



VICTORIA POLICE

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# ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2023-2025

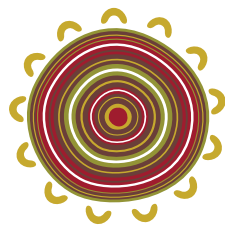


The *Victoria Police Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Action Plan 2023–2025* is part of the *Victoria Police Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2023–2030* (Framework).

To read the Framework visit [police.vic.gov.au](https://police.vic.gov.au)

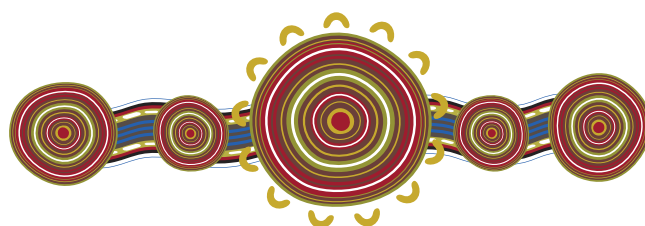
Original artwork designed by Gary Saunders, a proud Bangerang, Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung man.





*This design represents the layers and complexity of the Aboriginal community. Like the rings of a tree trunk, the rings represent the years of knowledge and understanding handed down to community by elders that have worked hard to pave the way and address the needs of their people.*

*The half circles around the rings represent the tradition of people sitting around having a yarn and, in this design, represent the ACLOs around the state that meet to share knowledge to help strengthen their communities.*



*This design represents the relationship and partnership that the PALOs have with their ACLO counterparts. The rings represent the communities and the PALOs across the state and how they are connected by their strong desire to build relationships and partnerships to strengthen the Aboriginal community links with the Police force.*

*The symbol of a river is used to connect these groups together as water is the source of life and of growth. This design depicts the ongoing connectedness between ACLOs, PALOs and the Aboriginal communities across the State.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Victoria Police respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging and continue to recognise and embrace the fact that Aboriginal People are connected to the oldest, continuous culture and history.

### ABORIGINAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Victoria Police proudly acknowledges the First Peoples of Victoria and their ongoing strength in practicing the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all those who have paved the way and fought for the rights of Aboriginal people, including the right to Self-Determination.

We recognise the continuing leadership of the Victorian Aboriginal community and our employees, who have contributed and paved the way, to creating a more inclusive and culturally safe workplace. In the spirit of Self-Determination, Victoria Police is committed to strengthening our partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal community, as we continue to embrace diversity and equity across our organisation.

# MESSAGE FROM DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEIL PATERSON

In July 2022, Victoria Police held our very first Aboriginal employee forum. At the forum, Aboriginal employees from regional and metropolitan workplaces across Victoria came together for a full day to yarn and network with each other.

I listened to employees who shared stories about the cultural burden their roles in Victoria Police sometimes place on them and the support they need to feel safe while fulfilling their roles in policing and in their communities. I acknowledged stories about what Self-Determination means for our employees and the importance of connecting with who they are, and where they belong in a culturally safe place.

The topics covered that day inform this action plan. It has been my privilege to work together with Victoria Police First Nations employees to bring this action plan to fruition.

Building relationships with Aboriginal employees is imperative if we are to set the foundations for moving together as one towards Self-Determination and cultural safety in our organisation and in our service to the Aboriginal community.

Strengthening our employee networks is a way to start. I am proud to hold the role of Executive Sponsor of the Victoria Police Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network Council (AENC) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employee Network (AEN).

I would like to offer my respect and gratitude to all past and present members of the AEN for their commitment and contribution to informing what is needed to create a safe and inclusive workplace for all our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

## **Neil Paterson APM**

Deputy Commissioner, Victoria Police  
Executive Champion



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## LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria and those employed at Victoria Police have diverse languages and cultures. The term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' is used in this action plan when referring to First Nations people from across Australia.

When referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the term 'Koori' is often used. Koori people are the Traditional Owners of our land in Victoria.

Koori people extend a welcome to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from other lands across Australia.

Aboriginal people often use different terminology to refer to themselves, depending on where they are from.

The following terms are the most commonly used by First Nations people in each state and territory when referring to themselves:

- 'Anangu' is often used in north west South Australia and the Northern Territory
- 'Koori/Koorie' is often used in south eastern Australia (Victoria and parts of NSW)
- 'Murri' is often used in Queensland and far northern New South Wales
- 'Nunga' is often used in South Australia
- 'Nyoongar' is often used in Western Australia
- 'Palawa' is often used in Tasmania
- 'Torres Strait Islander' is used to describe people from the Torres Strait Islands.





# INTRODUCTION

Victoria Police recognises the complex relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with police and law enforcement organisations.

It is important that we acknowledge ongoing entrenched systemic and structural racism that stems from Australian colonisation and is experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise the impact of trauma, disadvantage and marginalisation caused by past injustices that continue to disrupt the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Aboriginal community.

Victoria Police is dedicated to working alongside our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees,

community members and Traditional Owners to strengthen partnerships, empower Self-Determination and continue the process of removing barriers to a safe and inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In keeping with the principle of Self-Determination, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees provide guidance and advice to improve conditions in Victoria Police across the employee lifecycle. Self-Determination will guide and challenge Victoria Police on the way we approach the removal of barriers in the workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

## OUR VISION

- Victoria Police leads the way in creating a diverse workplace and an inclusive organisation.
- All Victoria Police employees work in a safe workplace where they are treated with dignity and respect.
- All Victoria Police systems, policies and processes provide all employees with fair and equal access to resources and opportunities.
- Victoria Police's workforce composition reflects the diversity in the community.
- Victoria Police's culture values diversity – all employees recognise that a truly excellent policing service is possible only with a diverse workforce that is reflective of the community it serves.
- All Victoria Police employees feel supported to reach their full potential and are connected, valued and empowered to succeed.

## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

This action plan is supported by the *Victoria Police Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2023–2030*. The Framework and Action Plan are underpinned by the Whole of Victorian Government Barring Djinang Aboriginal Community of Practice’s Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

Victoria Police is responsible for delivering a range of commitments arising from the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–2023 (VAAF)*; *Burra Loptja Dunguludja Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4 (AJA4)*; and *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, within a self-determination framework.

We work towards our vision consistent with best practice, being considerate of Victorian government strategies and initiatives, and the legislative framework, including:

- *Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021–2026: Pathway to Stronger Partnerships*.
- *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027*.
- *Balit Murrup: Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework (2017–2027)*.
- *The Equal Opportunity Act 2006* protects people from discrimination on the basis of their Aboriginality and provides redress for people who have been discriminated against.
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

We review our approach to providing a safe and inclusive workplace in response to and with national and Victorian initiatives as they occur.

Our work to improve inclusion for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees will also be advanced by the *Equal, Safe & Strong Victoria Police Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2030*, and the *Equal, Safe & Strong Victoria Police Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2024* (Equal, Safe & Strong). Equal, Safe and Strong applies an intersectional lens that acknowledges the many different forms of discrimination causing disadvantage, including the discrimination encountered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.





# THE YOORROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION

The Yoorrook Justice Commission (the Commission) was established by the Victorian Government in 2021. The Commission has the powers of a Royal Commission, and is the first formal truth-telling process into historical and ongoing injustices experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria since colonisation.

The Commission will:

- establish an official record of the impact of colonisation on Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Victoria.
- develop a shared understanding among all Victorians of the impact of colonisation, as well as the diversity, strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures.
- make recommendations for healing, system reform and practical changes to laws, policy and education, as well as to matters to be included in future treaties.
- produce a final report of findings and recommendations by June 2024.

The Commission's terms of reference include consideration of:

- historical and current systemic injustice in policy and practice regarding policing, youth and criminal justice, incarceration, detention, and the broader legal system.
- how ongoing systemic injustices can be addressed, and redressed, including recommended reform to existing institutions, law, policy and practice, and how the state of Victoria can be held accountable for addressing these injustices and preventing future injustice.

Victoria Police is committed to understanding the harm caused by colonisation, racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is committed to participating in the process of healing and system reform. Victoria Police will respond to the Commission through the Victoria Police Yoorrook Justice Commission Response Taskforce. The establishment of this taskforce acknowledges the significance of the Commission and highlights the organisation's commitment to reform.



## OUR PARTNERS

Victoria Police acknowledges the valuable contributions of our partners in the consultation and development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Action Plan.

- Aboriginal Justice Caucus – Aboriginal Justice Forum
- Aboriginal Portfolio Reference Group (APRG)
- Yilki Guludun Tagai Law and Biocultural Knowledge (YGT)
- Aboriginal Employee Network (AEN)
- Aboriginal Employee Network Council (AENC)
- Whole of Victorian Government Barring Djinang Aboriginal Community of Practice
- Yoorrook Justice Commission Response Taskforce
- Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU)
- The Police Association of Victoria (TPAV)

# WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

## SELF-DETERMINATION

Victoria Police is committed to self-determination as a guiding principle for organisational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion. This means: realising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' aspirations for change; valuing, promoting and requiring greater involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and communities in decision-making, program design and service delivery; and demonstrating the highest level of support and advocacy by our leadership.

A key action in this plan is to implement self-determination in our internal workforce decision making. In undertaking this work we will be guided by, and will apply, the VAAF self-determination framework. This work will be led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and supported by influential leaders of the organisation.



## CONTINUUM TOWARDS ABORIGINAL SELF-DETERMINATION

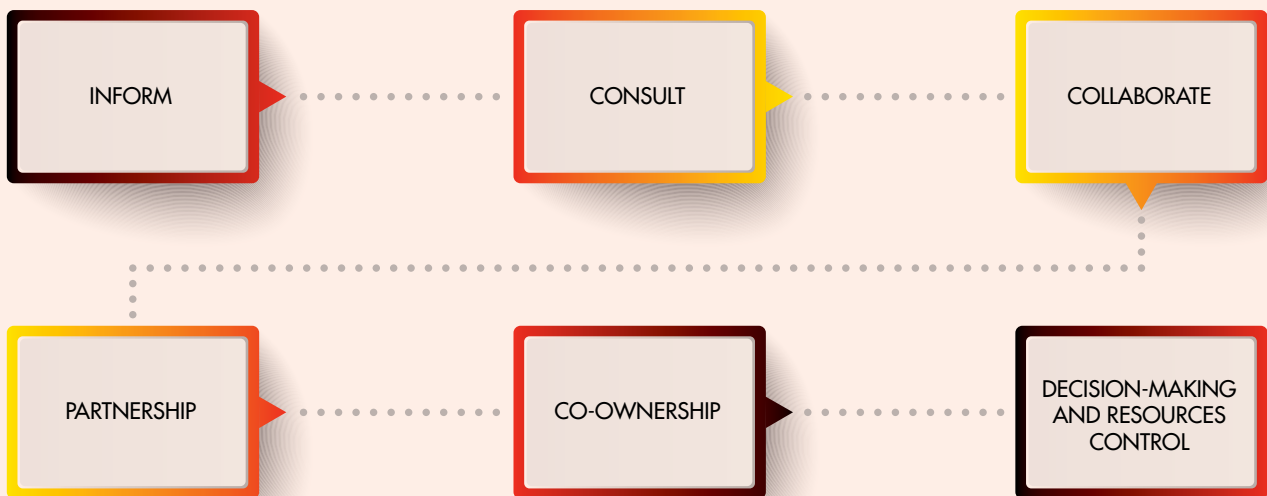
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employee-led Self-Determination creates the strongest foundation to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal outcomes. There are clear reasons why embedding Self-Determination is the most sustainable strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' wellbeing:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold the knowledge and expertise about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities. Local and international evidence shows us that Self-Determination is the key policy approach that has produced effective and sustainable outcomes for Indigenous peoples.
- Aboriginal Victorians have consistently and long called for Self-Determination as the key enabler for Aboriginal people, families and communities to thrive.
- Australia is a signatory to international law instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), that affirm the right to Self-Determination for Indigenous peoples.

The way government enables Self-Determination will continue to evolve over time, based on changing community expectations and needs. However, community has identified four Self-Determination enablers:

- Prioritise culture
- Address trauma and support healing
- Address racism and promote cultural safety
- Transfer power and resources to communities.<sup>1</sup>

The principle of Aboriginal Self-Determination is a continuum ranging from informing community through to transferring decision-making control.



## INTERSECTIONALITY

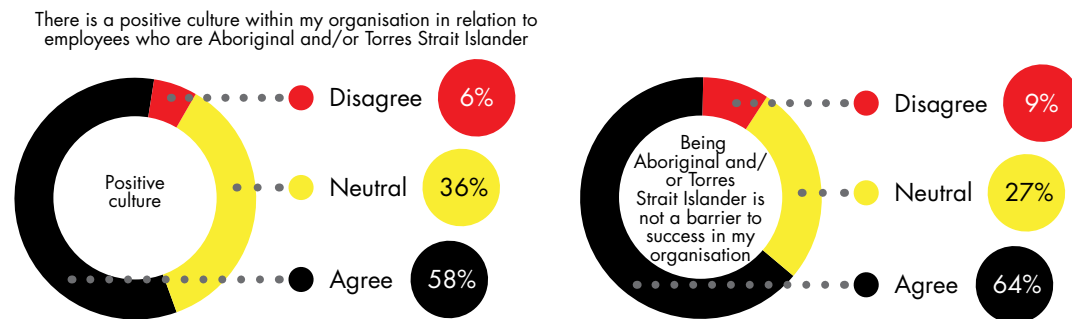
Being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is only one aspect of a person's identity. Each Aboriginal person has their own gender identity, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, language, colour, faith, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status or geographic location. Aboriginal people who live with other forms of discrimination can experience compounded inequality.

<sup>1</sup> Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–2023

# WHERE ARE WE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER INCLUSION?

Victoria Police participates in the Victorian Public Sector Commission's People Matter Survey. The survey is for all Victorian Public Service organisations and provides valuable insight into the culture and safety of organisations from employee perspectives.

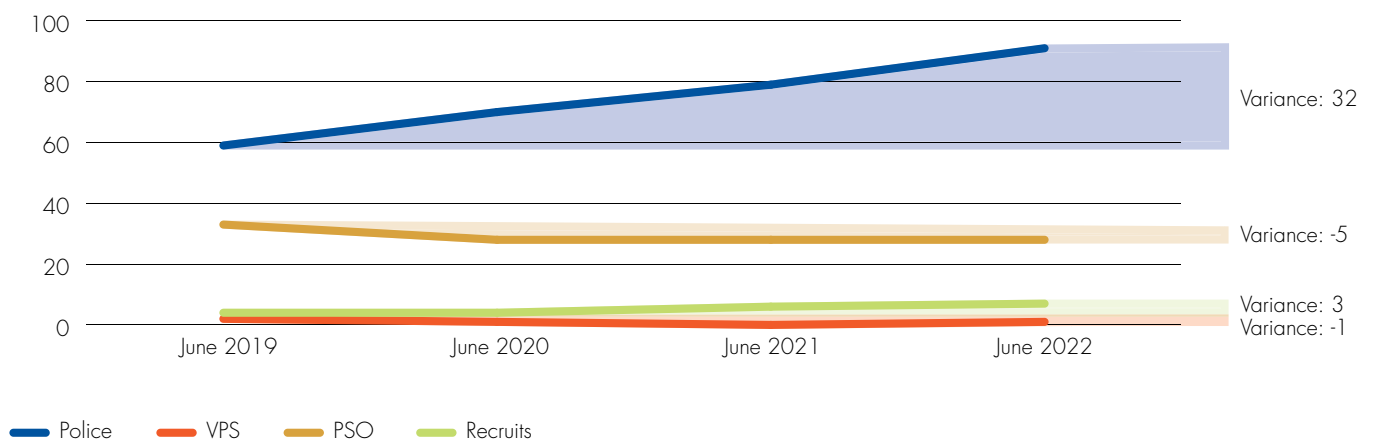
In 2021, 6,889 Victoria Police employees responded to the People Matter Survey. Of these employees, 64 self-identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Their responses included:



In 2021, Victoria Police's primary human resources IT system was enhanced to capture data about each employee's sex, gender, sexuality, languages, culture, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status and if a person has a disability. Data prior to 2021 was drawn from data collated at induction.

Because this is a new feature, diversity figures currently appear lower than might be expected. However, as more employees report their diversity data Victoria Police will obtain a greater understanding of the diversity and needs of our employees. This data provides a valuable benchmark to monitor our future progress.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employees: Head count June 2019 to June 2022



Source: HR Assist – Prepared by: Workforce Reporting and Analysis, HRC, 2022



# HOW FAR WE'VE COME

Victoria Police has demonstrated a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion through various initiatives over the last twenty years. It is important to acknowledge the work we have done to help establish the building blocks of a more culturally safe and capable organisation. The *Aboriginal Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2018–2021* provided a sound basis for making more substantial progress. We recognise that we have significant work to do and that a greater organisational focus is needed.

## ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING (ACAT)

### OBJECTIVES

- Improve the relationship between police and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Victoria.
- Improve engagement with non-Aboriginal employees to understand the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Improve and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workplace cultural safety and inclusion.
- Increase the attraction and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Improve cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples when accessing Victoria Police services.
- Develop the skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to contribute to ACAT content.
- Address the commitment to the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework – *Goal 17: Aboriginal Victorians feel safe and connected. Measure 17.1.1 Proportion of police officers who have received Aboriginal cultural awareness training.*
- Encourage Victoria Police employees who have chosen to not previously identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, to feel culturally safe to do so.

### STEPS

- The ACAT package was developed by an Aboriginal consulting firm and then strengthened by Victoria Police Aboriginal employees.
- It is designed for face-to-face delivery but can be adapted to be presented in an online format.
- In March 2022 ACAT was made mandatory for all police and Protective Services Officers (PSOs) and for Police Custody Officers (PCOs) in March 2023.

### ORGANISATIONAL IMPACT

- Organisational engagement in genuine conversations about the true experiences and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Contribution to a culturally safe and inclusive workplace for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.
- Enabling informed responses by Victoria Police employees to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- A demonstrated increase in the personal knowledge of Victoria Police employees of the true history and culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- As of 30 April 2023, Victoria Police has had 6,615 participants in ACAT.

Aboriginal people are at greater risk of victimisation than the wider community because of entrenched disadvantage associated with inter-generational trauma.<sup>2</sup> Interactions with the criminal justice system are strongly associated with this trauma and contribute to low levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities trust and confidence in police.

Victoria Police's ACAT acknowledges the historical role police played in past government policies and practices that negatively impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and aims to establish and strengthen the relationship between police and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The ACAT package was developed by Nyuka Wara Consulting, and led by cultural consultant and educator, Eddie Moore, an Aboriginal man with family links to the Wemba Wemba people from Swan Hill, the Palawa people from Cape Barren Island and the Wotjobaluk people from the Wimmera in Victoria.

Victoria Police Aboriginal employees have added their own contributions to strengthen and localise the package. Aboriginal employees began delivering ACAT to the Victoria Police workforce in 2020.

ACAT content is strengthened by truth telling videos provided by Aboriginal Elders and stakeholders from across Victoria who give their perspectives on the themes of the package.

ACAT provides an historical context of the experienced trauma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the impact that that previous government policies had on their culture, communities and lives. The training focuses on addressing unconscious bias and building greater levels of cultural awareness.

The development of ACAT highlights the importance of working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to enhance culturally competent policing responses. The training demonstrates Victoria Police's commitment to the VAAF and the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4.

With ACAT becoming mandatory for all police, PSOs and PCOs the state-wide rollout of ACAT has transitioned to a new model of delivery by the Divisional Training Officer Network with the assistance of Victoria Police Aboriginal employees.

AS AT 30 APRIL 2023:




6,615

Victoria Police employees had participated in ACAT



2 Behrendt, L., 2001. Genocide: the distance between law and life. *Aboriginal History*, 25, pp.132-147.



## A YARN WITH LAURIE MARKS, PROUD WOTJOBALUK AND GUNAI KURNAI MAN AND FIRST ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER (ACLO)

- The ACLO Program was implemented in 2005 to address Recommendation 231 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, to strengthen relationships and facilitate communication between Victoria Police and Aboriginal people across the State.
- When Laurie joined Victoria Police in 2005, he became the first ACLO to be appointed.
- Laurie is currently the ACLO at the Proactive Policing Unit in Morwell.

### WHEN DID YOU BECOME AWARE OF THE ACLO PROGRAM?

The Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer in Mildura, who started the ACLO Program came to speak with Aboriginal communities across Victoria and I was part of those discussions. At the time I was a Youth Justice worker in Gippsland, but I had experience in the courts too as I was one of the first Aboriginal bail justices.

### WHY DID YOU WANT TO BECOME AN ACLO?

I wanted to see a change in the way my community interacted with police. We can work well together if we have a shared understanding. There is mistrust with police inherited from past government decisions. But it is important to break down barriers. I start every day with a positive attitude and a smile.

### WHAT IMPACT DOES THE ACLO PROGRAM HAVE ON THE ORGANISATION AND COMMUNITY?

The community feels comfortable talking to the ACLO, as there is open and honest communication. It is a fine line to be part of the community, as well as represent the police. It takes time to break down barriers. But there are good relationships between the community and police.

### HOW HAS THE ACLO ROLE CHANGED?

I remember the first week was busy, meeting with many Aboriginal organisations and then needing to plan for what the role was going to do. I had to work out what the role should and could be. This was the beginning of the ACLO Program that has continued influencing policy, process and roles through to today. Once we got more people on board, I led the training and development for the new ACLOs in Shepparton, Warrnambool and Bairnsdale.

### HOW CAN VICTORIA POLICE IMPROVE?

The organisation needs to increase connection to the community. This must be a continuing priority. We also need to get better at retaining knowledge, sharing stories, learnings and local police ensuring that ACLOs and Aboriginal employees are part of the decision making.

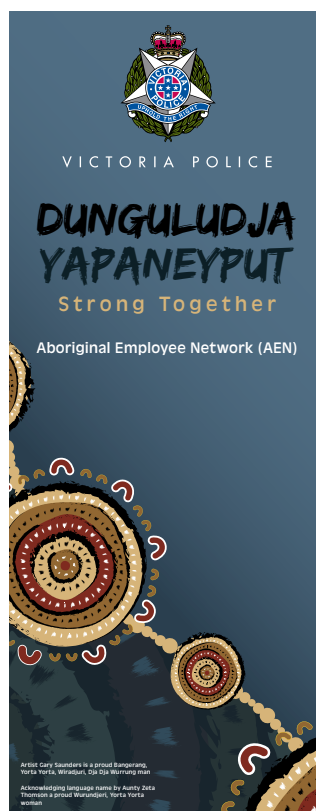
# VICTORIA POLICE SCHOOL-BASED TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

The School-Based Traineeship Program is designed for students completing Years 10, 11, or 12 who are interested in a career with Victoria Police. Victoria Police, Skillinvest and Jobs Victoria jointly created this program to provide useful work experience and insight into a policing career. From 2018–2022, 95 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school-based trainees participated in the program.

## AIDEN'S STORY – MY JOURNEY FROM SCHOOL-BASED TRAINEE TO VICTORIA POLICE EMPLOYEE

While I was at school, I had the opportunity to do a school-based traineeship at the Moe Police Station one day each week. This helped me to gain a Certificate 3 in Business Administration and make some good relationships. I became a much better person through my knowledge and experience along the way. I was nominated for the Koorie Student of the year at the Victorian State Training Awards, and I was runner-up top four from across the state.

After the program, I was successful in gaining a business administration job and I left school early. Within a short period of time, I received a call from Skillinvest about the Youth Cadetship at Victoria Police, applied and was successful in gaining a role at the Priority and Safer Communities Division. During the two years as a cadet, I gained a Certificate 4 in Government.



Dunguludja Yapaneyput - Strong Together: This Yorta Yorta phrase was gifted to the Aboriginal Employee Network by Elder Aunty Zeta Thomson (pictured left), who is a renowned artist, cultural teacher and advocate for Aboriginal prisoners in Victoria. She is a respected Elder and descendant of the Yarra Yarra Clan of the Wurundjeri people and the Ulupna Clan of the Yorta Yorta people.



# WHERE CAN WE IMPROVE?

## EVALUATION OF THE ABORIGINAL INCLUSION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2018–2021

At the conclusion of the 2018–2021 Action Plan, Victoria Police committed to undertaking a comprehensive and independent evaluation of its progress and performance. Yilki Guludun Tagai (YGT) Law and Biocultural Knowledge were engaged to conduct the evaluation which included consultation involving yarning circles, group facilitated discussions, data collection and analysis. YGT's evaluation concluded that Victoria Police had fallen short in achieving meaningful change through the implementation of the plan.

At a strategic level, the evaluation pointed to the need for the actions in this new plan to be more targeted and achievable in the lifespan of the plan. A smaller number of targeted actions will enable a greater impact when tied to relevant and specific outcomes, allowing for greater emphasis on ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning.



The evaluation identified key focus areas to be:

### SELF-DETERMINATION:

- YGT's evaluation concluded that Self-Determination and Aboriginal culture, history and agency are yet to be fully embraced and prioritised in Victoria Police. There is scope to work on fundamental aspects of Self-Determination policy and practice.

### CULTURAL SAFETY AND WELLBEING:

- Cultural safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees continues to be an area that requires significant focus.
- Providing safe and culturally appropriate avenues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to report discrimination or seek assistance was highlighted as an area of priority.

### LEADERSHIP:

- Leadership capability, awareness and support of Aboriginal culture and of Self-Determination within the organisation was a critical foundation.
- A need was identified for improved transparency from senior leadership on the progress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion through engagement with employees and community.

### GOVERNANCE:

- A governance framework or structure is required to oversee the implementation of actions and initiatives linked to the plan and subsequent strategies.
- Governance should include utilisation of knowledge, experience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and stakeholders when developing policies and procedures that will directly impact them.

# A YARN WITH SERGEANT MELISSA PETERS, A PROUD YORTA YORTA, NGURAI ILLUM WURRUNG, DJA DJA WURRUNG, WAMBA WEMBA & WADI WADI WOMAN



## BEHIND THE BADGE

Melissa is a First Nations woman with Polish heritage. She graduated from the Victoria Police Academy in 1998. Melissa was recently promoted to Sergeant in charge of the Proactive Policing Unit at Western Region, Division 3.

## WHY DID YOU JOIN VICTORIA POLICE?

I always wanted to be a police officer to help people. Growing up in the western suburbs in a single parent household opened my eyes to life's struggles, as well as built my empathy and desire to help people. I feel as police members we can assist in changing negative attitudes and promoting social inclusion for all.

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR CAREER

Throughout my career I have had different roles that draw on my life experiences as a First Nations woman with mixed heritage. My training station was Melton, where I had great mentors and learnt a lot about general duties policing. I attended many traumatic events from road fatalities to family violence incidents. My outlet from the trauma and stress of the job was sport and my Aboriginal community, to which I am strongly connected to.

I have had many other roles including at Laverton Police Station where I took an active role in my local Aboriginal community as part of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee & Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group. I was able to advocate for our community for better justice outcomes. After working in metropolitan locations, we moved our family to regional Victoria where I accepted a role as a community engagement officer. I have learnt so much about our diverse communities, but the common fact is that we are all more similar than different. Everyone wants to feel safe and included in community.

## WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR WORK?

I love connecting to community in all its forms. We are a vibrant and diverse community and need to celebrate this.

## WHAT PROGRESS HAVE YOU SEEN OVER YOUR CAREER WITH ABORIGINAL INCLUSION?

Over the years I have seen the introduction of specific roles such as Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer (PALO),

Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO) and Aboriginal Community Justice Panel volunteers (ACJP). All these roles aim to reduce the over representation of Aboriginal people within our justice system.

Victoria Police has a focus on building Aboriginal employee inclusion, with the Aboriginal Inclusion Action Plan and Aboriginal Employee Network.

I have been honoured to participate in the permanent flying of the Aboriginal flag at Victoria Police buildings and contribute to the development of a mandatory e-learning module about understanding family violence in the Aboriginal community.

## WHAT BARRIERS ARE REMAINING FOR ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES?

Many Aboriginal employees work in areas with no other Aboriginal employees, this can be quite isolating. As community members we don't have the luxury of finishing when our shift ends, there's an expectation that we will support our community 24/7. This can be very tiring and having another Aboriginal member to support each other helps as we understand the cultural load.

Unfortunately, racism and outdated views of our community still exist. Aboriginal cultural safety is a concern to our employees.

## WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE?

Victoria Police should continue their path of inclusion for all, we still have a long way to go.

## WHAT ADVICE YOU WOULD PASS ON?

My advice to all police officers is to be creative in the ways we can help. By saying "you are worth it", "I believe you", "I will help you", can be the catalyst for change in someone's life.

# MY STORY: SENIOR CONSTABLE JOSHUA JAMES, A PROUD NOONGAR MAN



My name is Joshua James and I am a proud Noongar man from the nation of Wardandi Gnalla Karla Booja, in the South West of Western Australia. I graduated from the Victoria Police Academy in March 2019 and I am now a Senior Constable at the Yoorook Justice Commission Response Taskforce.

In 2015 I applied to join Victoria Police but unfortunately I was unsuccessful in my application to join as a police officer. Fortunately I was able to join as a PCO.

I worked as a PCO in Western Region for 16 months and during this time I had some fantastic work relationships. However, I also had some terrible moments where I was racially vilified and verbally abused by fellow police members. I was shocked. I reported the inappropriate behaviours and I feel it was dealt with appropriately.

It was in this moment I thought to myself, 'Does this happen elsewhere in VicPol?' I decided that I wanted to do something about it. I wanted to influence better understanding of Aboriginal communities and for police officers to respect my people and my culture. Two months later the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO) role was introduced to the Western Region, I successfully applied for the role and in less than a month I was working as an ACLO in Western Region, Division 1.

My focus for the role was two main tasks: firstly, for Victoria Police members to better understand the Aboriginal community and secondly, to promote positive engagement between Victoria Police and Aboriginal communities.

In 2018, I passed my police entrance exam and entered the Victoria Police Academy to begin my six-month training to become a probationary constable. I was voted by my peers to be the squad leader of Police Squad 6. This is a significant moment for Victoria Police as I was the first person who identified as Aboriginal at the time that I became a Squad Leader. This is probably the proudest moment of my professional career. I graduated as a Constable in March 2019.

In graduation week, I spent my evenings designing an artwork piece that I presented to then Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton. The artwork has an extensive story behind the design which reflects the Victoria Police Academy, Victoria Police and the members of Squad 6 of 2018. The centre piece of the artwork is the heart of the design, with each member of the squad along with mentors and all instructors that were a part of the squad's pathway placing a thumb print in yellow around the centre design. A full description of the design is on display next to the artwork piece that is now hanging on display near the chapel at the Victoria Police Academy.

In my seven years in Victoria Police I've worked as a PCO, an ACLO and now a sworn member of Victoria Police. I have a clear mindset of where I want my career to go. I want to continue to advocate for Aboriginal people through my contributions within Victoria Police's Aboriginal Employee Network and the Ballarat Aboriginal Youth Cautioning Program. I am looking forward to my next step where I want to engage in proactive roles and become a Sergeant.



# WHERE WE WANT TO BE AND HOW WE ARE GETTING THERE

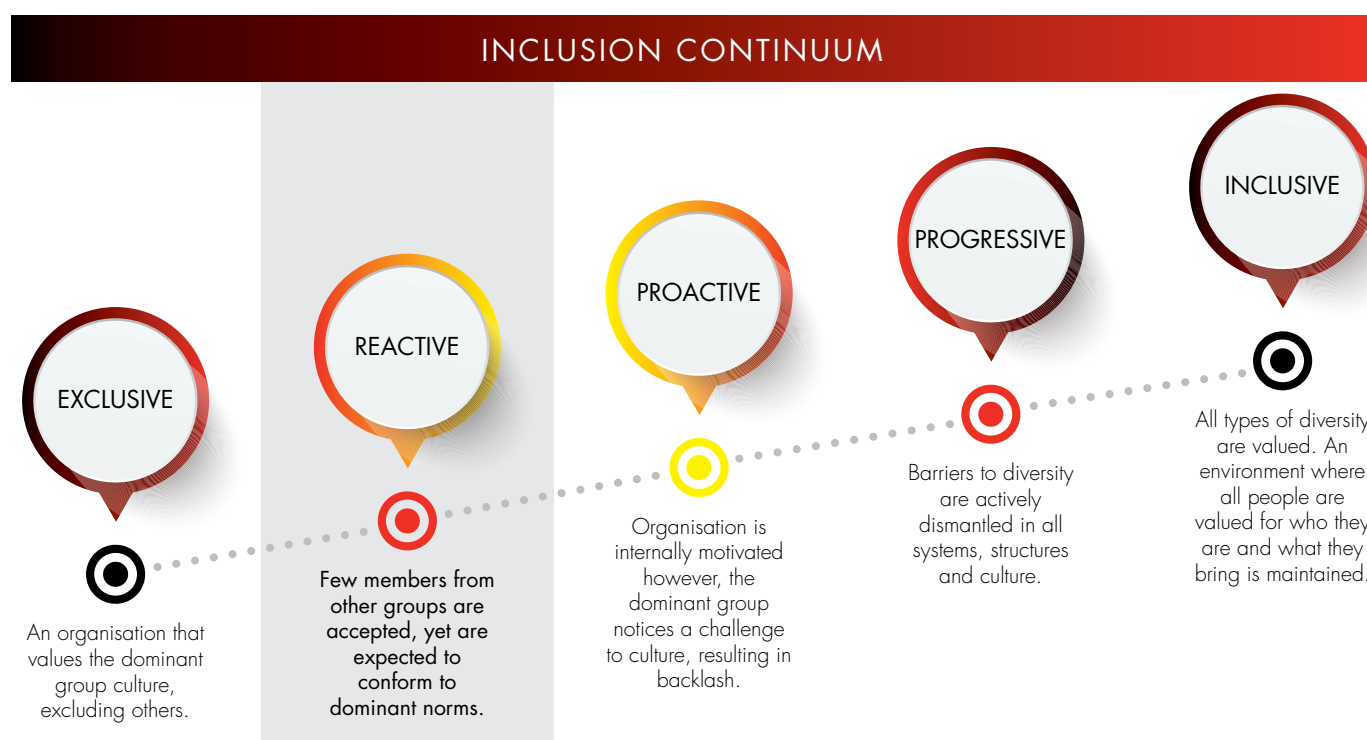
## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER INCLUSION IN THE INCLUSION CONTINUUM

The Diversity and Inclusion Program Logic (Appendix 1) provides a schematic representation of how Victoria Police will work towards a truly diverse workplace and inclusive organisation. The program logic will provide the strategic framework to map future progress through targeted outcomes and action plans.

The program logic identifies the steps we need to take along the *Inclusion Continuum*, a visual model, as we seek to improve the diversity and inclusion consciousness and culture of Victoria Police.<sup>3</sup>

The 2018–2021 Action Plan used the Inclusion Continuum as a measure of our progress on our journey to becoming an inclusive organisation. In 2018, we considered that the organisation was at the ‘**compliant**’ (recently renamed ‘reactive’) phase of the continuum. This is based on the level of maturity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion confidence and capability.<sup>4</sup>

Following the results of the evaluation of the 2018–2021 Action Plan, a self-assessment of Victoria Police’s progress against the updated *Inclusion Continuum* determined that Victoria Police’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion remains at the **reactive** level.



<sup>3</sup> B. Jones and Michael Brazzel 2014, *The NTL Handbook of Organization Development and Change: Principles, Practices, and Perspectives*.

<sup>4</sup> Please note since 2018 Dr. Angela Workman-Stark has improved the definitions within the Inclusion Continuum to better align to evidence-based diversity and inclusion standards. The previous inclusion Continuum (2018) included 6 pillars: exclusive, passive, compliant, proactive, redefining and inclusive. Please see the 2018–2021 Diversity and Inclusion Framework for expanded definitions.



### VISION QUOTE FROM JACQUI MARION

*“It is extremely important to have success with cultural change and we need everyone to be on board to support Aboriginal employment across the organisation. This is a pathway to ensure Aboriginal inclusion is supported in the workplace. We want to create a workforce where Aboriginal people choose Victoria Police as an employer because they feel welcomed, valued and respected and have opportunities for career development within a supportive environment.”*

– Jacqui Marion, Manager, Aboriginal Community Portfolio, Priority and Safer Communities. Proud descendant of the Bidjara Nation.



# THE NEXT STEP

The journey towards our vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion in Victoria Police starts with six actions for 2023–2025. In addition, Victoria Police has developed eight actions that will benefit all areas of diversity and inclusion. These actions complement those actions targeted solely at improving the experience of our Aboriginal employees.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER INCLUSION ACTIONS AND MILESTONES 2023–2025

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES/MEASURES	OWNER
Review and strengthen current Aboriginal applicant attraction strategies	<p><b>The problem:</b> at 0.5% of the Victoria Police workforce, 117 out of 22,500, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are underrepresented when compared to overall representation in the wider community.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> removing social barriers that are experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aspiring to obtain employment with Victoria Police.</p> <p><b>How:</b> we will review existing Aboriginal applicant attraction strategies and implement new employment preparation programs.</p>	<p>Complete annual review of SBTP, YES and Graduate Programs to monitor progress and implement recommendations for continuous improvement.</p> <p>Implement two police employment preparation programs targeting First Nations applicants.</p> <p>Implement and review a mentoring program for participants in the Victoria Police Diversity Recruitment Program (Aboriginal stream).</p> <p>Prepare a business case for the police employment preparation program (Aboriginal stream) to continue to 2030.</p>	HRC
Establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mentoring Program	<p><b>The problem:</b> there are limited opportunities for development or pathways to promotion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> enhancing career experience, progression opportunities and providing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.</p> <p><b>How:</b> we will develop and implement a bespoke Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander police mentoring program.</p>	<p>Review employee lifecycle and identify opportunities to include mentoring as part of the application process, training and ongoing career.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to develop VPS mentor program.</p>	HRC
Review and enhance Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training (ACAT)	<p><b>The problem:</b> Aboriginal cultural awareness is limited across the organisation.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> building Aboriginal cultural capability and awareness through increased participation and strengthened training content.</p> <p><b>How:</b> by ensuring that ACAT is mandatory for all Victoria Police employees and working with Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (ACLO) and Traditional Owner groups to identify opportunities to include localised content.</p>	<p>ACAT is Self-determined by Aboriginal Justice Caucus and Aboriginal Portfolio Reference Group.</p> <p>Identify opportunities for areas to enhance the ACAT package with localised content.</p> <p>ACAT endorsed as mandatory training for all Victoria Police employees.</p> <p>Establish a process to ensure all Command participate in most updated ACAT.</p>	CD



ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES/MEASURES	OWNER
Implement Self-Determination Reform	<p><b>The problem:</b> an evaluation of Victoria Police’s <i>Aboriginal Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2018–2021</i> found that self-determination was the most significant gap relating to the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Organisational decisions impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are not currently made with any consistency or reference to a Self-Determination Reform Framework.</p> <p><b>What we’re doing:</b> operationalising a Self-Determination Reform Framework guided by the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and embedded into foundation elements of organisational decision making relevant to Aboriginal employees.</p> <p><b>How:</b> recognising that Victoria Police Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are a community with the right to make decisions that impact on them by incorporating self-determination guiding principles into all outcomes under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inclusion Action Plan.</p>	<p>Support the AEN and AENC in their role in guiding how Victoria Police applies a Self-Determination Reform Framework. This may involve allies, champions and action owners.</p> <p>Framework is published and communicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and the organisation.</p>	HRC
An annual forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees	<p><b>The problem:</b> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are widely distributed across Victoria. They rarely have the opportunity to come together to share experiences and support, communicate their needs with each other and the organisation, and participate as a group in decision making and prioritisation of their needs.</p> <p><b>What we’re doing:</b> convening an annual forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.</p> <p><b>How:</b> the location, timing, duration and frequency of the forum will be determined by a working group comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees and supported by HRC.</p>	Establish a working group to formulate an approach (timing, frequency, duration, location, funding).	HRC
Consider establishing a centralised ACLO coordination function	<p><b>The problem:</b> ACLOs report to local workplace managers with different levels of cultural awareness and sensitivity. Centralised coordination will provide consistency and support for ACLOs statewide.</p> <p><b>What we’re doing:</b> reviewing central coordination capacity to provide consistent support and resources for ACLOs and their managers statewide.</p> <p><b>How:</b> develop a proposal to establish a central coordination function for ACLOs.</p>	Examine options for a centralised coordination function for ACLOs.	HRC

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTIONS AND MILESTONES 2023–2024

ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES/ MEASURES	OWNER
ALL PORTFOLIOS			
<p>Create a suite of targeted diversity and inclusion tools and resources that are user friendly and easily accessible.</p>	<p><b>The problem:</b> limited knowledge, understanding and awareness of diversity and inclusion amongst managers.</p> <p><b>What we are doing:</b> enhancing diversity and inclusion capability in people managers.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> by developing and promoting a diversity and inclusion resource hub targeted at leaders and people managers.</p>	<p>Conduct a literature review of existing mandatory WoVG and other jurisdiction diversity and inclusion training packages, to inform the development of the resource hub.</p> <p>Review and identify gaps and opportunities in existing training/ engagement programs.</p> <p>Develop the diversity and inclusion management resource hub.</p> <p>Diversity and inclusion management resource hub is integrated into existing people management training.</p>	HRC
<p>Strengthen induction and onboarding with workforce diversity and inclusion information.</p>	<p><b>The problem:</b> current Victoria Police induction and onboarding content lacks comprehensive information on employee networks and other employee diversity and inclusion information.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> ensuring that all new employees are aware of the organisation's diversity and inclusion values, standards, resources and support.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> a review of current induction and onboarding processes will identify opportunities to create and embed new materials addressing current gaps in diversity and inclusion.</p>	<p>Review current police, protective services officers and VPS induction and onboarding content and identify opportunities to incorporate diversity and inclusion content.</p> <p>Implement recommended content changes to ensure there is consistency in how new employees across Victoria Police are introduced to diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Establish a process of regular review that includes consultation with HRC and employee networks.</p>	PDC
<p>Develop a diversity and inclusion communications and engagement strategy to raise awareness of Victoria Police's strategies and action plans.</p>	<p><b>The problem:</b> communications and engagement for diversity, equity and inclusion is limited and lacks an overarching strategy or plan.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> improving knowledge and understanding across the organisation of inclusion for employees with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and LGBTIQ+ employees.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> by including active communications and engagement tactics.</p>	<p>Develop, execute and evaluate an organisational Diversity and Inclusion Communication and Engagement Strategy.</p>	HRC
<p>Strengthen strategic influence of employee networks through increased representation and embedding representatives.</p>	<p><b>The problem:</b> employee networks have different levels of influence, support and visibility depending on the rank and position of their members and their nominated champion's level of involvement.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> strengthening employee networks and introducing consistency to support all groups to have greater strategic influence in Victoria Police.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> by developing a consistent process of support and executive advocacy that will apply to all employee networks.</p>	<p>Set benchmark requirements that all employee networks are entitled to.</p> <p>Review each group against benchmark requirements.</p> <p>Provide support to employee networks to ensure that all networks have an Executive Command Sponsor and a Command Portfolio Lead.</p> <p>Develop a process to ensure there is consistent support, influence and advocacy across all groups.</p> <p>Establish a formal consultation and feedback process.</p>	HRC





ACTION	STRATEGIC INTENT	KEY MILESTONES/ MEASURES	OWNER
<b>ALL PORTFOLIOS</b>			
Establish a governance and an authorising framework for diversity and inclusion.	<p><b>The problem:</b> insufficient governance or authorising framework to support and progress workforce diversity and inclusion.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> expanding and renaming the Gender Equality and Inclusion Outcomes Committee to include representation and support for implementing the diversity and inclusion strategy and action plans.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> we will re-scope and expand the Gender Equality and Inclusion Outcomes Committee. The committee will welcome new members and be responsible for monitoring and tracking progress against the inclusion strategies and action plans.</p>	<p>Review Gender Equality and Inclusion Outcomes Committee membership and terms of reference (ToR).</p> <p>Develop a proposal in consultation with employee networks including new name, ToR, membership, and governance model.</p> <p>Obtain approval including endorsement from Gender Equality and Inclusion Outcomes Committee and approval from Safety, People and Culture Committee.</p>	HRC
Uplift capability of units responding to workplace harm through development of training and resources.	<p><b>The problem:</b> organisational response to workplace harm has been identified as an area of focus for improvement by all diversity portfolios.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> ensuring an intersectional lens is applied to workplace harm reporting and responses.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> by developing, training and resources for Victoria Police units that respond to workplace harm and complaints.</p>	<p>Develop targeted diversity and inclusion training.</p> <p>Rollout training to all employees managing incidents of workplace harm.</p> <p>Develop processes that ensure new employees engage in the training as part of their induction to workplace harm units.</p> <p>Develop and provide ongoing support/ refresher training for existing employees.</p>	HRC
Review workplace harm reporting, complaint pathways and employee support services.	<p><b>The problem:</b> complaint pathways and employee support services are not fully inclusive.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> ensuring that complaint processes and support services are safe, appropriate and inclusive for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD, LGBTIQ+ employees and those with disability and accessibility requirements.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> we will conduct the review with an inclusive lens.</p>	<p>Ensure all workplace harm systems capture employees' diversity information where relevant to the complaint.</p> <p>Establish a review for workplace harm reporting and wellbeing services referral processes.</p> <p>Review opportunities within existing contract requirements to ensure EAP providers include culturally safe, accessible and inclusive support and referrals.</p>	HRC/ PSC
Create and implement a diversity and inclusion Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework	<p><b>The problem:</b> previous systems and processes developed for monitoring and evaluating strategies and actions have lacked robustness, creating difficulties in measuring and assessing progress.</p> <p><b>What we're doing:</b> ensuring Victoria Police can sufficiently assess and monitor the organisation's material progress towards a diverse workplace and inclusive organisation.</p> <p><b>How we will do it:</b> by developing KPIs for each action across the four strategies and action plans.</p>	<p>Review relevant existing data and reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>Determine KPIs and processes to establish baseline data.</p> <p>Establish mechanism for monitoring progress.</p> <p>Develop processes to ensure regular review.</p>	HRC

# ACRONYMS AND SHORTENED FORMS

## ACAT

Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training

## ACLO

Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer

## AEN

Aboriginal Employee Network

## AENC

Aboriginal Employee Network Council

## APRG

Aboriginal Portfolio Reference Group

## GEIOC

Gender Equality and Inclusion Outcomes Committee

## PALO

Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer

## PCO

Police Custody Officer

## PSO

Protective Services Officer

## RAP

Reconciliation Action Plan

## SBTP

School-Based Traineeship Program

## VAAF

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

## YES

Youth Employment Scheme

## YGT

Yilki Guludun Tagai Law and Biocultural Knowledge

## VPS

Victorian Public Service

# GLOSSARY

We define key terms below and acknowledge that people have different definitions. Language has changed and continues to evolve.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

An Aboriginal person and Torres Strait Islander person:

- is a descendent of an Aboriginal person
- is a descendent of a Torres Strait Islander person
- identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by the community in which they live or has lived

## COLONISATION

Is the act of setting up a colony away from one's original place of origin and involves the process of settling among and establishing control over the Aboriginal people of the area.

## DISCRIMINATION

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, sex, or disability.

## DISCRIMINATORY WORKPLACE HARM

This umbrella term covers any way a person experiences discrimination, harm or violence based on protected characteristics within the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

## GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION OUTCOMES COMMITTEE

The Gender Equality and Inclusion Outcomes Committee is the current authorising and governing committee that sits over gender equality in Victoria Police. The committee is being expanded to include diversity and inclusion.

## INTERSECTIONALITY

This is an approach to understanding how social meanings related to the way we categorise and identify can overlap and interconnect. This creates different layers of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group.

## PROGRAM LOGIC

A program logic model is a schematic representation that describes how a program is intended to work by linking activities with outputs, intermediate outcomes and longer-term outcomes.

## STEREOTYPE

A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

## WORKPLACE HARM

Workplace harm is the detrimental effects of being targeted by all forms of inappropriate behaviour from work colleagues including sex discrimination, gender-based bullying, sexual harassment and assault, predatory behaviour, victimisation, workplace conflict and bullying.

# APPENDIX 1: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM LOGIC



## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: Program Logic

**Problem:** An engrained culture and systemic bias has amplified inequality and impeded diversity.

**Goal:** A diverse workplace and inclusive organisation







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