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

Figure 6: Percentage of mothers admitted to hospital from one month prior to delivery who were current smokers6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous women</th>
<th>All women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Victorian Admitted Episodes Dataset, based on the recorded Indigenous status of the mother.

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 new born 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 Pregancies, Healthy Babies for Koori Communities resource for use by Indigenous women.
**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>Rate per 1000 births</th>
<th>Indigenous mothers</th>
<th>Non Indigenous mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2007</strong></td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006</strong></td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2005</strong></td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2004</strong></td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2003</strong></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](http://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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate per 1000 births</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

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

**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).

**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.

**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.

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.

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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 Heath 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.\(^\text{12}\)

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.\(^\text{13}\) 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.\(^\text{14}\) 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.

![Figure 10: Rate per 1000 children aged 0-16 years in substantiations by Indigenous status](image)

<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>

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
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 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).

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.

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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.
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

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 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>
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<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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18 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>Non Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 3 Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 5 Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 7 Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 9</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 9 Numeracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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?
Go to:
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.

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.\(^{24}\)

TARGET BY 2013
95% of Indigenous students will commence Year 10.

Figure 19: Apparent retention rates for students from Years 7 to 10

Figure 20: Apparent retention rates for students from Years 10 to 12

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\(^{21}\) 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:

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.
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.32

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.33

Figure 22: Percentage of Non School Qualifications, Indigenous Persons Aged 15 Years and Over, Victoria

Source: 2006, ABS, Census of Population and Housing.32

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

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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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Data Source: Victoria Police, Corporate Statistics, extracted from LEAP, July 18 2009 and is subject to variation. Incidents with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of these calculations.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of FIRs recorded</td>
<td>% FIRs where charges laid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>786</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Victoria Police, Corporate Statistics, extracted from LEAP, July 18 2009 and is subject to variation. Incidents with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of these calculations.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of FIRs recorded</td>
<td>% FIRs where charges laid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Victoria Police, Corporate Statistics, extracted from LEAP, July 18 2009 and is subject to variation. Incidents with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of these calculations.
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

<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.

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.
SECTION 3

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 TAFE 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%.

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.

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

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.

<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>

Data Source: Victoria Police

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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 2000 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**

The proportion of Indigenous offenders on remand (un-sentenced) in 2008-09 was 19.7%. This was a decrease from 22.5% in 2007-08 (Figure 27).

The proportion of Indigenous offenders sentenced to prison rather than other orders in 2008-09 was 34.5% (Figure 28).

**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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**Figure 27:** Proportion of daily average number of offenders on remand, by Indigenous status41 42

<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>

Data Source: Corrections Victoria, Data Warehouse.

**Figure 28:** Proportion of offenders sentenced to prison rather than other orders, by Indigenous status43

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>Non Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Corrections Victoria, Data Warehouse.

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41 The data presented in Figure 27 tends to vary over time. It is not clear at this stage if the 2008-09 data represents an actual change in trend regarding the proportion of Indigenous people remanded in custody.

42 Prisoners with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of the calculations.

43 Prisoners with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of the calculations.
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.
Strategic Area for Action 4: 
Prevent Family Violence and Improve Justice Outcomes

**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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SECTION 3

Figure 29: Proportion of prisoners released who returned to prison under sentence within two years, by Indigenous status.\(^{45}\)

<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.\(^{46}\)

<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.

\(^{45}\) Column headings refer to the final return period. Prisoners with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of the calculations.

\(^{46}\) Column headings refer to the final return period. Prisoners with unknown Indigenous status have not been included in any of the calculations.
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
SECTION 3

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>212</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.

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.

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).

TARGET BY 2013

There will be at least 140 substantial employment outcomes 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

Figure 31: Indigenous participants in State funded employment programs

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.

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.

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

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**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.

**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.

**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.

**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*

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48 Note this target is to be reached by 2015 as part of the COAG National Partnership on Indigenous Economic Participation.
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?
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