strategic Area for Action 3: Improve Year 12 completion or equivalent qualification, develop pathways to employment, further education and training.

INDICATOR 3.1

Improve transition to Year 10 for Indigenous students.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The 2008 apparent retention rate\(^{21}\) for Indigenous student's Years 7 to 10 decreased to 82.2% from 88.3% in 2007 (Figure 19).

The 2008 apparent retention rate\(^{22}\) for Indigenous students Years 10 to 12 decreased to 50.9% from 56.7% in 2007 (Figure 20).

Even though in 2008, the retention rate for Indigenous students at 50.9% is significantly lower than the 2007 rate, there has been an increase in Year 10–12 retention rate over the last decade of 4.8 percentage points for Indigenous students.

TARGET BY 2013

95% of Indigenous students will commence Year 10.

Why is this important?

Growing evidence shows the importance of continuing school after the period of compulsory schooling ends (Year 10).\(^{23}\)

There is a strong correlation between the level of schooling attained and a person’s employment prospects. In 2006, the employment rate and household income of Indigenous people increased with the level of schooling they had attained.\(^{24}\)

---

\(^{21}\) The apparent rate of retention is defined as the number of full time school students in a designated level/year of education as a percentage of their respective cohort group, which is at the commencement of their secondary schooling at Year 7.

\(^{22}\) The apparent rate of retention from Year 10 to Year 12 has been derived by expressing the number of full time school students enrolled in Year 12 in the current year as a proportion of the number of full time school students enrolled in Year 10 two years prior.

\(^{23}\) Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2006.

\(^{24}\) OID P6.25
What action has been taken?

Managed Individual Pathways

The Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) initiative ensures that all students 15 years and over in government schools are provided with individual pathway plans as a means to continue education, training or full time employment.

MIPs aims to help young people to:
- make a smooth transition from compulsory schooling to further education, training and employment
- develop skills to manage their pathways throughout their working lives
- develop their knowledge, understanding and experience of opportunities in education, training and employment.

Under *Wannik*, MIPs has been extended to all Indigenous students in Years 8 and 9, meaning all Indigenous Year 8 to 12 students will have a MIPs plan.

Additional support is provided to students who are at risk of disengaging or not making a successful transition to further education, training or secure employment. Students participating in youth pathways programs in TAFE or Adult and Community Education institutions also have pathways plans.

Youth Transition Support Initiative

The Youth Transition Support Initiative assists disengaged young people aged 15 to 19 to obtain sustainable education, training or employment.

There are 24 transition support workers employed by funded organisations across 12 Local Learning and Employment Network areas within Victoria. These areas were selected based on rates of Year 12 or equivalent completion and numbers of young people who are not in education, training or full time employment.

Three extra *Koorie Youth Transition Workers* funded through *Wannik* have been employed in Darebin, Morwell and Shepparton.

School Focused Youth Service

The School Focused Youth Service is a joint initiative between the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Human Services.

The focus of the initiative is the coordination of preventative and early intervention strategies for young people, to be delivered through school and community clusters. There have been 41 school community clusters established across the state to ensure that services are coordinated and responsive to the needs of young people.

Local Learning and Employment Networks

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) bring together education providers, industry, community organisations, individuals and government to improve education, training and employment outcomes for young people in Victoria.

There is a statewide network of 31 LLENs which were established in 2001-02. They focus on young people aged 15-19, with a particular emphasis on those at risk of not completing Year 12 or equivalent.

Regional Youth Commitments

Regional Youth Commitments are a framework negotiated within and between all local and regional stakeholders to link and coordinate pathway and transitions support arrangements for 15-19 year olds.

The framework operates within Department of Education and Early Childhood Development regions with sub regional implementation coordinated by LLENs.

Regional Youth Commitments seek to ensure that there is continuous support for a young person to remain in/or re-enter education and training and attain a minimum of Year 12 or equivalent qualification.
SECTION 3

Strategic Area for Action 3: Improve Year 12 completion or equivalent qualification, develop pathways to employment, further education and training.

INDICATOR 3.2
Increase completion of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications for Indigenous students.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The 2008 Year 12 or equivalent completion number for Indigenous students in the school sector increased to 225 from 190 in 2007 (Figure 21).

Further data analysis has revealed that in 2008:
- 336 Indigenous people completed Year 12 or equivalent\(^{28}\) in the VET sector\(^{29}\)
- of these, 111 Indigenous students completed Year 12 or equivalent\(^{30}\) by the age of 19.

TARGET BY 2020\(^{25}\)
The gap for Year 12 completion or equivalent\(^{26}\) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people will be at least halved.

Why is this important?
Young people who do not complete Year 12 are less likely to engage in study or work, and are less likely to access further education, training, and employment, compared with young people who do complete Year 12.\(^{27}\)

Figure 21: Number of Indigenous students who completed Year 12 or equivalent in the school sector

25 Note this target has 2020 timeline to ensure alignment with the COAG target.
26 Caution: these figures include all certificates attained within the Schools Sector, which are largely VCE certificates. VET certificates attained in the Schools Sector i.e. VET in Schools Certificates (regardless of level) are also included. The figure does not include certificates attained in the non school (VET) Sector. The figures include all Indigenous students who attained a certificate in the schools sector in a given year. Year 12 or equivalent attainment is usually reported for specific age groups; including at age 19 and 20-24. The figures have not been checked for duplicate records. When calculating Year 12 or equivalent attainment, all certificates should be distinct or unique. That is, a student certificate should be excluded from the count if this student has previously received a Year 12 or equivalent certificate, either in previous years or in the same year.
27 OID 2009 P.4.51
28 Certificate II or above.
29 Includes TAFEs, Adult Community Education Providers and Private Providers.
30 Certificate II or above.
What action has been taken?

**Wannik**

**Expanding Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS)**

The MIPS initiative has been expanded into Years 8 and 9 for all Indigenous students. This means that all Indigenous students from Year 8 to Year 12 will have a MIPS plan.

All schools with Indigenous students have received a per capita grant of $200 per Indigenous student to assist with the development of the plans.

In addition, professional development on the student mapping tool has been provided across the state to school leaders.

**Youth Transition Support Initiative**

Three extra Koorie Youth Transition Workers funded through the Wannik Strategy have been employed in Darebin, Morwell and Shepparton. The workers have a specific focus on Indigenous students at risk of disengagement from education.

**Wannik Senior Scholarships**

Wannik Education Scholarships, valued at $5000 each, were awarded to 24 Indigenous students. The scholarships acknowledge the recipients’ sound academic achievement and strong involvement in the Indigenous community.

Up to ten Year 10 Indigenous students demonstrating aptitude in Science and Mathematics are also fully funded for a place at ASSETS C21: Aboriginal Summer School for Excellence in Technology and Science. This residential summer school, being held in Adelaide from 13 – 22 December 2009, is designed to promote excellence in technology and science among young Indigenous people.

**Sports and Arts Engagement Programs**

Support has been provided to the Munarra Youth Futures Project based in Shepparton.

The project will support and assist young people and their families with goal setting, personal development, career counselling, as well as mentoring young people with support, guidance and companionship when required.

The Clontarf Football Academy has committed to the establishment of academies in Mildura, Robinvale, Swan Hill, Bairnsdale and Warrnambool.

Three Koorie Girls Dance Academies are being established in Mooroopna, Ballarat and Bendigo. These will engage girls in Years 7 - 9 with their schooling, close the gap through the development of literacy and numeracy skills and provide opportunities for mentoring and the development of youth transition pathways.
Leadership program

The School for Student Leadership and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have entered into an agreement where the costs of Indigenous students attending the school have been fully funded. Koorie educators will also be available when students are in attendance and schools with Indigenous students in their population will be encouraged to give them priority in the selection process. Twenty Indigenous students will attend the school over the course of 2009.

Expanded uptake of Senior Tutorial Assistance

Demand for Senior Tutorial Assistance has far exceeded expectations. In fact, over $1.0 million in extra funding has been provided to this program in 2009, to cater for the four-fold increase in the take up of tutoring in Years 9-12.

Wurreker Strategy

Skills Victoria’s Wurreker strategy aims to address the training needs and aspirations of Indigenous people. As part of the strategy, 23 Indigenous Liaison Officers are employed across Victorian TAFE campuses.

Other initiatives include:
- development of an annual state Koorie Training Plan
- Indigenous controlled training centres
- a range of training providers for specific Indigenous Training programs
- funding to TAFE Institutions for additional training delivery to Indigenous students.

Wurreker promotes links at the regional level between secondary schools, Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, LLENs, TAFE and Higher Education Institutions.31

Want to know more?

Go to:

Want to know more?

Go to:

31 The Wurreker strategy for Indigenous VET brings together key community, training and employment representatives to undertake annual planning around priorities for the delivery of training that focuses on employment outcomes.
**Strategic Area for Action 3:** Improve Year 12 completion or equivalent qualification, develop pathways to employment, further education and training.

**INDICATOR 3.3**
Increase the successful transition of Indigenous people aged 18-24 years to employment and/or further education.

**MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

In 2006, 42% of Indigenous young people aged 18-24 were engaged in full time employment and/or further education. This compares to 72% for non Indigenous young people aged 18-24.

For Indigenous Victorians aged over 15 years who have completed a non school qualification, the most common qualification is Certificate III and IV (Figure 22).

**TARGET BY 2013**
The gap in transition into employment and/or further education, between Indigenous and non Indigenous young people aged 18-24 years will be reduced by at least 20%.

**Why is this important?**
Young people who are not achieving in secondary school and leave without a school qualification may have fewer opportunities for work and further study. As time passes, their chances of gaining employment or re-entering full time education appear to decline even further.\(^3^2\)

Nationally, in every age group, Indigenous people who had completed Year 12 were more than twice as likely as those who had completed to Year 9 or below to have a full-time job.

For young people, aged 18–24 years, the rate of full-time employment for those who had completed Year 12 was four times higher compared with those who had left school at Year 9 or below.\(^3^3\)

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\(^3^2\) OID 2009 P.6.29.

\(^3^3\) 2008, ABS, The Health and Welfare of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
What action has been taken?

On Track

On Track is a Victorian Government initiative designed to ensure that Year 10-12 government and non government school students are on a pathway to further education, training or employment after leaving school.

The On Track program builds on the Managed Individual Pathways program. On Track ensures that Year 10-12 students are contacted after leaving school and assisted with further advice if they are not studying or in full time employment.

On Track also includes a research component to provide a picture of what happens to young people after they leave school.

Young people who are not studying or in full time employment and request assistance when surveyed are referred to relevant local agencies.

A Guaranteed Place in TAFE

The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 provides a guaranteed place in TAFE Institutions, the Centre for Adult Education, Adult Multicultural Education Services and participating adult community education providers, to young people who have not completed Year 12 or equivalent.

The Guarantee is a key element of the Government’s commitment to deliver quality education and training to all young people now and in the future. Victoria is the first Australian State or Territory to make this commitment in legislation. Under the legislation, a person is eligible for a guaranteed place if they are under the age of 20 years on 1 January of the year in which the training takes place, and has not completed Year 12 or equivalent.

Young people will be able to access all courses available to other students at the particular provider. Education providers will work to place young people in courses that will meet their needs and are consistent with government training priorities.

Want to know more?

Go to:

www.skills.vic.gov.au
Strategic Area for Action 4:
Prevent Family Violence and Improve Justice Outcomes

INDICATOR 4.1
Increase the police response to and taking action on any Indigenous family violence incident reported to them.

INDICATOR 4.2
Reduce repeat police call outs for Indigenous family violence incidents.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
In 2008-09, the number of Family Incidents Reports by Indigenous aggrieved family members was 1,058. From these reports, charges were laid in 28.2% of cases (Figure 23).

Of the Family Incidents Reports made by Indigenous aggrieved family members in 2008-09, 766 incidents required repeat attendance from Victoria Police. From these reports, charges were laid in 30.3% of cases (Figure 24).

TARGET BY 2013
INDICATOR 4.1 There will be no difference in the police response and action taken to Indigenous family violence incidents.

INDICATOR 4.2 There will be no difference in repeat police call outs for Indigenous family violence incidents.

Why is this important?

The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce defined family violence as:

‘An issue focused around a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. It extends to one-on-one fighting, abuse of Indigenous community workers as well as self-harm, injury and suicide.’

Violence can be a significant threat to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous families, particularly women and children.

Family violence undermines aspirations for children, families and communities to learn and develop, to be healthy and fulfill their potential.

Significant investment and effort underway in Victoria since 2005 has had a measurable impact on the understanding and awareness of family violence. Reforms have included a new Police Code of Practice and new family violence legislation. These reforms have resulted in a significant increase in reporting of family violence and levels of police action in response.

### What action has been taken?

The focus of community and government effort has been on developing a longer term vision and plan to prevent and reduce the impact of family violence in Victorian Indigenous communities.

*The Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum*, a community led partnership between Indigenous communities and the Victorian Government, was established in April 2005 to address Indigenous family violence.


This unique partnership is the first of its kind on Indigenous family violence in Australia and aims to guide joint government and community efforts to prevent and respond to family violence in Indigenous communities over the next ten years.

The *Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum* continues to oversee the development of the implementation of the *Indigenous Family Violence 10 Year Plan* via three working groups including: Implementation and Evaluation, Prevention and Cultural Competency.

This process complements the existing consultative structures including the Aboriginal Justice Forum and the Aboriginal Human Services Forum.

### Want to know more?

Go to: *Indigenous Family Violence Strategy*

www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au

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36 The Aggrieved Family Member (AFM) has made previous Family Incident Reports to police.
Strategic Area for Action 4: Prevent Family Violence and Improve Justice Outcomes

Strategic Change indicators 4.3 - 4.7 are underpinned by the Aboriginal Justice Agreement: Phase 2 (AJA2) which was launched in 2006. Development of the third phase or AJA3 has commenced and may lead to an adjustment of the targets in 2010 and alignment with the VIAF cycle.

INDICATOR 4.3
Reduce the number of times Indigenous young people are processed by police.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
In 2008-09, Indigenous young people (aged 10-17) were 3.1 times more likely to be processed by Victoria Police than non Indigenous young people (Figure 25).

TARGET BY 2013
The number of times Indigenous young people will be more likely to be processed by police compared to non Indigenous young people will decrease to 3.5.

Why is this important?
In order to address Indigenous over representation in the criminal justice system it is crucial to reduce the number of Indigenous young people coming into contact with police and the frequency with which they are processed by police over time.

This is an increasingly important issue because the proportion of the Indigenous population aged 25 and under is growing rapidly and is at a greater risk of being socially and economically disadvantaged.

As well as contending with the multiple effects of disadvantage, such as higher levels of unemployment, lower education achievements, socio-economic factors, poorer health and housing, greater likelihood of being in out of home care, Indigenous young people face additional challenges stemming from past and present racism and discrimination.

Indigenous young people have higher rates of arrest, remand and incarceration and lower utilisation of options that divert them from further penetration into the criminal justice systems.

Since 2004-05 the rate at which Indigenous young people (aged 10-17 years) processed by police has decreased while the rate for non Indigenous young people who are processed has increased.

In 2004-05, per thousand of the relevant population, 75.6 Indigenous young people were processed by Victoria Police compared with 19.3 non Indigenous young people. In 2008-09 these figures are 71.8 and 23.1 respectively.

Figure 25: Indigenous young people processed by police 37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Victoria Police, Department of Justice population projections based on ABS 2006 Census.

37 These figures represent the ratio of distinct young (10-17 years) Indigenous (alleged) offenders processed per thousand to distinct young non Indigenous (alleged) offenders processed per thousand. Population estimates are calculated by the Department of Justice based on the 2001 and 2006 ABS Census figures. The average growth rate of these demographic groups between 2001 and 2006 is calculated and used to estimate the size of these groups in future.
CASE STUDY
The Frontline Youth Initiatives Program (Frontline) is a grants based program that enables local Indigenous communities to engage their young people in pro-social activities such as sport, recreation, culture and life skills. Participation in these activities strengthens connections between Indigenous young people, family, culture and community. Frontline projects are initiated and developed by communities as local solutions to their own identified needs, and conducted with community input, which ensures credibility and local support. Frontline projects have facilitated partnerships between Indigenous community organisations, mainstream agencies (Victoria Police, other community organisations, regional TAFEs and sporting groups) and community members.

More than 30 community based initiatives have been funded through Frontline involving around 670 Indigenous young people and more than 1000 community members. A 2008 sample survey of 283 participants engaged in nine different projects indicated that Frontline delivered positive impacts for participants, including:

- one in four returned to education or training programs
- eight percent of working age participants secured new ongoing employment
- of the 31 young people with prior negative contact with the criminal justice system, only 5 had further contact
- none of the ‘at-risk’ young people had negative contact with the criminal justice system during their engagement with Frontline projects.

What action has been taken?
The Aboriginal Justice Agreement was developed in conjunction with Indigenous communities and was launched in June 2000. It is a landmark agreement which enshrines a formal partnership between the Victorian Government and Indigenous communities. In 2006 the Victorian Government renewed its commitment to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement by launching a second phase, AJA2.

AJA2 aims to improve justice outcomes by minimising Indigenous over representation in the criminal justice system and improving Indigenous access to mechanisms designed to uphold their human, civil and legal rights.

AJA2 is built on a strategic framework of prevention, early intervention, increased diversion and reduced reoffending that aims to halt the progression of Indigenous young people into the justice system. A number of AJA2 initiatives aimed at reducing negative contact between Indigenous young people and the police are described below.

The Koori Night Patrol Program (KNP) operates in six locations across Victoria (Mildura, Bairnsdale, Robinvale, Shepparton, Latrobe and the Northern Metropolitan area.) The KNP are staffed by volunteers from local Indigenous communities who offer after hours transportation to Indigenous people, particularly young people, at risk of coming into contact with police or becoming a victim of crime. Data collected from the patrols in 2008-09 indicates that KNP is regularly providing after hours services and transporting at risk Indigenous people from public places to their homes or a safe place.

The Victoria Police Youth Resource Officer Program is in place in a number of local government areas. The Program delivers crime prevention activities to Indigenous young people, making it less likely that they will offend. Victoria Police is also involved in activities aimed at fostering positive relationships, and building trust between Indigenous young people and police such as the Murray River Marathon and Victoria Police High Challenge Camp.

Young people who disengage from education or work are generally at higher risk of offending. The Koori Early School Leavers and Youth Employment Program targets Indigenous young people aged between 10 and 20 years who are disconnected or poorly connected to school, who have disengaged from education, training or employment and are at risk of contact or ongoing contact with the justice system. The Koori Early School Leavers and Youth Employment Program will explore avenues to reengage Indigenous young people with school, alternative educational, vocational or employment pathways.

Want to know more?
Go to:
Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
www.justice.vic.gov.au
INDICATOR 4.4
Increase the proportion of Indigenous young people (aged 10-17 years) cautioned when processed by police.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
The proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned when processed by Victorian Police will increase to 35%.

TARGET BY 2013
The proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned when processed by Victorian Police will increase to 35%.

Why is this important?
Preventing initial contact with the criminal justice system is fundamental to reducing Indigenous young people coming into contact with the system.

Cautioning aims to minimise the likelihood of Indigenous young people proceeding into the criminal justice system. Cautioning also decreases the likelihood that young people, in particular, will become entrenched in a cycle of re-offending.

There is considerable variability in this data over time, as small changes in the number of young people cautioned by police can lead to relatively large changes in the proportion of young people cautioned. Some of this improvement can be attributed to programs such as the Cautioning and Youth Diversion Program.

Data Source: Victoria Police

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned</th>
<th>Proportion of Non Indigenous young people cautioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 26: Proportion of distinct (alleged) young (10-17 years) offenders cautioned by police, by Indigenous status

38 OID 2009 P.10.33.
39 Percentages are based on the number of individual Indigenous young alleged offenders cautioned when processed by police. Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009 published by the Productivity Commission reported that the proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned by police in Victoria increased from 11.7% to 15% between 2004-05 and 2007-08. However this figure is based on the total number of alleged offences committed by Indigenous young people rather than the number of individuals processed.
What action has been taken?

As outlined in relation to Indicator 4.3, the second phase of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement aims to intervene at every point along the criminal justice continuum to maximise opportunities for diversion and reduce re-offending by Indigenous Victorians. Under AJA2, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service in conjunction with Victoria Police run a Cautioning and Youth Diversion Program which aims to improve justice outcomes for Indigenous young people.

The Cautioning and Youth Diversion Program was piloted in Mildura and Wellington and engages cautioned young people in community based services and attempts to reduce the likelihood that cautioned young people will reoffend.

The pilots have successfully shown that through increased use of police cautioning and greater involvement of parents and guardians, lower rates of recidivism for Indigenous young people can be achieved.

The program was extended in 2008-09 to include the North-West Metropolitan, Hume and Loddon-Mallee communities.

Want to know more?

Go to:
Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
www.justice.vic.gov.au
Strategic Area for Action 4: Prevent Family Violence and Improve Justice Outcomes

**INDICATOR 4.5**
Reduce the proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody.

**INDICATOR 4.6**
Reduce the proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison rather than other alternatives.

**MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TARGET BY 2013**

**INDICATOR 4.5** The proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody will decrease to 20%.

**INDICATOR 4.6** The proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison rather than other alternatives will decrease to 28%.

**Why is this important?**

In Victoria, Indigenous people are over represented in both bail and on remand and are more likely to be incarcerated or placed on summons than non Indigenous people.\(^{40}\)

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\(^{40}\) Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, 2004.
What action has been taken?

A number of mainstream and Indigenous specific diversionary programs are in place to reduce the number of Indigenous people detained prior to sentencing, and the number and proportion of Indigenous people sentenced to prison. In particular, a range of initiatives have been implemented under AJA2, which are outlined below.

As part of the Court Integrated Services Program Aboriginal Liaison Officers are located at the Melbourne Magistrates’ Court and the La Trobe Valley Law Courts. During 2008-09, 165 Indigenous clients were referred to this program.

The Department of Justice has employed Aboriginal Community Engagement Officers to improve access to mainstream court diversion and support programs for Indigenous people.

Koori Courts are designed to address Indigenous over representation in the justice system and reduce alienation within the Court sentencing process by providing a culturally sensitive court environment.

An evaluation of the Koori Court pilot found that it was successfully meeting its community building and criminal justice related objectives. Koori Courts have been established in Magistrates’ Courts in Broadmeadows, Shepparton, Warrnambool, Mildura, Moe/ La Trobe Valley, Bairnsdale and Swan Hill. In addition two Children’s Koori Courts operate in Mildura and Melbourne.

In November 2008, a County Koori Court opened at the La Trobe Valley Law Courts as a four-year pilot project. It is the first of its kind in Australia. The County Koori Court model was designed in partnership between Indigenous communities and the County Court.

The Indigenous Community Corrections Officer Program provides culturally sensitive supervision of Indigenous offenders subject to community-based orders. Under this program, six Indigenous Community Corrections Officers assist to develop and maintain relationships between Community Correctional Services and the Indigenous community to divert Indigenous people from serious contact with the correctional system.

Similarly, the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program is designed to reduce the number of Indigenous offenders breaching Community Based Orders. The program utilises different approaches including training and providing mentors to Indigenous offenders so they can successfully complete their orders. The project aims to reduce recidivism by facilitating positive contact between young people and the justice system.

The Local Justice Worker Program employs Local Justice Workers in 10 Indigenous community organisations and agencies. These workers foster positive relationships between the local Indigenous community and justice agencies, particularly Community Corrections and the Sherriff’s Office.

In May 2008, The Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place (WNLP) commenced in South Gippsland. This is a residential diversionary facility for Indigenous men on community-based orders. At WNLP participants receive support to complete their community based order in order to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Participants reside at WNLP for three to six months and each participant has an individual case management plan that addresses their particular needs. Since it began, WNLP has had 63 men commence the program.

The Koori Intensive Bail Support Program is for Indigenous young people from the adult justice system and the Children’s Court (on deferral of sentence status) who are at high risk of breaching bail and/or re-offending and are deemed likely to be remanded in custody. The program provides intensive outreach services to support the young person’s compliance with the conditions attached to bail. The program also facilitates referrals and access to accommodation, community-based and culturally specific support. This program operates in five regions across Victoria.
INDICATOR 4.7
Reduce the proportion of Indigenous people convicted within two years of their previous conviction.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
In 2008-09, the proportion of Indigenous prisoners who returned to prison within two years after being discharged was 49.1% (Figure 29).
In 2008-09 Indigenous prisoners were almost 16 times more likely (15.7) to return to prison within two years of their release than non Indigenous prisoners (Figure 30).
This was a slight decrease from 50% for those discharged the previous year.

TARGET BY 2013
The proportion of Indigenous people convicted within two years of their previous conviction will decrease to 50%.
The number of times Indigenous prisoners will be more likely than non Indigenous prisoners to return to prison within two years of discharge will decrease to 17.0.

Why is this important?
The rate at which released prisoners return to the criminal justice system is one of many different measures of recidivism, which can broadly be defined as the tendency for an offender to engage in criminal behaviour repeatedly. Reducing recidivism will decrease the number of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system and the impact of incarceration on family and community members. It will also assist to reduce Indigenous over-representation in the system.
It is important to note a prisoner in Victoria is considered to be a re-offender if the prisoner returns to prison within two years after discharge. That is, a prisoner who was discharged in 2006-07 would have had to return to prison under sentence during 2008-09 to be considered a re-offender.

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Figure 29: Proportion of prisoners released who returned to prison under sentence within two years, by Indigenous status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous prisoners</th>
<th>Non Indigenous prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Corrections Victoria Data Warehouse

Figure 30: Number of times released Indigenous prisoners are more likely than non Indigenous released prisoners to return to prison under sentence within two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Corrections Victoria Data Warehouse, Calculation based on Department of Justice population projections 2006 ABS Census.

On average, from 2001-02 to 2005-06 Indigenous prisoners were approximately 20 times more likely than non Indigenous prisoners to return to prison under sentence within two years of their release. Although in 2008-09 this figure decreased to approximately 16, it is likely to remain high given the current over representation of Indigenous Victorians in the prison system.

What action has been taken?

Under the second phase of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement a number of initiatives have been implemented to reduce re-offending among Indigenous offenders. These initiatives aim to support the rehabilitation of Indigenous prisoners, address factors of re-offending, and ensure that Indigenous people in custody can effectively reintegrate into the community.

When young people come into contact with the criminal justice system they are at higher risk of subsequent contact with the system. The Koori Youth Justice Program operates in 15 locations and provides a diversionary and rehabilitation service for Indigenous young people on statutory youth justice orders or who are at risk of entering/re-entering the youth justice and criminal systems. The program provides culturally inclusive and responsive services for Indigenous clients.

The Koori Intensive Pre and Post Release Program aims to reduce the rate at which Indigenous young people reoffend by providing support to Indigenous young people exiting youth justice custodial centres. The program provides intensive outreach services directly to support the young person’s compliance to the requirements of the youth parole or youth residential order. The program also facilitates referrals to accommodation, community based and culturally specific services to ensure that Indigenous young people are able to effectively reintegrate into their community.
communities upon release. This program operates in five regions across Victoria.

For adults the Konnect Program provides pre and post-release support to Indigenous men and women exiting prison and returning to the community. At eight to ten weeks prior to release an Indigenous caseworker is engaged with the program participant and this support and assistance can be provided for up to 12 months after release, depending on the transitional needs of the participant. As of June 2009, 30 Indigenous prisoners were being assisted by the Konnect Program to reintegrate into the community.

While incarcerated, Indigenous prisoners have access to initiatives such as the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program (ACIP), the Marumali Program, the Koori Cognitive Skills Program and the Indigenous Men’s Program.

The ACIP encourages Indigenous prisoners to connect/re-connect with their culture. This intensive week-long program also assists participants to strengthen their identity as an Indigenous person. The ACIP has extremely high attendance and retention rates. Anecdotal evidence suggests that participants who complete this program are more likely to participate in other programs and services within the prison. Marumali is an intensive program run over five days, which focuses on healing long-standing trauma and loss associated with Stolen Generations such as dispossession from land and the enforced removal from families and communities. The program also deals with ongoing issues of loss of identity and a number of underlying issues such as education, employment and health outcomes.

The Koori Cognitive Skills Program is a problem solving program based on cognitive behavioural therapy. The program is delivered via a dual facilitation model, utilising an Indigenous facilitator and a Corrections Victoria psychologist. The program was piloted in 2005 and is continually being rolled out in prisons and community corrections locations.

The Indigenous Men’s Program is specifically structured to assist Indigenous men to take personal responsibility and be accountable for their life situation and behaviour, irrespective of their socio-economic standing, level of disadvantage, education or life experiences. The program aims to provide Indigenous men in custody with opportunities to grow and develop responsibility and leadership in family and community. Three of the six workshop days are devoted specifically to addressing family violence issues, using an approach built on the successful model of family violence prevention currently provided in partnership with Relationships Australia. All aspects of the program are facilitated by three experienced facilitators including one Indigenous elder who ensure the program is delivered in a culturally responsive way.

The Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers in prisons ensure Indigenous prisoners understand prison processes and the services available to them. They also:

- provide linkages between the prison facility and the Indigenous community (significantly including the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee) and Indigenous agencies
- provide case work support, including transitional planning and management
- contribute to cross cultural training
- work with the Indigenous Service Officers and promote relevant and responsive approaches to Indigenous prisoners.

To further strengthen connections with family the Aboriginal Family Visits Program provides travel and accommodation assistance to the families of Indigenous prisoners. In 2008-09 more than 60 Indigenous families were assisted to visit family members in prisons throughout Victoria.

The Yannabil Program is a visitors program for Indigenous young people in Victoria’s youth justice custodial centres. The Yannabil Program links the Indigenous community to youth justice to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of Indigenous young people in custody (including young people on remand).

Want to know more?
Go to:
Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
www.justice.vic.gov.au
CASE STUDY

Deadly Jobs
Deadly Pathways

A key Workforce Participation Project for Indigenous young people in 2008-09 was the Indigenous Apprenticeship Program (IAP), provided by Sports Health Check Australia. IAP worked with electrical and plumbing employers to place Indigenous young people into apprenticeships. Participants received ongoing mentoring, support and training including pre-apprenticeship training.

Outcomes included:
- 60 Indigenous young people have registered with the IAP since it commenced
- 51 have started work
- 45 of these are in apprenticeships predominantly in plumbing and electrical trades and six began as trainees or scaffolding labourers
- 76% who started work are in sustainable jobs.

Strategic Area for Action 5:
Improve economic development, settle native title claims and address land access issues

INDICATOR 5.1
Increase Indigenous participation in State funded employment programs.

Why is this important?
Employment is an important indicator of economic participation and commonly associated with increased income levels, better health and improved outcomes.47

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

While the absolute number of Indigenous participants fell between 2007-08 and 2008-09, the Indigenous participation rate in State funded employment programs increased from 5.3% in 2007-08 to 6.3% in 2008-09 (Figure 31).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the 2006 Census, there were 2,883 Indigenous young people (aged 15-24 years) participating in the labour force. More than 75% were in employment but over 700 were unemployed.

A further 2,501 Indigenous young people were not employed or looking for work. While many may have been participating in formal education or training, a number may have been discouraged jobseekers.

47 OID 2009 P.8.3
What action has been taken?

The Workforce Participation Partnerships (WPP) program provided resources for place-based or industry based partnerships between industry, unions, local government, employment services, training providers, and community organisations. This included case management services to place jobseekers into ongoing, sustainable employment. The program also assisted employers to meet their labour and skill needs. In 2008-09, 23 Indigenous jobseekers received support through WPP.

In 2008-09 the Victorian Government provided $5 million to fund New Workforce Partnerships (NWP). This program builds on the successful WPP and aims to help meet the labour and skills needs of Victorian industry, as well as to increase the sustainable employment of people facing significant barriers to employment. In 2008-09, 34 Indigenous jobseekers received support through NWP.

Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

YES offers young Victorians, aged 15 to 24 years, traineeships and apprenticeships in Victorian Government departments and agencies. In 2008-09, 26 Indigenous people participated in the scheme.

Connectus

Connectus trains and supports young people aged 16 – 20 years to be job-ready for entry-level positions in industry or to re-engage with education or training. Connectus provides young people with access and support from the community, employment and industry sectors. Young people participate in a four week accredited training program and are placed into school, employment or further education and training pathways. A total of 37 young Indigenous people participated in the Connectus program in 2008-09.

Moving Forward

Industries targeted under the Moving Forward initiative were transport and distribution in North Eastern Victoria and manufacturing in the Ballarat region. Over 2008-09, 41 Indigenous jobseekers commenced in Moving Forward Projects.

Indigenous Youth Employment Program

The 2008-09 Budget provided $2.1 million over four years to establish an Indigenous Youth Employment Program (IYEP) to deliver flexible employment help to Indigenous young people.

IYEP, launched in April 2009, targets Indigenous young people aged 15-24 years who are not participating in the labour market. The program aims to place at least 140 young participants into sustainable employment by 2012.

The IYEP aims to achieve this goal by assisting young Indigenous Victorians who are:
- unemployed and actively seeking work
- exiting, or at-risk of exiting, education or training
- not in school or training, not working or not actively seeking work.

By June 2012 it is anticipated that the IYEP will have:
- increased the numbers of young Indigenous people in jobs
- improved the transition of young Indigenous people from education and training to jobs
- promote retention and progression in employment for Indigenous young people
- increase the number of employers, who recruit, retain and progress young Indigenous employees.

Want to know more?
Go to:
Workforce Victoria
www.employment.vic.gov.au
SECTION 3

CASE STUDY

Charcoal Lane restaurant and catering business is a social enterprise incorporating Indigenous culture and provides a unique dining experience in Fitzroy, Melbourne.

Charcoal Lane has been developed by Mission Australia with the support of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Victorian Government and an Aboriginal Advisory Group. It is designed to provide training programs and employment pathways for Indigenous and disadvantaged young people as well as access to waged employment in a supported, real work environment.

They will be part of an integrated program that includes personal skills development and accredited education in hospitality, with the aim of enabling a successful transition to sustainable mainstream employment.

The program seeks to:
• establish and run a viable social enterprise that positively promotes Indigenous culture
• provide supported education, training and employment pathways for Indigenous and disadvantaged young people in a commercial hospitality environment
• provide a location where all community members can meet on their own terms in a friendly and welcoming place.

Want to know more?
Go to: www.charcoallane.com.au

Victorian Aboriginal Economic Development Group

In December 2008, the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs established the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Development (VAED) Group to advise government on improving economic outcomes for Indigenous people in Victoria.

The VAED Group comprised leaders from Indigenous communities, business, philanthropy and State Government.

The Group identified six key areas of work:
• the transition from school to work or further education (youth transitions)
• employment
• business development
• access to land and natural resources
• tourism
• leadership and mentoring.

Consultancies were commissioned and extensive consultations were undertaken for each area of work. Consultations took place across the state, nationally and internationally with Indigenous people, business, philanthropy and all levels of Government.

The final report and recommendations from the VAED Group will be presented to the Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs in late 2009.
STRATEGIC AREA FOR ACTION 5:
Improve economic development, settle native title claims and address land access issues

INDICATOR 5.2
Increase the proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?
Traditional Owners have a cultural, economic, social and spiritual relationship with their traditional lands.
The resolution of Traditional Owners’ native title claims and continuing land grievances is important to increase access by Indigenous people to their traditional lands.
Increasing the number of native title settlements will increase access to land for Traditional Owners thereby strengthening and potentially re-establishing connections to country and culture.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
It has been reported that the number of Victorian Registered Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) from 2007-08 to 2008-09 remained unchanged at 33. The Total Area of the Registered ILUAs was 71,440 Square Kilometres equating to 31.4% of Victoria.

TARGET BY 2013
Following implementation of the Native Title Settlement Framework, the target will be five new native title settlements by 2013 and native title resolved over 50% of Crown land.

WHAT ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN?
Native Title Settlement Framework
On 4 June 2009, the Victorian Government announced that it had adopted an alternative way of resolving native title through agreement-making with Traditional Owner groups under the Victorian Native Title Settlement Framework. Subject to Commonwealth funding, the Framework will become the preferred method of negotiating native title settlements in Victoria.
The Framework is the result of a collaborative process between Government and the Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group (the peak body for Traditional Owners in Victoria). The Framework is currently still under development with the first agreements under the Framework anticipated in mid 2010.
Once in operation, the Framework will be a streamlined, expedited and cost effective approach to settling native title claims by negotiation, resulting in equitable outcomes consistent with the aspirations of Traditional Owners and the Victorian Government.

The Framework will deliver certainty and finality to the Victorian Government and other Crown land users through the quicker resolution of claims, build stronger partnerships between government and Traditional Owner groups, facilitate better Crown land management and deliver on government policies.

The Framework will provide an alternative to pursuing native title through the Federal Court process. It will set the parameters for a ‘non-native title’ agreement where the State recognises a Traditional Owner group alongside a package of benefits, in return for their agreement to withdraw their native title claim(s) and/or not lodge one in the future.

Components of settlement available under the Framework include:

- **Access to land.** Based on best practice in Australia, this component aims to increase Traditional Owners access to land through transfers of land (with or without conditions), handback of Crown land in perpetuity through joint management and joint management where the State retains ownership of the land;
- **The Land Use Activity Regime (LUAR).** This component offers an alternative to the future act regime under Native Title Act 1993 (Cth). The LUAR will be a streamlined and simplified way of managing Crown land that accommodates third party interests while taking into account Traditional Owners’ coexisting rights and interests. Land use activities are simplified into four categories with clear procedural rights making the system much easier to use.
- **Access to and use of natural resources.** This component aims to increase Traditional Owner access to, and sustainable use of, natural resources by increasing participation in management opportunities, recognition of customary, non-commercial use and access and increased participation in the commercial use of natural resources.
- **Measures for recognition and strengthening culture.** This component aims to recognise, build and strengthen Traditional Owner group cultural identity through measures tailored to meet the group’s aspirations.
- **Alignment with cultural heritage processes.** The Framework seeks to align the recognition of Traditional Owner groups with the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic).
- **Claims resolution.** The total Framework package will be a fair alternative to native title related compensation and compensation for future events will be addressed through ‘community benefits’ under the Land Use Activity Regime where there are high impact land use activities. In return for an out-of-court settlement, Traditional Owners will agree to withdraw native title claims and not lodge them in the future. There will be sustainable funding of Traditional Owner corporations so that they can meet their obligations under the agreement into the future.

Economic development and employment opportunities exist within the components of settlement outlined above.

**Want to know more?**

Go to:

**Victorian Native Title Settlement Framework**

Strategic Area for Action 6: Build Indigenous capacity

INDICATOR 6.1
Increase workforce participation by Indigenous people in the public sector in ways which can drive improvements in the Strategic Areas for Action.

Why is this important?
Increasing Indigenous employment in the public sector is important as it builds agency capacity to deliver programs and services that are effective and appropriate for Indigenous people and encourages support and respect for Indigenous cultural values in the workplace and in the delivery of services.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE
In 2008 it is estimated that 0.5% (approximately 1200 employees) in the Victorian public sector identified as Indigenous. This estimate is sourced from the State Services Authority’s People Matter Survey.

TARGET BY 2015
Employment of Indigenous people in the Victorian public sector will increase to 1% of total employees by 2015.

What action has been taken?
In September 2008, the Premier requested the State Services Authority lead the development of the Indigenous Public Sector Employment Strategy to increase the workforce participation of Indigenous people in the Victorian public sector. The Strategy outlines actions to increase the number of Indigenous public sector employees.

This Strategy will form an integral part of Victoria’s contribution to the COAG National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Economic Participation, which set firm national targets for Indigenous public sector employment.

Want to know more?
Go to:
State Services Authority
www.ssa.vic.gov.au

Note this target is to be reached by 2015 as part of the COAG National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation.
Strategic Area for Action 6: Build Indigenous capacity

INDICATOR 6.2
Increase the proportion of board members of large Indigenous organisations having undertaken rigorous governance training.

INDICATOR 6.3
Increase the proportion of Indigenous Co-operatives and other organisations meeting their statutory obligations.

MEASURE OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

In 2008-09, there were 191 Governance Training Program attendees, of which 67 were from large Indigenous organisations. Of those, 60% were board members (Figure 32).

94% of Indigenous Co-operatives and other organisations were compliant with their statutory obligations.

TARGET BY 2013

INDICATOR 6.2 At least 70% of board members of large Indigenous organisations will have undertaken rigorous governance training.

INDICATOR 6.3 At least 95% of Indigenous Co-operatives and 93% of other organisations will meet their statutory obligations.

Why is this important?

Indigenous organisations provide a wide range of community and essential services for their communities while governing and managing within ‘two worlds’.

As well as balancing community and cultural responsibilities, Indigenous organisations must also maintain their legal obligations to the wider community, government legislators and to funding bodies. With such significant responsibilities, directors and staff require diverse skills to manage the complex demands faced by their organisations.

Until the Governance Training Program began in 2006, there was no structured training support for boards of management for Indigenous organisations.

As there are approximately 200 Indigenous community controlled organisations in Victoria, it is important to ensure they are well governed and sustainable, because they play a crucial role in addressing the specific needs of Indigenous communities.

What action has been taken?

Under the Governance Training Program in 2009, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) conducted five introductory workshops, two Certificate IV courses and one Diploma course in Business (Governance).
One third of all workshop participants continued on to a Governance Training Program accredited training component.

The Governance Training Program is funded by the Victorian Government and managed in partnership with the Commonwealth Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations and Consumer Affairs Victoria. The program covers a suite of culturally inclusive management and governance training options, targeting board members and staff of Indigenous organisations.

In addition to the introductory workshops and Certificate IV courses delivered during 2008-09, AAV also conducted the second Diploma course in Business (Governance). The second Diploma course followed on from the success of the initial course in 2008, which was the first Diploma of its kind nationally, targeting Indigenous students and organisations.

Training gaps have also been analysed in the Certificate IV in Business (Governance). Following research and consultation with Indigenous communities, the Analysing and Using Information Unit was developed. It aims to strengthen skills in capturing and managing data more effectively. This is the first accredited training unit specifically developed for Indigenous students on data. The unit was developed and tested in 2008-09 and is now included into the ongoing Certificate IV program.

Currently all components of the Governance Training Program are undergoing review, including the Innovation and Business Skills Australia review of the accredited training components of the Program, a review by Commonwealth Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations of the workshop training nationally, and an impact review of the Governance Training Program Certificate IV course. These results will enhance the content and quality of the Program.

Representation on the Governance Training Program will continue to be sought from large Indigenous organisations that will strengthen the foundations for more effective service delivery in the Indigenous community.

Want to know more?
Go to:
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au
## Victoria’s performance on selected headline indicators for Indigenous outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline Indicator</th>
<th>Indigenous Victorians</th>
<th>Non Indigenous Victorians</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Expectancy 2009</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Key Indicators Report 2009&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt; <em>National figures only</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birth weight 2007</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies with birth weight below 2500 grams.</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>Department of Health, State Government of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apparent School Retention 2008</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention to Year 10</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, State Government of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention from Year 10 to Year 12</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, State Government of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labour Force Status 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>ABS 2006 Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Income 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median gross weekly equivalised - $ per week</td>
<td>$498</td>
<td>$726</td>
<td>ABS 2006 Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Ownership 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>ABS 2006 Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hospitalisations for Intentional Self-Harm 2006-07</strong>&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age standardised non-fatal hospitalisations for intentional self-harm per 1000 population&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>AIHW National Hospitalisation Morbidity Database, cited in Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Key Indicators Report 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection 2008-09</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiations per 1000 children aged 0-16 years</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Department of Human Services, State Government of Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imprisonment 2008</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per 1000 adults</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Department of Justice, State Government of Victoria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Despite effort of the ABS to improve the accuracy of Indigenous life expectancy estimates, the underlying population and death registrations data have limitations. Therefore, life expectancy estimates are experimental. Due to the small number of Indigenous deaths in Victoria, it is not possible to produce life expectancy estimates for Indigenous people in Victoria. National figures are reported above.

2. Collated data from NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and public hospitals in the Northern Territory.

3. The rates per 1000 population were directly age standardised using 2001 Australian standard population. Includes hospitalisations where Indigenous status was recorded as non Indigenous or not stated.
### VIAF Strategic Change Indicators Aspirational Performance Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Action Area</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2013 Target</th>
<th>2018 Target</th>
<th>2023 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Reduce reported smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers.</td>
<td>Reported smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers will be reduced to 25%</td>
<td>Reported smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers will be reduced to 20%</td>
<td>Reported smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers will be reduced to 14%</td>
<td>Reported smoking in pregnancy by Indigenous mothers will be reduced to 14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Reduce the Indigenous perinatal mortality rate.</td>
<td>The Indigenous perinatal mortality rate will reduce to no more than 16 per 1000 births</td>
<td>The Indigenous perinatal mortality rate will reduce to no more than 10 per 1000 births</td>
<td>There will be no gap between the Indigenous and non Indigenous perinatal mortality rate.</td>
<td>There will be no gap between the Indigenous and non Indigenous perinatal mortality rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Decrease the percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500grams.</td>
<td>The percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500g will decrease to 13%</td>
<td>The percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500g will decrease to 12%</td>
<td>The percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500g will decrease to 7%</td>
<td>The percentage of Indigenous babies with birth weight below 2500g will decrease to 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Increase Indigenous 3 year old and 4 year old kindergarten participation.</td>
<td>75% of Indigenous 3 year old children will be participating in funded kindergarten programs. The gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous 4 year old children participating in funded kindergarten programs will be closed.</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 51 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 34 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 17 per 1000 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Reduce the rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations.</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 51 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 34 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 17 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 17 per 1000 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Proportion of Indigenous children attending MCH at key age milestones.</td>
<td>The gap in participation at MCH key age and stage visits, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children will be at least halved.</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 51 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 34 per 1000 children</td>
<td>The rate of Indigenous child protection substantiations will be reduced to 17 per 1000 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Action Area</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>2013 Target</td>
<td>2018 Target</td>
<td>2023 Target</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improve literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>2.1 Improved school attendance rates for Indigenous students.</td>
<td>There will be no gap in attendance for Years Prep - 6 between Indigenous and non Indigenous students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There will be no gap in attendance for Years 7 - 10 between Indigenous and non Indigenous students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Improve literacy and numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 for Indigenous students.</td>
<td>For Year 3 Reading, the gap in the percentage of students in bands 1 or 2 between Indigenous and non Indigenous students will be reduced by 75%.</td>
<td>For Year 5 Numeracy, the gap in the percentage of students in bands 3 (or below) or 4 between Indigenous and non Indigenous students will be reduced by 75%.</td>
<td>For Years 3, 5 and 7 Reading and Numeracy, the percentage of Indigenous students in the top two bands will increase by 10%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For Year 9 Reading and Numeracy, the percentage of Indigenous students in the top two bands will double.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve Year 12 completion or equivalent qualification and develop pathways to employment, further education and training</td>
<td>3.1 Improve transition to Year 10 for Indigenous students.</td>
<td>95% of Indigenous students will commence Year 10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Increase completion of Year 12 or equivalent qualifications for Indigenous students.</td>
<td>By 2020, the gap for Year 12 completion or equivalent between Indigenous and non Indigenous young people will be at least halved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Increase the successful transition of Indigenous young people aged 18-24 years to employment and/or further education.</td>
<td>The gap in transition to employment and/or further education between Indigenous and non Indigenous young people will be reduced by at least 20%</td>
<td>Halve the gap in transition to employment and/or further education between Indigenous and non Indigenous young people</td>
<td>There will be no gap in transition to employment and/or further education between Indigenous and non Indigenous young people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[1\] and \[2\] Victoria has signed up to national measures and targets to close the gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous students in school attendance, literacy and numeracy and educational attainment. In particular, States have committed to halving the gap in literacy/numeracy and attainment by 2018 and 2020 respectively. In order to achieve, and possibly improve on, these targets, the Victorian Government has set itself some highly aspirational State trajectories and timelines, to guide action over the next five years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Action Area</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2013 Target</th>
<th>2018 Target</th>
<th>2023 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.1 Increase the police response to and taking action on any Indigenous family violence incident reported to them.</td>
<td>There will be no difference in the police response and action taken to Indigenous family violence incidents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 Reduce repeat police call outs for Indigenous family violence incidents.</td>
<td>There will be no difference in repeat police call outs for Indigenous family violence incidents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 Reduce the number of times Indigenous young people (aged 10-17 years) are processed by police.</td>
<td>The number of times Indigenous young people will be more likely to be processed by police compared to non Indigenous young people will decrease to 3.5</td>
<td>The number of times Indigenous young people will be more likely to be processed by police compared to non Indigenous young people will decrease to 3.0</td>
<td>The number of times Indigenous young people will be more likely to be processed by police compared to non Indigenous young people will remain at 3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.4 Increase the proportion of Indigenous young people aged 10-17 years cautioned when processed by police.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned when processed by police will increase to 35%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned when processed by police will increase to 45%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous young people cautioned when processed by police will increase to 50%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.5 Reduce the proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody will decrease to 20%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody will decrease to 18%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody will decrease to 17%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.6 Reduce the proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison rather than other alternatives.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison rather than other alternatives will decrease to 28%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison rather than other alternatives will decrease to 27%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous adults sentenced to prison rather than other alternatives will decrease to 26%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.7 Reduce the proportion of Indigenous people who are convicted within two years of their previous conviction.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous people who are convicted within two years of their previous conviction will decrease to 50%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous people who are convicted within two years of their previous conviction will decrease to 49%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous people who are convicted within two years of their previous conviction will decrease to 47%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The number of times Indigenous prisoners will be more likely than non Indigenous prisoners to return to prison within two years of discharge will decrease to 17.0</td>
<td>The number of times Indigenous prisoners will be more likely than non Indigenous prisoners to return to prison within two years of discharge will decrease to 14.6</td>
<td>The number of times Indigenous prisoners will be more likely than non Indigenous prisoners to return to prison within two years of discharge will decrease to 12.6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Strategic Change Indicators 4.3 - 4.7 are underpinned by the Aboriginal Justice Agreement: Phase 2 (AJA2) which was launched in 2006. Development of the third phase or AJA3 has commenced and may lead to an adjustment of the targets in 2010 and alignment with the VIAF cycle.
### Strategic Action Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2013 Target</th>
<th>2018 Target</th>
<th>2023 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 By 2013, increase Indigenous participation in State funded employment programs.</td>
<td>140 sustainable employment outcomes in State funded employment programs.</td>
<td>50% reduction in the gap between Indigenous and non Indigenous participation in the labour market.</td>
<td>There will be no gap in labour market participation between Indigenous and non Indigenous people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Increase the proportion of Indigenous people with access to their traditional lands.</td>
<td>Five new Native Title settlements and Native Title resolved over 50% of Crown land.</td>
<td>Native Title resolved over 75% of Crown land.</td>
<td>Native Title resolved over 100% of Crown land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Increase workforce participation by Indigenous people in the public sector in ways which can drive improvements in the Strategic Areas for Action.</td>
<td>Employment of Indigenous people in the Victorian public sector will increase to 1% of total employees by 2015.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Increase the proportion of board members of large Indigenous organisations having undertaken rigorous governance training.</td>
<td>The proportion of board members of large Indigenous organisations having undertaken rigorous governance training will increase to 70%.</td>
<td>The proportion of board members of large Indigenous organisations having undertaken rigorous governance training will increase to 90%</td>
<td>The proportion of board members of large Indigenous organisations having undertaken rigorous governance training will remain at 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Increase the proportion of Indigenous Co-operatives meeting their statutory obligations.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous Co-operatives meeting their statutory obligations will increase to 95%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous Co-operatives meeting their statutory obligations will increase to 96%</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous Co-operatives meeting their statutory obligations will increase to 98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Increase the proportion of Indigenous incorporated associations meeting their statutory obligations.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous incorporated associations meeting their statutory obligations will increase to 93%.</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous incorporated associations meeting their statutory obligations will increase to 95%</td>
<td>The proportion of Indigenous incorporated associations meeting their statutory obligations will increase to 98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Targets are subject to the full implementation of the Victorian Native Title Settlement Framework.*