



**Victorian Equal Opportunity
& Human Rights Commission**

JULY 2020

Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy 2020-22

Published by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission,
Level 3, 204 Lygon Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053.
July 2020.

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Story: This is about three countries keeping a connection with each other using smoke over the water. At the centre of the painting are our Ancestors keeping the culture going.

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Foreword from the Commissioner

I am proud to present the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's *Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy 2020–22*.

As an organisation, we recognise the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians as First Nations peoples and the critical role Aboriginal Victorians have played in advocating for and advancing human rights – from criminal justice reform to the nation's first Treaty process. I particularly acknowledge the unwavering dedication and strength of the Aboriginal Victorians, who over the last 200 years, have fought for the recognition of their rights, often in the face of racism, oppression and marginalisation.

Aboriginal Victorians continue to experience discrimination and breaches of their human rights. Recognising this, we are committed to providing high quality and tailored services to Aboriginal community members so they can exercise their rights, while supporting Aboriginal voices to advance human rights.

This is our second Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy. Under our first strategy, established in 2015, we undertook critical work to advance Aboriginal rights. While it provided us with a strong foundation on which to build, we understand that to meet community needs and respond to evolving challenges, we must continually develop as an organisation.

As the next step in our development, the *Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy 2020–22* is intended to drive substantive reform within the Commission. To do this, we have consulted with Aboriginal Victorians for their guidance on how we can improve. We have also engaged with organisations who deliver services to Aboriginal Victorians, including Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, to understand what best practice looks like and how we can enhance the Commission's processes, governance and service delivery.

The Strategy commits us to a number of actions guided by three key themes that reflect our values and priorities: embedding cultural rights; demonstrating our commitment to self-determination in practice; and being accountable to the Victorian Aboriginal community.



Over the next three years, we will:

- fast-track complaints by Aboriginal clients through our dispute resolution service
- capture and share data in line with data sovereignty principles
- establish partnership principles to guide our work with Aboriginal organisations and enhance community engagement
- undertake education and engagement sessions with other organisations and members of the Aboriginal community.

We understand that for this Strategy to be effective we need to earn the trust of the Victorian Aboriginal community and be an effective partner and ally. While this is an ongoing process, we are committed to this important work.

We look forward to working with the Victorian Aboriginal community to implement this Strategy and the opportunity it provides for us to listen, learn and work together to create a fair, safe and inclusive Victoria.

Kristen Hilton

**Victorian Equal Opportunity
and Human Rights Commissioner**

1. Acknowledgement

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (the Commission) proudly acknowledges and celebrates the First Peoples of Victoria and their ongoing strength in upholding some of the world's oldest living cultures. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands throughout what is now Victoria, where we live and work, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal Victorian Traditional Owners maintain that their sovereignty has never been ceded. The strength, resilience and pride of Aboriginal Victorians, their cultures, communities and identities continue to grow and thrive today despite the impact of colonisation and ongoing experiences of racism.

The Commission celebrates the important contribution of the Victorian Aboriginal community in progressing human rights.

1.1 Our appreciation

The Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy 2020–22 (the Strategy) has benefited from the guidance and feedback provided by members of Aboriginal Victorian communities as well as other organisations working in the Victorian Aboriginal rights sector.

Members of Aboriginal Victorian communities provided their views in confidence and candour to inform the development of the Strategy. We appreciate the opportunity to hear directly from everyone who generously participated in our consultations.

We are also grateful to the following organisations who shared their experience of delivering services to Aboriginal people in Victoria:

- Commission for Children and Young People
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice and Community Safety – Koori Justice Unit
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – Aboriginal Victoria
- Victorian Aboriginal-Controlled Health Organisation
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Victorian Legal Aid.

Note on terminology

The Commission acknowledges the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians, their communities and cultures. Throughout the Strategy, we refer to the Aboriginal Victorian Community as inclusive of the many different First Nations Peoples in Victoria, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



2. About us

2.1 Who we are

The Commission is an independent statutory body responsible for addressing human rights issues and discrimination in Victoria. To do this we:

- inform and educate people about their rights and responsibilities
- help people resolve disputes about discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation, and racial and religious vilification
- undertake voluntary reviews of programs and practices to help people and organisations comply with the law
- undertake research to identify, understand and find solutions to systemic causes of discrimination and human rights breaches
- conduct investigations to identify and eliminate systemic discrimination
- intervene in court and tribunal proceedings that involve equal opportunity and human rights issues.

We have responsibility under three laws:

- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter).

A key part of the Commission's Aboriginal rights work is promoting and advancing Aboriginal cultural rights under the Charter. Cultural rights under the Charter protect Aboriginal people's right to practise and maintain traditional activities.

2.2 Our vision

Our vision is for a fair, safe and inclusive Victoria where every person is respected and treated with dignity. Our mission is to engage and influence law and policy makers, institutions, communities and individuals to protect and promote human rights in Victoria.

2.3 Strategic priorities

The Commission has four strategic priorities that drive our vision for a fair, safe and inclusive Victoria. We set out these priorities in our 2017–22 Strategic Plan *Upholding human rights close to home*.

These include:

- embedding a human rights culture
- improving workplace equality
- protecting human rights in closed environments
- reducing racism.

In developing the Strategy, we have focused on committing to actions that will help us progress our work under these strategic priorities for Aboriginal Victorians.



3. Developing the Aboriginal Community Engagement Strategy

3.1 Purpose

We understand that to achieve our vision, we must provide high quality services to Aboriginal clients that are tailored and responsive to the needs of community. Additionally, we need to build and sustain awareness and trust in us as an organisation. This Strategy provides a roadmap for how we plan to do this through a specific set of actions that we have committed to undertake over the next three years as an organisation. The actions, while designed to be achievable, seek to extend us as an organisation to create substantive change.

3.2 History

In 2015, the Commission developed its first Aboriginal Engagement Strategy. This internal policy has guided our work engaging with and promoting the rights of the Victorian Aboriginal Community up until 2020. Over this period, the Commission successfully implemented a number of actions to promote and protect Aboriginal rights. In particular, we committed to and delivered actions to promote Aboriginal rights under the Charter, including:

- intervening in the Supreme Court matter of *Cemino v Cannan*¹ in which the Court determined that the cultural rights of an Aboriginal person must be considered when deciding whether the matter should be heard before Aboriginal Elders in the Koori Court
- producing the *Aboriginal cultural rights in youth justice*² report in partnership with the Commission for Children and Young People
- creating a series of resources for public authorities and community members that raise awareness of cultural rights
- delivering education sessions on the Charter to over 1500 staff in the Victorian justice sector throughout 2018–19 with a focus on cultural rights, consistent with the *Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja (Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement)*.

3.3 Consultation

In early 2020, the Commission conducted two separate consultations with members of the Victorian Aboriginal community and other organisations working in the sector. The consultations were designed to identify the needs of the Aboriginal community and understand how the Commission can better meet these needs.

¹ *Cemino v Cannan and Ors* [2018] VSC 535.

² Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Children and Young People, 'Aboriginal Cultural Rights in Youth Justice' (Report, 2018).

The Commission also distributed an online survey to members of the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) throughout Victoria. The online survey allowed us to receive feedback from Aboriginal Victorians in regional areas and supplemented the Melbourne-based consultations.

“I’ve had no problem with them [the Commission], and I trust them. They are about the only people I trust. I really appreciated them being straight down the line.”³

The feedback and guidance that we received has provided the foundation for the Strategy and the actions we have committed to. The consultations also gave us an opportunity to hear and understand what is important to Aboriginal Victorians in accessing our services.

“I’m really pleased with the people I’ve dealt with and who I have referred to them have had a good outcome. Life’s a lot better for my friend that I recently referred.”⁴

3 Community consultation participant.

4 Community consultation participant.

4. About the Strategy

4.1 Our approach

4.1.1 Time frame

The Strategy sets out actions across 2020–22 and aligns with the life cycle of our Strategic Plan *Upholding human rights close to home*. This allows us to integrate our Strategy into the Commission's broader work and strategic priorities.

Our intention is to formally assess our progress annually to ensure that we continue to advance against the actions we have set ourselves, with the view to re-setting the Strategy in line with the Commission's next Strategic Plan at the end of 2022. This three-year time frame provides us with the opportunity to create meaningful change while ensuring we can update the Strategy to respond to the changing needs of the Victorian Aboriginal community and maintain its functionality for the Commission.

4.1.2 A living document

The Strategy provides a roadmap for us to make sure our work and services are more accessible, supportive and beneficial for the Victorian Aboriginal community. In order to adapt to evolving challenges, the Strategy has been created as a 'living document' and will be monitored, evaluated and reported on at different stages, including as part of our public annual reporting process. It will also become embedded across all parts of the Commission, so that this work becomes part of our business as usual.

4.1.3 Being flexible and responsive

We know that there is diversity of perspective and experience within

the Victorian Aboriginal community. The Strategy has been developed in recognition of this diversity and is designed to build services that are flexible and responsive to the individual needs of Aboriginal Victorians.

4.2 Key themes

Our Strategy is based around three key themes:

- embedding cultural rights
- demonstrating our commitment to self-determination in practice
- being accountable to the Victorian Aboriginal community.

These themes arose out of our consultations and reflect our values as an organisation, directly linking our objectives under the Strategy to who we are and what we want to achieve.

4.2.1 Embedding cultural rights

Our services consider the context of our clients and their individual needs to provide tailored services and solutions.

For Aboriginal clients, this means respecting, understanding and implementing their cultural rights, protected under the Charter. We support the cultural rights of all Aboriginal Victorians and demonstrate this by embedding cultural rights into how we provide our services, including by increasing our presence in and promoting our services to the Aboriginal Victorian community. By providing culturally respectful and tailored services, we will improve the accessibility of our services and satisfaction of community members using our services.

// Aboriginal people need to be treated in a way that is doubly understanding and committed.”⁵

The Strategy seeks to embed Aboriginal cultural rights by equipping our staff with the ability to sensitively identify Aboriginal clients and the capability to provide tailored and culturally appropriate services and referrals.

// Community can trust that when they go there they are going to be heard and that their issues are going to be respected [when services are culturally appropriate].”⁶

The Strategy also sets actions to ensure we provide a culturally safe and respectful workplace for our staff, and that we are able to attract and support Aboriginal talent.

4.2.2 Demonstrating our commitment to self-determination in practice

We know that the Aboriginal community is itself in the best position to understand and address issues affecting Aboriginal Victorians. This is supported by human rights law, which protects the right of

Indigenous people to self-determination.⁷ The Victorian Government has also committed to self-determination as a guiding principle for its work with Aboriginal Victorians.⁸

// One of the ways of making self-determination meaningful – is having a seat at the table to make sure they have a say in setting the agenda.”⁹

We support self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians as a human right, and self-determination guides how we undertake our work with the Aboriginal community, including under this Strategy.

// It’s the responsibility of the rest to play a role in self-determination. Not just that Aboriginal person who comes through the system.”¹⁰

5 Community consultation participant.

6 Community consultation participant.

7 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, GA Res 61/295, UN GAOR, 61st sess, 107th plen mtg, Supp No 49, UN Doc A/RES/61/295 (13 September 2007) art 3.

8 Victorian State Government, *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 – 2023* (Framework, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2018).

9 Organisational consultation participant.

10 Organisational consultation participant.

We will implement self-determination into our practice through a number of actions, including:

- creating Aboriginal Partnership Principles to guide our work with Aboriginal communities
- practising data sovereignty by providing data and analysis to Aboriginal stakeholders and using that data to improve our services for the benefit of community
- supporting economic self-determination by engaging Victorian Aboriginal businesses through social procurement.

“If you’ve got data on a lot of people utilising in this area, it will help you identify and address issues and funding.”¹¹

4.2.3 Being accountable to the Victorian Aboriginal community

We embrace rigour and accountability in all our work and accept responsibility for our actions, while holding ourselves to account. To do this, we undertake our work in an impartial and transparent way so that we can reflect on our actions and continue to develop. By publishing and reporting our progress publicly we are committing to being accountable to the Victorian Aboriginal Community.

4.3 What we want to achieve and why

The Strategy is centred on four key objectives:

- accessibility and tailored services
- awareness and promotion
- Aboriginal representation
- monitoring and governance.

Objective 1: Our services are accessible and tailored to the Aboriginal community

There is a great diversity of culture, history and experience within the Victorian Aboriginal community. There are also specific factors that can create barriers for Aboriginal Victorians in accessing services, including systemic racism.

To offer the best services, we need to be able to recognise and understand the context and specific needs of Aboriginal clients, as well as barriers to accessing services. This will enable us to tailor our services so that they are provided in a way that is culturally appropriate while enhancing accessibility.

“It’s not about community fitting systems, but about ensuring we [organisations] follow up.”¹²

¹¹ Community consultation participant.

¹² Organisational consultation participant.

Actions to get us there

To achieve this objective, we will establish a:

- referral policy and process with relevant organisations for Aboriginal clients
- fast-track process for Aboriginal clients using our Dispute Resolution services
- formal process to follow-up with Aboriginal clients who have used our services to receive their feedback and improve our services
- specialised service where we offer additional assistance to Aboriginal clients who wish to make and lodge a complaint
- data strategy for managing and sharing de-identified data in relation to Aboriginal clients consistent with data sovereignty principles.

Objective 2: There is greater awareness within the Victorian Aboriginal community of our role as an organisation and the services we provide

In order to engage with us effectively and access our services, Aboriginal Victorians need to be aware of the Commission, what we do and how we can help.

“// There’s a lack of information out there. We aren’t getting to the people that are affected by this stuff.”¹³

We have committed to actions to better promote our services and engage with the Aboriginal community to create a higher level of awareness of our services. We believe greater awareness will also help us build trust as an organisation.

“// If there was [more] info out there it would go some way to improving the trust.”¹⁴

Actions to get us there

To achieve this objective, we will:

- partner with ACCOs to promote the Commission’s role and services
- promote the Commission’s services through Aboriginal media channels
- develop a communication strategy that guides how we advocate and promote Aboriginal rights in public communications
- co-design and deliver engagement sessions to Aboriginal community members with partner ACCOs.

Objective 3: Aboriginal representation is increased across the Commission and staff have the knowledge and skills to provide culturally respectful services

To meet the needs of Aboriginal Victorians, we need to be able to provide tailored and culturally respectful services. This requires us to build a stronger understanding of the context, culture and perspective of Aboriginal clients so that we are best positioned to engage with them in a considered way.

¹³ Community consultation participant.

¹⁴ Community consultation participant.

// You need something in place for Aboriginal people, so they [non-Indigenous people] know that they need to go that extra step and how to do it for Aboriginal people.”¹⁵

To achieve this, we will provide all staff with cultural awareness training to establish a strong foundational understanding across the Commission. This will be supplemented by specialised training for individual teams within the Commission that focuses on providing tailored services to Aboriginal clients.

It is also important that clients have the option to talk to an Aboriginal staff member when they access our services and that our non-Indigenous staff are supported with the knowledge and experience of Aboriginal staff members.

Actions to get us there

To achieve this objective, we will:

- modify our recruitment processes to encourage more Aboriginal applicants
- support the appointment of at least one Aboriginal board member on a continual basis
- support and recruit at least one Barring Djinang Aboriginal student for an internship with the Commission per year
- provide all non-Indigenous staff with cultural awareness training in addition to specifically tailored and specialised cultural competency training for individual teams.

Objective 4: The Strategy is promoted and actively monitored to allow staff and stakeholders to track our progress

As an organisation, we accept responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves to account. We have created a number of actions to monitor our progress under the Strategy so that we continue to reflect on our progress and incorporate learnings.

Actions to get us there

To achieve this objective, we will:

- publish the Strategy on the Commission’s website
- provide information sessions to all staff during the roll out of the Strategy
- embed the Strategy into individual staff Professional Development Plans
- empower the Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group to monitor our progress under the Strategy
- publicly report on our progress and reflect on the Strategy as part of our Annual Report.

¹⁵ Community consultation participant.



5. Action table

Outcome	Action	
Theme: Embedding cultural rights		
Objective 1: Our services are accessible and tailored to the Aboriginal community		
<p>1. Improved accessibility of the Commission’s services and greater engagement with the Victorian Aboriginal community.</p>	<p>a) Establish clear warm referral policies and processes between the Commission and relevant organisations.</p>	
	<p>b) Formally establish a fast track process for Aboriginal complaints through the Commission’s Dispute Resolution service.</p>	
	<p>c) Establish mechanisms to follow up with Aboriginal clients about their satisfaction with the services they have received, and the outcomes reached to ensure clients’ matters are handled to the best of our ability, or, otherwise, referred to other relevant organisations.</p>	
	<p>d) Aboriginal clients are provided with additional individualised assistance to make a formal complaint with the Commission’s Dispute Resolution service.</p>	
	<p>e) Provide a number of entry points to the Commission and specialised support for Aboriginal clients accessing the Commission’s services.</p>	

	Measure	Time frame	Responsibility
	<p>i) We have co-designed our referral service, including policies and processes with relevant organisations, such as the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Djirra and the Commission for Children and Young People.</p> <p>ii) We have developed and delivered training sessions to all frontline staff in the Information and Engagement and Dispute Resolution teams, providing guidance on the referral policy and processes.</p>	March 2021	Legal and Dispute Resolution; Education and Engagement
	<p>i) We have developed a formal process to identify complaints from Aboriginal clients as part of the complaint assessment process. Aboriginal complaints have been fast tracked to a conciliator as part of this process.</p>	November 2020	Legal and Dispute Resolution
	<p>i) We have developed a satisfaction and feedback survey for conciliators to complete in consultation with Aboriginal clients that have used our Dispute Resolution service.</p> <p>ii) We have formally established a process where conciliators follow up over the phone, or by other client-preferred means, with Aboriginal clients to assess the services provided and any feedback.</p>	November 2020	Legal and Dispute Resolution
	<p>i) We provide Aboriginal clients with additional assistance in forming a complaint when using our Dispute Resolution service. Any feedback has been incorporated into the complaint assistance process (as identified in the follow-up survey outlined in Objective 1 – Action 1(c)).</p>	November 2020 (ongoing)	Legal and Dispute Resolution
	<p>i) We have established a process whereby Aboriginal clients are provided with the option to speak with an Aboriginal staff member at the initial stages of engagement with the Commission through both the Enquiries and Dispute Resolution teams.</p>	November 2020	Education and Engagement; Legal and Dispute Resolution; Policy and Research

Outcome	Action	
<p>2. Enhanced data processes and analysis to better understand the needs and experiences of Aboriginal Victorians, and to tailor our services to those needs.</p>	<p>a) Develop a data strategy for managing and sharing data in relation to Aboriginal clients, consistent with data sovereignty principles and protocols.¹</p>	
	<p>b) Our services request information, in a respectful way, to identify Aboriginal clients (disclosures are voluntary).</p> <p>This will be further informed by the Commission's Data Strategy (Objective 1 – Action 2(a)).</p>	
	<p>c) Client data is used to strengthen the delivery of our services to the Aboriginal community, and informs our other functions.</p>	
<p>Objective 2: There is greater awareness within the Victorian Aboriginal community of our role as an organisation</p>		
<p>1. Increased community awareness of the role and services of the Commission</p>	<p>a) Identify and partner with Aboriginal organisations to promote information about the Commission's services and role.</p>	
	<p>b) Develop a tailored communication strategy that provides clear guidance on how and when the Commission should advocate and promote Aboriginal rights issues in public communications. The Strategy will align with the Aboriginal Partnership Principles (Objective 3 – Action 3(a)).</p>	

¹⁶ For example, by promoting 'increased Aboriginal community ownership of and access to data' – Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja (Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement – Phase 4), 50.

	Measure	Time frame	Responsibility
	i) We have established a process to share de-identified enquiry and complaints data with Aboriginal stakeholders and detailed how we have used this data to improve our services for the benefit of the Aboriginal community.	November 2020	Communications and Campaigns (in consultation with Legal and Dispute Resolution; Education and Engagement)
	i) We have established processes at all entry points of the Commission to enable Aboriginal clients to voluntarily identify, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inserting an option to voluntarily self-identify as Aboriginal in the complaints form; and • asking clients whether they identify as Aboriginal at initial engagement with the Commission's Enquiries Team (supported by Objective 3 – Action 2(c)). 	November 2020	Legal and Dispute Resolution; Education and Engagement.
	i) Our Legal Team has considered Aboriginal client data in assessing the merit of interventions and investigations.	Ongoing	Legal and Dispute Resolution
	ii) The Policy and Research Branch has considered Aboriginal client data in identifying and addressing Aboriginal rights issues.		Policy and Research
ation and the services we provide			
	i) We have established partnerships with at least two Aboriginal organisations, including one focused on regional Aboriginal Victorians.	August 2021	Education and Engagement
	ii) We have delivered information and resources that promote the Commission's services in a way that is tailored for partner organisations and their staff.	November 2021	
	i) We have developed an Aboriginal rights communications strategy.	November 2020	Communications and Campaigns (supported by Senior Policy and Research Officer, Aboriginal Rights)

Outcome	Action	
	c) Promote the Commission, its services and role through Aboriginal media channels.	
	d) Engage with Aboriginal content producers to create compelling information and stories about our enquiry and dispute resolution services and positive outcomes that have been achieved.	
	e) Work with other organisations in the Aboriginal rights sector to provide legal information sessions focusing on current human rights issues of concern to Aboriginal Victorians and law in addition to the Commission's services.	
2. Greater presence in Aboriginal Victorian communities, including in regional Victoria.	a) Leverage our partnerships with two Aboriginal organisations (as identified in Objective 2 – Action 1(a)) to jointly engage with the Aboriginal community to increase awareness of rights and the Commission's services.	

	Measure	Time frame	Responsibility
	<p>i) We have engaged Aboriginal media organisations to trial targeted advertising to the Victorian Aboriginal community that promotes the Commission and its services.</p> <p>ii) We have engaged with Aboriginal media organisations to promote and discuss issues on Aboriginal rights.</p>	January 2021	Communications and Campaigns
	<p>i) We have identified at least three case studies that highlight Aboriginal clients that have positively engaged the Commission's services.</p> <p>ii) We have published these case studies on our website and integrated them into education and engagement sessions as provided in Objective 2 – Action (2(a)).</p>	December 2021	Communications and Campaigns (supported by Legal and Dispute Resolution)
	<p>i) We have provided legal information sessions to at least one organisation working in the Aboriginal rights sector or providing services to Aboriginal clients.</p> <p>ii) We have created tailored content as part of the legal information session/s, in consideration of the current human rights issues that are relevant to the organisation's work and clients.</p> <p>iii) We have assessed the legal information session/s to understand their impact.</p>	<p>August 2021</p> <p>August 2021</p> <p>December 2021</p>	Legal and Dispute Resolution
	<p>i) We have explored the possibility of co-designing and co-delivering information and rights-based education with one or more Aboriginal organisations.</p> <p>ii) We have co-developed tailored education content or resources that increase awareness among the clients of partner Aboriginal organisations.</p> <p>iii) We have co-delivered at least two engagement sessions or resources to clients of partner Aboriginal organisations, including in regional Victoria.</p>	<p>January 2022</p> <p>March 2022</p>	Education and Engagement

Outcome	Action	
Objective 3: Aboriginal representation is increased across the Commission and staff have the knowledge and		
1. Opportunities at the Commission are promoted to the Victorian Aboriginal community and a culturally respectful and supportive workplace is provided to Aboriginal staff.	a) Modify recruitment processes to encourage more Aboriginal applicants by reviewing and redeveloping position descriptions and advertisements to ensure they are accessible and culturally sensitive to prospective Aboriginal applicants; and advertising vacancies through Aboriginal professional networks or media where possible.	
	b) Support the appointment of at least one Aboriginal identified person to the Commission's Board.	
	c) Continue the Barring Djinang/CareerTrackers program, offering internships to Aboriginal tertiary students at the Commission each calendar year.	
	d) Ensure that Aboriginal staff are aware of, and supported to engage with, the Aboriginal Employee Network, and other professional networking opportunities.	
2. Enhanced staff capability to engage in a considered and respectful way with the Victorian Aboriginal community.	a) Implement an internal event calendar that provides staff with knowledge of Aboriginal history, culture and issues.	
	b) Provide staff with cultural awareness training at regular intervals to ensure that its value is maintained across the lifecycle of the Strategy.	
	c) Provide tailored cultural competency training to the Enquiries and Dispute Resolution teams to ensure staff are confident and knowledgeable in providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal clients.	

	Measure	Time frame	Responsibility
nd skills to provide culturally respectful services			
	i) We have observed an increase in the number of Aboriginal applicants for positions with the Commission, or otherwise, we have assessed how this can be improved.	December 2020 (implementation) December 2021 (review)	Business Services
	i) We have advocated for the appointment of at least one identified Aboriginal board member.	Ongoing	Executive
	i) We have recruited at least one Barring Djinang/ CareerTrackers intern to the Commission each calendar year. ii) The Barring Djinang/CareerTrackers intern has reported satisfaction with the internship at its completion and has enhanced their professional skills, experience and networks.	November 2020 – December 2022 (ongoing)	Business Services
	i) We have included Information on the Aboriginal Employee Network and Aboriginal Career Development Fund in staff on-boarding material.	Commence July (ongoing)	Business Services
	i) We have developed and promoted an internal events calendar to Commission staff.	July 2020	Senior Policy and Research Officer, Aboriginal Rights (with support of Communications and Campaigns)
	i) We have required and supported all non-Indigenous staff to attend foundational cultural training session provided by the Koori Heritage Trust.	Ongoing	Business Services
	i) We have provided all of our Enquiries and Dispute Resolution staff with tailored training to enhance their cultural competency. ii) Our training provides an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Aboriginal communities’ culture, community and context • factors that influence the provision of services to Aboriginal clients • how to appropriately and sensitively handle identification of Aboriginal clients • how to address these issues and provide tailored services to Aboriginal clients. 	Commence September 2020 (ongoing)	Education and Engagement; Legal and Dispute Resolution

Outcome	Action	
	d) Implement a system of 'buddy' training that pairs non-Indigenous with Aboriginal staff to process enquiries, complaints and conciliations from Aboriginal clients (supplementing the cultural training (Objective 3 – Action 2(b) and 2(c)).	
Theme: Demonstrating our commitment to self-determination in practice		
3. The principle of self-determination is promoted and embedded in our work. ²	a) Develop Aboriginal Rights 'Partnership Principles' that provide guidance on how the Commission engages with Aboriginal communities and empowers Aboriginal voices (in alignment with the Commission's Stakeholder Strategy).	
4. The Commission supports the Victorian Aboriginal business community.	a) Update our social procurement policy to include a specific focus on Victorian Aboriginal business, consistent with the Victorian Government's policy 'Tharamba Bugeen – Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy'.	
	b) Develop a supply chain strategy to influence other organisations and businesses to engage Aboriginal businesses as part of their social procurement policies.	
Theme: Being accountable to the Victorian Aboriginal community		
Objective 4: The Strategy is promoted and actively monitored to allow staff and stakeholders to track our p		
1. The Strategy is visible and actively used by all staff.	a) Publish the strategy on our website and promote it to the Victorian Aboriginal community.	
	b) Provide mandatory information sessions to all staff during the roll-out of the Strategy.	
	c) The Strategy is included in onboarding material and induction sessions for new staff.	

17 Self-determination is provided as human right by the 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples'. Supporting self-determination is also a key commitment of all partners to 'Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja (Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement – Phase 4), 54.

18 Consistent with our value of 'accountability' by enabling ourselves to 'accept responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves and other to account' – Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 'Business Plan, 2018 – 20', 19.

	Measure	Time frame	Responsibility
	i) Each member of the Dispute Resolution and Enquiries teams has participated in observing and processing an enquiry, complaint or conciliation with an Aboriginal staff member.	July 2021	Legal and Dispute Resolution; Education and Engagement
	i) We have developed 'Partnership Principles', or an analogous policy, to guide how the Commission partners with Aboriginal stakeholders and Aboriginal communities in a way that is consistent with the principle of self-determination.	December 2020	Policy and Research
	i) We have worked in coordination with the Department of Treasury and Finance to identify and scope potential opportunities to prioritise support for Victorian Aboriginal businesses.	March 2021	Business Services
	ii) Our social procurement policy provides clear guidance on how we will support Victorian Aboriginal businesses.		Business Services
	i) We have identified and pursued opportunities to influence other organisations and businesses within our supply chain to engage in social procurement with Victorian Aboriginal businesses.	July 2021	Business Services
Progress³			
	i) We have published the Strategy on the Commission's website, promoted the Strategy through social media channels and distributed it to Aboriginal communities and stakeholders.	July 2020	Communications and Campaigns
	i) All staff have participated in an information session within the roll-out time frame.	August–October 2020	Business Services; Senior Policy and Research Officer, Aboriginal Rights
	i) We have provided the Strategy to all new starters and discussed the Strategy during induction sessions.	Commence July (ongoing)	Business Services

	d) Updates are provided to all Commission staff on the progress of the Strategy.	
2. Transparency and accountability are built into Commission processes	a) Clearly allocate responsibility for overseeing the delivery of actions under the Strategy to members of the Leadership Team.	
	b) All staff are accountable for progressing actions under the Strategy and individual responsibilities are reflected in professional development plans.	
	c) Branch heads reference relevant Strategy actions in branch and individual work plans.	
3. Action taken under the Strategy is actively monitored and progress is publicly reported.	a) The Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group actively monitors and provides oversight of the Strategy.	
	b) Publicly report against the Strategy actions as part of the annual report and on our website.	
	c) Reflect on the Strategy regularly to identify ways that we can progress the Strategy and enhance its impact.	

	i) The Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group has provided updates on the progress of the Strategy to all staff at regular intervals, for example, at staff meetings as relevant.	Ongoing	Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group
	i) We have allocated all actions under the Strategy to relevant members of the Leadership Team. ii) We have embedded accountability for achieving the actions and objectives of this Strategy into the performance plans of all Branch heads.	July 2020	Executive
	i) We have integrated Strategy actions into the professional development plans of all staff, as relevant to their role and responsibilities.	July 2020 (ongoing)	Business Services
	i) We have reflected Strategy actions into individual staff workplans so that staff are aware of how the Strategy actions relate to their work.	Ongoing	Leadership Team
	i) We have included the Strategy as an item at Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group meetings as relevant.	Ongoing	Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group
	i) We have made information about our progress available in an accessible format in each annual report.	Commence July 2020 (ongoing)	Policy and Research (supported by Business Services; Communications and Campaigns)
	i) We have undertaken an internal audit that assesses the progress of the Strategy and provides any relevant recommendations on how to adjust actions to improve results. We have undertaken this as part of the annual report process.	May 2021 (annually in line with the Annual Report)	Senior Policy and Research Officer, Aboriginal Rights (supported by Governance and Compliance Officer)

Contact us

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