



Closing the Gap

Implementation Plan

2023 - 2025

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

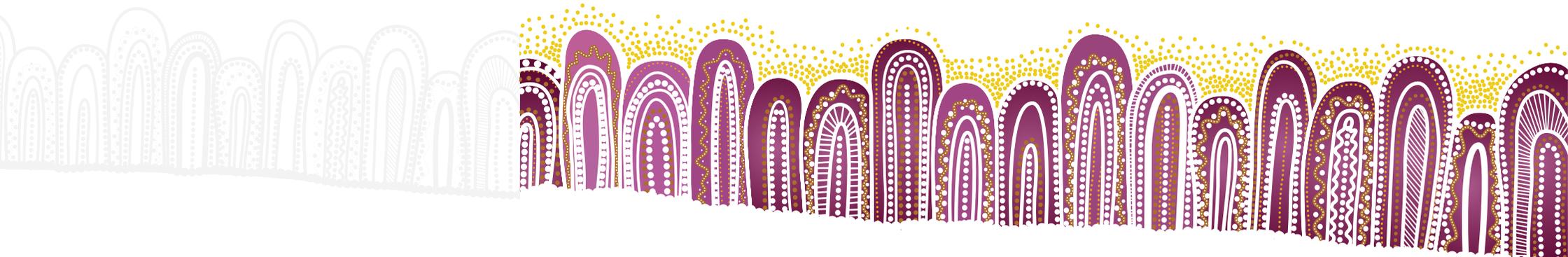


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**The Department of the Premier
and Cabinet**

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2 Havelock Street,
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Acknowledgement of Country

The Western Australian Government acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of Western Australia's Aboriginal Communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.



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A note about language

In this document, the term Aboriginal people is used in preference to “Indigenous” or “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” people, in recognition that Aboriginal peoples are the original inhabitants of Western Australia.

Together, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people make up the First Nations of Australia; however, Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia have unique cultures, identities and histories, distinct from those of Aboriginal people. On average, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people have different socioeconomic profiles and face different challenges, despite sharing a number of common experiences, including a history of racial discrimination. Some families have both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage, and this rich diversity is acknowledged and celebrated.

DISCLAIMER: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this document may contain images of people who are deceased.



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Mal-ga

Gard-i-ma-nha

Malga Garrimanha

Standing Strong





This painting is about teaching our future kids about their Culture before they take the path of Education, Employment, Lifestyle and fitting into Community.

This painting also represents going back to bush, On Country and practising our culture. It's about taking our kids back to the rivers on a fishing trip and having a big cook-up together as a family.

It's important for us as families to go bush to connect with the land, it means gathering bush tucker and hunting kangaroo and other animals for food.

In the past the women gathered plant foods and the men hunted animals for meat. Our families ate healthy bush tucker and didn't have diseases such as diabetes.

Having strong family connections and strong support from our Elders leading the way for our kids is important.

This painting also represents having strong connections to our communities and teaching our future kids as our ancestors taught us.

This painting represents our future kids getting a good start in life with strong support in the family home with our Families & Elders teaching our kids about their culture, beginning from their early years so that barriers in the future can be broken to be able to fit into our community, lead a healthy lifestyle and gaining good skills for employment and education.

About the artist



Leeann Kelly - Pedersen

I am from the Midwest of Western Australia and I am a Wajarri/Nhanda woman. My parents are Wajarri woman Dawn Flanagan/Hamlett, who is a recognised artist of the Midwest & has won many Art Awards that was exhibited in the Morawa/Mullewa/Geraldton/Perth Galleries. My father is Steven Kelly who is a Nhanda man from Carnarvon.

His family are from the Kalbarri/Northampton area whose ancestors lived along the Murchison River near Kalbarri. My father has worked on most Midwest Cattle/Sheep Stations & Farms as a Labourer.

I have a Danish/Finnish husband hence my surname. His life story and stories of his ancestors are so intriguing to hear as he also finds my background stories from my ancestors. We have learnt a lot from each other from stories of our ancestors.

I have had my artwork in a few exhibitions in Geraldton & artwork in Fremantle at the Revealed Exhibitions, but the most recognised Exhibition where my Artwork was displayed was in Geraldton Art Gallery called the Nganang Badimaya Wangga: Yarns with Badimaya Elder Gami Ollie George. (R.I.P.) while working at Irra Wangga language Centre – Bundiyarra Aboriginal Corp. I have done commission work for individuals and Government Departments, one of them was for WACHS in Carnarvon WA, my artwork was glazed onto glass

panels at the new Aged Care Unit at Carnarvon Hospital. My love of Art came to me quite early as a child. My favourite subject at school was Art. I am known in the Geraldton community for my artwork and my past position in the Irra Wangga Language Centre involved in reviving & maintaining Aboriginal languages in the Midwest Region. I tell my grandchildren my stories and teach them about my culture. They are turning into excellent little artists with their artwork being sold in the Gwoonwardu Mia Cultural Centre Carnarvon where I currently have some artwork for sale. My artwork consists of my life experiences, places I have been to, things I have seen during my lifetime and my cultural experiences. I love collecting quondong & the bush pear. I make jewellery from the quondong seeds. My inspiration from my artwork comes from my mother who is a recognised artist. She tells stories about “old aboriginal” stories from her life and stories from her elders about special places and things from what she has experienced during her life. I also am inspired by my sisters Carlene and Vanessa Kelly who are also great artists.

Acroynms

ACCHO	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Housing Organisation
ACCHS	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services
ACCO	Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations
AEDC	Australian Early Development Census
AER	Aboriginal Expenditure Review
AHCWA	Aboriginal Health Council WA
ALSWA	Aboriginal Legal Service of WA
ALT	Aboriginal Lands Trust
AMHW	Aboriginal Mental Health Worker
AMS	Aboriginal Medical Services
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
APAS	Aboriginal Procurement Advisory Service
APP	Aboriginal Procurement Policy
ARO	Aboriginal Representative Organisations
ARP	Aboriginal Ranger Program
CASWA	Council of Aboriginal Services WA
CLO	Community Liaison Officers
CPC	Child and Parent Centre
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DPLH	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
DTWD	Department of Training and Workforce Development
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care

ECPP	Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership
EIFS	Earlier Intervention and Family Support
EYP	Early Years Partnership
HSSP	Housing Sector Strengthening Plan
ICAMHS	Infant Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
JTSI	Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation
KAYWSC	Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee
KJJS	Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy
PPG	Partnership Planning Group
PRIS	Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing
RED	Regional Economic Development
RIFIC	Regional Insights for Indigenous Communities
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
RVAG	Regional VET Advisory Groups
SIDE	School of Isolated and Distance Education
SIDR	Social Investment Data Resource
SNAICC	Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TCP	Transitional Care Program
VET	Vocational Educational and Training
WAPHA	WA Primary Health Alliance
YEP	Youth Engagement Program



Message from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Welcome to the Western Australian (WA) Government's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2023-25. This is our second Implementation Plan since signing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) in July 2020 and demonstrates the breadth and depth of our commitment to this historic reform agenda.

The National Agreement, which came into effect on 27 July 2020, was developed in genuine partnership between all Australian governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Successful implementation of the National Agreement requires all Parties to carry this new way of working through to the development and delivery of new policy and programs.

This will necessitate the transformation of existing government processes; a move away from the 'business as usual' approaches that we know have not always produced positive outcomes in the past.

Our first Implementation Plan (2021), developed in alignment with the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy 2021-2029, established a baseline for us to build on, providing a stocktake of existing policies, programs and services aligned to the priority reform and socioeconomic outcome areas under the National Agreement.

'all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation.'

This second Implementation Plan 2023-25 renews and deepens the WA Government's commitment to a new way of doing business. It moves beyond the foundational work, outlining new initiatives and key strategic actions the WA Government will implement to drive progress towards its commitments under the National Agreement. It reflects the key elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy, demonstrating the strong alignment of that policy framework with Closing the Gap.

Transforming government will take time, and the WA Government has commenced this essential work. In 2022, significant effort was directed to reforming WA Government's Aboriginal Affairs governance arrangements, to enable a truly whole-of-government approach to the implementation of the National Agreement. With these governance structures in place, the WA Government is now in a strong position to build and strengthen formal

partnerships with the Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation sector and other Aboriginal partners in this implementation period. Together with our Coalition of Peaks partner the Aboriginal Health Council of WA, and our key strategic partner the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA, we will work with Aboriginal people and organisations to build on and implement the approaches outlined in this Implementation Plan. The WA Government is embarking on this journey in partnership and is committed to a Western Australia where 'all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation.'



Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs



Message from the Aboriginal Advisory Council Western Australia

The Aboriginal Advisory Council WA recognises that the WA Government's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2023-25 demonstrates progress towards much needed reform, and we support the Western Australian (WA) Government's commitment to embedding a genuine partnership approach that supports the empowerment of Aboriginal people in WA.

.....
Below: Danny Brown, Corina Martin OAM, Merle Carter, WA Premier Hon Roger Cook MLA, Gail Beck (Co-Chair), Preston Thomas, Rowena Leslie, Marty Sibosado (Co-Chair) and Vicki O'Donnell OAM.

As the WA Government's strategic partner on the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in WA (National Agreement), the Aboriginal Advisory Council WA has worked in partnership to progress a number of strategic priorities, including the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy; Western Australian Aboriginal Expenditure Review 2022-23, Privacy & Responsible Information Sharing Bill and improving relationships, engagement and advice on communication between the WA Government and Aboriginal communities.

The National Agreement has been developed in partnership between Australian governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (the Coalition of Peaks). The objective of the National Agreement is to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. Additionally, genuine partnership between the Aboriginal Advisory Council WA and WA government to progress structural reform is required to deliver this objective.





We need to work in ways that are innovative, flexible and prioritise culture and wellbeing at the centre of all we do and resource the sector adequately to move towards these new ways of working.

We would like to see a sharper focus on the Priority Reform Areas under the National Agreement, particularly Priority Reform 1 – Formal Partnership and Shared Decision making (not just limited to Native Title agreements). More partnership approaches with remote communities like The Bidyadanga Land Activation Project will enable the intent of the National Agreement and Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy to be realised. The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy outlines how the Western Australian Government will direct its efforts towards a future in which all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation.

As of June 2023, the Productivity Commission’s Annual Data Compilation Report shows that four of the 17 Closing the Gap targets are on track. While there have been some improvements across

a number of targets in WA, that report clearly demonstrates the significant ongoing effort required to substantially meet the targets. People are still doing it tough; we suggest implementing human centred approaches, in how we evaluate and define measures of closing the gap.

Reform measures need to ensure that ‘Culture is at the Heart’ of everything we do, which means acknowledging cultural frameworks and designing structures that are fit for purpose. We need to work in ways that are innovative, flexible and prioritise culture and wellbeing at the centre of all we do and resource the sector adequately to move towards these new ways of working.

The Aboriginal Advisory Council WA advises that adoption of the actions outlined in this second Implementation Plan will enhance the achievement of the stated objectives of the National Agreement and the Aboriginal

Empowerment Strategy. We also support building the capacity of the public sector workforce and drawing on the role of Aboriginal Advisory Groups across WA agencies within the Closing the Gap frameworks.

We welcome the WA Government’s commitment to recognising the ongoing impacts of colonisation, moving towards truth-telling approaches, focus on outcomes not just outputs for Aboriginal people and establishing new ways of working with culture at the heart.



Gail Beck
Co-Chair
AACWA



Marty Sibosado
Co-Chair
AACWA

Message from the Aboriginal Health Council WA

The Aboriginal Health Council WA (AHCWA) is pleased to continue working in genuine partnership with the WA Government to realise and achieve the Priority Reforms of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. AHCWA welcomes the second iteration of the WA Closing the Gap Implementation Plan as a starting point representing the need for shared decision-making, Aboriginal leadership, and Government accountability. The Implementation Plan should bring together strategic partnerships, governance arrangements, and transparent mechanisms to realise the stories, experiences, and innovations in Aboriginal communities. Realising Aboriginal knowledge and expertise and translating into well-resourced and equitable policy improvements will achieve optimal outcomes and wellbeing for Aboriginal people and their communities across Western Australia.

While each and every target of the National Agreement is crucial and requires sustained dedicated investment and multi-sectoral attention, it is important that we do not forget about the four Priority Reforms.

The Priority Reforms are intended to drive structural change, and by signing the National Agreement the Western Australian Government committed to this change. The Priority Reforms require a change to the way decisions are made and funding is allocated. To realise the full potential of the Priority Reforms, governments need to change the way their departments operate, provide advice, and engage with our people. It is about treating us as partners, and about prioritising our self-determination.

Aboriginal people, communities, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across WA demonstrate resilience and strength even when facing hardships that disproportionately affect communities, such as increased rates of chronic illnesses and socioeconomic disadvantage. There are great efforts involved in drafting and committing to the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and

communities command our respect and dedication to remaining committed to achieving outcomes directly aligned to the needs and priorities of those communities.

The Aboriginal Health Council WA looks forward to valuable, effective and truthful collaboration on Aboriginal-led initiatives that support the thriving and rich culture of communities, with robust and accountable mechanisms to ensure sustained impact is being led by and reaching the right places.



Vicki O'Donnell
Chairperson of Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia,
Member Western Australia Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations





Executive Summary

The WA Government's initial Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, released in 2021, acknowledged that implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) would entail a significant reform and change agenda that would challenge organisational cultures and established practices within the public sector.

For this reason, the State committed to a phased approach to implementation, with the first phase focused on laying the foundations and structures needed to embark on system-level reforms.

The WA Government has streamlined and strengthened whole-of-government coordination and decision-making mechanisms to support the implementation of the National Agreement over the longer term.

New governance structures have built ownership of the National Agreement across all of government in recognition that responsibility for implementation is shared across the public sector.

Strengthened governance arrangements include:

- i. expanded membership of the Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee (a statutory body under the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*), including most public sector agencies;
- ii. a Closing the Gap Deputies Group, with equally broad agency representation, to provide oversight and coordination of whole-of-government implementation activities; and
- iii. nine Partnership Planning Groups, bringing together relevant agencies with strategic Aboriginal partners to plan and report on actions to drive progress against each of the 17 socioeconomic outcome areas and associated targets (see Appendix A for details).

These governance structures have been instrumental in supporting WA Government agencies to participate in the development of national partnership actions required under

the National Agreement, including further development of Closing the Gap targets, the negotiation of four Sector Strengthening Plans and the establishment of five discrete national Policy Partnerships to facilitate joined-up work on national priority policy areas.

These implementation activities have required new ways of working across WA Government agencies, and with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and our counterparts in other jurisdictions. This collaborative approach has been brought to the development of this Implementation Plan.

While the first phase of implementation was dominated by development and planning (at the national and state level), phase two will focus on delivery of those plans, particularly in relation to projects and initiatives targeting the Priority Reform Areas of the National Agreement.

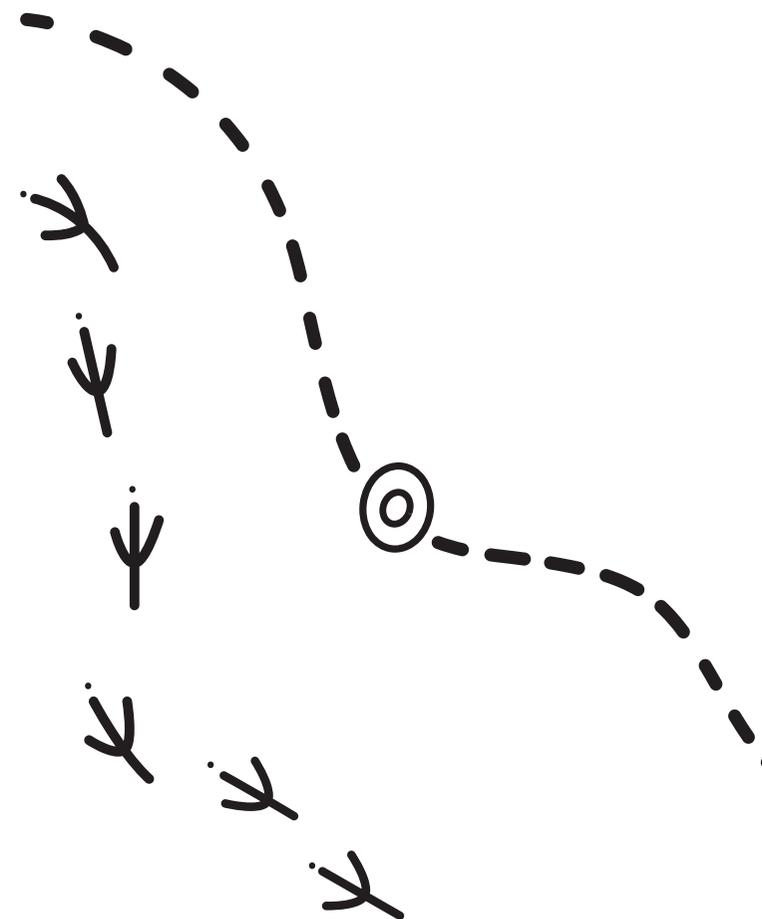
Structure of the Implementation Plan 2023-25

This Closing the Gap Implementation Plan elevates the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy to reflect its standing as the WA Government's strategic policy framework for Aboriginal Affairs.

The Implementation Plan contains two parts:

- i. **Part One:** System level responses to the key strategic elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the alignment to the Priority Reform Areas in the National Agreement.
- ii. **Part Two:** Policy and program responses by Lead and Supporting Agencies to drive progress against the socioeconomic outcome areas and targets in the National Agreement.

The Implementation Plan is a living document that will be refined, refreshed and updated every two years. Each update will be informed by collaboration and partnership with Aboriginal people and organisations, draw upon the expertise of the community-controlled sector, and use data to drive accountability for outcomes affecting the lives of Aboriginal people in WA.





Part One:
Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy
and Priority Reform Areas

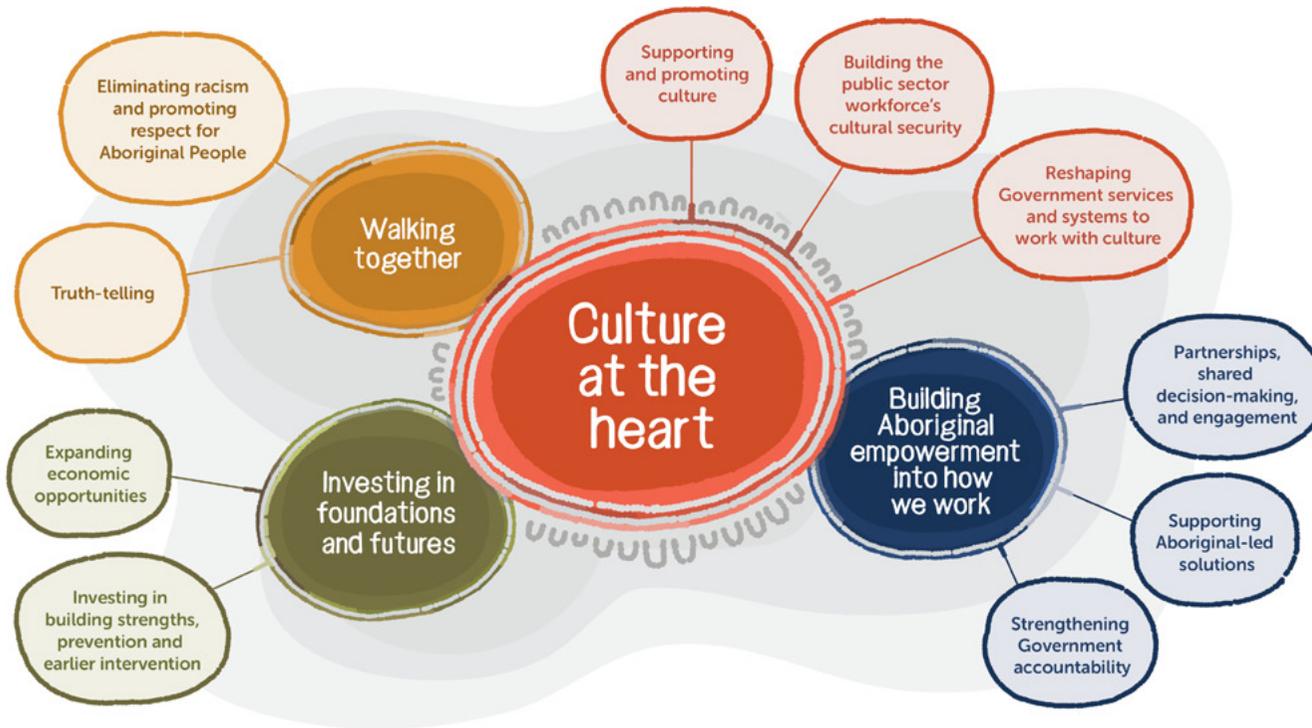
Part One of this Implementation Plan outlines the WA Government’s implementation approach to the strategic elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and how they align with the Priority Reform Areas under the National Agreement.

The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy provides a framework for WA Government policies, plans, initiatives and programs that contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal people, built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working.

The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy aligns to the Priority Reform Areas in the National Agreement but extends beyond them, acknowledging the intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal people and their communities and the need for culture, healing and self-determination to be at the heart of future policy and practice.

The strategic elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy are:

- » Culture at the heart
- » Building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work
- » Investing in foundations and futures
- » Walking together





Culture at the heart

Alignment with Closing the Gap Priority Reform Three

This strategic element of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy is aligned to Priority Three of the National Agreement, which commits Government Parties to implement the following transformational elements within mainstream agencies and institutions:

- a. Identify and eliminate racism.
- b. Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety.
- c. Deliver services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people.
- d. Increase accountability through transparent funding allocations.
- e. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- f. Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Key Focus Area One: Supporting and promoting culture

The WA Government recognises and aims to be responsive to the central aspects of culture emphasised by Aboriginal people which include:

- » family (including kinship, marriage and parenting);
- » connection to country, caring for country and cultural heritage;
- » community leadership and cultural authority (people who hold cultural authority are often referred to as Elders and/or Law Bosses);
- » language; and
- » values, spirituality and cultural practices (including Law/Lore).

Culture is at the heart of a secure foundation for life, and provides the landscape in which futures are imagined, chosen and pursued. WA Government agencies are increasingly inviting cultural knowledge holders and custodians to help inform the design and delivery of major

infrastructure projects, programs and services so that they better reflect the values and worldviews of Aboriginal people.

Embedding culture into major infrastructure development

The Transport Portfolio comprises Main Roads, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority, Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery (OMTID), Metronet and Westport. Each agency has frameworks that integrate cultural consultation and input into major project infrastructure, public art and interpretive designs; consultation in a variety of methods with Traditional Custodians and knowledge holders, and state-wide cultural awareness training.

All contract scope documentation across more than 30 major projects being delivered by Main Roads and OMTID includes requirements for consultation with relevant Traditional Custodians on specific aspects of individual projects. Many of the projects

establish an Advisory Group which involves regular liaison with Traditional Custodians, to ensure they are involved in aspects such as archaeological heritage investigations, geotechnical investigations, environmental monitoring, advice on local environmental factors, appropriate ceremonial practices, local story telling, public art and interpretive opportunities and in some cases, final alignment of infrastructure and design elements. The following major projects are examples of where this approach is embedded.

.....

Previous page: Aunty Olivia Roberts at Smoking ceremony at Bremer Bay, Djeran Yorga Camp

Westport's Kapi Bididi, Water Pathways – Aboriginal Engagement Strategy



Westport is WA Government's long-term program to investigate, plan and build a future port in Kwinana with integrated road and rail transport networks. Westport established the Kapi Bididi, Water Pathways Aboriginal Engagement Strategy which evolved into the Westport Aboriginal Engagement Strategy and draws on the expertise of an Aboriginal Reference Group. The Strategy, comprises seven pillars that will acknowledge, consult, protect, develop, design and advance the Aboriginal cultural connection with Westport.

.....
Above: METRONET Noongar Reference Group (L-R) Greg Ugle, Geri Hayden, Peter Michael, Doreen Nelson, Marion Collard, Lera Bennell

Matagarup Elders Group

The Causeway Pedestrian and Cyclist Bridges Project is a \$100 million project being delivered by Main Roads. Main Roads recognised that the site holds strong cultural significance to Aboriginal people and since the project's inception, has maintained extensive, ongoing engagement with local Traditional Custodians and Noongar community members as part of the Matagarup Elders Group.

The Matagarup Elders Group are involved in monthly meetings and had extensive positive influence on the project in areas such as the location and design of the bridges, design of the pylons and rest areas, landscaping, story-telling, artworks and interpretive elements. By acknowledging the deep cultural significance and connection to the land, and involving Matagarup Elders throughout the planning, design and construction of this project, Main Roads is ensuring the delivery of an iconic, culturally sensitive legacy project that all stakeholders and community members can connect to with a sense of shared ownership.

Key Focus Area Two: Building the public sector workforce's cultural responsiveness

The cultural responsiveness of WA Government agencies is fundamental because of the impact of the history of colonisation and structural barriers imposed by governments on the continuity of Aboriginal cultures.

WA Government agencies are adopting a range of approaches to strengthen the cultural responsiveness of their workforce at all levels including cultural awareness training programs, cultural capability policy and practice frameworks and Reconciliation Action Plans.

In 2023-24, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet will work with the Aboriginal Advisory Council WA to explore options for monitoring and reporting on the WA Government's response to this Key Focus Area of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the 'transformation elements' under Priority Reform Three in the National Agreement (see p.12). A key objective

will be to identify measures of progress that are suitable for WA's jurisdictional context and identify opportunities for improvement and innovation.

The Aboriginal Advisory Council WA will continue to formalise links with and between agency-specific Aboriginal advisory bodies, improving whole-of-system alignment and collaboration on Closing the Gap and Aboriginal Affairs more broadly as part of their annual Culture at the Heart workshops.

Key Focus Area Three: Reshaping Government services and systems to work with culture

Culturally responsive staff, services, systems and workplaces are accessible, effective, welcoming, trusted and safe: in short, they work well for Aboriginal people. Cultivating the knowledge, attitudes and actions that respect and respond to Aboriginal people's cultures, experiences and values is essential for government agencies to improve their day-to-day work practices with Aboriginal people.

Department of Communities' Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program

The Aboriginal Cultural Capability Reform Program will continue to drive an agency-wide cultural reform agenda, aimed at improving the cultural capability of the Department of Communities.

Between November 2022 and January 2023, state-wide engagement with approximately 800 stakeholders including Aboriginal community, Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Department of Communities' staff, was undertaken in partnership with Kambarang Services, an Aboriginal-owned consultancy. The outcomes of this engagement is informing the development of an Aboriginal Cultural Framework and Aboriginal Cultural Learning Strategy.

Kambarang Services have provided the Department of Communities with a draft Framework and Learning Strategy. Further engagement with stakeholders is planned to finalise the implementation of the Framework and Learning Program.

It is anticipated that the Framework and Learning Strategy will be finalised in 2024.

Department of Communities' Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group

In June 2022 the Minister for Child Protection established the Department of Communities' Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group under the Children and Community Services Act 2004. The Advisory Group members hold diverse lived experience and subject matter expertise and provide valuable insights into issues affecting Aboriginal people living across metropolitan and regional WA.

The Advisory Group supports the voices and views of the Aboriginal community being heard and acted upon through high level strategic advice to the Department of Communities Director General and will inform important areas of work, including:

- » Closing the Gap outcomes;
- » Child protection;
- » Disability services;

- » Prevention of family and domestic violence; and
- » Housing and homelessness.

The Advisory Group also assists staff to gain a deeper understanding of issues affecting Aboriginal people and build cultural capability within the Department of Communities.

The Advisory Group has identified a number of strategic priorities for 2023:

- » Department of Communities' Aboriginal Workforce.
- » The Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation Strategy.
- » Aboriginal empowerment through procurement.
- » The 10-Year Roadmap to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in out of home care.
- » Homelessness and housing.
- » Prevention of family and domestic violence.

The strategic priorities are strongly focussed on measures and actions to address Department of Communities' responsibilities under the Closing the Gap framework and policies, strategies or matters that impact on Aboriginal communities in WA.

Reshaping the Infant, Child and Adolescent Implementation Program

The Mental Health Commission is reconfiguring and reforming the Infant, Child and Adolescent Implementation Program to incorporate an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker (AMHW) model into the development of the 12 Infant, Child and Adolescent Models of Care.

The AMHW Model will inform the roles, responsibilities and career pathways of current and future AMHWs, including Senior AMHWs in the Infant, Child and Adolescent mental health system.

A Working Group comprising people with knowledge and experiences of Infant, Child and Adolescent mental health services designed the AMHW model and provided a forum for a broad range of voices including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal clinicians, health professionals from Aboriginal Medical Services, AMHWs and Aboriginal people with living and/or lived experience of mental health issues. The Working Group then applied its expertise to inform the design and incorporation of the AMHW model into the Infant, Child and Adolescent models of care.

In April 2023 the WA Government announced a further \$35.5 million investment into infant, child and adolescent services. This includes funding to pilot a Community Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Hub in the South West, which will guide the future expansion of like services in other locations. The funding will also support a pilot of an Acute Care Response Team in the metropolitan area, expansion of the AMHW workforce, continued uplift of the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) workforce and reconfiguration of the Perth Children's Hospital Mental Health Inpatient Unit (Ward 5A).

Planning for this activity has commenced and additional and reconfigured services expected to come online in 2024.

Summary

Key Action

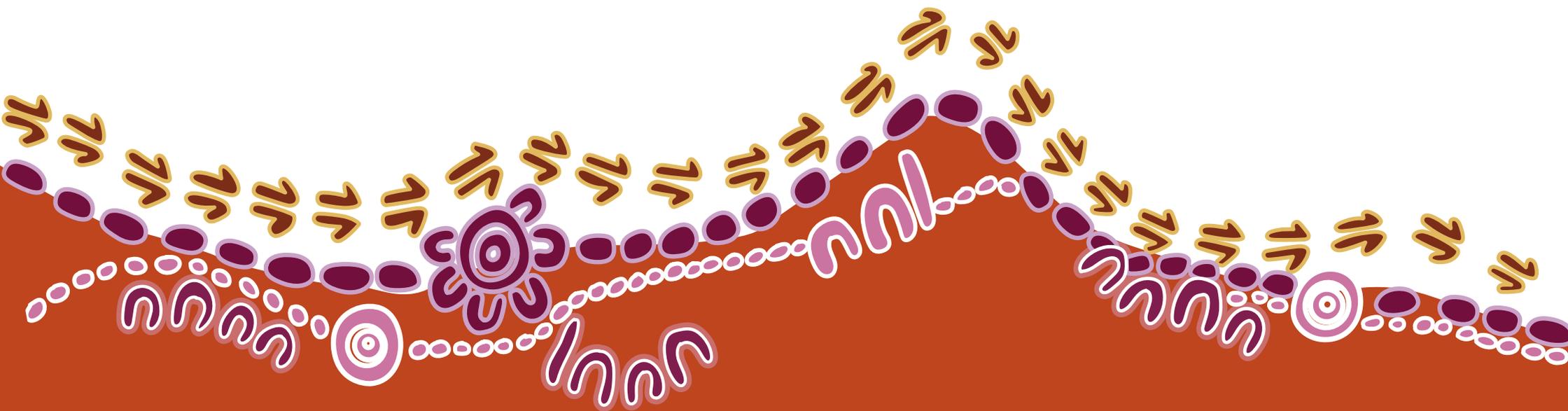
Work in partnership with the Aboriginal Advisory Council WA to explore options for monitoring and reporting on WA Government's response to the 'transformation elements' under Priority Reform Three in the National Agreement.

Responsible Agency

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Priority Reforms

3





Building Aboriginal empowerment into how we work

Alignment with Closing the Gap Priority Reform Areas

This strategic element of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy aligns with all four Priority Reform Areas of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Priority Reform One: The WA Government is committed to strengthening structures to ensure that Aboriginal people share in decision making with WA Government at the regional or local level on on policies, projects and services that affect Aboriginal people and communities.

Priority Reform Two: The WA Government is committed to supporting a strong and sustainable Aboriginal community-controlled sector to deliver high quality services to Aboriginal people. This includes commitment to increasing the

proportion of services being delivered by ACCOs, and policies to support Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) as preferred providers of services to Aboriginal people.

Priority Reform Three: The WA Government is committed to systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government organisations to improve accountability, and to respond to the needs of Aboriginal people.

Priority Reform Four: The WA Government is committed to improving collection, access, management and use of locally relevant data to support decision making.





Key Focus Area One: Partnerships, shared decision-making, and engagement

Working in partnership across WA Government

The WA Government is committed to strengthening formal partnerships with its strategic Aboriginal partners in 2023-24, particularly the Aboriginal community-controlled sector. Strong partnership arrangements are critical to meeting our shared commitments under the National Agreement and to build mutual understanding and respect as all parties work together to deliver this ambitious reform agenda.

A particular focus for partnership development will be the new governance arrangements established in 2022 to support whole-of-government coordination and implementation of the

.....
Previous page: Ms Cecily McKinnon, Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Mr Lawford Benning, Executive Chair, MG Corporation

National Agreement. In particular, the WA Government will work closely with the Aboriginal Advisory Council WA, the Aboriginal Health Council WA (AHCWA) and the new Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA) to strengthen the partnership arrangements between the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and all agencies actively involved in driving progress against the Closing the Gap outcome areas and associated targets.

Building place-based partnerships

The WA Government is working to establish a place-based partnership in the East Kimberley, bringing all levels of government together in partnership with local Aboriginal community organisations. The East Kimberley place-based partnership will focus on outcomes in the 'Early Years' as the first priority of East Kimberley Aboriginal organisations.

The WA Government is also progressing scoping for the Kimberley Data Project, which aims to improve the collection of, and access to, suicide and self-harm data. The project has been guided

and developed by a Project Reference Group comprising representatives from AHCWA, local ACCOs and relevant WA Government agencies.

Consistent with other Community Data Projects nominated by States and Territories under the National Agreement, the Kimberley Data Project will link to a national data portal based on the Regional Insights for Indigenous Communities (RIFIC), operated by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. It is envisaged that updates on national and community data can be uploaded, stored and shared for the purpose of this data project. The next phase of the pilot includes:

- » Leveraging of the RIFIC infrastructure
- » Development and execution of the required data governance frameworks and agreements to operationalise Aboriginal data sovereignty and support deployment of government and non-government data sets to the RIFIC portal.
- » Data validation work on target data sets
- » Community consultation including engagement with peak bodies and the Remote Communities CEO Forum.



Promoting local and regional solutions

The WA Government is committed to supporting and enabling place-based solutions where possible. Aboriginal people are being empowered to participate in decisions regarding their lives through the Aboriginal Community Connectors Program, which is being delivered in Metropolitan Perth and 12 regional locations across WA.

The Department of Communities has current service agreements with ACCOs that employ around 120 Aboriginal people to connect vulnerable Aboriginal people to services. The Aboriginal Community Connectors Program aims to connect Aboriginal people with support services to participate in social activities and decisions regarding their own lives so that they may live safe and meaningful lives free from fear, violence and anti-social behaviour.

Key Focus Area Two: Supporting Aboriginal-led solutions

Supporting ACCO service providers in the commissioning process

The State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services (State Commissioning Strategy), released in August 2022 and administered by the Department of Finance, outlines how the WA Government will support human and community services and maximise opportunities for ACCOs to deliver services to Aboriginal people.

The State Commissioning Strategy has a priority on improving and increasing contracting with ACCOs and includes various actions to enable ACCO capability development and transition to increased community service delivery by ACCOs.

A cross-agency governance committee has been established to support implementation of the State Commissioning Strategy. In

addition, a working group has been established that includes community services peak bodies and government agencies to monitor the progress of the implementation plan for the State Commissioning Strategy. These committees have an important role in driving change and ensuring consistency across government, including identifying opportunities to partner with ACCOs in service planning and design.

As part of the State Commissioning Strategy, WA Government agencies who commission services will also publish their Agency Commissioning Plans outlining how ACCOs can be involved in upcoming commissioning work and how ACCOs will be prioritised as service providers to Aboriginal people.

Increasing the proportion of ACCOs delivering services to Aboriginal people, families and communities

The WA Government's forthcoming whole-of-Government ACCO Strategy will set out the approach for WA Government agencies commissioning ACCOs in community services.

The ACCO Strategy has three objectives:

- » Greater involvement of ACCOs in planning and designing services.
- » ACCOs delivering more services to Aboriginal people.
- » Strong and sustainable ACCO sectors.

A key component of the ACCO Strategy is to guide agencies to prioritise ACCOs as service providers, or if there are no ACCOs currently able to deliver the services, to take steps to transition these services to ACCOs in the future where appropriate.

To deliver on this objective, WA Government agencies have put in place a range of enablers to respond to the need to improve the way that government commissions and delivers services to Aboriginal people across WA.

These include the:

- » The Department of Communities' ACCO Strategy 2022-2032, launched in August 2022. The Department of Communities ACCO Strategy seeks to improve the way that Department of Communities commissions and delivers services to Aboriginal

children, families, and communities, while supporting the development of ACCOs to increase their capability to deliver place-based and culturally secure services across WA.

- » The WA Police Force ACCO Strategy 2022-2032, endorsed in September 2022. The WA Police Force ACCO Strategy ensures that services will be designed by the WA Police Force in partnership with local Aboriginal communities.

A new ACCO Peak Body

Unlike other jurisdictions, WA only has one peak body representing ACCOs operating in the social services sector. In 2021, the WA Government engaged AHCWA to lead a cross-sectoral process to establish a new ACCO peak body for social services, given its expertise as an existing peak body.

A subcommittee of AHCWA's Board, the Social Services Committee (which includes representation from a range of priority sectors) led this work throughout 2022. The Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA) was formally incorporated in March 2023 and the WA Government

has committed \$5.725 million for ongoing operations of the new peak over the next four years.

As CASWA establishes itself as an ACCO Peak Body in 2023, opportunities will emerge for the WA Government to work in partnership with CASWA to expand the role of ACCOs in planning, designing and delivering services and continue to build on the existing capacity of ACCOs to enable better service delivery.

Key Focus Area Three: Strengthening Government accountability

Review of the State Budget process to elevate Aboriginal peoples' needs and viewpoints in decision-making.

In 2023, the Department of Treasury (Treasury) has developed the Treasury Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy to embed the principles of the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and Closing the Gap Priority Reforms into the way the Department of Treasury works.

A key action under the Treasury Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy is the review of Treasury's processes and systems, including the State Budget process, to identify opportunities to elevate the representation of Aboriginal peoples' needs and viewpoints in government decision-making. The review will be conducted over 2023 with recommendations to inform processes for the 2024-25 Budget process.

Aboriginal Expenditure Review

The WA Government's first Implementation Plan identified the need for increased transparency and a shared resource to inform resource allocation decisions for spending on services for Aboriginal people and communities.

The Aboriginal Expenditure Review (AER) Report, developed by Treasury, has collated data across 23 agencies to provide a baseline of key expenditure aggregates that will be consistently tracked and monitored over the life of the National Agreement. The AER's approach was developed in consultation with the Aboriginal Advisory Council of WA.

The AER report shows that in 2021-22 WA Government spent \$583.4 million (actual spend) on 362 discrete programs targeted to, or used predominantly by, Aboriginal people and communities – a 13.8 percent increase on expenditure in 2020-21.

Additionally, the AER Report baselines the service provider profile of this expenditure showing that Aboriginal organisations play a role in delivery in up to 70 percent of existing State Government initiatives relating to Aboriginal wellbeing, either solely or in partnership with Government agencies and other non-government organisations.

The AER Report will provide decision-makers – across Government and our Aboriginal partners – with timely, useful, and accessible information to inform and prioritise resource allocations to initiatives to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people. The AER Report will be a shared resource to promote accessibility and transparency of Aboriginal-specific spending to Aboriginal stakeholders.

The AER Report will also provide a key tool to support the identification of opportunities to reprioritise funding to ACCOs as required under Clause 113 of the National Agreement. This includes several recommendations made on commissioning which will be actioned as part of the ongoing implementation of National Agreement in WA. The AER Report will also inform work under the State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services.

Data sharing and Aboriginal data sovereignty

Launch of PeopleWA

Priority Reform Four of the National Agreement recognises that sharing of data and information is fundamental for decision making as well as enhancing the evidence base for designing and evaluating services and programs used by Aboriginal people. Enabling sharing of locally relevant data will not only demonstrate that the WA Government is working towards a true partnership approach but will strengthen Government accountability.



In August 2023, the WA Government will be launching PeopleWA, a whole-of-government linked data asset. PeopleWA will use data linkage to combine information from across the public sector, creating a rich repository of data which will enable approved users to address the State's most complex social, health, environmental and economic issues. The asset will be protected by international best practice for transparent data governance, safeguards for personal and sensitive information, and robust cyber security controls.

PeopleWA will comply with the WA Government's forthcoming Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing (PRIS) legislation, balancing privacy concerns with the benefits of data sharing. The WA Office of Digital Government is currently working with ACCOs and other key stakeholders to embed Aboriginal Data Sovereignty principles in the access and use of PeopleWA.

Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Legislation

The WA Government has commenced drafting of a new legislation for Privacy

and Responsible Information Sharing. The PRIS legislation will provide Western Australians with greater control over their personal information and improve the delivery of government services. The legislation will enable data to be shared within government for the right reasons and provide greater accountability and transparency about how government uses this information.

The legislation includes a mechanism that supports Aboriginal data sovereignty and governance in WA, by requiring that Aboriginal people and communities are involved or consulted when data about Aboriginal people is shared.

Pilbara Aboriginal Health Alliance Data Integration Project – Our Story Our Way

Pilbara Aboriginal Health Alliance (PAHA) is an alliance of three Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations: Mawarnkarra Health Services, Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service and Wirraka Maya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation, located in the Pilbara region of WA. These three members provide holistic primary health

and social services, are registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers and Wirraka Maya is also a Registered Training Organisation. Through these three organisations, more than 20 Aboriginal communities receive vital health and community services responsive to local needs.

The PAHA Data Project, Our Story, Our Way, aims to improve the health outcomes and regional planning for Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara by creating an Aboriginal community-controlled data ecosystem. As part of this Project, PAHA have been working with the Office of Digital Government on how they can access deidentified data held by PeopleWA to create a State of the Pilbara report, initially focusing on key indicators reflecting Closing the Gap targets.

PAHA intends to embed the data in culturally appropriate, multimedia storyboards. In the first phase, these will be used to support seven Pilbara Aboriginal communities to determine their health priorities and strategies for community-led solutions to improve regional planning and external health partnerships.

Summary

Key Action	Responsible Agency	Priority Reforms
Operational funding for a new ACCO peak body	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	2
Deliver a whole-of-government ACCO Strategy	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	2
Ongoing annual Aboriginal Expenditure Review	Department of Treasury	3
Department of Treasury Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy - review of the State Budget process	Department of Treasury	1
Progress the development of Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Legislation including a mechanism that supports Aboriginal data sovereignty and governance in WA	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	4

Investing in foundations and futures

Alignment with Closing the Gap Priority Reform Areas

This strategic element of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy aligns with Priority Reform Two and Three of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Under **Priority Reform Two**, WA Government is committed to working in partnership with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to build the capacity of organisations and increase the proportion of services used by Aboriginal people that are delivered by Aboriginal community-controlled service providers.

Under **Priority Reform Three**, the WA Government is committed to systemic and structural change within its public sector organisations to eliminate racism and embed meaningful cultural safety and competency at all levels.

Key Focus Area One: Investing in building strengths, prevention and earlier intervention

Wrap around support for young people and their families

The WA Government recognises the need to invest in early intervention and diversionary programs to support young people who are at risk of becoming repeat offenders and becoming lost to the criminal justice system.

The Target 120 program is an early intervention, cross-government program which provides individualised and intensive case management support to young people at risk of transitioning to prolific offending, and additional coordinated support for their families. By supporting both the young person and their family, Target 120 aims to provide a holistic intervention to address the factors that lead to offending before the young person becomes a prolific offender.

Since its inception in 2018, \$43 million has been invested by the WA Government to deliver and expand Target 120 to a total of 20 sites. This includes \$11.1 million announced in the 2022-23 State Budget to roll out the program to an additional nine locations – Broome, Halls Creek, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby, Karratha, Newman, Carnarvon, Mandurah and Ellenbrook.

In March 2020, the Target 120 Executive Committee endorsed a decision to pilot a fully ACCO-led delivery approach due to a high number of Aboriginal young people and families involved in the program. The inclusion of ACCO-led sites has the ACCOs providing full-service delivery and coordination of Target 120. As of 31 March 2023, a total of eight ACCOs are leading the delivery of the program and an additional three ACCOs are partly funded to provide expertise in youth mentoring and family supports.

The Department of Communities has engaged an external consultant to evaluate Target 120. The final evaluation report will be completed by November 2023. The findings of the evaluation will form the basis of a business case for funding beyond 30 June 2025.

Key Focus Area Two: Expanding economic opportunities

Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal businesses awarded government contracts

The Aboriginal Procurement Policy mandates progressive targets for the award of WA Government contracts to Aboriginal businesses and applies to all contracts valued at \$50,000 and above, to support economic participation and development of Aboriginal people and communities.

The targets apply to all WA Government agencies when purchasing goods, services, community services and works. Government Trading Enterprises have also been invited to apply the targets.

The targets apply at an individual agency level to improve accountability.

In September 2021, the Aboriginal Procurement Policy was broadened to include Aboriginal employment and subcontracting targets, creating opportunities for Aboriginal people and businesses. These amendments leverage the broader supply chain to support economic outcomes for Aboriginal people, extending participation requirements to government suppliers. Participation requirements apply to contracts valued at \$5 million or more in community services, construction, education and training or public administration, or where services will be delivered predominantly to Aboriginal people.

Employment targets vary depending on the contract delivery location, reflecting Aboriginal workforce and population demographics varying across WA. From 1 January 2022, these participation requirements have been incorporated in tenders for eligible contracts, requiring entities interested in contracting with WA Government to commit to achieving minimum levels of Aboriginal employment or businesses subcontracting.

To strengthen government accountability, the Department of Finance has developed a Power BI dashboard that enables easy access to source data (Tenders WA) to gain insights on agencies' Aboriginal business contracting activities and performance against the APP targets from 2021-22 financial year onwards. In addition, the Department of Finance will be exploring feasibility to make this dashboard more widely available in the public sector to better inform agencies' procurement decision making and accountability.

Transformative possibilities of land, Native Title and agreement-making

The WA Government recognises the potential for Native Title and land-based agreement-making to promote and strengthen cultural economies and offer diverse opportunities for participation and economic development.

The Noongar Economic Participation Framework (Framework) forms an important part of the South West Native Title Settlement and aims to support economic development and the growth of Noongar businesses across the South

West region. It includes deliverables and initial projects for the WA Government to progress, focussed on business capability building, government tendering support, and promoting early engagement between WA Government agencies and Noongar businesses.

A Noongar Economic Participation Steering Group (Steering Group) oversees implementation of the Framework. Consisting of representatives from the Settlement’s Noongar Corporations and key economic development WA Government agencies, the Steering Group is a platform to drive Noongar economic aspirations in partnership across the South West.

The Steering Group will provide a unique forum where the Settlement’s Noongar Corporations and the WA Government can also work together to set new agendas and leverage opportunities beyond the original Framework.

The first meeting of the Steering Group was held in May 2023. Over the next twelve months, the Steering Group will work together to develop a three-year Noongar Economic Participation Framework Implementation Plan.

Summary

Key Action	Responsible Agency	Priority Reforms
Developing a three-year Noongar Economic Participation Framework Implementation Plan	Department of the Premier and Cabinet; Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	1

Walking Together

Alignment with Closing the Gap Priority Reform Areas

This strategic element of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy aligns with Priority Reform Three of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Under **Priority Reform Three**, the WA Government is committed to systemic and structural change within its public sector organisations to eliminate racism and embed meaningful cultural safety and competency at all levels.



Key Focus Area One: Truth - telling

The Wadjemup Project

On 2 June 2020 the WA Government initiated the Wadjemup Project. This unique project aims to reconcile the history of Aboriginal people's imprisonment on Wadjemup (Rottneest Island), one of the first large-scale and genuine acts of recognition of the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people.

Stage One of the project, led by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, has been completed and saw the establishment of the Cultural Authority for the project. This involved a three-part engagement process that has guided state-wide consultation with Aboriginal people to determine how best to commemorate the Aboriginal men and boys buried on the island, and the future use of the Quod.

The WA Government committed \$27.5 million over the next four years in the 2023-24 State Budget to commence Stage Two of the Wadjemup Project. This will deliver truth-telling, ceremony, and commemoration strategies to formally acknowledge and reconcile the Aboriginal prison history on Wadjemup (1838-1931) and will focus on how best to commemorate the Aboriginal men and boys who are buried on the island.

Funding will be focussed on delivering:

- » Development of an Aboriginal-led Truth-Telling and Ceremony Strategy to identify the ceremonial aspects of the Project.
- » Delivery of the Aboriginal Burial Ground site memorial through design development in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders.
- » Development of a robust strategy and business case to inform the future use of the Quod as identified through Aboriginal-led consultation and,
- » Immediate heritage conservation works to the Quod to preserve the deteriorating heritage building fabric.

Aboriginal Cultural Centre WA

The State of Western Australia is embarking on an exciting and transformational journey in developing the new Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Led by Aboriginal people and working in partnership with the WA Government, work has commenced on planning for a central place of significance to empower Aboriginal people in telling their histories and demonstrating their culture.

In 2022, the WA Government committed \$52 million to progress the planning, engagement, design, and seed capital for the project. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is responsible for progressing the new Aboriginal Cultural Centre, which will be located on the banks of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River/Perth Water), and close to Matta Gerup (Heirisson Island) and Kaarta Koomba (Kings Park), which are places of cultural significance to Noongar people.

.....
Previous page: Smoking ceremony - Wadjemup Project

The proposed functions of the Aboriginal Cultural Centre include performance, gallery, community, commercial, education and research and empower Whadjuk Noongar people, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which the Aboriginal Cultural Centre will be built, to play a critical role as hosts. This embeds Aboriginal cultural protocols related to respecting the role and responsibility of Traditional Owners and Custodians on their country into the functionality of the Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

The Aboriginal Cultural Centre will become a powerful symbol of truth telling, justice, healing, and reconciliation, creating a culturally safe place for Aboriginal people in WA. Furthermore, it will play an important role in the economic empowerment of Aboriginal people through the growth of the cultural industries and tourism sectors, creating new employment and training opportunities.

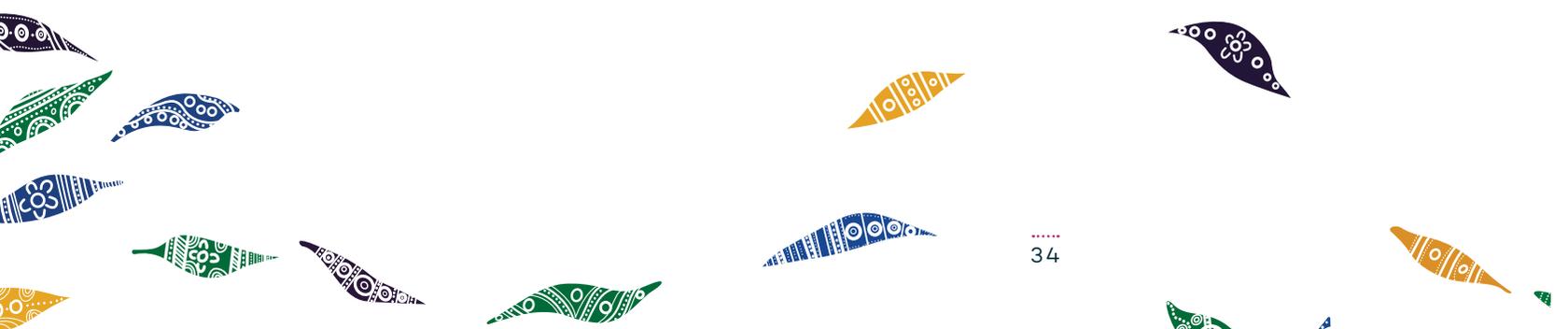
Key Focus Area Two: Eliminating racism and promoting respect for Aboriginal people

The WA Government is committed to contributing to efforts within the Government and broader society to eliminate racism, promote understanding, and avoid repeating the wrongs of the past. Each Government agency has a role to play, either directly or as facilitator.

Reconciliation WA is a not-for-profit organisation providing leadership, advocacy and support to people and organisations driving the reconciliation movement in WA. The WA Government allocated \$1.1 million in the 2023-24 State Budget to Reconciliation WA to support its work to establish its position as a professional peak organisation and progress the reconciliation movement in WA.

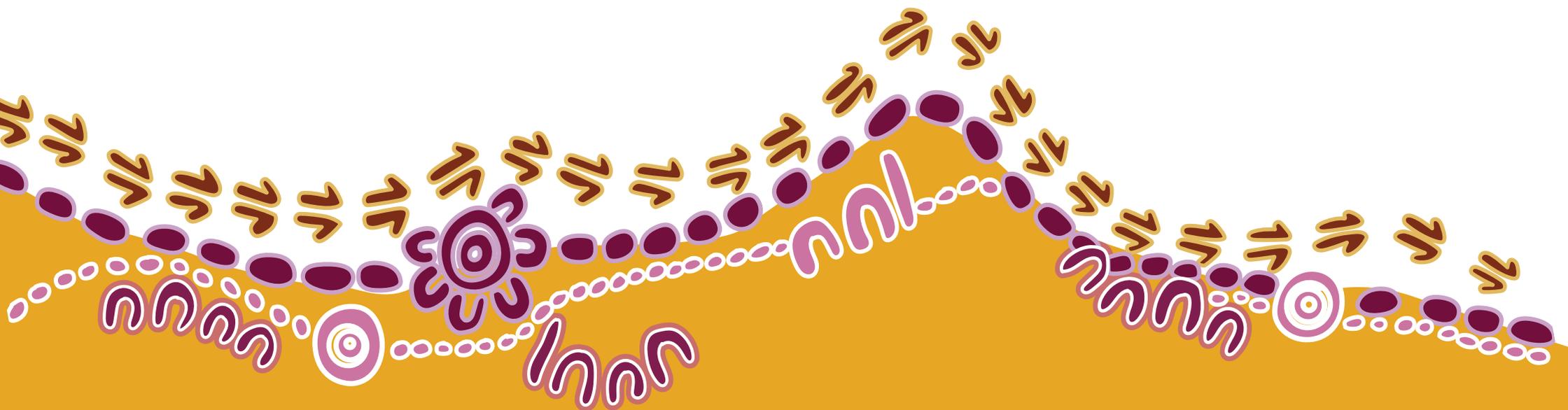
Reconciliation WA also works with other state and territory reconciliation partners and Reconciliation Australia to support, promote and lead national reconciliation initiatives. This includes providing support to member organisations, WA Government agencies with Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs) and Reconciliation Industry Network Groups to build connected and informed communities of reconciliation peers encouraging a collaborative approach to delivering on RAP commitments.

Reconciliation WA will support the development of the State Government Reconciliation Industry Network Group, commencing with participation by the Departments of the Premier and Cabinet, Treasury and the Public Sector Commission.



Summary

Key Action	Responsible Agency	Priority Reforms
Development of truth-telling, ceremony, and commemoration strategies to formally acknowledge and reconcile the Aboriginal prison history on Wadjemup.	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	3
Development of the Aboriginal Cultural Centre	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	3





Part Two: Closing the Gap Socioeconomic Outcomes



Under the National Agreement, the WA Government has made a commitment to close the gap on seventeen socio-economic outcome areas that have an impact on life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Each socioeconomic outcome area has associated national targets, which all government parties have committed to achieve over the life of the National Agreement.

Part Two of the Implementation Plan outlines the policy and program response by Lead and Supporting Agencies to drive progress against the seventeen socioeconomic outcome areas and targets in the National Agreement.

The key actions in Part Two embed the strategic elements of the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and Priority Reform Areas in their design and approach.



Outcome 1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives

National target:

Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Health;
Mental Health

Lead agency:

Department of Health

Supporting agencies:

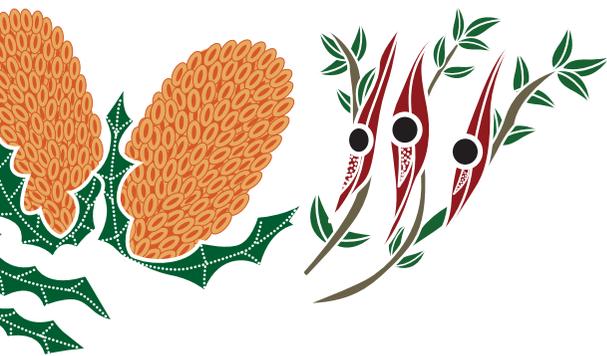
WA Country Health Service;
Mental Health Commission

WA's progress against the target

Life expectancy in years (2015-17)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal males	67	72
Non-Aboriginal males	80	80
Aboriginal females	72	76
Non-Aboriginal females	84	83

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)



Previous page: Aunty Olivia Roberts on Country at Boxwood Hill, Djeran Yorga Camp

The WA Government recognises that closing the gap in life expectancy of Aboriginal Western Australians is contingent upon improvements across all socio-economic targets under the National Agreement, as well as consideration for the cultural determinants across the life-course.

Life expectancy reflects the combined effects of socioeconomic factors, health risk behaviours and access to high-quality and culturally safe health care services. Monitoring life expectancy will assist in informing overall performance of the health system and social and behavioural determinants of health.

The Department of Health is responsible for stewarding the WA health system to continuously improve the level of inclusion and access to government health services by Aboriginal people. The WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030 and the Sustainable Health Review recommendations provide guiding principles and strategic directions for the WA health system that align with national priorities.

The Department of Health, along with other government agencies, in collaboration with the Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) is:

- » building strategic partnerships to progress better health outcomes for Aboriginal people;
- » embedding structures, policies, and processes to ensure a culturally respectful and non-discriminatory health system;
- » building capacity of the Aboriginal health workforce;
- » improving access to high-quality healthcare services;
- » supporting communities to take a preventive approach to optimising health and wellbeing; and
- » enhancing health system performance and accountability mechanisms.



Our Key Actions

Build strategic partnerships to influence better health and wellbeing outcomes

The WA Government recognises the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving better health outcomes for Aboriginal people. To facilitate strategic partnerships, the Department of Health is progressing the reconfiguration of the statewide Aboriginal Health Network to enhance cultural governance of the WA health system. This will enable stronger engagement between the WA health system and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) to advance priorities for better health and wellbeing outcomes.

In addition, the Aboriginal Workforce Partnership Working Group will be engaged to strengthen collaborative efforts with ACCHS to grow the Aboriginal health workforce in WA and progress priority employment and workforce initiatives.

The WA Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum (Forum) will be re-established as a key lever for commitment to drive reform and influence improvements in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Western Australians. The Forum comprises membership from the AHCWA, the Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA), WA Department of Health, and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

The Department of Health will continue to convene the Long and Healthy Lives Partnership Planning Group (PPG), bringing together partners across various program areas within the WA health system, AHCWA and other government agencies to plan, monitor and report on initiatives for collective effort and innovation. The Department of Health will develop and monitor strategic networks with other relevant committees and groups, including other PPGs, to advocate for and influence activities that will impact on life expectancy, including WA health system priorities such as environmental health and early years.

Embed structures, policies, and processes to ensure a culturally respectful and non-discriminatory health system

Through the implementation of the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030, the Department of Health is guiding the transformation of the WA health system to ensure Aboriginal people in WA have equity of access to high quality care and services that are free from racism and inequality. To support this transformation, the Department of Health will continue to implement, monitor, and improve mandatory health system policies including the:

- » Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Policy specifying mandatory requirements for Health Service Providers to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.
- » Aboriginal Cultural eLearning Policy to improve cultural responsiveness of the workforce by mandating all employees within the WA health system complete the Aboriginal Cultural eLearning course. The course was released in 2021, and as of 31 January 2023, 47,320 (76 percent) of

WA health system employees had completed the course. The Policy will be reviewed in 2023 and updated to improve compliance and increase the proportion of WA Health workers who have completed training.

- » Aboriginal Health Impact Statement and Declaration Policy, requiring WA health system staff declare interests, potential impacts on, and opportunities for Aboriginal people are considered and embedded within the WA health system policy development processes. In 2023, efforts will focus on implementation of the Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration tool and user guide across the Sustainable Health Review program focus areas.

Additionally, all WA Health Service Providers will implement Aboriginal Champions programs to support the delivery of culturally appropriate and safe care. The programs aim to increase the cultural competency of non-Aboriginal staff working in services that interact with Aboriginal people.

The Department of Education will also progress a shared understanding of the Cultural Determinants of Health Model and embed this approach in the following programs:

- » Triple P – Positive Parenting Program
- » Child and Parent Centres
- » KindiLink
- » Professional learning for psychologists who support the delivery of Triple P.

Build and expand the Aboriginal health workforce, using a variety of career pathways and employment opportunities

The Department of Health is committed to building and expanding the Aboriginal health workforce ensuring it is culturally relevant and responsive to Aboriginal perspectives. In 2022-23 to 2023-24, WA Health Service Providers will progress with the recruitment, orientation, and induction of up to 30 FTE Aboriginal Health Practitioners. In addition, the WA Government has committed \$5.8 million to recruit additional Aboriginal Mental Health Workers to support Aboriginal children and families to access and engage with mental health services. To

support these positions and the wider Aboriginal mental health workforce, a co-designed Aboriginal mental health workforce model will be developed.

The Mental Health Commission's Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Program (SSSMAP) has a key role in the development of knowledge and skills within the alcohol and other drug and broader health services sector. SSSMAP training programs align with the Mental Health Commission's Workforce Strategic Framework 2020-2025, through increasing the workforce capacity to be able to navigate, respond to and support Aboriginal people experiencing trauma, loss and grief.

- » The Ways of Working Part 1 training highlights the exploration of Aboriginal peoples' lives before, during and after colonisation; developing cultural competencies; understanding oppression and how to challenge it; and building a stronger future for Aboriginal peoples.
- » The Ways of Working Part 2 training is an expansion of the topics covered in Part 1, but with a more clinical focus. This includes an introduction to Aboriginal ways of counselling,

using Aboriginal AOD models for culturally secure assessment, and activities to build the confidence of non-Aboriginal people to better understand and work in a culturally secure manner.

The WA health system will continue to implement the Aboriginal Workforce Policy to increase representation of Aboriginal people at all levels of the workforce through recruitment, retention, and development initiatives. This will include:

- » Continued application of Section 51 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (WA) in relevant recruitment processes.
- » Expanding the employment pathway for Aboriginal cadets and graduates with the development of an Aboriginal Graduate Program for the WA health system.
- » Exploring opportunities to expand the WA Health Aboriginal Leadership Excellence and Development Program and First Step Aboriginal Leaders Program across other organisations and agencies to build the capability of the Aboriginal workforce.

Improve access to high quality health care services, while supporting communities to take a preventive approach to optimising health and wellbeing

Studies show that when Aboriginal people are in control of the decisions that affect their lives, they are likely to experience better health and wellbeing. In a commitment to improving the outcomes for Aboriginal people, the WA Government is transitioning two remote health clinics to Aboriginal community control.

Transitioning existing government-run clinics to community control is an effective way to implement key governance areas for action developed under the Health Sector Strengthening Plan by strengthening corporate governance capacity in communities. This is also an important step towards Closing the Gap and reflects strong partnership elements between the community and the WA Government.

The community-led transition of the Lombadina/Djarindjin and Ardyaloon clinics is designed to improve access

to culturally safe primary health care services to these communities on the Dampier Peninsula. Working in partnership to progress the transition is the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service, WA Country Health Service, Department of Health and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. Moving these remote health clinics to community control will also meet requirements set by the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030 and Recommendation 3a of the Sustainable Health Review.

Transitional Care Program

The Department of Health is partnering with ACCHS to pilot the Transitional Care Program (TCP). The program provides culturally safe, community-based transition care to older people for up to 12 weeks after their hospital discharge, including social work, nursing support, personal care and allied health care. Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service, South West Aboriginal Medical Service and Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service joined the pilot in 2022 and are delivering TCP

services within their regions. Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation (MKAC) has recently joined the pilot and is planning delivery of TCP services for the metropolitan area.

Health Navigator Pilot Program

The WA Government has committed \$3.5 million over 2 years, commencing November 2022, to establish the Health Navigator Pilot Program to help children in care navigate and access health and mental health services. Health navigators are Aboriginal health workers or registered nurses who assist children in out of home care, their parents, carers and child protection workers to better connect to services. The program was co-designed with people who have lived experience, carers, advocacy groups and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations; and is built on a holistic model of care to meet health, social, cultural and spiritual needs. Early tangible wins are demonstrating an increase in timely access to health services, mental health services, cultural services and disability supports for children and young people in out of home care.

The WA Country Health Service will continue service reform projects that prioritise incorporation of telehealth within outpatient models of care for remote and vulnerable patients. It will achieve this by developing partnerships with regional Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS) to expand capability for Aboriginal patients in regional and remote locations to attend virtual (telehealth) outpatient appointments from AMS sites.

The WA Country Health Service will also identify the potential for additional virtual clinical services (emergency and outpatient) through increased digital infrastructure and network capacity in collaboration with the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services. In addition, the WA Country Health Service will support the development of a plan for effectively identifying and treating Aboriginal people with Acute Rheumatic Fever or Rheumatic Heart Disease.

Enhance health system performance and accountability

Discharge against medical advice (DAMA) rates are a measure of the

responsiveness of hospitals to the needs of their Aboriginal patients. People who discharge against medical advice have a higher risk of mortality compared to those patients who are discharged by their physician.

The Department of Health will continue to use and monitor DAMA and 'Did Not Wait' (DNW) rates across WA Health Service Providers, ensuring strategies are implemented across the system to improve the responsiveness of hospitals to the needs of Aboriginal patients. Reduced rates of DAMA and DNW will result in better health outcomes for Aboriginal people as the health system moves towards a more culturally safe service where Aboriginal people feel confident and safe in accessing health care and health services. The Department of Health will also progress implementation of hospital procedural variance as key performance indicators into the existing performance reporting mechanisms.

WA Aboriginal Health Dashboard

The Department of Health will develop a WA Aboriginal Health Dashboard to



enhance and consolidate systemwide performance and progress monitoring of Aboriginal health measures and reporting requirements. Measures in the Dashboard will be disaggregated by Health Service Provider to enable local performance and progress monitoring. The Dashboard will also be used to support and inform strategic planning and cultural governance.



Aboriginal Health Data Governance Policy

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap recognises Aboriginal data sovereignty and the need for Aboriginal people to have access to the same information and data as governments to improve Aboriginal peoples' wellbeing and health outcomes.

The Department of Health, in partnership with AHCWA, is developing an Aboriginal Health Data Governance Policy. This Policy will optimise the value and quality of information about and for Aboriginal people in WA, maximise access and use of Aboriginal data, minimise misuse and inappropriate disclosure of data and promote Aboriginal community-led decision making.

Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
WA Aboriginal Health Partnership Forum	Department of Health and Aboriginal Health Council of WA	2023 - ongoing
Aboriginal Mental Health Workers	Mental Health Commission	2023-2024
Aboriginal Health Practitioners Transitional Care Program	Department of Health	2022-2024
Health Navigator Pilot Program	Department of Health	2022-2024
Aboriginal Graduate Program	Department of Health	2024-ongoing
WA Aboriginal Health Dashboard	Department of Health	2023-ongoing
Cultural Determinants of Health Model	Department of Education	2025-2026



Outcome 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong

National Target:

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Health

Lead agency:

Department of Health

Supporting agencies:

WA Country Health Service;
Mental Health Commission



WA's progress against the target

Percentage of babies born at a healthy birthweight (2020)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal children	88	89
Non-Aboriginal children	94	94

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)



Previous page: Mya is an Yindjibarndi child from the Pilbara, who loves going out on country and connecting to the land. Photo by Leeann Pederson.

A healthy beginning lays the foundation for positive health outcomes throughout life. The first 1,000 days of life, from conception, are critical to developing the foundations of a person's future health and wellbeing.

In 2020, 88 percent of Aboriginal babies born in WA recorded a healthy birthweight, an improvement of 1.1 percent since the baseline report (based on 2017 data), although still slightly behind the national average of 89 percent. This compares to 94 percent for non-Aboriginal babies born in WA.

Evidence shows that Aboriginal mothers who attend five or more antenatal care visits during pregnancy are less likely to have a low birthweight baby. Models of care tailored specifically for Aboriginal mothers and babies result in quantifiable improvements in antenatal care attendance, pre-term birth, birth outcomes, perinatal mortality and breastfeeding practice. These models include culturally safe and responsive continuity of care and collaboration between midwives, Aboriginal health professionals, and involvement of family members.

The Department of Health and Health Service Providers are continuously improving the level of inclusion and access to government health services by Aboriginal people through the implementation of the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2030 and the Sustainable Health Review recommendations.

Our Key Actions

Build culturally secure antenatal services for all Aboriginal families

The Department of Health, in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) will identify opportunities for the development of a statewide program that enables seamless transition across services and ensures all Aboriginal families have access to culturally secure antenatal care.

To support the development of this program, AHCWA have undertaken engagement with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) to identify priorities for



Aboriginal women accessing maternity services. Information will also be garnered from the statewide Birthing on Country survey to scope the availability and utilisation of maternity services currently available to Aboriginal women in WA. The Department of Health in collaboration with the AHCWA will seek a funding commitment for the development of a statewide model to support culturally secure antenatal care across WA.

King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) is one of the primary maternity hospitals situated in Perth. A WA State election commitment was made to expand Aboriginal and midwifery support programs at KEMH and to reintroduce the Strong Links Program. The Women and Newborn Health Service has commenced development of a new service model for the Aboriginal Midwifery Group Practice and Strong Links Program service, to consider models of care that align with Birthing on Country research. An all-inclusive maternity service at KEMH will be implemented for Aboriginal women and families to receive care from multidisciplinary teams through a single point of service.

The Child and Adolescent Health Service Aboriginal Health Program, Koorliny Moort, will be enhanced through the development and implementation of a model of care including care coordination.

Invest in an Aboriginal maternity workforce to deliver antenatal and postnatal services

Moort Boodjari Mia maternity program

The WA Government recognises the importance of holistic and culturally appropriate maternity and post-natal care for Aboriginal women. This recognition is exemplified through the continuing delivery of the Moort Boodjari Mia maternity program. Delivered to Aboriginal women and their families in the Midland catchment area, the program provides a culturally secure clinical service. The program aims to further improve collaborative cultural care in antenatal and postnatal care between Moort Boodjari Mia and other clinical services, both within the hospital and the community's Aboriginal specific services.

Boodjari Yorgas Midwifery Group Practice

Essential Aboriginal specific support programs continue to be delivered in the Armadale catchment in the form of the Boodjari Yorgas Midwifery Group Practice for Aboriginal mothers and their families. The team is comprised of midwives, an Aboriginal Health Officer and Grandmother Liaisons who provide support in conjunction with the Armadale Hospital's maternity services.

The WA health system will continue to deliver these valuable programs ensuring continuous improvement and opportunities for future investment are explored. To support the expansion of Aboriginal specific maternity, post-natal and priority clinical services across the state, the Department of Health will progress with the recruitment, orientation and induction of up to 30 FTE Aboriginal health practitioners across WA Health Service Providers in 2022 - 2024. Priority clinical settings include child and maternity services.

Provide early identification of, and education and support services for, maternal health risk factors during pregnancy

Having a healthy weight at birth provides children with a good start in life, while low birthweight infants are prone to ill-health in childhood and to chronic disease as adults. Significant amounts of research point to contributing risk factors affecting healthy birth weight such as maternal smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy.

The WA Government recognises that addressing these contributing risk factors will most likely lead to improved health outcomes for mother and baby.

The Mental Health Commission is leading the development and implementation of a suite of prevention strategies that seek to prevent and reduce alcohol use during pregnancy. This includes a state-wide public education campaign, training for health and social workers and funding to support local community action in high needs areas.

The Department of Health is supporting the evaluation and improvement of the Baby Coming You Ready (BCYR) Midwives and Nurses eLearning Package. The eLearning has been co-designed by and for midwives and nurses who are working with Aboriginal mothers and families across WA as part of the BCYR program.

The Department of Health will continue to explore opportunities to support BCYR to enable culturally safe perinatal mental health assessment and screening including family and domestic violence, social determinants of health, antenatal and postnatal depression and anxiety and supporting appropriate care and referral.

Public information on preventative care options will continue to be promoted and shared through the 'My Baby WA App' as a source of evidence-based information for maternal health care.

Summary

Key Actions

Birthing On Country Project

Strong Links Program (Aboriginal Midwifery Group Practice)

Baby Coming You Ready eLearning review

Agency Responsible

Department of Health

Department of Health

Department of Health

Timeframes

Ongoing

Ongoing

2023-2024



Outcome 3:
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander children
are engaged in high
quality, culturally
appropriate early
childhood education in
their early years

National target:

By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Early Childhood Education;
Minister for Education

Lead agencies:

Department of Communities;
Department of Education



WA's progress against the target

Percentage of children enrolled in YBFS (2022)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal children	109	99
Non-Aboriginal children	94	88

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Access to quality and culturally responsive early childhood education is critical for Aboriginal children's identity, which encompasses self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth, and capacity to learn.

The YBFS is provided in public schools across WA. The WA Government has continued to make significant improvement in this area, achieving Target 3.

Our Key Actions

Aboriginal community-led Child and Parent Centres

The Department of Education, in partnership with the Departments of Health and Communities, oversees the Child and Parent Centre (CPC) program in WA, including procuring the services of non-government organisations to operate the centres.

Three CPCs located in the Kimberley are operated and led by local Aboriginal organisations: CPC-Fitzroy Valley, operated by Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre, and CPCs Halls Creek and Kununurra, both operated by the Wunan Foundation. These organisations work in partnership with the host and surrounding schools, local service providers and the Department of Health, as well as the local Aboriginal Medical Services, to deliver a range of early learning, parenting support and health programs and services.



Previous page: Older sister taking her little brother to playgroup, Bidyadanga Family Centre, Early Years Partnership

KindiLink Program

The KindiLink program, supporting Aboriginal families with young children, operates out of the CPCs in all three of these locations. The Department of Education oversees the KindiLink program, which is a play-and-learn initiative for Aboriginal children who are not old enough to enrol at school, and their parents or caregivers. KindiLink teachers and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers delivering the program have undertaken the Abecedarian 3a training, facilitated by the Department of Education.

Recently a snapshot survey was completed where all KindiLinks identified services they networked with. The survey revealed that 51 organisations that worked closely with Aboriginal people were linked ranging from Ngunga Womens Group to Polly Farmer Foundation. In total the snapshot revealed KindiLink was linked to 186 services, which highlights the effectiveness of KindiLink in connecting parents with services and supports.

National approaches to early childhood care and development policy

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership

The national Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership (ECPP) established in late 2022, is a commitment under the National Agreement. It provides oversight for early childhood policy and program development and implementation that impacts Aboriginal children and ensures that there is meaningful dialogue and a joint decision-making process between governments and Aboriginal representatives.

SNAICC, the National Voice for our Children, co-chairs the ECPP with the Commonwealth Government's Department of Education. The WA Government is a member of the ECPP, along with all other Australian Governments and Coalition of Peaks representatives. The WA Government is

represented on this Policy Partnership by senior executives from the Department of Communities, with support from the Department of Education.

Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan

The ECPP has identified priorities, along with key action areas from the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan. These priorities and action areas will serve as crucial inputs for guiding the future work of the WA Government's Early Years Partnership Planning Group.

To implement the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan, the ECPP has identified several key areas of focus. One of these areas involves the ECPP taking on the responsibility of overseeing and advancing the policy reforms outlined in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy.

National Early Years Strategy

WA will continue to participate in consultations and collaborations to inform the development of national strategies, frameworks and policy development that influence, support and drive outcomes against Outcome Area 3 including the National Early Years Strategy.

Development of the National Early Years Strategy seeks to coordinate investment into early childhood development policy and programs and identify ways to:

- » reduce program and funding silos across departments;
- » better integrate and coordinate functions and activities across government; and
- » deliver better outcomes for young Australians and their families.

The first draft of the National Early Years Strategy is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2023. The first half of 2024 will focus on developing and implementing action plans to deliver the Strategy, including what may be done in collaboration with the States and Territories.

While this Strategy is not specific to Aboriginal children, it will build on and complement existing Closing the Gap measures including the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Strategy, and Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan.

National Vision for Early Childhood Education and Care

Federal, state and territory education and early years Ministers are developing a national long-term vision to drive future reform of early childhood education and care (ECEC). The draft national vision covers all forms of ECEC, including preschool and all forms of childcare. The vision will provide long-term direction to achieve a quality, accessible, affordable, and equitable ECEC sector. Department of Communities is a member of the vision working group that is undertaking this nationally coordinated project.





Outcome 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years

National target:

By 2031, increase the proportion of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census to 55 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Early Childhood Education

Lead agency:

Department of Communities

Supporting agencies:

Department of Education;
Department of Health



WA's progress against the target

Percentage of children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal children	31	34
Non-Aboriginal children	60	56

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

The early years shape every child's future and lay the foundation for development and learning. They are critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth, and capacity to learn.

The WA Government recognises that complex systemic developmental factors and barriers impact outcomes for Aboriginal children in their early years and that these issues are exacerbated in regional and geographically isolated areas of WA. While in its early stages of development, the establishment of the Early Childhood Education portfolio will provide significant opportunities for both WA Government and also in collaboration with the Australian Government, to address some of barriers to achieving substantial progress against Outcome 4.

Our Key Actions

The Early Years Partnership

The Early Years Partnership (EYP), previously called the Early Years Initiative, aims to improve child well-being and school readiness in four WA communities to learn what it takes to create change for children across the state. The EYP is currently working with the four communities of Armadale West; Central Great Southern (Shires of Katanning, Broomehill-Tambellup, Kojonup and Gnowangerup); Derby (including Mowanjum and Pandanus Park; communities) and Bidyadanga.

The EYP aims to create change through:

- » increasing awareness about the importance of early development;
- » strengthening whole-of-community governance and collaboration;
- » providing the best data and evidence; and
- » mobilising resources at community, state, and federal levels.

The EYP communities are empowered to identify the main enablers and barriers

Previous page: Grandmother in Bidyadanga Community visits the Family Centre Community with her grandchildren, Early Years Partnership

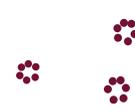


to children thriving in their communities, co-design agreed and targeted Community Plans and test, trial and learn from evidence-informed solutions.

The EYP is a 10-year collective impact partnership with the four communities, the Departments of Communities, Health and Education, and the Minderoo Foundation. The partnership is supported by Telethon Kids Institute as the evidence and evaluation partner.

The EYP Board is made up of senior executives from partner agencies comprising Departments of Communities and Education, Minderoo Foundation, WA Country Health Service (representing WA Health) and the Commissioner for Children and Young People with two independent co-chairs. The Board oversees the delivery of the initiative, ensures that agreed outcomes and targets are achieved and that any emerging risks or issues are appropriately managed.

The \$49.3 million Partnership includes a WA Government investment of \$24.6 million over 10 years, which includes project management and effective



alignment of existing funding to community priorities, and an investment from the Minderoo Foundation of \$24.7 million over 10 years to test, trial and learn from new initiatives as well as fund research and evaluation by the Telethon Kids Institute.

The Armadale West Early Years Community Plan was launched in March 2023. Armadale Elders named the plan Koorlangkas Danjoo Koorliny which means Children Coming Together. It identifies four main priorities for improving child well-being and school readiness:

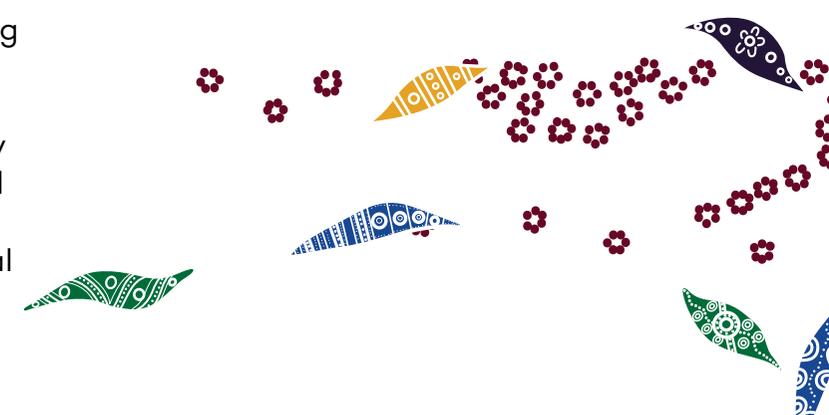
- » Child Development – improve early identification and early intervention for developmental delay.
- » Family safety – reduce exposure to family and domestic violence.
- » Maternal health – improve access and attendance to maternal health services.
- » Financial wellbeing – improve housing stability and food security.

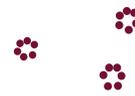
The Central Great Southern Community Plan, Children Growing Strong, launched in May 2023, identifies five priorities: child health; child development; financial

wellbeing; family safety; and maternal health. The remaining Community Plans will be finalised and launched over the course of 2023.

The Australian Government, via the Connected Beginnings program, funds the Minderoo Foundation to provide backbone infrastructure across the Armadale West, Central Great Southern and Bidyadanga partner communities. Minderoo Foundation has partnered with:

- » the City of Armadale in Armadale West (Community workers are based at the City's Champion Centre which is a gathering place for Aboriginal people and for agencies working with Aboriginal families);
- » Badgebup Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) in Central Great Southern; and
- » Bidyadanga Aboriginal Corporation la Grange (BACLG) in Bidyadanga.





Separate Connected Beginnings funding is provided directly by the Australian Government to Ngunga Women's Group Aboriginal Corporation in Derby, which is aligned to and supports the work of the EYP in the community.

Improving Access to the Australian Early Development Census

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) has recently been integrated with the WA Government's Social Investment Data Resource (SIDR) which provides a linked, administrative database for researchers and policy analysts. SIDR data will be transitioning to a new whole-of-government data repository called PeopleWA in August 2023 (see page 25 for more details on PeopleWA).

The addition of the AEDC will assist the evaluation of the Early Years Partnership and demonstrate whether the collective impact of the partnership in the four EYP locations has improved outcomes for children aged 0-4 years over the 10-year partnership.

The SIDR linked administrative data also has measures of household and area socioeconomic measures so priority areas identified by communities as being important to child health and wellbeing, such as family financial security, and the actions identified can be measured for change over time, both in the EYP areas and in comparison, to control areas. The use of the integration of the AEDC into SIDR is an important development and provides an opportunity to better inform WA government's actions towards Closing the Gap and measure progress towards Outcomes 3 and 4.

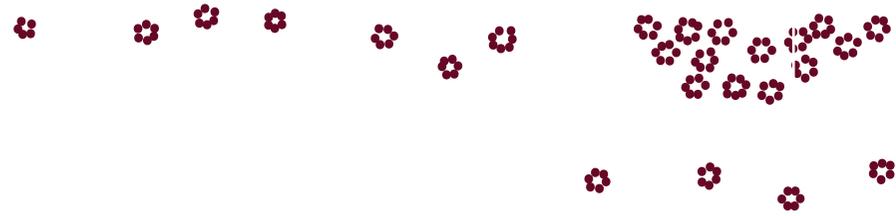
Supporting delivery of the Enhanced Child Health Schedule with Aboriginal families

WA Country Health Service contracts and partners with Aboriginal Health and Medical Services to provide child health and development services for Aboriginal children in several remote and very remote locations.

WA Country Health Service is currently working with the Aboriginal Health Council of WA (AHCWA) to support delivery of the Enhanced Child Health Schedule with Aboriginal families across country WA. The aim is to provide more opportunities for early support for parents, enhanced child development and early intervention for developmental and health concerns for Aboriginal children and families.

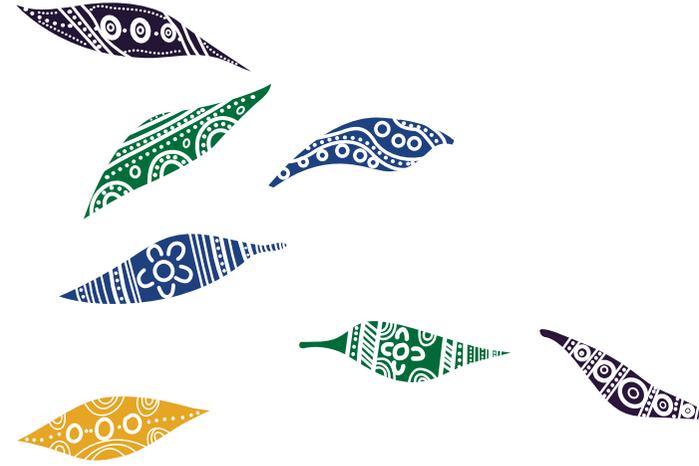
Child Ear Health Services

In 2021, WA Country Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service and AHCWA collaborated to develop the Child Ear Health Services: Codesign Framework. The Co-design Framework is a resource for managers, staff and leaders aiming to improve services by collaborating truly with Aboriginal families and communities.



In response to the WA Child Ear Health Strategy and the WA Auditor General's Report 23A, WA Country Health Service child health services are now providing regular physical ear health assessments for Aboriginal children and infants (from 8 weeks) through to the early primary school years.

During 2023, WA Country Health Service will work with the Department of Health to better coordinate data collection for children's ear health. The aim is to improve information sharing between ear health providers to enhance service coordination and effectiveness.



Summary

Key Actions

Early Years Partnership

Early Years Partnership Community Plans

Agency Responsible

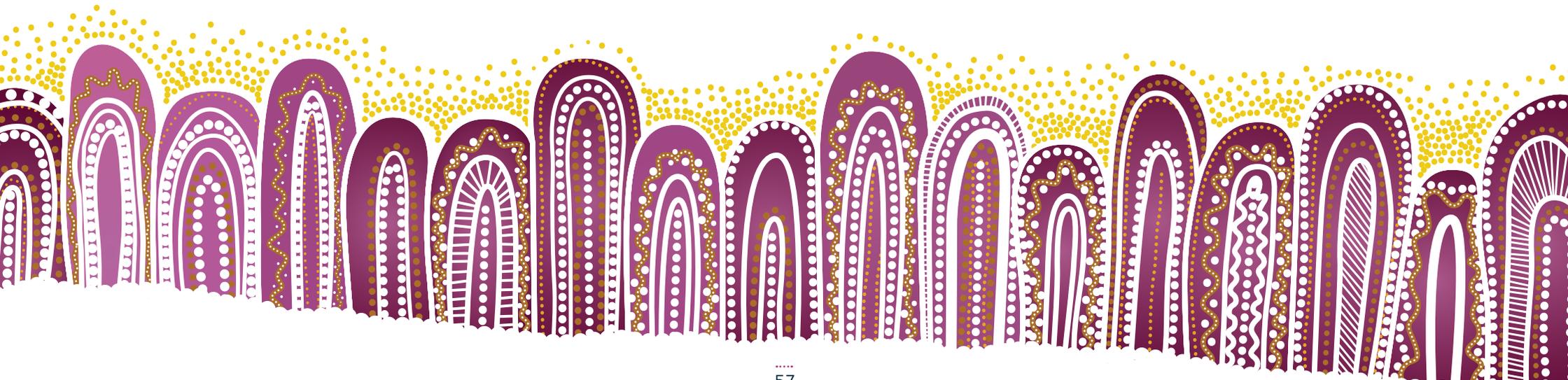
Timeframes

Department of Communities

Ongoing – 2018-2028

Department of Communities

2023





Outcome 5: Aboriginal students achieve their full learning potential

National target:

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent (Certificate III or above) qualification to 96 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Education

Lead agency:

Department of Education

Supporting agencies:

Department of Training and Workforce
Development

WA's progress against the target

Percentage of people aged 20-24 who have attained year 12 or equivalent (2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	61	68
Non-Aboriginal people	90	91

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)



Previous page: Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer and student at a district high school

A good quality and culturally responsive education that meets the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students lays the foundations for success in their later life. While all social indicators are important, educational attainment is a key catalyst for improving life outcomes in the long term.

The Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy identifies actions for schools to embed Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages into classroom practice, and create learning environments that build respect for the cultures, experiences and worldviews of Aboriginal people. To support Aboriginal students to achieve their full learning potential, the WA Government's priority is to support the creation of culturally responsive schools that build on strengths of Aboriginal students, engage them in their learning, and enable them to thrive academically and socially.

All WA public schools have the flexibility and autonomy to develop and implement locally determined, place-based strategies and programs that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of students in the school.

Our Key Actions

Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework

The Department of Education's Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework continues to drive the agency's work to strengthen the wellbeing, engagement and achievement of Aboriginal students. Through the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework, schools are supported to build and maintain mutually respectful relationships with Aboriginal students and their families that reflect a genuine partnership and appreciation of the strengths of Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

Education Aboriginal Advisory Body

The Department of Education is establishing a system-level Aboriginal Advisory Body to strengthen the Department's relationship and shared decision-making with Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Advisory Body will have an important role in the governance and oversight of the Department's progress towards reconciliation and creating a

culturally responsive education system to support the wellbeing, engagement and achievement of Aboriginal students in public schools.

The Aboriginal Advisory Body will be an independent Aboriginal voice to the Department of Education and the Minister for Education and signals a commitment to whole-of-Government strategic drivers and long-term transformational change that builds Aboriginal empowerment into the WA education system.

Culturally responsive pedagogies

The Department of Education is committed to reconciliation and building an anti-racist, culturally responsive education system. The Department of Education's Quality Teaching Strategy which includes the Teaching for Impact resource establishes a shared, system-wide position on effective teaching that sets clear and common expectations of classroom practice across all public schools. It is the central element of the Department of Education's school improvement architecture.

The Quality Teaching Strategy maintains that effective teachers believe in equity and reconciliation and use culturally responsive pedagogies that build on the cultural and linguistic strengths of Aboriginal students. In 2021-22, the Department of Education designed a new online culturally responsive pedagogies self-paced professional learning course, which was launched in March 2023.

The Department of Education will continue to design, deliver and evaluate professional learning and resources that strengthen the delivery of culturally responsive pedagogies that respond to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Balanginy Research Project

The Department of Education has commissioned Koya Aboriginal Corporation as part of a research project, Balanginy, to investigate what success at school means for Aboriginal students and their parents. In 2023, Koya Aboriginal Corporation will consult with Aboriginal students and parents to develop metrics for Aboriginal student

success at school and in 2024 will commence trialling the use of these metrics in a small number of schools, as a 'proof of concept' research project.

Senior secondary metrics

To help more young people fulfil their learning potential, secondary public schools are being supported with three senior secondary school metrics designed to align with the Department of Education's strategic directions. These will be used by staff to reflect on student outcomes, and to find opportunities to work with students, their families and school community to reinforce high expectations and strengthen aspirations. The metrics will include disaggregation by gender and Aboriginality.

Follow the Dream

The Follow the Dream program is delivered through a partnership between the Department of Education and the Polly Farmer Foundation. The program provides tailored after-school tuition and individualised mentoring support to Aboriginal secondary students to

assist them to achieve positive academic outcomes and meaningful post-school destinations such as university, further training or employment.

Follow the Dream celebrates culture, strengthens a sense of belonging and connection to community and empowers students to pursue their aspirations. As at Term one, 2023, 101 public schools in WA are operating a Follow the Dream program.

Clontarf Foundation Academies

The Clontarf Foundation's school-based Academies are delivered in partnership by the Department of Education, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Clontarf Foundation. The WA Government committed \$34 million over five years from 2020-2024 to deliver school-based programs designed to strengthen the educational and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal boys and young men and assist their transition through school and into post-school destinations.

In Term one, 2023, Clontarf Academies were approved to operate in 40 schools

across WA, supporting approximately 2,330 male Aboriginal primary and secondary school students.

Aboriginal Girls Program

The Department of Education continues to deliver a range of programs to enhance the engagement of female Aboriginal students in public schools. From 2020-21 to 2024-25, the WA Government committed \$19.75 million to support schools to deliver engagement programs for Aboriginal girls and young women.

In 2021, the Department of Education established a mandatory panel of service providers to deliver engagement programs for Aboriginal girls and young women in Years 7-12 in WA's public schools from 2022-2026. The panel consists of service providers who have demonstrated the capacity to deliver engagement programs that support Aboriginal girls and young women to achieve their full learning potential; shape their own futures; and embrace their cultures, languages and identities as Aboriginal people.

Service agreements have been established with:

- » Aurora Education Foundation Limited;
- » Glass Jar Australia Limited;
- » Koya Aboriginal Corporation;
- » Shine Inspire Achieve Belong Incorporated;
- » Stars Foundation Limited;
- » Stephen Michael Foundation Limited; and
- » Waalitj Foundation Limited.

The programs on the panel agreement collectively encompass a focus on health and wellbeing, post-school pathways to employment, education and further training, celebrating connection to community and culture, and developing leadership skills.

Between February 2022 – May 2023, approximately \$7.246 million has been provided to schools to support the purchase of an engagement program for Aboriginal girls and young women, from the state panel arrangement. The WA Government funding commitment complements Commonwealth funding provided under the National Indigenous Australians Agency grant program to service providers for the delivery of

additional engagement programs and program placements for Aboriginal girls and young women.

In Semester one 2023, a total of 49 WA public schools are providing an engagement program for Aboriginal girls and young women through Commonwealth and/or State funding. The number of public schools in WA providing the Program, assisted by state funding is expected to increase by nine, as a number of schools are in the 'discussion phase' of selecting an engagement program from the panel arrangement.

Year 9 Career Taster Program

The Department Training and Workforce Development's \$22 million Year 9 Career Taster Program supports Year 9 students to start their career exploration journey. The program was launched in November 2021 and commenced delivery in Term one 2022. The program is student centric and focused on helping students to explore potential career pathways through hands-on, industry-led activities.

The program is designed to:

- » provide flexible and hands-on experiences to suit all learning requirements;
- » facilitate inclusivity and culturally appropriate delivery; and
- » promote and support bespoke delivery to priority cohorts, including those who identify as Aboriginal.

As at end of 2022, 729 students identifying as Aboriginal participated in the program, representing 5.3 percent of total participation. The Department Training and Workforce Development has engaged Aboriginal organisations in the early consultation and co-design of the program and will continue to identify opportunities to encourage ACCOs to participate in the program.



Aboriginal school community engagement forums

The Department of Education held Aboriginal school community engagement forums in each of the education regions in WA, as part of the Education Conversation series. The purpose is to strengthen the Department of Education's relationship with Aboriginal parents and community members and to provide an opportunity to share ways to strengthen education outcomes for Aboriginal students by creating culturally responsive schools.

In response to the common themes raised by Aboriginal families, the education regions have committed to progressing the work from the forums. The commitments centre around strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities and families, establishing or re-establishing regional Aboriginal advisory groups and/or school-based Aboriginal parent advisory groups in some regions, establishing Aboriginal education officer networks, and continuing regional meetings with Aboriginal families.



Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Year 9 Career Taster Program	Department of Training and Workforce Development	2022-2025
Senior secondary metrics	Department of Education	Fully implemented for the start of the 2025 school year
Balanginy Research Project	Department of Education	2023-2024





Outcome 6: Aboriginal students reach their full potential through further education pathways

National target:

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Training;
Minister for Education

Lead agencies:

Department of Training and Workforce
Development; Department of Education



WA's progress against the target

People aged 25 to 34 years old who have completed AQF Certificate level III or above as a percentage (2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	37	47
Non-Aboriginal people	73	76

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Providing more opportunities for Aboriginal students to achieve tertiary qualifications is a vital step in strengthening employment prospects and social outcomes. Like all young people, Aboriginal students need education pathways to access, engage with and achieve in education from primary and secondary schooling through to tertiary education.

Holding a Certificate III or above qualification significantly improves a person's labour market outcome, both in terms of ensuring they are participating in the labour market and reducing the likelihood of unemployment. To achieve this target, the WA Government's priority is to support Aboriginal children to learn and progress at school and to leave school with the capabilities demanded by further education, training or modern workplaces.

Our Key Actions

Pathways to post-school success

The Department of Education is conducting a review of senior secondary school pathways in a bid to ensure all WA students reach their full potential in their post-school study, training or employment pursuits. Under its terms of reference, the review will explore whether current pathways options for Aboriginal students build the skills and knowledge they need to successfully access further study, training, and work options available to them. Furthermore, the review will investigate whether current certification and university entry requirements assist Aboriginal students to make the best study choices and identify the barriers that students face in accessing equitable pathways.

An expert panel and advisory committee appointed for this review will examine emerging practices in WA and elsewhere to inform a culturally responsive approach to meet the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students.

Previous page: Ms Kaysanna Elap, Aboriginal Education Support Officer, North Regional TAFE, Broome

Training and employment of Aboriginal people

The Department of Training and Workforce Development's (DTWD) Strategic Plan 2023-2028 prioritises participation of Aboriginal people in training and employment. DTWD will be placing Aboriginal people at the forefront of developing strategies to close the gap on employment and training measures and develop the skills to realise their economic and community development priorities.

This will include designing training in partnership with Aboriginal stakeholders, consulting with Aboriginal communities when developing policy and programs and awarding service contracts to Aboriginal providers where appropriate. In addition, DTWD commits to developing a strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal employees and attract more Aboriginal lecturers at TAFE colleges.

Aboriginal career promotion programs

The WA Djinda Ngardak career promotion program is offered to Aboriginal high school students in Years 10-12 to participate in a culinary masterclass taught by renowned chefs and trainers. The program is supported by schools, teachers, Aboriginal community groups, local chefs and businesses. The program continues to give Aboriginal students hands-on hospitality experience, while also promoting strong cultural values and identity in this career pathway.

Students are mentored by local Elders and cultural leaders during activities on-country that facilitate the exploration of traditional plants and ingredients and support cross-cultural sharing and connection to Country. The program culminates in an event where students co-create, prepare and serve a high-end gala dinner. Participation contributes to the Western Australian Certificate of Education Workplace Learning capabilities.

Aboriginal Open Days

The Department of Justice's Aboriginal Open Days Program (Open Days) promotes education and employment among Aboriginal youth, particularly within the 20-24 year-old cohort, by facilitating access to identity documents and driver licences that are necessary or of great assistance in accessing education or employment opportunities. Accessible to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, Open Days are held across WA in metropolitan and regional locations, and remote communities.

The Department of Justice works in partnership with a range of external stakeholders to deliver the Open Days, including the Department of Transport, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Sheriff's Office, Curtin Tax Clinic, Aboriginal Legal Service of WA, Legal Aid, job active providers and relevant Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations.

The TAFE Jobs and Skills Centres are present at Open Days, raising awareness, engaging with Aboriginal youth and promoting opportunities that

facilitate employment and education outcomes. By bringing services directly to remote communities, Open Days allow Aboriginal people to access services in a place where they are comfortable in speaking their traditional languages and, if necessary, can explain their service requirements in language to a family/ community member who will be able to ensure these needs are understood by service providers.

The Open Days program is implemented through an annual operational budget of \$225,000 per year. The WA Office of Crime Statistics and Research intends to conduct a process and outcomes evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Program.

Regional VET Advisory Groups

The Regional Vocational Education and Training (VET) Advisory Group (RVAG), comprising schools, TAFE, School of Isolated and Distance Education Registered Training Organisation

(SIDE RTO) and Industry have begun planning for improved VET delivery and participation in the Kimberley. RVAG meetings commenced in the Wheatbelt in 2021. In all other educational regions planning for establishing RVAG is continuing for 2023.

Regions will be consulted further as system improvement measures are implemented. The Department of Education is preparing a broader strategic approach to providing students with future skills and pathways, which will encompass the critically important areas of career development, contemporary and emerging work capabilities, STEM skills and understandings, and partnerships with business, industry and training providers.

SIDE RTO continues to engage with schools to explore the possibility of providing skill sets applicable to local needs, industry requirements for local employment, and a platform to better engage students.

Education, Employment and Transitional Services – Collective Nations: Many Tracks Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategy

The Collective Nations: Many Tracks Aboriginal Education and Employment Strategy 2022-2025 will guide education and training from foundational skills to further education and employment pathways for Aboriginal people in prison. Engagement in education and acquiring useful skills in prison have been identified as ways of helping reduce reoffending and incarceration rates of Aboriginal people as well as ultimately contributing to closing the gap across health, education, employment, economic and social divides.

The Strategy was developed following wide consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders and informed by a review of other national and state and territory strategies. The Strategy incorporates four key components: "Walking Together", "Many Tracks", "Connecting Our People" and "Creating Opportunities."



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

Aboriginal Career Promotion Programs (Djinda Ngardak)

Department of Jobs, Tourism,
Science and Innovation

Ongoing

**The “Collective Nations: Many Tracks” Aboriginal Education and
Employment Strategy 2022-2025**

Department of Justice

2022-2025





Outcome 7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education

National Target:

By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Training

Lead agencies:

Department of Training and Workforce
Development

Supporting agencies:

Department of Education

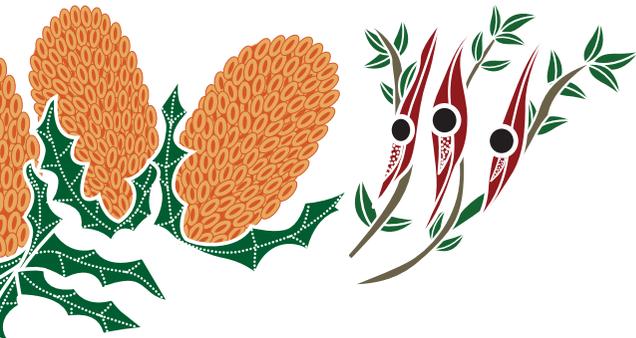


WA's progress against the target

People aged 15 to 24 years who are fully engaged in employment, education or training as a percentage (2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	53	58
Non-Aboriginal people	80	80

Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)



Previous page: Construction students Jasmine Augustine and Shiahn Dwyer, with lecturer Sam Geci, North Regional TAFE, Broome

Engagement in employment and education is critically important in empowering young Aboriginal people and providing the foundations for long-term socioeconomic prosperity for themselves and their communities. Engagement in further education and training is the pathway to accessing employment, which in turn brings financial security, increased social mobility and access to higher standards of living.

Our Key Actions

Aboriginal School-Based Training Program

The Department of Training and Workforce Development's Aboriginal School-based Training (ASBT) Program is for full-time Aboriginal students in Years 10, 11 and 12 and contains two training options; a work and study readiness program; and an Aboriginal school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. The ASBT Program is an ongoing commitment, funded for approximately \$2 million annually and delivering to approximately 350 students across 23 schools each year.

Connecting businesses and young Aboriginal people in the workplace

The Department of Training and Workforce Development has contracted Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry WA to June 2024 to develop and implement the Working Together program, which contains a range of employer activities to expand work opportunities, including work experience, for Aboriginal people in the Goldfields, Great Southern, Mid-West, South West, West Kimberley and the Pilbara. Employer engagement as part of the program is promoted by:

- » Raising local employers' awareness of the potential benefits of employing Aboriginal people.
- » Encouraging employers to list work opportunities for Aboriginal people on the Aboriginal services Jobs Board.
- » Encouraging employers to offer part time and work experience opportunities to Aboriginal high school students and school leavers.
- » Providing feedback on barriers to the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

- » Increasing local uptake of retention strategies such as cultural awareness training, mentoring etc.
- » Acknowledging employers' contributions.

Youth employment support programs

The Department of Training and Workforce Development's Aboriginal Policy Planning and Reconciliation (APPR) branch provides an Aboriginal perspective to ensure policy development and service delivery enhances opportunities for Aboriginal people to gain vocational skills, meaningful employment and economic development.

The APPR branch has led the development of two pilot programs for Aboriginal people: Caring for country – caring for self, Kadadjin Boodja Bidi (completed on 30 June 2022) and the Employment Enabling Support for Aboriginal Youth Pilot, delivered in partnership with Waalitj Foundation.

The Employment Enabling Support for Aboriginal Youth pilot addresses individual barriers to participating in employment or training leading to employment. Support includes payment for items such as training and resources fees, industry tickets, driver licences and lessons, personal protective clothing and work wear.

The scope was extended in early 2022 to include Aboriginal job seekers aged 25 to 30 years exiting the justice system. As at 31 December 2022, 131 Aboriginal youth have received funded support, with approximately 49 percent transitioning into employment or training leading to employment.

Jobs and Skills Centre expansion of Aboriginal services across metropolitan and regional centres

In 2022, an additional \$8.14 million was invested into Jobs and Skills Centre (JSC), expanding services for Aboriginal people in regional and metropolitan areas to enhance opportunities for Aboriginal people to

engage in sustainable employment and help meet WA's skills shortages and growing workforce demand. There is currently a network of 19 JSCs around the state, including two new centres in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions that opened in August 2022, and a new centre opened in Fremantle in November 2022.

Approximately 30 Aboriginal employment and engagement officers are employed across the JSC network. They work closely with employers and other key service providers in their area to integrate services and maximise training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal clients and ensure culturally appropriate employment and career services are provided.

Other enhancements include the inclusion of more Aboriginal artwork to ensure the JSCs provide a culturally supportive, vibrant and welcoming space for Aboriginal staff and clients, where community members and employers can meet, and find local information and resources.



Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer Career Pathways Review

The Department of Education has commenced work to develop a skills and competencies framework to recognise the scale of roles and responsibilities that encompass the work of an Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) in public schools.

A review of the Job Description Form will also be undertaken to consider the strategic nature of the AIEO role. The purpose of a new competency framework and Job Description Form review is to provide opportunities for career progression and strengthened whole-school support to create culturally responsive work and learning environments.



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Aboriginal Jobseeker Support Program	Department of Training and Workforce Development	2024-2025
Enhanced Aboriginal services at Jobs and Skills Centres	Department of Training and Workforce Development	2023-ongoing
Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer Career Pathways Review	Department of Education	2023-2024



Outcome 8: Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities

National Target: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 who are employed to 62 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for State and Industry
Development, Jobs and Trade

Lead agencies:

Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science
and Innovation

Supporting agencies:

Department of Training and Workforce
Development;
Department of Primary Industries and
Regional Development



WA's progress against the target

Employment rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 to 64 years as a percentage (2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	50	56
Non-Aboriginal people	80	78

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Previous page: Yamaji Art Centre, Geraldton. Photo credit TourismWA

Economic participation and development empower Aboriginal people, their families and communities to build strong foundations and secure, independent futures. Governments have an important role in boosting Aboriginal people's economic participation and success in employment, procurement, training and business.

The WA Government continues its commitment to a range of actions to increase economic development outcomes in employment, training, procurement and enterprise development with Aboriginal people across WA.

Our Key Actions

Enhancing Aboriginal engagement in policy and program development

In February 2023 the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (JTSI) received endorsement from the Aboriginal Advisory Council WA to establish an Aboriginal Economic Development Advisory Board (Advisory Board), in order to support JTSI and other public sector agencies to implement policies and programs in a way that will improve the economic opportunities for Aboriginal people living in WA.

The creation of the Advisory Board aligns with the objectives of the WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy and the National Agreement and will support the function of the JTSI 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The Advisory Board consists of Aboriginal stakeholders who have experience in economic development and job creation, as



Left: BORR Yaka Dandjoo Program – graduates and mentor on site

well as government representatives who regularly engage with Aboriginal stakeholders. The Advisory Board will be co-chaired by JTSI and an Aboriginal Board member.

Tourism WA will also establish an Aboriginal Advisory Committee to provide the Tourism WA Board with guidance and advice around Aboriginal partnerships on matters related to tourism.

The Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Business and Employment Advisory Group is another vital forum that continues to guide and support initiatives to increase Aboriginal participation across the transport sector. It ensures that local Aboriginal businesses and community members are involved in the decision making to determine appropriate project objectives, targets and engagement approaches, and ensure the best outcomes for local Aboriginal businesses and people.

Building the capability of Aboriginal businesses

To support the Aboriginal Procurement Policy, the Department of Finance redeveloped its Aboriginal Business Capability Building (ABCB) program with the intent to provide more individualised services to program participants. The ABCB program is delivered by two Aboriginal businesses and is accessible to Aboriginal businesses in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Central and Southern regions.

The Aboriginal Procurement Advisory Service (APAS), funded by Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), aims to assist Aboriginal businesses to secure contracting opportunities with government and private sector opportunities across the regions.

Between 2017 and 2022, the APAS assisted Aboriginal businesses to gain \$20.5 million worth of contracts, spread over 47 successful tender opportunities across the regions and across a wide

range of government goods, services and works opportunities. Since September 2022, APAS has supported an additional 78 Aboriginal businesses across WA and tracked 29 successful tenders valued at over \$5.16 million.

Connecting Aboriginal jobseekers to employers in WA

Resources are available on the Jobs and Skills WA website to help employers to attract, recruit and retain Aboriginal employees, and assist and support Aboriginal jobseekers in WA to find employment. The Deadly Jobs Board allows employers to advertise employment opportunities for Aboriginal jobseekers.

To support Aboriginal jobseekers and employers, an Aboriginal project officer has recently been appointed within the Department of Training and Workforce Development's Jobs and Skills Resource Unit to develop careers and employability resources that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal people.



Driving Aboriginal economic development in remote and regional

DPIRD and the nine Regional Development Commissions continue to drive economic outcomes for Aboriginal people in regional WA.

The Aboriginal Economic Development unit within DPIRD works with Aboriginal organisations and Native Title holders across WA to drive economic outcomes in the primary industries. This work has had a key focus on increasing Aboriginal representation in targeted primary industries such as the carbon farming, bushfoods, fishing and regenerative agriculture industries.

In 2023, the Aboriginal Economic Development unit's work will include:

- » the expansion of the Aboriginal Pastoral Academy;
- » implementation of the Follow the Flowers initiative with Outback Academy Australia;
- » commercialisation of an Aboriginal mud crab fishery; and
- » working with the WA Sandalwood Advisory Group to implement the 2020 Sandalwood Taskforce Report.

DPIRD's Aboriginal Economic Development unit also delivers the Aboriginal Governance and Leadership Development Program, which provides business leadership, procurement advisory and governance support services to Aboriginal businesses through:

- » provision of the statewide Aboriginal Procurement Advisory Service;
- » funding for the continued delivery of the Jawun model;
- » delivery of the Gascoyne Aboriginal Business Leadership Program; and
- » delivery of the 2022-23 Aboriginal Native Seeds and Nursery Grants.

The Regional Development Commissions will deliver the sixth round of the Regional Economic Development Grants program, which will see \$5 million invested towards regional projects that support jobs and business opportunities, including for Aboriginal people.

Development of training and employment opportunities across the Transport Portfolio

The Transport Portfolio comprises Main Roads, Department of Transport, Public Transport Authority, Office of Major Transport Infrastructure Delivery (OMTID), Metronet and Westport. The Transport Portfolio framework ensures continued development of pathways through its workforce, across its agencies State-wide. An Aboriginal Employment Working Group has been established with objectives to:

- » Increase sustainable opportunities for Aboriginal employment and businesses in the new State Road Funds to Local Government Agreement 2023-24 to 2027-28.
- » Strengthen and foster partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.
- » Identify and remove obstacles to the successful adoption of Aboriginal employment and retention initiatives.
- » Explore the views and issues that involve Aboriginal employment and participation.

- » Monitor factors, outside of the Group's control, that are critical to the success of Aboriginal employment.
- » Establish a system/process for monitoring and reporting on Aboriginal employment.

Supporting Aboriginal businesses in the tendering process

The Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Engagement (TPAE) team works with Aboriginal businesses to provide assistance with the State Government tendering process and holds forums for Aboriginal businesses to ensure they are aware of upcoming tendering opportunities.

Following the success of the inaugural Meet the Buyer and Supplier Forum hosted by the Transport Portfolio in 2021, the next Forum is being planned for October 2023. This initiative is being held to connect Aboriginal businesses and contractors operating in the road and rail construction and maintenance sector, allowing each to network, share capabilities, make new business connections and explore upcoming opportunities.

The TPAAE team has a longer-term plan to implement programs that will create and promote sustainable procurement and business outcomes for Aboriginal people across WA. This includes a pipeline of contracts on major projects, proposed scholarship program, Aboriginal business growth program, and support for initiatives that will make positive social and cultural impacts.

Main Road's Aboriginal Participation Dashboard

Main Roads' Aboriginal Participation Dashboard is updated monthly by project contractors and provides a clear snapshot of data for use across the Transport Portfolio. It enables Aboriginal participation and procurement, monitoring, reporting and risk management for over 30 major infrastructure project contracts.

In a major boost to recording Aboriginal businesses and suppliers, the Main Roads Aboriginal Business Directory (Main Roads ABD) was launched in July 2022 and is a digital database in which businesses are verified, recorded and tracking data can be optimised. The

Main Roads ABD contains more than 4000 Aboriginal businesses nationwide, including approximately 1200 Western Australian businesses. The data has been drawn from Supply Nation (via daily data updates), the Aboriginal Business Directory WA (via a one off data import) and input from the TPAAE team, who can manually add businesses they encounter.

Improving lives through the Driving Access and Equity Program

The Driving Access and Equity Program (DAEP), initiated by the Department of Transport (DoT) in 2021, seeks to remove considerable barriers faced by residents in remote Aboriginal communities to obtaining their driver's licence. This includes having access to someone who has a licence, a vehicle, and the time or ability to provide the necessary 50 hours of supervised driving.

Having a driver's licence is significantly associated with greater opportunities to securing fulltime employment and undertaking post-secondary education. People who hold a driver's licence are four times more likely to be in full-time employment and two to four times more

likely to have higher levels of formal education.

Based on its initial success in the Kimberley and Pilbara, DAEP was expanded in February 2023, with a further \$3.3 million in grant funding made available to ten organisations in the Mid West, Gascoyne and Goldfields-Esperance regions. This funding will support up to 800 people to become safe, licensed and employable drivers.

A further amount of \$5.8 million was announced for the program in the 2023-24 State Budget, which will enable projects started in 2022 to be extended and continue to support more than 1,000 current participants through the licensing process.

DAEP initiatives are complemented by DoT's Remote Services program which increases access to driver and vehicle licensing services in regional and remote areas through mobile service delivery and engaging Aboriginal organisations to deliver learner's permit theory testing.

WA Aboriginal Ranger Program – Working on Country

The WA Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP) continues to create jobs, training and community development opportunities for Aboriginal people on a range of land tenures in regional and remote communities across WA.

In Phase One, the ARP funded 35 ranger programs, resulting in over 800 people being employed across the State: 45 percent of positions were filled by women and 95 percent identified as Aboriginal. The ARP works with many partners who are at varying stages of development or expansion. In 2021, the WA Government committed to an investment of \$50 million with a further \$16.5 million committed in 2022, bringing the total current commitment to \$66.5 million over five years, from 2021-26. More information about the ARP can be found under Outcome 15.

The Aboriginal Business Round of the Local Capability Fund

The Local Capability Fund (LCF) continues to build capability, capacity and improve the competitiveness of Aboriginal businesses competing for government and private sector contracts.

Since 2018-19 the Aboriginal Business Round of the LCF has awarded a total of more than \$2.5 million in grant funding to 59 Aboriginal businesses, supporting 187 new staff including 23 new apprentices. The funding has enabled Aboriginal businesses to secure 294 major new contracts valued at \$108.4 million, representing a leverage ratio of 43:1 (\$43 dollars of new contracts won for every \$1 in funding awarded). In the 2022-23 financial year, JTSI awarded grant funding of \$586,742 to 15 Aboriginal businesses through the Aboriginal Business Round of the LCF.

Aboriginal businesses awarded funding through the Aboriginal Business Round of the LCF represent a number of industries, including construction; manufacturing; professional, scientific and technical services; mining; and agriculture. The outcomes reported on annually include contracts won and additional employment created through apprenticeships.



Aboriginal Capability Pavilion at AOG Energy 2024

In 2023, JTSI provided an opportunity for 10 Aboriginal-owned businesses to co-exhibit on the inaugural Aboriginal Capability Pavilion at AOG Energy Conference and Exhibition, showcasing their products and services to over 6,800 attendees. The co-exhibitors were selected through a competitive Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

JTSI has committed to an Aboriginal Capability Pavilion at AOG Energy 2024 in order to strengthen engagement with the Aboriginal business community and deliver better outcomes. JTSI will work to deliver: wider promotion of the EOI process through the Indigenous Emerging Business Forum; increased input by Aboriginal people into the design and layout of the Pavilion; more preferable positioning of the Pavilion within the exhibition space with improved connection to the JTSI stand; greater representation of Aboriginal culture on the stand, and further support provided to the selected coexhibiting businesses.

Jina: WA Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2021-25

The Jina: WA Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2021-2025 (Jina Plan) provides the WA Government with an agreed approach to align, collaborate and communicate cross-agency activities aimed at growing a diversified and sustainable Aboriginal tourism sector for WA. The Action Plan identifies an accountable set of actions to drive tangible outcomes. Initiatives under the Action Plan include:

- » the Custodians Collective (Jina);
- » the Gwoonwardu Mia Jobs and Skills Project (Jina); and
- » the Build the Dream Initiative (Jina).



Custodians Collective (Jina)

The Custodians Collective is a broad-based product development initiative of Tourism WA. Custodians Collective includes Camping with Custodians, Cruising with Custodians and Walking with Custodians. All programs are developed and delivered with Traditional Owners on country. The sixth Camping with Custodians campground site was developed on the Djarindjin community in 2022. Tourism WA is currently working with the Lombadina community in the construction of a Camping with Custodians site with completion due in late 2023. Scoping works are underway for future Camping with Custodians and Base Camp development options in Southern WA.

Gwoonwardu Mia Jobs and Skills Project (Jina)

The Gwoonwardu Mia Jobs and Skills Project is a partnership between Tourism WA, the WA Museum, Real Futures and TAFE to provide employment and training opportunities at the Gwoonwardu Mia Culture Centre Café. The program will involve 36 Aboriginal participants with the first 12 recently commencing their employment training program.

Build the Dream Initiative (Jina)

The Build the Dream initiative enables Aboriginal young people the opportunity to explore career options in hospitality and tourism through participation in familiarisation tours. This activity is an integral component of the Aboriginal workforce development program delivered through the Jina Plan and aims to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed in the tourism sector. Funded until 2025, the aim of the program is to guide and support these individuals so that their experience and capacity is increased.

Recent programs have included six emergent tour guides participating in the Savannah Guides School at Kununurra and El Questro. Four of these emergent operators interested in dark sky tourism will be attending the FACET dark sky forum and four additional guides will be attending trade ready workshops, family tour of Perth and peel regions and the World Indigenous Tourism Summit.



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

The Aboriginal Business Round of the Local Capability Fund

Department of Jobs,
Tourism, Science and
Innovation.

Ongoing

The Aboriginal Capability Pavilion, AOG Energy 2024

Department of Jobs,
Tourism, Science and
Innovation.

2024

WA Aboriginal Ranger Program

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and
Attractions

Ongoing

Aboriginal Pastoral Program

Department for Primary
Industries and Regional
Development

Ongoing

Aboriginal Governance and Leadership Development Program

Department for Primary
Industries and Regional
Development

Ongoing

Round 6 of the Regional Economic Development Grants

Regional Development
Commissions

2023-2024

Transport Portfolio Meet the Buyer and Supplier Forum 2023

Main Roads WA

2023-2024



Outcome 9:
Aboriginal people
secure appropriate,
affordable housing
that is aligned with
their priorities and
need

National target 9a:

By 2031, increase the proportion of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
people living in appropriately sized (not
overcrowded) housing to 88 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Housing; Homelessness

Lead agency:

Department of Communities

WA's progress against the target

Percentage of people living in appropriately sized housing (2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	79	81
Non-Aboriginal people	96	94

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

A safe, stable, sustainable home is key to a good life and fundamental to human wellbeing. Houses are essential infrastructure and provide a foundation for sustainable communities, connecting people to opportunity through social integration and economic participation. The potential flow-on benefits to other systems such as health, education, justice and employment are enormous.

In line with its commitment to Closing the Gap, the WA Government is focussed on driving reforms to improve housing outcomes that are place-based and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people.

Our Key Actions

Strengthening the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Housing Sector

The Department of Communities is engaging with the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to develop a 10-year strategy that will inform WA Government's implementation of the Closing the Gap Housing Sector Strengthening Plan (HSSP). The strategy will seek to further align WA's policy environment with the HSSP and National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and build capacity and growth in the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Housing Organisation (ACCHO) sector.

The ACCHO strategy will provide high level guidance on HSSP's six key priority areas:

- » workforce;
- » capital infrastructure;
- » service delivery;
- » governance;
- » consistent funding models; and
- » support from a peak body.

Previous page: Kullarri Building Pty Ltd in construction at Fitzroy Crossing

The ACCHO strategy will guide capacity building and growth of the ACCHO sector for the next 10 years, by supporting the establishment of an Aboriginal housing peak body to advocate for Aboriginal housing needs, providing a high-level roadmap to build and grow the sector and providing principles for engaging and consulting with the ACCHO sector.

ACCHO Sector Strengthening Project

The Department of Communities has provided \$150,000 to ShelterWA to facilitate capacity and network-building of the ACCHO sector. ShelterWA is an independent peak body in WA that advocates for social and affordable housing and ending homelessness. The intention is to lay the foundation for establishing WA's first Aboriginal housing peak body and in turn maximise place-based and Aboriginal-led progress towards the Closing the Gap socioeconomic outcome area/target 9a.

WA's Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030

The WA Government will continue to invest in measures to improve housing and homelessness outcomes for Aboriginal people in WA. WA's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030 aligns closely with the HSSP by directly committing to improved Aboriginal wellbeing outcomes that are Aboriginal designed and delivered, place-based and culturally appropriate.

The 2020-2025 Action Plan includes nine priority actions under the Focus Area 'Improving Aboriginal Wellbeing'. These Priority Actions include a range of activities such as:

- » implementing the Department of Communities Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCO) Strategy to increase opportunities for ACCOs to design and deliver infrastructure and services for Aboriginal people; and
- » the establishment of additional Aboriginal Short Stay facilities around the State to support Aboriginal people visiting major regional centres

from regional and remote areas (for personal, medical, judicial or cultural reasons).

Investing in remote Aboriginal housing

The WA Government has committed \$140 million out of the \$350 million Remote Communities Fund towards better housing outcomes in Aboriginal remote communities. This will include \$73 million for up to 89 new builds, \$38.1 million to revitalise up to 230 community-managed houses through refurbishments and \$28.9 million to upgrade up to 105 Aboriginal community-controlled houses.

Boorloo Bidee Mia - transitional crisis accommodation for rough sleepers

Boorloo Bidee Mia is a key initiative of the WA Government's All Paths Lead to a Home: WA's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness. Boorloo Bidee Mia commenced on 5 August 2021, providing the first low barrier homelessness service of its kind. It provides culturally supportive transitional accommodation

for chronic rough sleepers with highly complex needs with a service capacity of up to 70 residents.

Perth based ACCOs, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation and Noongar Mia Mia, were jointly awarded \$10.5 million via a grant to deliver culturally informed responses, tenancy management and lodging support to residents of Boorloo Bidee Mia until 30 June 2024. Since commencement until 18 May 2023, Boorloo Bidee Mia had supported 101 people of which 70 percent identify as Aboriginal.

Expansion of Aboriginal short stay accommodation facilities

The WA Government is committed to increasing the availability of appropriate accommodation and service options for Aboriginal people and families. Aboriginal Short Stay Accommodation facilities are designed to provide safe, culturally appropriate, and affordable short-term accommodation for Aboriginal people who travel to regional centres to access services, or for business, cultural or family reasons.

The WA Government has committed to build two additional Aboriginal Short Stay facilities in regional WA, to be located in Kununurra, in the East Kimberley and Geraldton, in the Mid-West Region. The site for Geraldton has been leased and a build concept design has been developed for Kununurra in consultation with stakeholders. In addition, the WA Government has also committed to providing a further Aboriginal Short Stay facility in Perth and the community and stakeholder consultation phase for this project has commenced.

Following planning, community consultation, design and contractor involvement, construction on the Geraldton Short Stay is scheduled to commence mid-2023 and open to guests in 2025. The Kununurra and Perth Short Stays are still in the planning and design phases, with an official opening date to be determined following the achievement of necessary project milestones, including the finalisation of design concepts and procurement of a head contractor.

The Department of Communities will continue to engage with Aboriginal

people, the community services sector, government agencies and a range of other stakeholders across the state to ensure each new facility is culturally appropriate and responsive to the place it is located and the needs of Aboriginal people it will accommodate.

North West Aboriginal Housing Fund

The North West Aboriginal Housing Fund is a \$200 million initiative supported by Royalties for Regions and the State and Australian Governments aimed at investing in Aboriginal driven solutions to increase the social and economic independence of Aboriginal people across the North-West of WA.

The WA Government has approved the allocation of \$112.4 million of the Fund to deliver seven investments across the Pilbara and Kimberley, including the expansion of the Transitional Housing Program across the East Kimberley and South Hedland, which provides affordable rental with the option to purchase for employed Aboriginal families, enhanced by support services to build social and economic independence and wellbeing.

Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Investing in remote Aboriginal housing	Department of Communities	Commenced 2022
Aboriginal Community-Controlled Housing Organisation (ACCHO) Strategy	Department of Communities	Ongoing
ACCHO Sector Strengthening Project - Development of Aboriginal housing peak body	Department of Communities	Commenced 2022
Boorloo Bidee Mia - Transitional Crisis Accommodation for Rough Sleepers	Department of Communities	Commenced 2021





Outcome 9: Aboriginal people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need

National Target 9b:

By 2031, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households:

- » within discrete Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities receive essential services that meet or exceed the relevant jurisdictional standard.
- » in or near to a town receive essential services that meet or exceed the same standard as applies generally within the town (including if the household might be classified for other purposes as a part of a discrete settlement such as a “town camp” or “town-based reserve”).

Lead Minister:

To be confirmed

Lead agency:

To be confirmed

Supporting agencies:

To be confirmed



As this target was agreed in 2022, nationally there is no Productivity Commission data currently available.

Providing safe and reliable essential services to remote communities is critical to achieving health and social outcomes for Aboriginal people and their communities. Low population densities and vast distances in regional and remote WA communities present some challenges including higher per capita service delivery and maintenance costs. To drive progress towards Target 9b, provision of vital infrastructure to support liveable, safe, sustainable, and healthy communities for Aboriginal people and their communities remains one of WA Government's key infrastructure related priorities.

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Previous page: Ganalili Accommodation and Training Facility, lived experience trainees and apprentices who participated in the co-design workshops which will inform the final service model.

Our Key Actions

Improving power, water and wastewater services in remote Aboriginal communities

The WA Government is committed to improving power and water services and infrastructure in remote Aboriginal communities. From April 2023, the WA Government has transferred responsibility for delivery of power, water and sewerage services to 141 remote Aboriginal communities from the Department of Communities to State-owned utilities: Water Corporation and Horizon Power. The transfer involves a transition to a licensed and regulated framework, as well as a significant upgrade to power, water and sewerage assets over ten years.

The WA Government has committed over \$242 million over the next four years to improve essential services and upgrade of power and water assets. In addition, Water Corporation is currently implementing a \$78 million upgrade program to seven larger Aboriginal communities through the Essential and Municipal Services Upgrade Program funded through Royalties for Regions.

WA Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030

The WA Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030 sets out the strategic direction for waste management and resource recovery in WA. The Strategy contains a vision for WA to become a sustainable, low waste, circular economy in which public health and the environment are protected from the impacts of waste.

The Waste Authority is leading the review of the waste strategy in 2023 with a view to releasing an updated waste strategy in mid-2024. The project will commence with the release of a directions paper that sets out the key areas the Waste Authority proposes to focus on in the review. The Directions Paper recognises that the issues faced by regional and remote communities, including remote Aboriginal communities, are complex and multidimensional. It also acknowledges that many residents in remote communities, particularly remote Aboriginal communities, do not have the infrastructure or support to manage their waste.

The Directions Paper is seeking to identify opportunities for delivering better waste outcomes in regional and remote communities, including Aboriginal communities. It is also seeking to harness and apply the skills and experience of Aboriginal people to an updated waste strategy.

Enhancing household waste services in remote communities

The WA Government is committed to increasing access to waste management infrastructure for remote communities through local governments. It will continue to enhance contaminated site identification and ground water protection efforts and explore options for joint Commonwealth and State funding.

In the 2022-23 State Budget the WA Government announced additional funding to support the Shire of Ngaanyatjaraku to reinstate household waste services. This funding included \$850,000 toward capital expenditure and \$370,000 per annum to support operational costs.

In November 2022, the Department of Communities convened an Ngaanyatjaraku Lands Waste Management workshop including senior representatives from WA government agencies, Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku and Ngaanyatjarra Aboriginal Council. The workshop resulted in the drafting of NG Lands Working towards best practice Waste Management Program 2022–2025.

The main objective of the Waste Management Program 2022-2025 is for local government to assume responsibility for waste management on a pathway to compliance in waste management aligned with the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007. The Department of Communities is the lead agency progressing the program in collaboration with the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

Co-designing the Aboriginal Environmental Health Program

From 2023, the Department of Health will work with service providers, regional agencies and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), including the Aboriginal Health Council WA, to co-design the scope for the future WA Aboriginal Environmental Health Program in alignment with the WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015–2030 and focus on health outcomes. Co-design will include program focus, consideration of future outreach growth and resourcing to support this.

The current program contracts regional service providers that include eight Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services, seven ACCOs and three Local Government Authorities to deliver services to remote Aboriginal communities. This service model supports a program delivered by culturally competent regional practitioners: the program's employed practitioner rate shows that more than 70 percent of practitioners are Aboriginal people.



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

Co-designing the Aboriginal Environmental Health Program

Department of Health

Commenced 2023

WA Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030

Department of Water and
Environmental Regulation

2022-2025





Outcome 10:
Aboriginal people are
not overrepresented
in the criminal justice
system

National target:
By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander adults held in
incarceration by at least 15 percent.

Lead Minister:
Attorney General;
Minister for Corrective Services

Lead agency:
Department of Justice

Supporting agencies:
Department of Communities;
WA Police Force;
Mental Health Commission

WA's progress against the target

Imprisonment rate per 100,000 of the adult population (2022)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	3,214	2,151
Non-Aboriginal people	193	151

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Previous page: Narlijia Experiences, Broome. Photo credit TourismWA

Aboriginal people experience contact with the criminal justice system as both offenders and victims at much higher rates than non-Aboriginal people. Imprisonment compounds existing social and economic disadvantage and affects family, children, and the broader community with intergenerational effects. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody found that the higher rates of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is directly linked to the “disadvantaged and unequal position in which Aboriginal people find themselves in the society—socially, economically and culturally” (Commissioner Elliott Johnston, 1991).

To reduce the rate of incarceration of Aboriginal people, the WA Government is committed to strategies that address both the issues within the criminal justice system and the underlying factors that contribute to the disadvantage faced by many Aboriginal people.

Our Key Actions

Improving access to culturally safe legal assistance for Aboriginal people

In 2022, the WA Government launched the Legal Assistance Action Plan 2022-2025, outlining how it will support the legal assistance sector to improve access to justice services for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

The Department of Justice will embed Priority Reform Two and Three of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in its approach to implementing the Legal Assistance Action Plan in the following ways.

Department of Justice will work with the legal assistance sector to ensure that Aboriginal people have access to culturally safe services and that, wherever possible, they have the option to choose to receive services from an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation (ACCO). These actions are intended to ensure that Aboriginal



people in WA have access to culturally safe, trauma informed, client-centred and timely legal assistance to address or prevent legal problems, including in relation to criminal law matters.

The Department of Justice will also develop a Legal Assistance Services Commissioning Strategy and Implementation Plan in alignment with the State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services 2022. The Legal Assistance Services Commissioning Strategy is expected to, among other things, prioritise ACCOs' key role in providing appropriate legal assistance services to Aboriginal people, children and families, including in relation to criminal law matters.

A Workforce Planning and Development Strategy and Implementation Plan will be developed and will include strategies to grow the Aboriginal workforce in both ACCO and non-ACCO legal assistance service providers generally; and the delivery of legal assistance to Aboriginal people, in relation to priority areas of law identified in the Legal Assistance Strategy, including criminal law matters.

Supporting ACCOs to provide legal assistance to Aboriginal people

The Department of Justice will continue to provide funding to ACCOs that provide, among other things, legal assistance to Aboriginal people. Currently funded ACCOs include:

- » Aboriginal Legal Service of WA (ALSWA);
- » Aboriginal Family Legal Services (AFLS);
- » Southern Aboriginal Corporation (SAC); and
- » Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre (MWRC).

AFLS, SAC and MWRC provide legal assistance to people who have experienced family violence and sexual assault, including women in prison. While these ACCOs do not provide criminal law assistance, their holistic service model approach contributes to reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

Bail Support Service and Prison In-Reach Legal Services

The Department of Justice has provided approximately \$3.3 million over two years from 2023-24 to the ALSWA to deliver the Bail Support Service and Prison In-Reach Legal Service in Perth, and the Bail Support Service in Broome for a further two years until 30 June 2025. The additional funding will enable the evaluation of the Reducing Avoidable Remand project, which incorporates the above services, to be completed. The Reducing Avoidable Remand project aims to reduce the volume and length of stay of those remanded in prison.

Custody Notification Service

In 2022-2023, \$1.6 million has been committed to ALSWA to deliver the Custody Notification Service (CNS) in WA; a phone service operating 24 hours per day, seven days per week for Aboriginal people who are detained by WA Police Force in a police facility. The main objectives of the CNS are to prevent or reduce Aboriginal deaths in police custody, prevent or reduce harm suffered by Aboriginal people in police

custody, and protect the legal rights of Aboriginal people in police custody.

The CNS undertakes a culturally appropriate welfare check, provides appropriate early fundamental legal advice and refers Aboriginal people to the appropriate services to address ongoing welfare and legal needs. The funding will continue for a further 12 months.

Training and employment pathways for Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system

The Carey Bindjareb Project is a collaboration between Carey Training Pty Ltd and the Department of Justice. The project provides Aboriginal men currently engaged in the criminal justice system with industry training in a supportive environment that steers them to employment in the mining, construction and associated industries. The project leads men to positive and sustainable changes for their life and positively impacts their families.

Participants in the Carey Bindjareb Project receive culturally appropriate training and mentoring and earn a Certificate II in Civil Construction; First Aid Certificate; Forklift High Risk Licence; and Working at Heights and Working in Confined Spaces qualification.

Support for culturally safe dispute resolution

The Aboriginal Mediation Service provides culturally secure, intensive case management and mediation to disputing parties in Aboriginal communities. This is a free service that aims to assist and work alongside Aboriginal individuals, groups and communities in a culturally safe manner to resolve conflicts before they escalate.

The Aboriginal Mediation Service is an ongoing initiative. For 2022-23, the WA Government has committed \$429,272 for the Aboriginal Mediation Service, including funding for travel to regional locations to facilitate mediations.

Assistance for Mentally Impaired Accused

To reduce incarceration rates and the overrepresentation of adults and children in the criminal justice system, the Department of Justice will continue to fund ALSWA to assist mentally impaired accused who come into contact with the criminal justice system through the new Criminal Law (Mentally Impairment) Act 2023 (the Act). This new legislation was passed by Parliament in March 2023 and extensively reformed the Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996.

Around \$6.70 million was approved in the 2023-24 Budget for impacted Government agencies to continue planning for the implementation of the legislative reforms and undertake preparation activities in 2023-24.

The reforms and the funding will improve the scope for mentally impaired accused to supported in a more holistic and therapeutic manner, which in turn will reduce the risk of mentally impaired Aboriginal people being imprisoned.

Aboriginal leadership programs

The Department of Justice has partnered with the WA Aboriginal Leadership Institute to deliver the Aboriginal Women's Prevention Early Intervention Leadership Program under a grant agreement at the Melaleuca and Bandyup Women's Prison Estates. The Department of Justice has provided \$ 71,500 in 2023 to support this partnership.

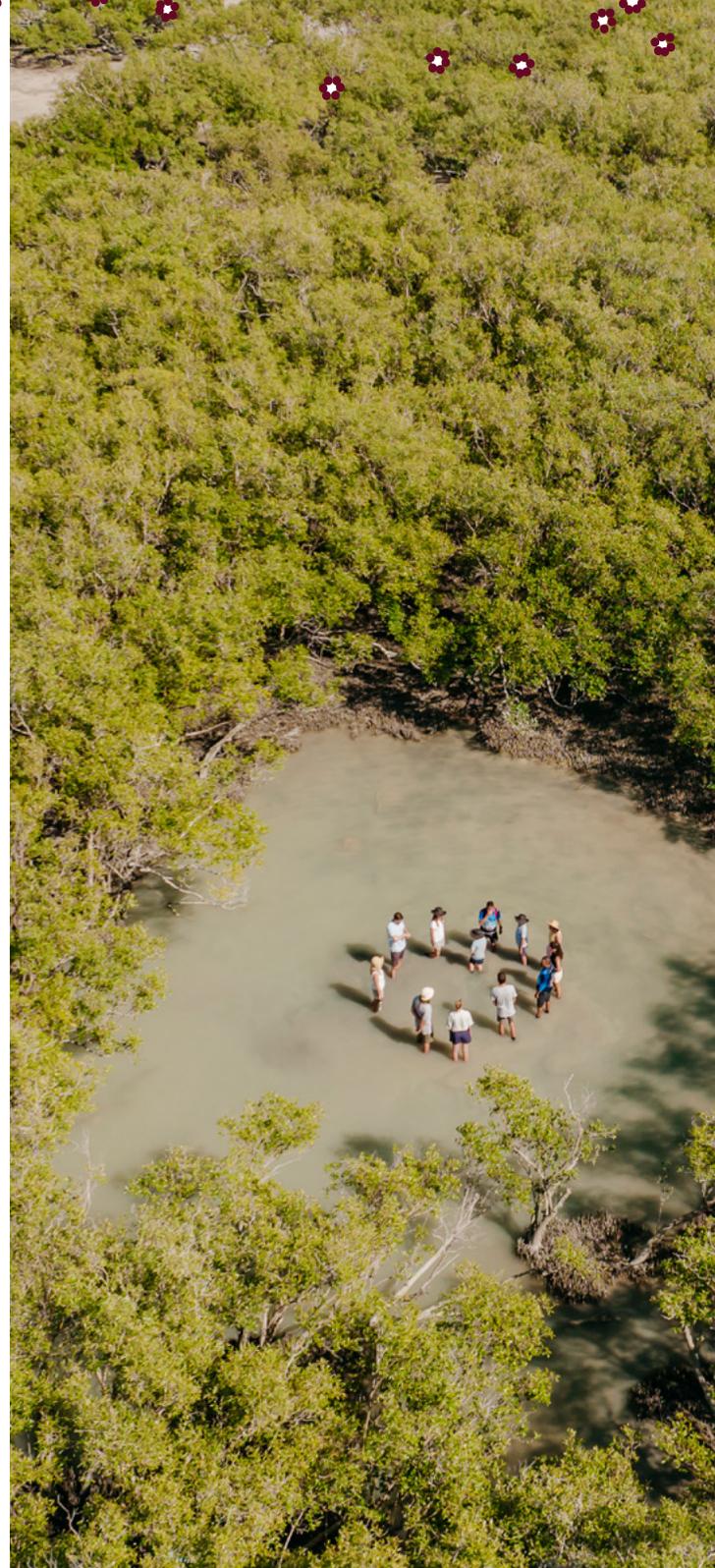
This innovative Aboriginal cultural leadership initiative aims to build on and develop the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal women in custody through:

- » Access to a culturally endorsed leadership program and its activities.
- » Increased opportunities for Aboriginal women to connect to culture, self-care, financial management, therapeutic art, and PRINT personality profiling or other WAALI preferred profiling tool.
- » Facilitating meaningful and positive inter-cultural interactions.

- » Increased cultural transitional support to maximise their opportunities to achieve personal goals and improve life outcomes.
- » Development of self-leadership to improve current and post release outcomes such as prison to work programs for Aboriginal women and their families.

The Yiwarra Kuju - Western Desert Justice Program

The Department of Justice has provided \$2.52 million over three years from 2021-22 to Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa to improve criminal justice system outcomes for the Martu people of the Western Desert through the provision of on-country mentoring, drug and alcohol services, and therapeutic diversionary programs. The Program is delivered through a suite of end-to-end cultural prevention, diversion and intervention programs.



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

The Carey Bindjareb Project

Department of Justice

Ongoing

Legal Assistance Action Plan 2022-2025

Department of Justice

2022-2025

Bail Support Service and Prison In-Reach Legal Services

Department of Justice

2023-2025

Custody Notification Service

Department of Justice

Ongoing

Aboriginal Mediation Service

Department of Justice

Ongoing

The Yiwarra Kuju - Western Desert Justice Program

Department of Justice

2021-2024





Outcome 11:
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait young people are
not overrepresented
in the criminal justice
system

National target:

By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by 30 percent.

Lead Minister:

Attorney General;
Minister for Corrective Services

Lead agency:

Department of Justice

Supporting agencies:

Department of Communities;
WA Police Force;
Department of Education;
Mental Health Commission

WA's progress against the target

Young people in detention per 10,000 young people (2021-22)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal young people	45	28
Non-Aboriginal young people	1	1

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Ensuring Aboriginal young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system is essential to improving wellbeing and facilitating positive outcomes later in life, and to assist in ensuring they have the same opportunities to thrive as non-Aboriginal young Western Australians.

The WA Government is committed to diverting young Aboriginal people away from the criminal justice system, to providing culturally secure legal assistance to young people involved in the criminal justice system and to reducing the risk of reoffending among young people through the delivery of culturally appropriate programs and services to young people on bail and on orders in the community and in custody.

Our Key Actions

WA Police Force's Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCO) Strategy 2022-2032

WA Police Force's ACCO Strategy 2022-2032 ensures that services will be designed by the WA Police Force

in partnership with local Aboriginal Communities.

The Strategy has three main principles:

- » Cultural Safety and Governance – all services for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities are grounded in Aboriginal knowledge and culture.
- » Relationships – building genuine relationships and partnerships with ACCOs to deliver strong accountability and implement culturally responsive ways of working.
- » Economic Opportunities – ACCOs are supported via economic and socio-economic opportunities to deliver community services.

The ACCO Strategy was applied to the 2022-23 allocation of the Police Community Services Fund in the following ways:

- » Requests for a community service are through engagement with WA Police Force stations and their local Aboriginal community.
- » The Aboriginal community are engaged in conversations regarding the appropriate organisation to deliver a service, including seeking

Previous page: Southern Cross Cultural Tour, Dampier Peninsula. Photo credit TourismWA

the permission of Elders or Traditional Owners, when culturally appropriate.

- » Half of the required community services, in both regional and metropolitan WA, are being delivered through funding agreements with local ACCOs.
- » On some occasions, ACCOs are not available or interested in the delivery of a community service. When this occurs, to ensure cultural responsiveness and safety, a requirement to partner with an ACCO or Aboriginal business is built into the funding agreement.

The continued adoption of these processes, coupled with capacity building support for ACCOs will ensure future funds are allocated at the local level for ACCO-led service delivery.

Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy

The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy (KJJS), led by the Department of Justice, forms part of the WA Government's Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing. The KJJS funds a suite of community-led place-based initiatives that engage young people in culturally safe and culturally appropriate activities

to steer them away from the criminal justice system. KJJS supports ACCOs, local government and other agencies in delivering these initiatives.

As part of the 2023-24 State Budget, funding was allocated to enable existing culturally safe night patrols, a youth engagement program, cultural camps, an alternative learning program and a suite of structured and unstructured activities to continue to be delivered for a further two years.

The Department of Justice is the lead agency for the KJJS. Since its inception, a total of \$26.7 million has been allocated to the KJJS across 2019-20 to 2024-25.

This includes a total \$6.6 million allocated to the Department of Training and Workforce Development to deliver North Regional TAFE's Young and Deadly alternative education program. Where possible, KJJS initiatives will continue to be implemented in partnership with ACCOs to develop integrated solutions where local Aboriginal community members are employed to engage at-risk young people.

The KJJS Collaborative Design Project

The KJJS Collaborative Design Project (KJJS-Collab Project) is a partnership of Aboriginal community representatives, the Shire of Broome and WA Government Agencies including the Departments of Justice, Communities, Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, the Mental Health Commission and WA Police Force. Community representatives are supported by West Kimberley-Empowered Communities, (EC-West), as the backbone organisation.

The Department of Justice's partnership with EC-West provides specialist knowledge of Aboriginal cultures and relevant expertise, including working with children and young people. The first phase of the KJJS-Collab Project resulted in the co-design of safe space options in Broome. The next phase of the KJJS-Collab Project will establish a pilot of an Aboriginal-led safe space in Broome (2023-24 to 2024-25) known as the Immediate Response Safe Space.

The KJJS-Collab Project aims to contribute to driving progress towards



Outcome 11 by providing a culturally secure and trauma-informed space, led by an ACCO, that ensures street-present young people have their immediate needs met, before working with the young person and their family to provide a range of supports. This holistic approach seeks to ensure immediate safety and support, followed by fostering a partnership with the young person and their family to address the drivers that may contribute to the young person’s risk of engaging in criminal and anti-social behaviours.

Investing in early intervention, prevention and diversionary approaches

Youth Engagement Program

The Department of Justice will continue to fund ALSWA to deliver the Youth Engagement Program (YEP) in 2023-24 through to 2024-25. The YEP provides flexible, holistic, culturally secure and individualised case management to clients to assist them to comply with the requirements of their bail and court orders.

YEP Diversion Officers can assist young people who are appearing in the Perth Children’s Court and in Broome and Derby Children’s Courts by providing support and referrals to enable young people to comply with bail and court orders and improve their wellbeing. The types of assistance include:

- » supports and referrals in relation to accommodation;
- » education/training enrollments and attendance;
- » substance abuse;
- » health;
- » family issues;
- » life administration support (e.g. Centrelink, identification, bank accounts, resumes);
- » transport and access to recreational activities; and
- » support for police and youth justice-related obligations.

Throughout their participation in the program, young people spend significant time with their diversion officer while traveling to appointments and undertaking activities. This provides an effective opportunity for the clients to receive ongoing mentoring about their life choices and circumstances.

Between 1 July - 31 December 2022, YEP-Metro accepted 21 clients and YEP-West Kimberley accepted eight clients. The Australian Government’s National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has committed funding to expand ALSWA’s YEP to the East Kimberley (Kununurra) for two years. The funding was received in November 2022 and the YEP-East Kimberley commenced operations in March 2023.

It is anticipated that NIAA will fund a further expansion of YEP-East Kimberley to Halls Creek during 2023, in lieu of a previous proposal to expand the service to the Pilbara (South Hedland).

Supporting vulnerable Aboriginal children and young people in contact with the justice system

Therapeutic Court Pilot for Protection and Care Matters, Children's Court of WA

The Department of Justice has provided \$477,188 in 2023-24 to ALSWA to deliver culturally secure legal representation to Aboriginal children, parents and families





appearing in the Children’s Court. The Therapeutic Court Pilot commenced in July 2020 and involves a separate list of cases in the Protection and Care jurisdiction in the Perth Children’s Court, focusing on families in need. It aims to address the issues that cause families to come before the court in a holistic, therapeutic and culturally informed manner.

The Therapeutic Court Pilot has implemented a team approach, including valuing the birth parents and promoting parent and family engagement. The Therapeutic Court Pilot lists appointments where the Magistrate focuses on encouraging the parents to speak, ask questions and share their concerns, primarily about the relationships that the system is asking them to form in the protection and care process. These appointments include the parents, the family, their support system, social workers, Department of Communities’ personnel, and lawyers.

The connection between the involvement of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care and involvement in the criminal justice system is well established and ensuring that Aboriginal children

remain out of care will likely have a flow on positive impact in terms of their involvement in the criminal justice system. The Therapeutic Court Pilot will be subject to an evaluation post 2023-24.

Child and Adolescent Forensic Service

Children involved in the justice system often have complex co-occurring needs related to mental health, neurodevelopmental issues, trauma, family and social issues and a significant proportion of those in custody at Banksia Hill Detention Centre (BHDC) are Aboriginal young people.

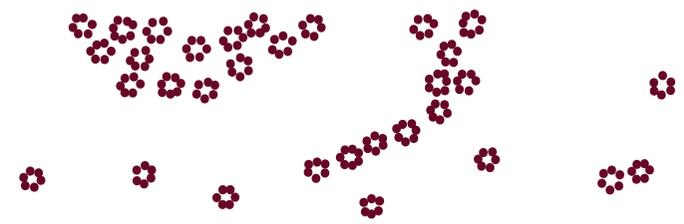
In 2021, the WA Government committed \$12.2 million over four years to establish the Child and Adolescent Forensic Service (CAFS). A further \$9.8 million was committed in 2023 to increase specialist multidisciplinary mental health services to BHDC.

CAFS provides specialist mental health support for children and young people who are at risk of or are currently in contact with the justice system. The purpose of CAFS is to improve the

mental health and social outcomes for these children and young people. There are three key service elements:

- » consultation liaison services;
- » a multidisciplinary mental health team to be co-located at BHDC, and
- » transition services for children and young people leaving detention.

The Department of Education continues to work with the Department of Justice to support students moving between youth justice services and schools. This includes sharing information with the schools in which students are enrolled to provide continuity for their education and care needs. A team of Youth Transition Consultants supports students exiting BHDC into an appropriate education option. This is enacted through a Memorandum of Understanding.



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

Therapeutic Court Pilot for Care & Protection matters, Children’s Court of WA	Department of Justice	2020-2024
The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy Collaborative Design Project	Department of Justice	2020-2025
WA Police Force’s ACCO Strategy 2022-2032	WA Police Force	2022-2023





Outcome 12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system

National target:

By 2031, reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0-17 years old) in out-of-home care by 45 percent.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Child Protection

Lead agency:

Department of Communities

Supporting agencies:

Department of Justice;
WA Police Force;
Mental Health Commission



WA's progress against the target

Children aged 0-17 years in out-of-home care, rate per 1,000 children (2022)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal children	62	57
Non-Aboriginal children	3	5

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

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 Previous page: Students at Yandeyarra Remote Community School, participating in the Awesome Arts Creative Challenge Wonder program in 2022, supported by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.

A whole-of-government approach, in partnership with Aboriginal families, communities and their organisations, is critical to addressing the key drivers that contribute to children coming into contact with the child protection system. The WA Government acknowledges that the proportion of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care will only be reduced through culturally safe approaches to reducing family and domestic violence, alcohol and other substance abuse, improving social and emotional wellbeing of parents and caregivers, and addressing homelessness.

The WA Government is committed to ensuring every effort is made to support Aboriginal families to keep their children safe, and bringing children into care is an option of last resort. When this is necessary, agencies work with the parents and their network to increase safety for the children so reunification with their parents can occur.

Our Key Actions

Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031

Safe and Supported 2021-2031 sets out a 10-year framework to improve the lives of children, young people and families experiencing disadvantage or who are vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Safe and Supported will drive change through collective effort across governments and sectors that impact the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Safe and Supported 2021-2031 will be delivered by two Action Plans (each five years in scope). For the first time, Aboriginal people have their own specific Action Plan across all aspects of the Framework. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan has been developed in partnership with Aboriginal leaders and communities. The WA Government endorsed the Action Plans and is committed to working with other jurisdictions on activities and deliverables over the next 12 months.



10 Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Care

The Department of Communities has established a formal partnership with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC) to develop the 10-Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Care (the Roadmap). It is intended that the Roadmap will act as WA Government's response to target 12 of the National Agreement and respond to actions and deliverables under Safe and Supported: 2021-31. The Roadmap will be a critical driver of change aimed at keeping Aboriginal children safe and well with their families and will build on the success of recent reform initiatives and pilots currently underway.

Listening to the voices of Aboriginal families and communities has been central to the Roadmap's development. From October 2022 through to early 2023, SNAICC undertook regional, culturally safe consultation sessions co-facilitated with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) with knowledge of the diverse WA Aboriginal community, child protection history, policy, and practice to co-facilitate.

In March 2023, SNAICC hosted a two-day forum which brought together Aboriginal leaders and representatives from across WA and senior government representatives where they shared the stories and input from the regional consultations. The Aboriginal representatives at the forum developed a set of overarching recommendations, based on the four Family Matters Building Blocks:

- » **Building Block One** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families enjoy access to quality, culturally safe universal and targeted services necessary for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to thrive.
- » **Building Block Two** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations participate in and have control over decisions that affect their children (self-determination).
- » **Building Block Three** – Law, policy and practice in child and family welfare are culturally safe and responsive.
- » **Building Block Four** – Governments and services are accountable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

SNAICC is expected to deliver the Roadmap and First Action Plan by the end of 2023 for consideration by the WA Government.

Building Safe and Strong Families

The Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy (EIFS Strategy) seeks to provide culturally responsive, earlier, targeted intervention, which delivers intensive, effective, coordinated services to at-risk Aboriginal families, working towards reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal families that come into contact with the child protection system.

Since commencing in 2018, the EIFS Strategy has contributed to the largest reduction of children in care for the last two decades and significant progress has been achieved since WA's first Implementation Plan was released in September 2021. During the 12 months to 30 June 2022, the number of children in care statewide dropped by 251, representing a reduction of 4.7 percent. Over the same period, there was a 3.3 percent drop in the number of Aboriginal children in care, marking a decrease of 101 children.





This reduction has largely been attributed to the WA Government's investment in earlier intervention and family support services including the following services delivered under the EIFS strategy:

- » The Aboriginal In-Home Support Service and Intensive Family Support Services, which are culturally responsive programs, designed to assist Aboriginal families where children are at imminent risk of entering care, and support reunification processes.
- » Family Support Networks, which are delivered in partnership with ACCOs, providing a common entry point to services, and deliver earlier targeted support to families experiencing complex issues and those most vulnerable to involvement with the child protection system.

In January 2022, the Aboriginal In-Home Support Service expanded to the Peel region. In July 2022, Intensive Family Support Service expanded into Halls Creek in the East Kimberley region. As at December 2022, 86 percent of children referred to the Aboriginal In-Home Support Service and 85 percent referred to Intensive Family Support Services

across WA remained at home with parents after 12 months. The WA Government will continue to implement measures that facilitate reduction of Aboriginal families that come into contact with the child protection system.

Earlier Intervention and Family Support Services

Earlier Intervention and Family Support (EIFS) have undertaken a one-year extension of contracts in the Intensive Family Support Service. The extension includes provision for the lead agency to review the partnership with an ACCO in accordance with the strong partnership elements outlined in the National Agreement. The intent of this work is to strengthen existing partnerships and foreshadow the requirement for further strengthening of partnerships in the re-commissioning phase.

All EIFS services will be recommissioned in 2023 with new service contracts in place by 1 July 2024. All recommissioning will support local placed based partners and will be aligned to the Department of Communities ACCO Strategy and National Agreement partnership principles.

A regional service model is being developed in consultation with Aboriginal community and stakeholders. EIFS have launched a new regional service model in the South-West region. A key aspect of the grant is the strengthening of ACCO partnerships in alignment with Communities' ACCO Strategy.

Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making

Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making (AFLDM) is a way of working that empowers Aboriginal families to make decisions that address the safety needs of their children in a culturally safe way, promoting self-determination in child protection proceedings. Under AFLDM, Aboriginal convenors facilitate a process that supports Aboriginal families to make decisions on how best to keep their children safe and connected with their community.

The AFLDM model was designed by Aboriginal community representatives. In February 2021 an external AFLDM Implementation Group was established to guide and make decisions on the

service model, the pilot locations and target cohorts which includes:

- » Aboriginal families engaged in pre-birth planning.
- » Aboriginal families engaged in Intensive Family Support work with Communities.
- » Aboriginal families with one or more children in care.

A Steering Committee for AFLDM was subsequently established 12 months following implementation. Representation on the Steering Committee includes five Aboriginal community members, who were involved with the AFLDM Implementation Group, and three additional Aboriginal community representatives from the Midwest and Mirrabooka regions.

The AFLDM pilot commenced in October 2021 in two WA locations. Wungening Aboriginal Corporation is delivering the program in the Mirrabooka region and Street Work Aboriginal Corporation is delivering the program in the Midwest Gascoyne region. In September 2022 the WA Government announced an additional \$1.2 million dollars to extend the pilot until 30 June 2024.

Early findings from an evaluation of the two pilot sites show positive program outcomes for families including implementation of family plans, reunification, mitigation of children going into care and increased contact between parents and children in out of home care. There is strong collaboration between the districts and the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

The pilot evaluation is highlighting the efforts of Communities and ACCOs working together in a place-based partnership, responding to the local needs of families involved with the child protection system.

Aboriginal Representative Organisations

In October 2021, the State Parliament passed the *Children and Community Services Amendment Act 2021* which includes a range of amendments to increase the involvement of Aboriginal people in decision-making processes concerning Aboriginal children in care and to prioritise connections to family, community, culture and Country.

Included among these are provisions which require Aboriginal Representative Organisations (AROs) to be:

- » consulted before a placement arrangement is made for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care; and
- » provided with the opportunity to participate in the preparation and review of cultural support plans for an Aboriginal child.

These amendments are intended to strengthen the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and help Aboriginal children in care maintain close connection to family, culture, and Country, which is fundamental to supporting reunification efforts and achieving sustainable whole-of-life outcomes.

To prepare for the new legislative requirements, Communities is implementing a staged approach to operationalising AROs and a specialised service model across WA.

The first stage is a 12-month pilot in Armadale and the Kimberley



region, which the State Government committed \$1.3 million to support its implementation. The ARO pilot commenced in November 2022 and is being delivered by two local ACCOs: Yorganop Association and Aarnja Ltd. Through the pilot, the organisations deliver a specialised service that provides local cultural advice and consultation to the Department of Communities to inform the placement of Aboriginal children in care and their cultural support plans.

The second stage is the transition from Pilot to state wide rollout, which will commence following the conclusion of the Pilot in October 2023. This transition stage will include a significant amount of work to prepare the Department of Communities and the ACCO sector and build readiness across the State. The State Government has committed a further \$1.3 million to extend the Pilot ARO service delivery model for an additional 12 months in the pilot locations to ensure continuity of service for Aboriginal children and families while this work occurs.

Improving outcomes for Aboriginal young people leaving care

Expansion of Home Stretch WA

Historically, young people have transitioned out of care at the age of 18 years, much younger than people outside the care system typically leave their parental home and family support network.

Home Stretch WA provides young people leaving out of home care with the option to continue to receive support up until the age of 21. The program is voluntary and aims to support young people leaving care to successfully transition to independence. The WA Government is delivering on a \$37.2 million election commitment to expand Home Stretch WA into a permanent, state-wide program.

Home Stretch WA is being rolled out across the State in a staged approach during 2023. The service will be delivered by both ACCOs and other community service organisations. The expansion of Home Stretch will offer young people

transitioning from out of home care enhanced access to the supports and services they need to reach their full potential.

A Registration of Interest process that targets ACCOs is being used to engage ACCOs to deliver Home Stretch WA across the state via a staged interim service. The Department of Communities is continuing to work in partnership with the commissioned ACCOs to integrate the program into the local community context and ensure a smooth transition for young people who wish to be supported through the Home Stretch WA service.

The Department of Communities has formed a two-year partnership with Yorganop Association Inc. to deliver the first Home Stretch WA service to support young Aboriginal people preparing to leave care in the metropolitan area.

In June 2023, the WA Government announced six ACCOs appointed to deliver Home Stretch WA services across the Kimberley and Pilbara regions. The following ACCOs that have been appointed:



- » MG Corporation (Kimberley region - Kununurra and Wyndham);
- » Jungarni Jutiya (Kimberley region - Halls Creek);
- » Broome Youth & Families Hub (Kimberley region - Broome and Derby);
- » Marra Worra Worra (Kimberley region - Fitzroy Crossing)
- » Bloodwood Tree Association (Pilbara region - Port Hedland, Marble Bar, Warralong, Yandeyarra and Newman); and
- » Robe River Kuruma (Pilbara region - Karratha, Roebourne and Wickham).

Appointing these ACCOs to deliver Home Stretch WA across regional northern WA will allow place-based localised services to be delivered to young people in the regions leaving care.

Enhancing Leaving Care WA in the regions

The Leaving Care WA model is being reviewed and reformed to ensure it is delivered in accordance with the Department of Communities ACCO strategy and the WA Aboriginal Procurement Policy.

A Leaving Care Kimberley Pilot (the Pilot) is currently underway in Broome and Kununurra. The Pilot is funded internally through the Department of Communities and was developed in response to regional need to provide enhanced supports to young care leavers aged 15-17 years, of whom 100 percent are Aboriginal young people. The Pilot is supporting an ACCO led service model for children aged 15 to 17 years preparing to leave care.

To strengthen the responses for unsupervised children and young people coming into the Northbridge precinct, the Department of Communities, in partnership with WA Police Force, Mission Australia and Nyoongar Outreach Services, are trialing an interim strategy to increase the capacity of the service providers and enhance the service model (Home Safe). Nyoongar Outreach Services is being supported in this interagency collaboration to provide additional support through family and young person case management approach.

Commissioning of services

The Department of Communities is currently developing an ACCO Commissioning Framework with input from the ACCO sector. The ACCO Commissioning Framework will support sustainable economic and socio-economic development opportunities for ACCOs across WA and ensure that ACCOs commissioned under the Framework will provide solutions that are locally informed, place based and culturally appropriate.

The ACCO Commissioning Framework is anticipated to be released in 2024. The Framework will apply to future services being commissioned by Communities under the Delivering Community Services in Partnership Policy.

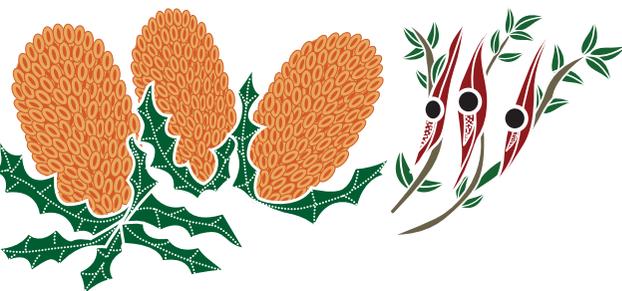
Department of Communities' ACCO Sector Building Grants Program

In March 2023, the Department of Communities released the ACCO Sector Building Grants Program to support, strengthen and empower prospective Aboriginal Representative Organisations (ARO) to carry out functions in child protection legislation and compete in future tender processes to implement AROs state-wide.

The activities funded through this grants program may also support ACCOs to build capacity and be competitive in other child protection procurement processes underway, including EIFS service delivery and independent reporting for Special Guardianship Orders.

This grant program has a total funding allocation of \$750,000 (ex GST) (provided by the Department of Finance) with a maximum of award of \$50,000 (ex GST) to individual ACCOs for a term of one year to June 2024. An evaluation of the ACCO Sector Building Grants Program is currently in progress.

The commissioning of the EIFS providers and the ACCO Sector Building Grants Program align with several key actions under the Early Childhood Care and Development Sector Strengthening Plan. This includes actions under the 'family support and child protection workforce development' and 'child protection and family support service delivery' categories.



Summary

Key Actions

**Building Safe and Strong Families: Earlier Intervention and Family Support Strategy
10 Year Roadmap to Reduce the Number of Aboriginal Children in Care**

Agency Responsible

Department of Communities
Department of Communities

Timeframes

Ongoing
TBD



Outcome 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe

National target:

A significant and sustained reduction in violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children towards zero

Lead Minister:

Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence

Lead agency:

Department of Communities

Supporting agencies:

Department of Justice;
WA Police Force;
Mental Health Commission

WA's progress against the target

Women experiencing physical harm in the last twelve months, as a percentage (2019)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal females (15+)	9	8

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

The WA Government recognises that family violence is a complex and intersectional issue with disproportionate health, economic and social impacts on Aboriginal families and communities. Improvements in Aboriginal family safety will be achieved through coordinated effort across government in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, addressing the unique drivers of family violence for Aboriginal people and prioritising Aboriginal led and owned responses that are culturally informed and secure.

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Previous page: Danika Farmer, one of the first participants to purchase her own home through Robe River Kuruma's In-situ Housing Pathways Support Program, Karratha

Our Key Actions

Progress on Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence

Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030 (Path to Safety) is a key WA Government initiative originally outlined in WA's first Closing the Gap Implementation Plan. The WA Government has made significant progress on the Path to Safety since 2021.

A key priority action of Path to Safety includes working with Aboriginal people and communities to co-design and implement a dedicated Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy (AFSS). The AFSS, released by the WA Government in December 2022, is a key action for addressing Outcome 13 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The AFSS sets the vision that Aboriginal families and communities in WA are safe, strong, and happy, enabling future generations to thrive. The Strategy was designed in partnership with WA's Aboriginal community,

Aboriginal stakeholders, and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). Over 1,000 people contributed to developing the AFSS.

Alignment with the implementation principles outlined in the AFSS remains a priority, including ensuring that actions are Aboriginal-led, designed in partnership, place-based, responsive to different groups and people and that they reflect new and better ways of working. The principles of the AFSS are already guiding existing projects that the WA Government is leading, including the service design for the Broome Family and Domestic Violence Hub (outlined below), the redesign of the Family and Domestic Violence Response Team model (which focuses on timely and early intervention, following police call outs to family violence incidents) and boosts to primary prevention initiatives.

Led by the priorities of community, the WA Government will continue to seek opportunities to support initiatives that contribute to the vision of the AFSS. Progress on implementation will be updated on the WA Government website.

Department of Justice Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy

The Department of Justice is developing a Justice Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy (Justice AFSS). The development of the Justice AFSS is a commitment under the First Action Plan 2020-2022 of the Path to Safety.

To inform the development of the Justice AFSS, the Department of Justice has established the Justice AFSS Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) comprising family violence experts from the Aboriginal community-controlled and legal assistance sectors, senior Aboriginal community members, Department of Justice staff and representatives from the Department of Communities and WA Police Force.

The SRG provides senior Aboriginal cultural and family violence specialist advice and is co-chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Family Legal Service and the Department of Justice's Assistant Director of Aboriginal Inclusion.

In addition to internal Departmental resources, \$82,300 has been provided to support the development of the Justice AFSS. This funding has supported:

- » a Senior Policy Officer being released from the Aboriginal Family Legal Service (an ACCO) to work at the Department to assist with the development of the Justice AFSS
- » remuneration for Aboriginal community members on the SRG, and
- » engagement of a specialist Aboriginal consultant.

Culturally appropriate programs

The design and delivery of culturally appropriate programs and actions to prevent and reduce family and domestic violence and better meet the needs of Aboriginal people remains a priority.

Two programs aimed at tackling family violence in the Kimberley have been extended for a further four years from 2023. The Derby Family Violence Service responds to family violence in Derby and the Mowanjum Aboriginal Community, and the Change Em Ways Kimberley Project, an Aboriginal men's behaviour change program, continues to operate in

the remote communities of Bidyadanga, Fitzroy Crossing and Kununurra.

These programs trial new ways of working with Aboriginal communities with a focus on helping perpetrators to change their behaviour. Every community is different and that is why it is important that strategies to reduce family violence include responses tailored to specific regions and remote locations.

Rapid rehousing for Aboriginal women and children leaving refuge

Following the successful establishment of a two-year pilot to assist women and children escaping family and domestic violence secure their own home, a dedicated initiative for Aboriginal women is being progressed. The initiative will assist with providing safe and stable housing to victim survivors of family and domestic violence, upon exit from women's refuges or safe houses. In addition, an approach for partnering with ACCOs to deliver this initiative is currently being considered.

Family and Domestic Violence Hubs

In February 2023, Hope Community Services was awarded a contract to run the Armadale Family and Domestic Violence Hub in partnership with Yorgum Healing Services Aboriginal Corporation. The \$14.7 million election commitment builds on the success of similar projects in Mirrabooka (Naala Djookan) and Kalgoorlie (Mara Pirni Healing Place). The Armadale hub will offer a range of specialist family and domestic violence and other community services in one location, making it easier for victim-survivors and those affected by family violence to access help.

Work is also underway to establish a fourth family and domestic violence hub in Broome to further support and promote Aboriginal family safety. The WA Government has committed \$16.3 million to this hub in the 2023-24 State Budget, which will provide a range of specialist family and domestic violence resources and other community services in one location. This will make it easier for victim-survivors to access and reduce the trauma of them needing to retell and relive their experiences each time they access a different service. The Broome hub will also provide specialist support and outreach services to Derby and Bidyadanga.



Summary

Key Actions

Agency Responsible

Timeframes

Implementation of the Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy

Department of Communities

2022-2032

Development of the Justice Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy

Department of Justice

Ongoing

Rapid Rehousing

Department of Communities

Time limited

Family and Domestic Violence Hubs

Department of Communities

Time limited



Outcome 14:
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people
enjoy high levels of
social and emotional
wellbeing

National target:

Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Mental Health

Lead agency:

Mental Health Commission

Supporting agencies:

Department of Communities;
Department of Health

WA's progress against the target

Rate of suicide deaths (5-year aggregate) per 100,000 of the population (2017-2021)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	35	26
Non-Aboriginal people	13	12

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

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Previous page: Wiluna student participating in Awesome Arts Challenge Wonder program 2023. Supported by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.



Supporting Aboriginal people in WA to experience high levels of social and emotional wellbeing will help build community resilience and empower Aboriginal people and organisations to take a leadership role in developing social and emotional wellbeing programs and interventions for their communities.

Our Key Actions

Commonwealth-Western Australia Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Joint Implementation Plan (Joint Implementation Plan)

The Joint Implementation Plan is provided for under the Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention: Western Australia (Bilateral Schedule), an agreement between the Commonwealth and WA which is valid until 30 June 2026.

The WA Government and the Commonwealth are committed to continuing collaboration between the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the Aboriginal Health Council

of Western Australia (AHCWA) and Aboriginal service providers to ensure programs are best placed to deliver optimal outcomes and to ensure that services are complementary and not duplicative.

Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021 – 2025

In October 2020, the Mental Health Commission released the WA Suicide Prevention Framework (WA SP Framework) that outlines the direction for action to reduce deaths by suicide in WA. The WA SP Framework was developed in consultation with the WA community, academic experts, representatives from relevant government and non-government agencies and those with a lived experience of suicide, in recognition that everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention. The WA SP Framework was developed for use by State and local governments, non-government, private organisations, and communities to help identify their role in suicide prevention across the state.

The WA SP Framework is separated into four streams of Prevention/ Early Intervention, Support/Aftercare, Postvention and Aboriginal people. This strategy allows for a culturally secure approach to social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention for Aboriginal communities.

Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans - Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Program

The Mental Health Commission is leading the implementation of the Aboriginal CLO Program across 10 health regions of WA. This program follows a culturally secure process that ensures ACCOs are engaged to develop and deliver their own Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans. These community-endorsed regional plans inform the nature of the activities to be developed and implemented by the CLOs. Each plan outlines local activities under the streams of prevention, early intervention, aftercare and postvention. The CLOs work within their own regional governance structures through Local Governance Groups to ensure their plans remain relevant and appropriate for their communities.

Some examples of activities already undertaken include:

- » on Country camps;
- » women's and men's groups;
- » grief and loss groups;
- » Elder's events;
- » suicide awareness days;
- » community and stakeholder suicide prevention training sessions; and
- » U Rite days.

The CLO Program operates across WA's 10 health regions, located at the following ACCO services:

- » Bega Gambirringy Health Service, Kalgoorlie, Goldfields
- » Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service, Broome, Kimberley
- » Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service, Geraldton, Midwest
- » Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service, Newman, Pilbara
- » Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Albany, Great Southern
- » South West Aboriginal Medical Service, Bunbury, South West
- » Derbal Yerrigan Health Service, East Perth, East Perth Metropolitan

- » Moorditj Koort Aboriginal Corporation, Cockburn, South Metropolitan
- » Moorditj Youth Foundation Aboriginal Corporation, Narrogin, Wheatbelt

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model of Service Pilot program

The WA Government committed \$17.6 million in the 2021-2022 Budget to a Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model of Service Pilot (SEWB Pilot). The Mental Health Commission is leading the implementation of the SEWB Pilot, which is governed by AHCWA. The Pilot is being implemented under four pillars:

Pillar 1: Culturally Secure Community Development

Pillar 2: Psychosocial Support

Pillar 3: Targeted Intervention

Pillar 4: Supported Coordinated Care

The SEWB Pilot provides the ability to build the capacity of ACCOs within the mental health and suicide prevention sector through the provision of a model that builds and implements a social and emotional wellbeing service and workforce. This involves a flexible



interdisciplinary team with cultural, prevention, community development and clinical expertise. Each pilot site operates this model relevant to their own community and is based in an appropriate ACCO as selected by the AHCWA membership.

The SEWB Pilot is being delivered in five locations (Kimberley, Pilbara, Wheatbelt, South West and Goldfields regions). The pilot is being evaluated by the University of Western Australia (UWA) and the Mental Health Commission is working in partnership with UWA, AHCWA and the ACCOs from each pilot site to ensure delivery can be met whilst gathering appropriate findings for future proposals of the model. The SEWB Pilot provides the ability to build the capacity of ACCOs within the mental health and suicide prevention sector through the provision of a model that builds and implements a SEWB service and workforce. This involves a flexible interdisciplinary team with cultural, prevention, community development and clinical expertise. Each pilot site operates this model relevant to their own community and is based in an appropriate ACCO as selected by the AHCWA membership. Implementation

of the Pilot has commenced at all five sites. UWA's evaluation study has also commenced, with a final report due on 31 March 2025.

Response to Suicide and Self Harm in Schools Program

The Department of Education and school sectors will collaborate with the Mental Health Commission, to revise the School Response and Planning Guidelines for Students with Suicidal Behaviour and Non-Suicidal Self Injury and Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention training and materials to embed culturally responsive approaches.

Whole School Approaches to Student Wellbeing and Care

The Department of Education established the Student Wellbeing and Care Taskforce (Taskforce) in early 2022 to set clear expectations and support schools to embed effective approaches to student wellbeing and care. One of the goals of the Taskforce is to develop guidance, support and materials through a co-design process, for schools to

implement effective culturally responsive whole school approaches to social emotional wellbeing.

Young People's Priorities for Action

On 16 December 2020 the Mental Health Commission launched the Young People's Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Priorities for Action 2020-2025 (YPPA). The YPPA guides the WA Government, the mental health and AOD sector and other stakeholders across the community to support and respond to the mental health and AOD needs of young people aged 12 to 24 years.

The YPPA builds on previous plans, strategies and frameworks developed by Government and non-government organisations. Some of the actions and initiatives YPPA are supporting to improve mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal young people include:

- » Birthing on Country project (Connected to Country, Birthing on Country, On Country We Grow, which aims to provide long term direction for the delivery of culturally safe maternal and newborn services for



- Aboriginal women, newborns and their families in WA.
- » The Kimberley Community Alcohol and Drug Service annual Beautiful Bumps program, promoting alcohol abstinence during pregnancy as well as other Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder week community education activities.
 - » The Deadly Thinking and the Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid programs delivered across regions, engaging with local schools and ongoing local collaborations across local service providers and Aboriginal communities.
 - » The Community AOD Services weekly AOD counselling sessions at Geraldton Headspace, and in partnership with Headspace and Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service 'Back on Track'; a fortnightly program aimed at young Aboriginal men at risk of AOD and mental health issues.

The Mental Health Commission will continue to engage with young people to ensure that outcomes are developed that are meaningful to them. This will include involving young people with a living or lived experience of mental

health, alcohol and other drug issues in actions that relate to progressing recommendations from the YPPA.

Improving access to crisis intervention in regional and remote and rural areas

As a part of the WA Government's 2022-23 budget, \$3.7 million was allocated to provide additional Child Psychiatry into the WA Country Health Service Command Centre for those presenting to an Emergency Department that require a virtual assessment (24/7), and the establishment of the Brief Contact Intervention service.

The Brief Crisis Intervention Service will be delivered by WA Country Health Service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and provide children with brief interventions after an acute Emergency Department presentation. This service will support young people and families awaiting care with Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, provide brief interventions that results in resolution of the immediate concerns, or divert to alternative services.

This intervention service is the only post-emergency department follow up service for those in the regional and rural areas of WA and will provide crucial support to Aboriginal children and their families and seeks to prevent repeated presentations to emergency departments and reduce the need for costly inpatient treatment.

The service commenced in March 2023 and is currently accepting referrals from all regions via Mental Health Emergency Telehealth Service. A further phased opening directly to emergency departments via Psychiatric Liaison Nurses is planned, however, the schedule for opening further is dependent on the recruitment of clinicians.

Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee

The Mental Health Commission is leading the implementation of the WA Government's Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing 2020 (the Commitment). The current delivery of the Commitment has a Kimberley regional focus, with engagement and collaboration with the Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group (ARGG) through the

Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Committee (KAYWSC).

The ARGG is an established Kimberley Aboriginal leadership group who represents a number of key Kimberley ACCOs in the region. The representatives from WA Government agencies include senior executive membership from:

- » Department of Justice
- » Department of Education
- » Department of Health
- » Department of Communities
- » Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- » Department of Treasury
- » Department of Finance
- » Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- » Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- » WA Primary Health Alliance
- » WA Police Force

KAYWSC brings together all relevant WA Government agencies, together with Kimberley ACCOs represented on the Kimberley ARGG to support and enable Aboriginal community-led solutions to improve Aboriginal youth wellbeing outcomes.

The WA Government is committed to working in partnership with Kimberley Aboriginal community representatives to progress implementation of actions related to the

WA Government's Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Report and the 86 recommendations identified in the State Coroner's 2019 Inquest into the deaths of thirteen children and young people in the Kimberley Region of WA, and the 2016 Parliamentary Inquiry, Learnings from the Message Stick: the report of the Inquiry into Aboriginal youth suicide in remote areas.

Active Recovery Team

The Active Recovery Team is a pilot aimed at bridging the gap between clinical mental health services and community-based organisations who provide care outside of the hospital setting. The model has been developed to engage and support individuals who repeatedly present to Emergency Departments in crisis.

The model recognises the cost benefits of stabilising and supporting individuals

to remain well in the community, as opposed to more costly inpatient settings. The model incorporates alcohol and other drug, recovery and peer support components utilising a partnership approach between Health Service Providers and Non-Government Organisations. The WA Government has committed \$9.9 million in 2023-24 towards the model, across eight sites: Bentley, City, Midland, Armadale, Wanneroo, Rockingham, Fiona Stanley Hospital and Geraldton.

Supporting Wunan Foundation to deliver low medical withdrawal services

The Mental Health Commission has reached agreement with Wunan Foundation in Kununurra to develop and operate a low medical withdrawal service in Kununurra.

To build the capability of Wunan to deliver these services, the Mental Health Commission will be funding a partner with this capability to support, coach and mentor Wunan to deliver low medical withdrawal services and build their capacity and capability.

Ensuring culturally responsive alcohol and drug treatment and mental health services

The Mental Health Commission is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal people have access to alcohol and drug treatment and mental health services that are culturally secure, meet local needs and are as close to home as possible.

Examples include:

- » The Mental Health Commission completed a co-design process with Ngnowar -Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation (NAAC) in Wyndham, which led to a re-focus of the service model from face to face counselling to holistic case management support. NAAC staff coordinate care with other service providers (e.g., Department of Communities, WA Country Health Service and Department of Justice) to provide treatment and support for identified high needs families in the community.
- » Recontracted the Pilbara Community Alcohol and Drug Service through an open tender process. From 1 July 2022 the service is being delivered

by a partnership between Hope Community Services (HCS) and Bloodwood Tree Association. Hope Community Services operates the Karratha office and Bloodwood Tree Association operates Port Hedland.

Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service and Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service / Kimberly Aboriginal Medical Service Partnership

In July 2021, the Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service (KMHDS) and Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (BRAMS)/ Kimberly Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS) entered a partnership agreement to subcontract a Senior Mental Health Professional from KMHDS to work from BRAMS 4hrs each week. Funded by Rural Health West, this service supports BRAMS to manage complex mental health clients in primary care, providing a no-wrong-door approach. Negotiations with BRAMS Senior Medical Officer to resume a GP well-being clinic specifically for KMHDS community clients, is planned for 2023.

Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug, SEWB and Suicide Leadership Committee

Located in the Pilbara, the Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug, SEWB and Suicide MASS Leadership Committee is the sector leadership group for the region and is the social emotional wellbeing, suicide prevention and mental health subcommittee for the Pilbara Aboriginal Health Planning forum. Membership is made up of executive representatives from all alcohol and other drug (AOD), mental health and suicide prevention organisations in the region and the SEWB managers from each Aboriginal Medical service. This Committee provides governance over all suicide prevention and SEWB related actions, including the development of the Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans.



Kimberly AOD Youth Service

The endorsed Kimberley Youth AOD Service – Service Model outlines seven different components across the three tiers of prevention and early intervention, moderate support and intensive support; delivered in an integrated way with existing services that are already available in the Kimberley.

The Mental Health Commission continues to work on refining the service model for the Kimberly AOD Youth Service. In addition to the broad consultations undertaken, more recent work has focussed on ensuring that the model has the input of key governance groups in the region. Strong community support for the service model is considered as critical in the success of the project.

The Mental Health Commission has commenced engagement with relevant stakeholders in the Kimberley to determine how investment should be prioritised in order to meet community needs. Current status of this work is ensuring appropriate co-design is being achieved with key regional stakeholders involved.

Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021 – 2025 (Aboriginal people stream)	Mental Health Commission	2021-2025
Commitment to Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing	Mental Health Commission	Ongoing
Regional Aboriginal Suicide Prevention Plans - Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Program	Mental Health Commission	2021-2024
Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model of Service Pilot program	Mental Health Commission	2022-2024
Kimberley AOD Youth Service	Mental Health Commission	Timeframe is currently being established in collaboration with Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Governance Group
Active Recovery Team	Mental Health Commission	2023-2024
Response to Suicide and Self Harm in Schools Program	Department of Education	2023-2024
Whole School Approaches to Student Wellbeing and Care	Department of Education	2023-2024



Outcome 15:
Aboriginal people
maintain a distinctive
cultural, spiritual,
physical and economic
relationship with their
land and waters

National targets: Target 15a:
By 2030, a 15 percent increase in
Australia’s landmass subject to
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
people’s legal rights or interests.

Target 15b:
By 2030, a 15 percent increase in areas
covered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people’s legal rights or interests
in the sea.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Environment; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Lead Agency:

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Supporting Agencies:

Department of the Premier and Cabinet;
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage;
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation;
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

WA's progress against the target

Square kilometres of land and sea mass subject to Aboriginal people's legal rights or interest (2022)

	WA	Australia
Land mass	1,800,999	4,138,356
Sea mass	40,147	91,111

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Land and water underpin Aboriginal relationships, economies, identities and cultural practices. Many aspects of the land and seascape are important as part of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Recognition of the rights and interests of Aboriginal people supports a caring for country approach to land and sea management and enables cultural obligations to continue to be fulfilled.

Previous page: Yawuru Parks Coordinator Wil Bennet with Yawuru Ranger Preston Manado



Our Key Actions

Plan for Our Parks Initiative

In 2019 the State Government launched Plan for Our Parks (PfOP), an unprecedented initiative to create five million hectares of new national and marine parks and conservation reserves across Western Australia. Thanks to the participation of traditional owners, key stakeholders and interest holders, PfOP is on target to achieve the five-million-hectare milestone in 2024.

PfOP is enabling the joint management and vesting of new and existing conservation areas. This provides additional legal rights and interests for Aboriginal people as they will have a statutory role to jointly manage these areas under the *Western Australian Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act).

As of April 2023, there have been nine Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) finalised and executed through Plan for Our Parks and a further 1.127 million hectares added to the

conservation estate. Negotiations are progressing to pursue a further eleven ILUAs under this initiative.

In addition to increased legal rights and interests in land, the PfOP ILUAs provide for additional resourcing for Aboriginal people to participate in the management of their land and sea country through Aboriginal land management employment, support to get back to country, support for the capacity development of ACCOs as well as community engagement to identify and develop strategies to conserve and protect the cultural and spiritual values of the land through the statutory joint management plans.

The Plan for Our Parks Initiative has seen \$115 million invested between 2021–27 in employing and involving Aboriginal people in the joint management of conservation estate, resourcing the involvement of ACCOs in the management of land and sea country, and building the capacity of ACCOs as joint management partners. This equates to an annual allocation of \$23 million per year from the 2027–28 financial year onwards. This is projected to rise to \$56 million per year from 2027–28 should the

remainder of the PfOP agreements be successfully concluded.

The WA Government will continue to increase the conservation estate beyond the Plan for Our Parks deadline of 2024, alongside the Australian Government's commitment to having 30 percent of terrestrial lands within Australia as protected areas by 2030.

WA Aboriginal Ranger Program

The WA Government is committed to the continuation of the WA Aboriginal Ranger Program and provides funding for Aboriginal organisations to conduct land and sea management programs on country. The program began in 2017 with a \$20 million investment to 2021.

Since then, the WA Aboriginal Ranger Program has received significant new investment from the WA Government, with the program boosted to \$83 million over six years, 2021–27. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions co-designed the rollout of this expansion with an expert reference group, and formed three funding streams – Development, Expansion and Innovation.





To date, of the expanded program has invested \$34 million into 32 ranger programs across WA.

In mid and late 2023, Round six and Round seven of the program will be allocated. Round six, known as the 'Innovation Fund' will allocate up to \$11 million to innovative, one-off projects. Round seven, the 'Development Fund' will fund up to \$13 million to new and emerging ranger groups and will open for applications later in 2023. Projects funded under these rounds will be implemented from January 2024 to June 2026.

A study into the social and economic outcomes of Phase One of the program (2017–21), Empowering people, culture and connection to country, was released in December 2022. It found the positive impacts include increases in self-confidence, pride, gender equality and improved mental and physical health. There have also been reported improvements in training and education outcomes and better career prospects, as well as intergenerational knowledge transfer.

The design and implementation of any further funding streams will be informed by monitoring and evaluation completed on previous tranches of the program.

Aboriginal Fishing Representation

The need for greater Aboriginal representation in the WA fishing industry was highlighted at a forum of saltwater Prescribed Bodies Corporate, Aboriginal Corporations and organisations and key government agencies in 2019. The aim of the forum was to take stock of Aboriginal fishing initiatives as it stood and identify an effective State-wide representative structure to advise Government on the implementation of identified Aboriginal fishing priorities.

As an outcome from the forum, an interim Aboriginal fishing advisory committee made up of Aboriginal representatives from each of the WA fisheries bioregions was formed.

This has been an Aboriginal-led process with support from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development to the interim group to

develop its foundational principles and assist in developing a more formal structure.

Establishment of an advisory process is a further step towards the recognition of the rights of Aboriginal people to be engaged in the management of fish resources and actively supports Aboriginal fishing sector representation and co-management.

Divestment of the Aboriginal Lands Trust estate

The WA Government is committed to divest 288 (20.6 million hectares) properties in the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT) estate into the direct control of Aboriginal people. The land tenure outcomes achieved through divestment are intended to create social, cultural and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people and communities. The Department of Planning, Land and Heritage (DPLH) is responsible for delivering the divestment program and is actively working with Aboriginal stakeholders across the State to negotiate positive divestment outcomes.



There are 33 properties currently funded for divestment by DPLH. Funding options for the next phase of divestment are also being considered to enable constraints on divestment to be removed and to support Aboriginal parties to build their capacity both pre and post divestment.

DPLH will continue to work with the communities involved to identify their aspirations, achieve consent from relevant Aboriginal interest holders and understand what investigations and remediations are required prior to divestment, as well as what is needed after divestment has occurred to ensure long term sustainability. To remove legislative barriers to divestment, the WA Government is also progressing targeted amendments to the *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972*, which is expected to occur in 2024.

Diversified land use opportunities

The *Land and Public Works Legislation Amendment Act 2023* received Royal Assent in March 2023. The Act proposes a number of amendments to the *Land Administration Act 1997* (LAA) and the *Public Works Act 1902*. The amendments include the introduction of a new form of tenure, the diversification lease, which is a non-exclusive leasehold tenure that can accommodate multiple land uses and can coexist with Native Title rights and interests.

The diversification lease offers further opportunities for Aboriginal people to hold secure tenure over large parcels of Crown land, especially where there are multiple interests in land. The new lease can be a vehicle for Aboriginal people to enter into partnerships with proponents for renewable energy or other projects for economic outcomes. Where Native Title rights and interests exist or may exist, the diversification lease proponent is required to negotiate an ILUA with the relevant Native Title party(s), which needs to be registered prior to the grant of a diversification lease.

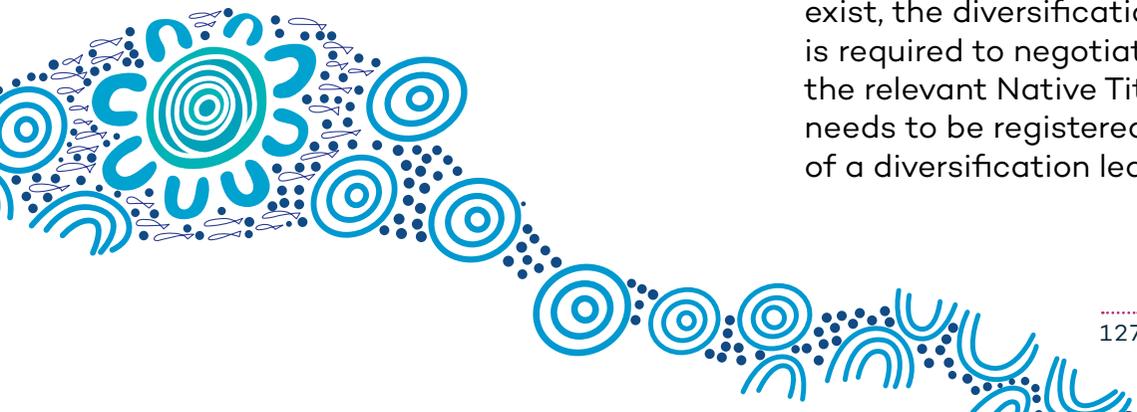
It is expected the amendments to the LAA, including the introduction of the diversification lease, will be enacted in the second half of 2023 (once proclaimed).

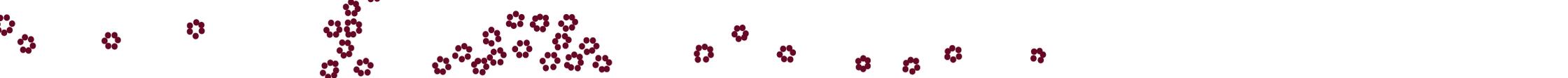
Native Title claims resolution and agreement making

The resolution of Native Title claims is vital to achieving progress against targets 15a and 15b: increasing the proportion of Australia's land and sea mass subject to Aboriginal people's legal rights and interests.

With approximately 87 percent of WA's land mass subject to a Native Title determination, the WA Government is working on resolving the remaining Native Title claims under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* and transitioning into a post-determination environment which will be defined by key matters such as Native Title compensation and agreement making.

The WA Government is committed to resolving Native Title matters by agreement, as genuine, culturally





appropriate and enduring partnerships between the WA Government and Traditional Owners are critical to the social, cultural, environmental, and economic future of the State.

Native Title compensation

The resolution of Native Title compensation matters provides an opportunity to achieve sustainable settlement outcomes for all parties. Depending on individual Native Title parties' aspirations, compensation agreements may include broader opportunities to maximise Native Title rights and interests, beyond monetary compensation. For example, agreements may enable additional land tenure outcomes, which can include resourcing to build capacity meet a group's aspirations for that land.

Some examples of key components in recent Native Title agreements, including the South West Native Title Settlement, Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement and the Tjiwarl Palyakuwa (Agreement) are:

- » legislative change;
- » addressing of historic wrongs and injustices;

- » ongoing capacity-building;
- » commitment to self-determination;
- » supporting reconciliation;
- » partnership approach with Government;
- » transfer of lands;
- » cultural redress;
- » an accounting of history and formal apologies; and
- » a partnership approach to Government programs & processes.

South West Native Title Settlement Agreements

The South West Native Title Settlement (South West Settlement) is a landmark Native Title agreement, negotiated between the Noongar people and the WA Government. The South West Settlement commenced on 25 February 2021 and includes \$1.3 billion in land and other benefits. It creates a Noongar governance structure to represent the rights and interests of the six Noongar Agreement groups.

The Settlement aims to improve opportunities for Noongar cultural, social and economic development over

the long term and provides significant partnership opportunities with the WA Government and other levels of governments.

The WA Government continues to implement the components of the South West Settlement as outlined in the agreement, with a strong focus on partnership building as the six regional corporations become firmly established.

Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement

The Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement (Yamatji Nation ILUA) is a comprehensive Native Title settlement agreement with five Native Title groups in the Mid-West region.

The Yamatji Nation ILUA includes a benefits package to facilitate self-determination and long-term economic independence for Yamatji people. The ILUA was conclusively registered on 26 October 2020 and includes a sustainable benefits package with a strong focus on economic development, supporting the vision of the Traditional Owner Negotiating Team to build a sustainable



economic foundation for Yamatji Nation members.

The WA Government continues to implement the next steps as outlined in the agreement, with a focus on partnership building.

The Tjiwarl Palyakuwa (Agreement) Indigenous Land Use Agreement

The Tjiwarl Palyakuwa (Agreement) is the comprehensive agreement between the State and the Tjiwarl Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the Tjiwarl Native Title Holders.

Commencing on 22 May 2023, the Tjiwarl Palyakuwa includes a package of benefits to support the recognition and protection of Tjiwarl peoples' language, culture, heritage, history, and cultural and intellectual property. It aims to build and foster ongoing forums for the WA Government and Tjiwarl people to work together through the implementation of the agreement and beyond.

The WA Government, in partnership with the Tjiwarl people, has commenced

the initial phase of implementation as outlined in the Agreement.

Bidyadanga Land Activation Pilot

The Bidyadanga Land Activation Pilot is a WA Government initiative that is building capacity between governments (Australian, State and Local), community residents and Native Title holders to reform land tenure in Bidyadanga to improve economic, health and social outcomes, re-engage with the Australian Government to increase participation in service delivery and divest the Aboriginal Lands Trust estate.

Engaging Aboriginal people in water management

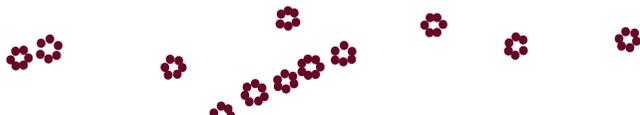
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation Aboriginal Empowerment Board

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) has established an Aboriginal Empowerment Board to support transparency, accountability and learning, while positioning the agency

to contribute to the implementation of the WA Government's Aboriginal empowerment vision and Reconciliation Australia's vision. The Board will lead and guide DWER's commitment and vision for ongoing Reconciliation and the engagement and empowerment of Aboriginal people and communities.

Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group

DWER recognises the importance of a partnership approach and acknowledge the role of Aboriginal people and their significant cultural knowledge and connection to Country and living waters to protect and manage Western Australian's environment and water resource. The Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group has been established to ensure that Aboriginal knowledge, values and needs are considered and appropriately addressed across the DWER's strategies, policies, programs and planning for the management and regulation of the State's environment and water resources. The Advisory Group is comprised of Aboriginal members from across the State with the skills, knowledge and



experience in water and environment, and is co-chaired by DWER and an Aboriginal member.

The Kep Katitjin - Gabi Kaadadjan (Waterwise Perth Action Plan 2)

Through the Kep Katitjin - Gabi Kaadadjan (Waterwise Perth Action Plan 2), DWER is establishing world-leading waterwise communities for Perth and Peel by 2030. This includes strong consultation and engagement with Noongar people. The Whadjuk and Bindjareb Noongar people have been the custodians of the environment and water resources for tens of thousands of years and utilising their knowledge and wisdom is at the heart of the plan.

Binjareb Djilba (Peel Harvey Estuary Protection Plan)

The Binjareb Djilba (Peel Harvey Estuary Protection Plan), is an important tool in enabling DWER to improve the health of Peel Harvey Estuary and includes Binjareb Noongar participation in estuary management. The Plans, Policy and Partnerships actions component

of the plan calls for collective decision-making in the implementation of this plan and strategic coordination of estuary management.

There is an emphasis on the link between land use planning decisions and water quality outcomes, with a suite of actions seeking to minimise the impact of future development on the estuary. The role of Traditional Owners is recognised, with several key actions aimed at supporting the Bindjareb Noongar people as active partners in estuary management.

Water measurement and monitoring program

The DWER has an active measurement and monitoring program that aims to engage Aboriginal people to collect water data on country and build skills to deliver this work longer term. This includes developing opportunities for Aboriginal people, to gain formal qualifications and on the job training in this field.

This program is being implemented as part of the Yamatji Nation ILUA,

with two trainees based at DWER in Geraldton and plans for a third trainee to be employed in the near future. This employment program has been expanded to the South Coast and DWER is also working with Aboriginal communities in the Broome area to build hydrography skills through engagement in a TAFE program.

The work includes:

- » Field collection of water measurement data.
- » Analysis of data collected to DWER standards.
- » Data storage techniques.
- » Communication with Traditional Owners regarding water data.
- » Practical skills in data collection equipment set up and maintenance.



Supporting the Yawuru irrigation licence

The Yawuru embarked on securing a large irrigation licence a few years ago to enable irrigated fodder production on their pastoral lease, Roebuck Plains, to support a cattle enterprise.

To further support complex technical work and monitory commitment for this irrigation licence, the DWER signed a long-term collaborative agreement with Yawuru Native Title holders (Yawuru Prescribed Body Corporate) to investigate groundwater resources on Yawuru Country in Broome.

The Agreement covers projects funded through the State Groundwater Investigation Program. As part of these investigations, DWER staff work with Yawuru Traditional Owners to investigate and monitor groundwater and surface water resources. Formal TAFE qualifications are being developed with North Regional TAFE to enable Yawuru rangers to acquire formal qualifications that recognise their skills.

The project will support Yawuru Traditional Owners in building their skills in collecting, analysing and understanding data to help decision making that will better manage water systems on Yawuru Country.

Water Resources Legislative Reforms

The DWER is currently supporting drafting of new water resources legislation that seeks to strengthen recognition of Aboriginal people's water interests, supporting, and promoting Aboriginal people's spiritual, social, customary, and economic needs. This legislation is likely to be considered by Parliament late 2023. Additionally, water allocation planning will include consideration of Aboriginal values.

Work is currently being carried out on the Fitzroy and Derby allocation plans in the North West and the Warren Donnelly surface water allocation plan in the south west of the state.



Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Plans for Our Parks	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	February 2024
WA Aboriginal Ranger Program	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	Ongoing
Legislative Amendment to the <i>Land Administration Act 1997</i>	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage	2023
Legislative Amendment to the <i>Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972</i>	Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage	Proposed introduction to Parliament in 2023 or 2024
Aboriginal Fishing Representation	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	Ongoing
Customary Fishing Regulation	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	2024



Outcome 16: Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing

National Target:

By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Culture and the Arts

Lead Agency:

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

Supporting Agencies:

Department of Education;
Department of Justice



WA's progress against the target

Total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken nationwide (baseline year of 2018-19)

	WA	Australia
Languages	123	31
Strong Languages	14	5

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)

Culture and language shape our identity and are intrinsic to our sense of belonging. Vibrant, flourishing Aboriginal languages and cultures offer significant social and economic benefits to Aboriginal people, families and communities, and to Western Australian society.

According to ABS data of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in WA: one in eight (13 percent or 11,213) Aboriginal people use an Aboriginal language at home. There are approximately 123 Aboriginal languages currently being spoken in Australia with 31 languages or 25 percent being spoken in WA.

Our Key Actions

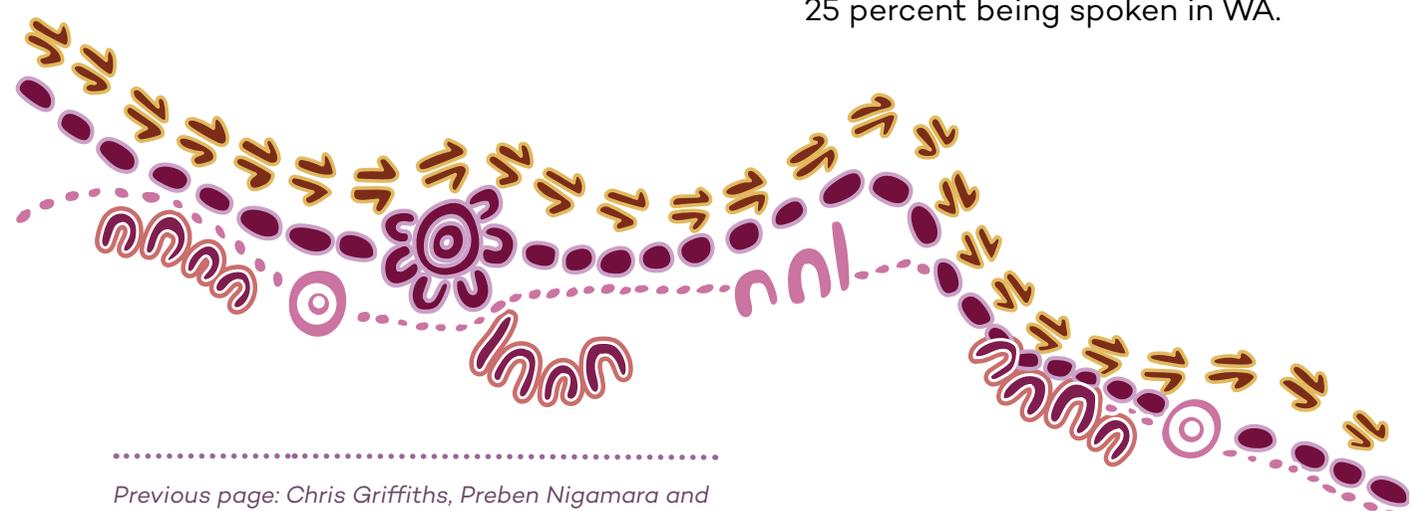
National Languages Policy Partnership

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) Deputy Director General, Management and Coordination represents the WA Government on the national Languages Policy Partnership and participating in discussions to impact language revitalisation and revival nationally. The Languages Policy Partnership was established in 2023 as a commitment to under the National Agreement.

Language revitalisation and revival across the Kimberley

State of Language Continuation in the Kimberley Report

The Kimberley Language Resource Centre received \$200,000 to conduct a research and planning project, State of Language Continuation in the Kimberley Report. This report will scope the health of the Aboriginal languages spoken in



Previous page: Chris Griffiths, Preben Nigamara and Andrew Daylight performing Wangga at The Journey Down premiere in Kunurra on Miriwoong Country. Presented by Tura in partnership with the WA Museum, supported by Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Photo by Edify Media.



the Kimberley, uncover best practice in language revitalisation activities and to identify priorities for strategic investment in the region.

Julurru Junba Project

DLGSC has provided \$500,000 to the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre for the 'Julurru Junba' Project, to document a song and dance cycle which connected language groups in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Northern Territory. This project will be completed in 2023.

Connecting to Country Program

DLGSC provides funding for the Connecting to Country program, which will continue to support Aboriginal communities to participate in trips on-Country, designed to transfer culture between generations. From 2017 – 2022, 36 of 81 funded projects included language components.

Strengthening Aboriginal languages in schools

The teaching of Aboriginal languages enhances the identity, self-esteem and engagement of Aboriginal students and positively incorporates Aboriginal knowledge within the mainstream curriculum. This increases the understanding of Aboriginal people and cultures by all teachers and students, further contributing to a whole-school approach to embedding the cross-curriculum priorities, including Aboriginal histories and cultures.

Education census data reports that in 2022, 92 public schools are teaching one of 24 Aboriginal languages to 12,795 Kindergarten to Year 12 students. The Department of Education will continue to implement strategies to strengthen Aboriginal languages in schools, including:

- » Supporting schools to implement an Aboriginal language in consultation with the local Aboriginal community.
- » Providing the Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training course to enable Aboriginal staff to gain qualifications

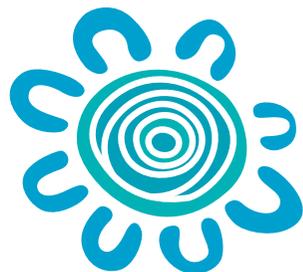
to teach an Aboriginal Language (see below).

- » Working with the Curriculum Standards and Reporting Authority for the development of the Western Australian Curriculum Aboriginal Languages: Noongar Language Revival Pre-Primary to Year 10.
- » Supporting the Aboriginal Languages of WA Reference Group.

In 2023, the Pre-primary to Year 10 Languages – Western Australian Aboriginal Languages: Noongar (Language Revival) scope and sequence, and the Western Australian Aboriginal Languages (Language Revival) template were published as part of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. These will provide a model to be applied to other Western Australian Aboriginal Languages in order to provide primary and secondary students with a robust Aboriginal Language education.

Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training Course

In WA, Aboriginal languages have been taught in schools since 1992. Commencing in 1998, the Department



of Education began delivering the Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training (ALTT) course, enabling Aboriginal staff to become Aboriginal language teachers.

In 2022, the Department of Education achieved accreditation of the Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training Course from the Training Accreditation Council. A Certificate III and Certificate IV in Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages will provide graduates with a nationally accredited qualification as well as providing opportunity for employment and further education in industry sectors.

The Certificate III Units of Competency are currently being mapped and aligned to the national Vocational education and training (VET) guidelines which will enable the course to be registered with the School of Isolated and Distance Education as the Registered Training Organisation. Certificate IV mapping will follow. Aboriginal school staff with a level of oral Aboriginal language skills can apply to participate in the Cert III and IV Aboriginal language teacher training course, available in 2024.

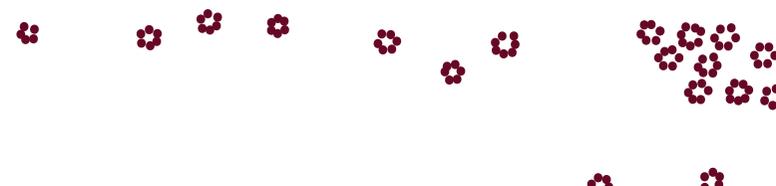
The Department of Education is working with the eight Aboriginal Language Centres in WA to support Aboriginal languages spoken in their areas. Three of these centres are actively involved in teaching and supporting Aboriginal Language Teachers and trainees in schools. The Miriwoong Language Centre (Kununurra) provide staff and curriculum material for teaching classes in schools in Kununurra. The Yawuru language Centre (Broome) and Irra Wangga (Geraldton) also work in partnership with the Aboriginal Language Teacher Training Team to provide a range of supports.

Yikan Noongar Language Program

The Department of Education's Yikan Noongar language program is a digital teaching and learning resource for Year three, developed in response to the high demand for Noongar language to be taught in many schools located on Noongar Country. Education Services Australia is developing the resource, with culturally responsive processes informed and supported by a Noongar circle of advisors, Noongar language expert, Noongar artists and an Aboriginal film

maker. Program development continues to be endorsed by the Noongar Boodjar Language and Culture Aboriginal Corporation and the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.

Terms one and two resources for Year Three public school students are available via Connect Discover; with Terms three and four content available during Semester two, 2023. The program is taught to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and includes local culture and history. The lessons are delivered face-to-face by a Noongar language teacher, Noongar language teacher trainee or a community member working with a classroom teacher. The resources provide practical support to Noongar language teachers, trainees and community members who are yet to complete their teaching qualifications and includes support to revive and learn their language as well as develop an understanding of Aboriginal languages pedagogy. A plan for the development of Yikan Noongar resources for Year four has been prepared to support continuity of language program teaching and learning.



Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies Course

The School Curriculum and Standards Authority reviewed the General Years 11 and 12 Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies course during 2021-2022. In 2023, the Department of Education implemented the Year 11 and will implement the Year 12 in 2024.

The Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies course provides opportunities for students from all cultures to become actively engaged in respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures. The revised course more accurately reflects contemporary attitudes and perspectives, provides opportunities for the teaching and learning program to be contextualised for the community in which the course is being delivered.

The course includes comparative studies, investigating the experiences of Aboriginal communities within Australia and elsewhere in the world. An important inclusion in the course is the guidance

provided to teachers around principles and protocols, the use of culturally responsive resources and terminology. The number of schools offering Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies has continued to increase over the last three years.

Aboriginal Languages of WA Reference Group

The Department of Education continues to support the Aboriginal Languages of WA Reference Group who provide advice and guidance on issues or matters relevant to Education's teaching of Aboriginal Languages in schools, and provision of the Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training. The Reference Group also provides a forum through which members can inform or guide future directions, enhance communication, and promote the teaching of Aboriginal languages to the wider community.

The Reference Group plays a critical role in providing advice to Aboriginal languages consultants as well as providing advice generally regarding the

teaching of Aboriginal languages. By keeping informed on the teaching of Aboriginal Languages, the Reference Group can recommend areas for future development and inform future directions such as the development of Aboriginal languages policy.

Reference group membership is by invitation, initially for two years; and may include Aboriginal languages teachers, senior Department of Education staff, representatives from education sectors, community members and representatives from Language Centres.

Aboriginal Language in Custody Program

The Department of Justice is continuing to work with the Noongar Boodjar Language Cultural Aboriginal Corporation to deliver the Aboriginal Language in Custody Program on Whadjuk Noongar Country to Hakea Remand Prison, Boronia Women's Pre-Release Centre, Casuarina Prison, Melaleuca Women Prison, and Banksia Hill Detention Centre.

The Program commenced in November 2020 and aims to reconnect and strengthen Aboriginal people's connection with culture, and contribute to good health and wellbeing, self-respect, empowerment, self-satisfaction and belonging. The WA Government provided \$244,000 to support the Aboriginal Language Custody Program in 2022-23.

The Aboriginal Language in Custody Program is also delivered across regional WA. Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation - Irra Wangga Language Centre, based in Geraldton, delivers its Cultural Language Program to Aboriginal participants at Greenough Regional Prison. The Wirlomin Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation in Albany delivers its Noongar Language and Stories to participants at Aboriginal Albany Regional Prison.



Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Julurru Junba Project	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	Completion 2023
Aboriginal Languages Teacher Training Course (Accreditation)	Department of Education	Ongoing
Yikan Noongar digital language resource	Department of Education	Ongoing



Outcome 17:
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

National target 17:

By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion.

Lead Minister:

Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy

Lead agency:

Office of Digital Government,
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Supporting agencies:

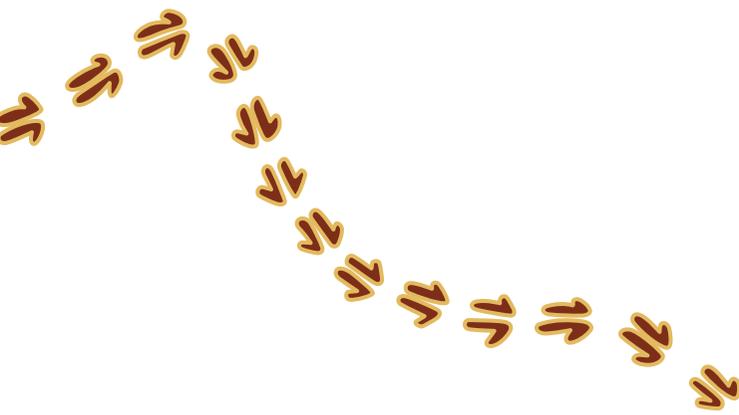
Department of Primary Industries and
Regional Development

WA's progress against the target

Proportion of people aged 15 years and over accessed the internet in their home (baseline year of 2014-15)

	WA	Australia
Aboriginal people	66	74

(Source: Productivity Commission Dashboard)



Previous page: Installation Team (Australian Private Networks), Jigalong Community.

The National Agreement recognises that digital inclusion is increasingly required to enable and empower Aboriginal people to participate in informed decision-making regarding their own lives. As essential services and public information increasingly move online, digital inclusion becomes an important contributing factor to improving many of the other Closing the Gap outcomes and targets, such as health and mental health, education, economic participation and the maintenance of strong relationships and connections to land, waters and languages.

Our Key Actions

Digital Inclusion in WA Blueprint

In December 2022, the WA Government launched the Digital Inclusion in WA Blueprint (the Blueprint) to improve digital inclusion through a partnership approach with the community, community services sector, industry and government. The Blueprint outlines a whole of government strategic approach for improving digital inclusion in WA and

aims to ensure all Western Australians can access and use digital technologies.

The four focus areas of the Blueprint: connectivity, affordability, skills and design, closely reflect the policy pillars underpinning the development of the Commonwealth Government's First Nations Digital Inclusion Plan: improving access, affordability and digital ability.

Led by the WA Government's Office of Digital Government, the Blueprint approach is supported by a whole-of-government Implementation Program which includes a range of initiatives to support Western Australians at risk of digital disadvantage. Governance for the Blueprint is being delivered through a Blueprint Partnership Framework that includes:

- » A Digital Inclusion Accord (the Accord), an instrument to gain commitment by all prospective digital inclusion partners to work in collaboration to the objectives and priorities of the Blueprint. As of April 2023, 19 organisations in WA, including Aboriginal Organisations had been accepted as members to the Accord and have implemented

digital inclusion initiatives accessible by Aboriginal people.

- » A Digital Inclusion Leadership Forum (the Forum) that the WA Government Office of Digital Government will establish in 2023 to provide coordination and commitment to improving digital inclusion outcomes in WA. The Forum membership will include key stakeholders from the WA community, community services sector, industry, government and Aboriginal leaders in digital inclusion.

Partnering with Aboriginal Corporations to tailor digital connectivity solutions

To support the Commonwealth's \$150 million Regional Connectivity Program Round three, in April 2023, the WA Government committed funding from the \$48.6 million WA Regional Digital Connectivity Program towards telecommunication projects that will deliver improved internet and fixed wireless services, alongside enhanced mobile services to regional WA. Work is currently underway to prioritise applications,

with a focus on new and improved 4G mobile coverage and additional Wi-Fi installations in remote areas.

The WA Government and industry partner Australian Private Networks undertake community visits and provide presentations to community members and their representative Boards for all community-scale Wi-Fi proposals. The specific needs identified by each community during the consultation phase are factored into the network design and all proposals are endorsed by the representative Board before funding applications are submitted.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is co-funding the following installations under the Regional Connectivity Program in consultation with:

- » Paupiyala Tjurtja Aboriginal Corporation for the Tjunjuntjara Community Wi-Fi Network. Installation to be completed in June 2023.
- » Kalumburu Aboriginal Corporation for the Kalumburu Community Wi-Fi Network, installed in November 2021, plus voice/Wi-Fi hotspots for

eight outstations at Honeymoon Bay, Winangie, Jaycos Beach, Pago Point, Wurdigulli Goonlingae, Murra Gurra, McGowan Island and Carson River Station to be completed by June 2024.

- » Mowanjum Aboriginal Corporation for the Mowanjum Community Wi-Fi Network, completed in October 2022.

Funding will be sought under Round three of the Regional Connectivity Program following consultation and endorsement from:

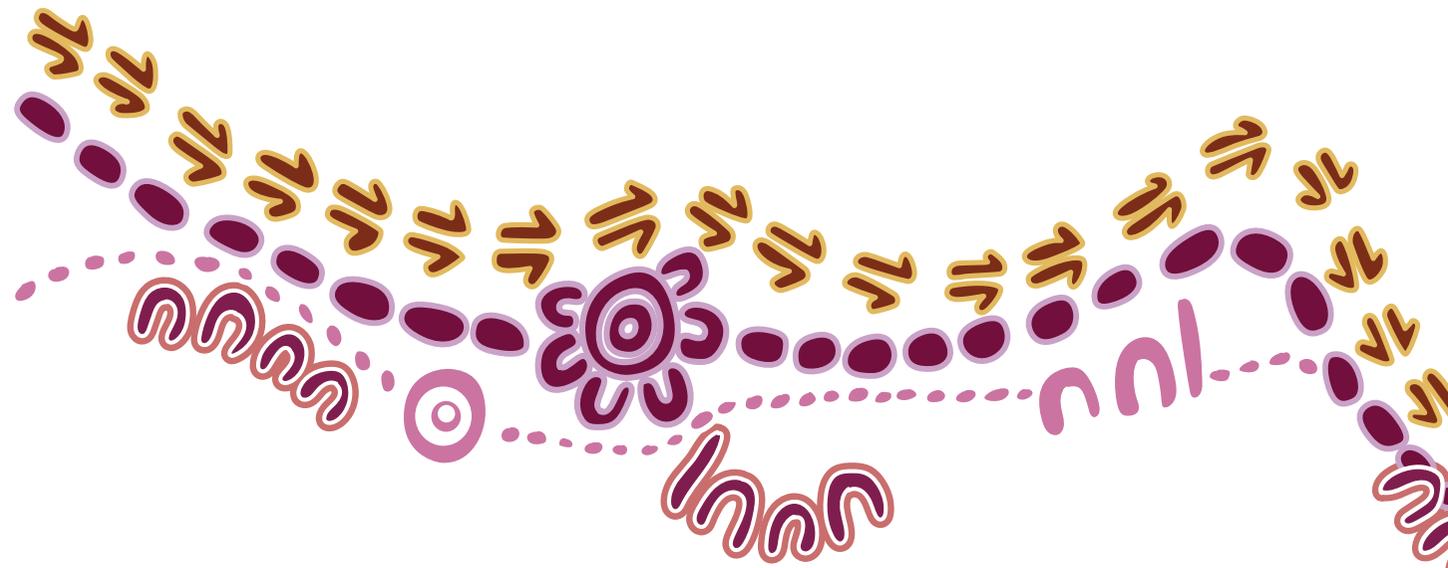
- » Bidyadanga Aboriginal Community La Grange Inc for the Bidyadanga Community Wi-Fi Network, plus voice/Wi-Fi hotspots for 11 outstations at Naja Naja, Kusi Block, Airport, Fuel Depot, Midgelmaya (Warnamulnyundong), Rollah Block, Fraiser Downs, Fraiser Downs Pivots, Kitts Well, Gray Block and Malupirti. Bidyadanga, located in the West Kimberley region, is WA's largest Aboriginal remote community.
- » Burringurrah Community Aboriginal Corporation for the Burringurrah Community Wi-Fi Network.





DPIRD is also engaging with mobile network operators for new and improved mobile coverage at up to 15 remote communities and will continue to support a study by RMIT University at Kalumburu and Djarindjin in the Kimberley as part of its three-year Mapping the Digital Gap research project. The research project covers 10-12 Aboriginal communities nationally and involves repeat visits and interviews at each location.

The project will enable measurement and tracking of the scale of the digital gap for remote Aboriginal communities and aims to provide data to inform policy and programs to help close the digital gap.



Summary

Key Actions	Agency Responsible	Timeframes
Implementation of the Digital Inclusion in WA Blueprint	Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Office of Digital Government	2022-ongoing
Tailored digital connectivity solutions	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development	2022-2024



Appendix A

Partnership Planning Groups

PPG	Convenor Agency	Outcome Areas/Targets
1. Long and healthy lives	Department of Health	1 and 2
2. Early Years	Department of Communities	3 and 4
3. Education and Youth Wellbeing	Department of Education	5 and 6
4. Jobs and Enterprise	Department of Jobs, Trade, Science and Innovation	7 and 8
5. Housing and Community Infrastructure	Department of Communities	9 and 17
6. Justice	Department of Justice	10 and 11
7. Safe Families	Department of Communities	12 and 13
8. Country and Culture	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions	15 and 16
9. Social and Emotional Wellbeing	Mental Health Commission	14

