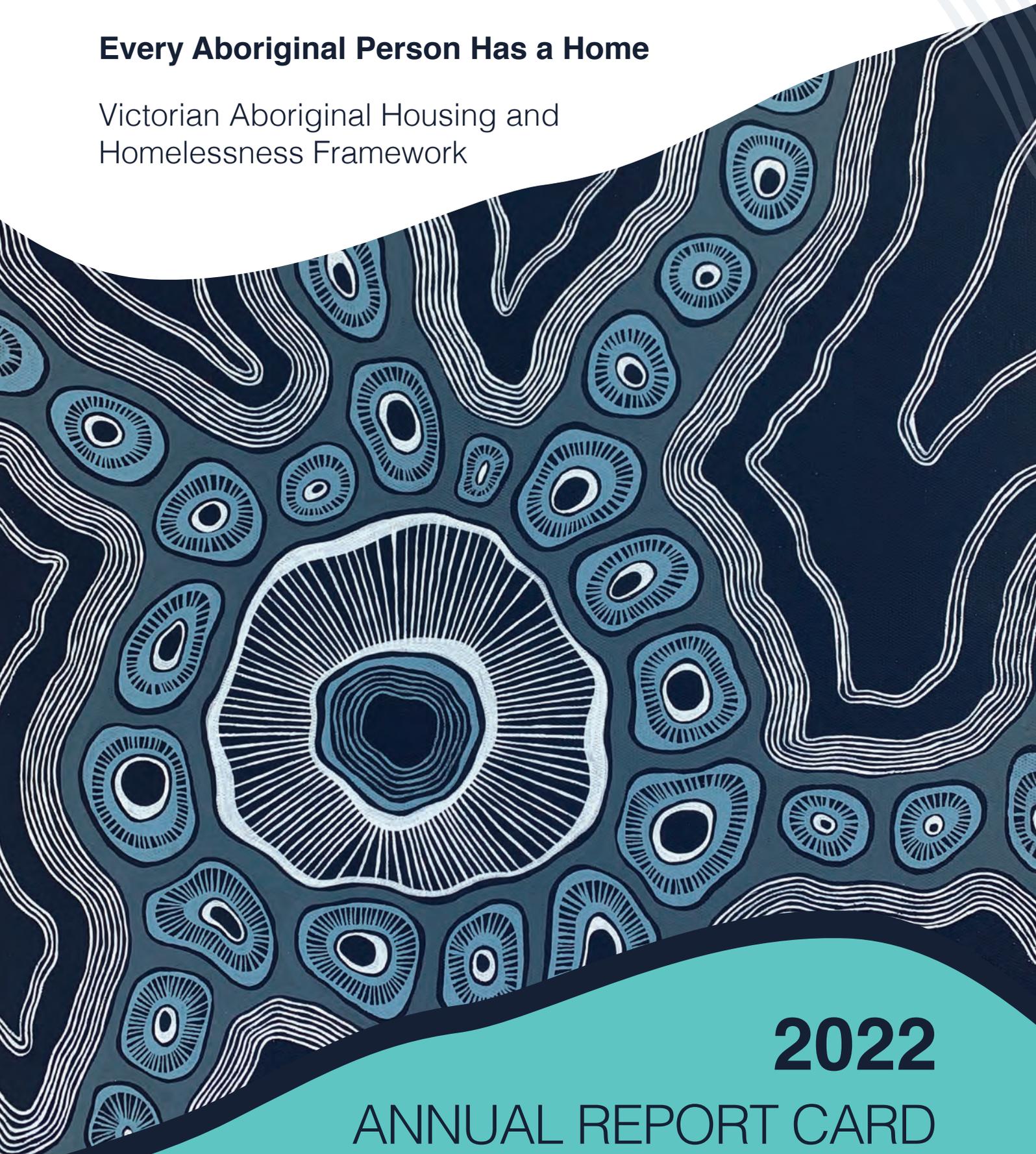


Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort

Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home

Victorian Aboriginal Housing and
Homelessness Framework

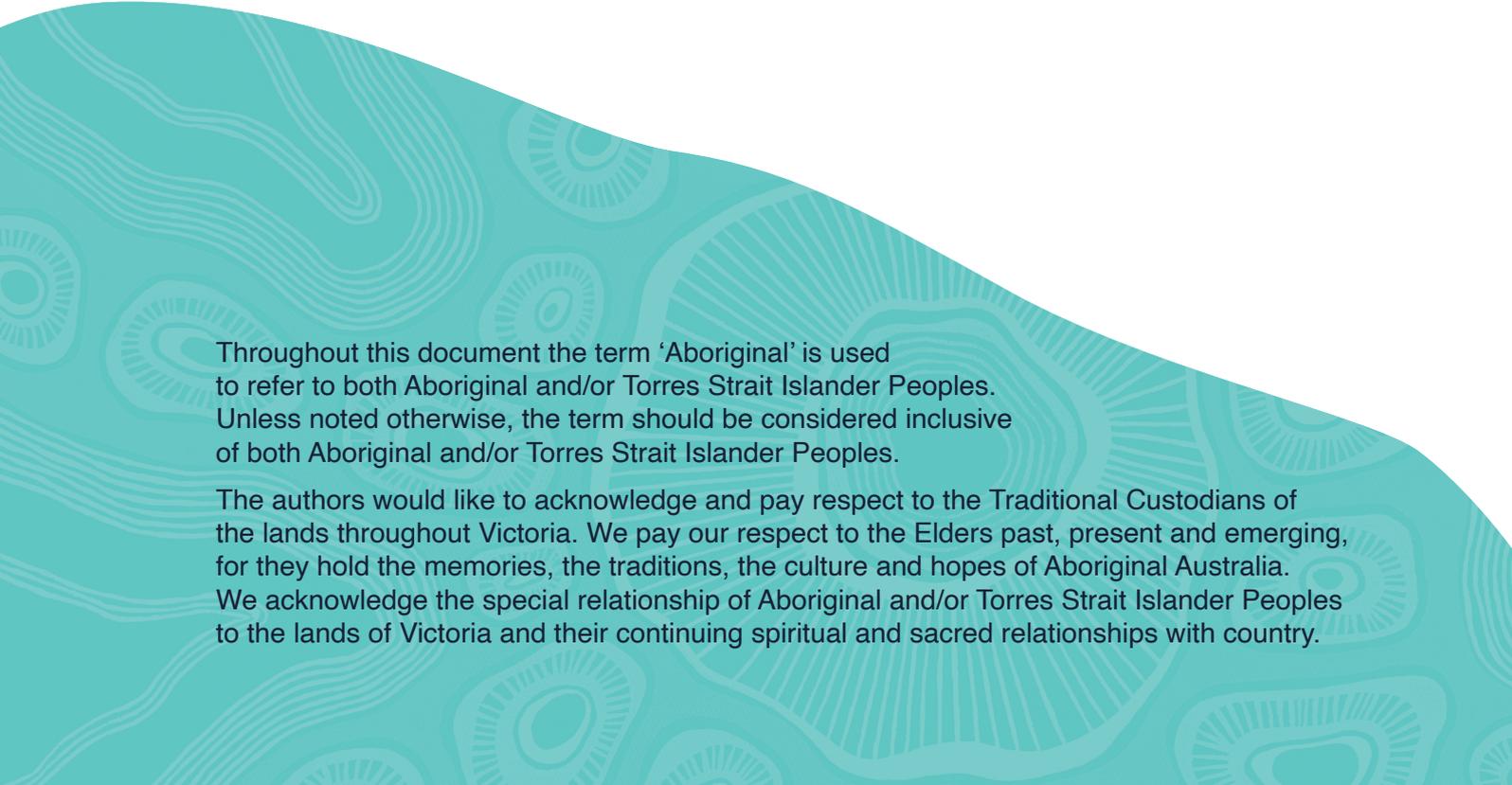


2022

ANNUAL REPORT CARD



Contents



Throughout this document the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Unless noted otherwise, the term should be considered inclusive of both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The authors would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands throughout Victoria. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We acknowledge the special relationship of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples to the lands of Victoria and their continuing spiritual and sacred relationships with country.

Message from the Chairs	4
Section 1: Implementing Second Year Actions	6
Section 2: Report against Outcome Measures	12
M1: Receiving services from Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) per capita (clients per 10,000 population)	13
M2: Proportion of clients who exit Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) homeless (%)	14
M3: Proportion of clients exiting the SHS system homeless who were homeless on entry (%)	15
M4a: Unmet need for short term / emergency accommodation (including referral only) (%)	16
M4b: Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with unmet need for medium term / transitional housing 2011-12 to 2020-21 (including referral) (%)	17
M4c: Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with unmet need for long term accommodation, 2011-12 to 2020-21 (including referral)	18
M5: Indigenous SHS clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis (%)	19
M6: Indigenous SHS clients presenting for assistance following exit from custody (number)	20
M7: SHS clients in Victoria and Australia, by Indigenous status and interaction with psychiatric hospital/unit (%)	21
M8: Indigenous SHS clients aged 20 or under leaving care in Victoria 2011-12 to 2020-21	22
M9: Proportion of SHS clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling	23
M10: Proportion of Victorian SHS clients with unmet need for mental health support	24
M11: Proportion of Victorian SHS clients with unmet need for family violence support (%)	25
M12: Returning SHS clients (%)	26
M13: Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population (\$/capita)	27
M14: Proportion of Population on the Housing Register Waiting List – New and Transfer Applications % (Number)	28
M15: Recipients of New Victorian Public Housing Allocated (%)	29
M16: Recipients of Mainstream Community Housing Units Allocated (%)	30
M17: Comparative Private Rental Rate, 2011 to 2021	31
M18: Transition from SHS into Private Market (% at Exit)	32
M19: Comparative Rates of homeownership, 2011 to 2021	33
M20: Number Assisted by Government Shared Equity Program to Purchase a Home	34
Section 3: Summary of Outcomes	35
Appendix 1: Year 2 Programs	38
Appendix 2: Resourcing	40

Message from the Chairs

In February 2020, the Victorian Government launched ***Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home*** - The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (VAHMF). The VAHMF (Framework) was developed through the principles of Aboriginal Self-determination that sets out a blueprint to improve Aboriginal housing and homelessness outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. The Framework was developed by the community, for the community, and implementation is being led by the community, through Aboriginal Housing Victoria with support from government.

Aboriginal Self-determination is the first order principle of the Framework and is fundamental to strengthening the housing and homelessness sector for Aboriginal people. It is through the knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal communities that advice is offered to respond to the needs of Aboriginal peoples across the housing and homelessness service systems.

Aboriginal Housing Victoria have developed and strengthened partnerships with the Victorian Government, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs), Traditional Owner Groups and the mainstream housing and homelessness sector to implement Framework objectives. The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework Implementation Working Group (VAHMF IWG) is the key partnership mechanism between the Aboriginal community and Government to oversee delivery of the significant reforms identified in ***Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort***.

Under oversight of the VAHMF IWG the second year of implementation focused on delivery of Framework initiatives to progress the infrastructure needed to begin to turn the Measures in this report around. The IWG identified actions through the VAHMF 2021-2022 Work Plan that drives the work which aligns with the strategic goals of the Framework.

The Framework is crucial to delivering a culturally safe housing and homelessness system which addresses the challenges that Aboriginal people face in the housing system. It also supports the implementation of Victoria's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build 10 per cent net Aboriginal dwelling target, strengthens the housing sector for Victorian Aboriginal communities, provides strong governance and enhances the capacity for Aboriginal communities in the housing sector.

The Building Works Package is well under way to deliver maintenance, refurbishment, and upgrades for Aboriginal Victorians in social housing. A commitment of \$35 million is being delivered by Aboriginal Housing Victoria in partnership with eighteen ACCOs. A further \$13 million has been committed to Aboriginal housing projects throughout the broader housing Building Works stimulus package.

Major reform projects have also commenced in Year 2 of implementation. Research was undertaken to develop options for a reformed homelessness system that better supports Aboriginal Victorians out of homelessness, with commitment from the Victorian Government to support implementation of those options.

Additionally, the Residential Tenancies Commissioner has produced a report and 14 recommendations to address the discrimination and barriers the Victorian Aboriginal Community faces when accessing the private rental market.

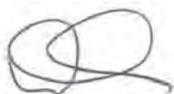
On 8 October 2021, the Government launched the Victorian Homebuyer Fund shared equity scheme.

While supporting all eligible Victorians to own their own home sooner, it includes targeted support for Aboriginal Victorians, enabling them to purchase a home with a deposit as low as 3.5 per cent. Under the Victorian Homebuyer Fund, the Victorian Government also provides Aboriginal Victorians up to 35 per cent of the acquisition price for a home in exchange for a proportionate share in the property, which participants can buy back in their own time.

The first two years of the Framework delivery has been in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic which placed significant stress on the housing and homelessness sector, further impacting on Aboriginal people accessing safe, secure, and affordable housing.

Despite the uncertainties of this time, work has continued to progress, and the pandemic enabled ground-breaking investment in innovative solutions such as the From Homelessness to a Home (H2H) and Housing for Families (H4F) programs. The Victorian Government invested \$150 million in H2H in July 2020, to ensure people experiencing homelessness and accommodated in hotels, were supported to exit into stable housing. As of 25 March 2022, 374 Aboriginal Victorians have exited hotel accommodation into housing. The Victorian Government funded a further \$66 million for the H4F program in November 2021, with a focus on providing safe hotel exits to longer term accommodation for families and their children by June 2022.

To deliver on the vision of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* that *Every Aboriginal Person has a Home*, ongoing investment of the key programs within the Framework is essential. The last two years have taught us that unanticipated challenges will always arise but that collectively we must continue to focus on improving the housing safety net for Aboriginal people. Housing is fundamental to achieving broader outcomes and we have seen how important it is to ensuring the Victorian Aboriginal Community remains safe during unprecedented times such as these.



DARREN SMITH

CEO, Aboriginal Housing Victoria
Co-Chair
VAHHF Implementation
Working Group



BEN RIMMER

CEO, Homes Victoria
Co-Chair
VAHHF Implementation
Working Group

Section 1:

Implementing Second Year Actions

Carrying on from the establishment of the governance to guide the implementation of the Framework in year one, the second year has focused on strengthening the infrastructure required to support long term implementation. This priority focus will lead to the desired vision of the Framework that, *Every Aboriginal Person has a Home*.

In year two, several major projects and programs commenced that supported and engaged a wide range of stakeholders and community members – those with a lived experience of homelessness, renters in social housing, ACCOs, and Traditional Owner Groups - ensuring Aboriginal Self-determination is always underpinning the work out of the Framework.

The projects commenced in year two, work towards achieving the Strategic Goals identified in *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*:

- 1. Secure housing improves life outcomes**
- 2. Build supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population**
- 3. Open doors to home ownership and private rental**
- 4. An Aboriginal focused homelessness system**
- 5. A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs**

1.1 VAHMF IWG 2021-2022 Work Plan

The IWG identified five priority pillars for progressing the second year of implementation. The VAHMF IWG 2021-2022 Work Plan identified 39 activities under the following five goals:

- 1. Develop a 5-year implementation strategy** – A drilling down of the 20-year road map (VAHMF) into a meaningful and strategic agenda of work.
- 2. Build supply of Aboriginal housing** – Enable Aboriginal communities to participate in the Big Housing Build and build supply
- 3. Housing Outcomes** – Focusing on Improving outcomes and support for Aboriginal renters and homeowners
- 4. Strengthen Governance** – Strengthen VAHMF governance to progress implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* objectives and to provide accountability and transparency
- 5. Embed Self-determination in homelessness policy and sector** – Reforming the homelessness service environment to improve access and outcomes for Aboriginal people

The deliverables below outline the major activities in the VAHMF IWG 2021-2022 Work Plan undertaken in Year 2. Items marked as ‘in progress’ have progressed and will continue to year three of delivering the Framework.

Item ¹	Activity	Achieved	In progress	Rolled over to Year 3
Goal 1: Develop a 5-year implementation strategy				
1.1	Develop 5-year strategic plan			
1.2	Develop a Theory of Change			
1.3	Develop a Yearly Work Plan (2021-22)			
1.5	Convene second bi-annual Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit			
Goal 2: Build supply of Aboriginal housing				
2.1	Implement <i>Advancing Aboriginal housing objectives</i> through the Big Housing Build			
2.2	Develop a 10 – 15 year Aboriginal Community Housing Sector Vision			
2.6	Develop a Closing the Gap Sector Strengthening Plan			
2.7	Develop resources and tools to assist ACCOs to become registered housing providers			
2.8	Develop template for culturally safe housing provider policies and procedures and guidance material for ACCOs			
2.12	Partnership brokers to work with mainstream registered housing and ACCOs to develop partnerships			
Goal 3: Housing Outcomes				
3.1	Improve support for Aboriginal social and community housing renters to sustain their tenancies and to progress on the pathway to housing independence and meet their potential			
3.3	Investigation into discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market and develop recommendations			
3.5	Implementation and coordination of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program			
3.6	Creating a voice for Aboriginal renters in social housing through the Victorian Public Tenants Association			
3.8	Improve Aboriginal cultural safety in the homelessness and housing system			
3.9	Support Aboriginal people to access home ownership opportunities			

¹ Actions have been summarised for the purpose of the Annual Report Card, a full list of actions can be found in the VAHMF 2021-2022 Work Plan

Item ¹	Activity	Achieved	In progress	Rolled over to Year 3
Goal 4: Strengthen Governance				
4.1	Strengthen governance to oversee delivery of the 5-year implementation strategy			
4.3	Engage Government-community structures in discussion of how to implement sector specific housing and homelessness strategies			
4.4	Develop, resource and implement a communication and engagement strategy for the VAHMF			
4.5	Monitor and report on progress in implementing the VAHMF			
4.7	Deliver the second Annual Report Card			
4.8	Create an Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness data dashboard			
4.9	Support the Aboriginal community and ACCOs participation in the social housing regulatory review			
Goal 5: Embed Self-determination in homelessness policy and sector				
5.1	Deliver project for options on a redesigned homelessness system that better supports Aboriginal Victorians			
5.2	Monitor and evaluate Aboriginal clients through from Homelessness to a Home program			

1.2 Summary of Year 2 Reform

Several system reform activities have commenced through year two implementation that will guide systematic responses across the housing and homelessness system, to increase positive outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. The activities undertaken and their progress are illustrated below.

Victorian Government's *Big Housing Build*

The Big Housing Build (BHB) announced in November 2020, was the largest investment in social housing in Victoria's history, with 10 per cent of the \$5.3 billion allocated to Aboriginal Victorians. Since its announcement, the Victorian Government has supported ACCO participation through initiatives such as:

The BHB Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) - Homes for Aboriginal Victorians Round, which seeks to deliver 400 new social housing for Aboriginal Victorians in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to:

- boost the quality and supply of housing for Aboriginal Victorians; and
- foster the growth and long-term sustainability of the Victorian Aboriginal housing sector.

Additionally, the \$1.38 billion BHB SHGF grants program has an overall target of providing up to 4,200 Social Housing dwellings, this includes:

- 10 per cent of housing (420) across the SHGF grants program allocated to Aboriginal Victorians enabled by the BHB Aboriginal First Order Principles to guide an Aboriginal Self-determined approach.

Additionally, the Victorian Government has invested a minimum \$600,000 from the Community Housing Sector Development Fund to empower the Victorian Aboriginal community to contribute to the Big Housing Build, including:

- A feasibility study of 8 ACCOs that assesses their financial health and sustainability to become housing providers and assesses and evaluates land they owned to determine development opportunities that can be submitted to the BHB HfAVR.
- Community partnerships brokerage support role that will support Aboriginal organisations and community housing providers to develop formal partnerships which can be submitted in the BHB HfAVR.

While the 10 per cent target in the BHB supports Goal 2 of the Framework: *Build Supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population*, the Framework identified that an additional 5,085 Aboriginal Social Housing units will be required by 2036. Therefore, continued investment like the BHB will be required to achieve this goal.

Improving Homelessness Services and Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) proposed funding to develop Aboriginal specific homelessness access point/s. However, the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) endorsed a broadening of the scope of the project to include a review of the homelessness system to support the goals outlined in ***Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort***.

Aboriginal Housing Victoria led work that aims to provide advice, and actionable options, on a redesigned Aboriginal homelessness service system that:

1. is accessible to Aboriginal People;
2. provides pathways out of homelessness; and
3. improves long-term sustainable post homelessness housing outcomes.

The final report of the project has been endorsed by the VAHHF IWG, who are committed to ensuring its implementation. The implementation of the options in this redesigned homelessness system will support Goal Four of the Framework: *An Aboriginal focused homelessness system*.

20-year vision of the Aboriginal Community Housing Sector

Achieving the vision of ***Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort***, that every Aboriginal person has a home will require long term dedicated effort and focus from government and community. Work has commenced to clearly articulate a 20-year vision for the Aboriginal Community housing sector focussing on the sector's contribution to achieving the broader vision. This work will extend to mapping out how the vision can be achieved, and foundational sector strengthening and capacity building activities that will be captured in an initial 5-year implementation plan. The 20-year vision of the Aboriginal Community housing Sector supports Goal 5 of the Framework: *A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs*.

Aboriginal Private Rental Access in Victoria: “Excluded from the Start” Project

During the past year work has progressed from research on barriers to private rental access to actionable recommendations to improve access.

Swinburne University of Technology researchers were contracted by the Consumer Policy Research Centre, on behalf of the Office of the Commissioner for Residential Tenancies, Victorian Legal Aid and Aboriginal Housing Victoria to conduct research into discrimination and other barriers faced by Aboriginal Victorians trying to access the private rental market. From the Report, the Commissioner for Residential Tenancies identified 14 Recommendations to address the barriers that the Victorian Aboriginal community faces in accessing the private rental market.

The report recommends actions to improve private rental access, wider support availability, the development and distribution of effective rental information to the Aboriginal community and implementing measures to address discrimination and improve dispute resolution.

The Recommendations have been endorsed by the VAHMF IWG and have been escalated for Ministerial approval. The implementation of the Recommendations from this project will support Goal 3 of the Framework: *Open doors to home ownership and private rental*.

Helping Aboriginal Victorians to buy a home through the Victorian Homebuyer Fund

The Victorian Government recognises the affordability challenges in the housing sector and is investing in supports and taxation relief to make owning a home a little easier. The Victorian Homebuyer Fund is one such initiative.

The Homebuyer Fund supports eligible Aboriginal Victorians to own their own home sooner by reducing the barriers to entering the property market. Once in the home, homebuyers will benefit from lower ongoing mortgage costs as their mortgage is smaller, making the loan more affordable.

Aboriginal participants purchasing an eligible property in an eligible location through the Homebuyer Fund can receive a contribution from the Victorian Government of up to 35 per cent of the value of the property in exchange for an equivalent share in the property. Participants will need to contribute at least 3.5 per cent of the acquisition price and cover any acquisition costs, such as stamp duty and conveyancing costs. The remaining amount is to be secured through a home loan from a Homebuyer Fund partner lender.

Increasing access to homeownership for the Victorian Aboriginal Community through the Victorian Homebuyer Fund supports Goal 3 of the Framework: *Open doors to home ownership and private rental*.

Social Housing Regulatory Review

The Social Housing Regulation Review (SHRR) identified future regulatory arrangements to promote strong resident protection, better and more accessible information to Victorians and positions social housing for growth and transformation over the next decade. The consultation approach specifically considered the views and experiences of Aboriginal Victorians and Aboriginal Community aspirations on how the regulatory system should contribute to ensuring the sector delivers culturally safe housing. The consultations focused on a key issue that apart from Aboriginal Housing Victoria all of the Aboriginal Community housing providers are outside the regulatory system. That in order to obtain the advantages and benefits of including Aboriginal housing providers in the regulatory system there are barriers to registration and costs and challenges of maintaining registration to be overcome. The SHRR Interim report was released in December 2021 and recommends 17 measures under the following categories in relation to Aboriginal Housing:

- Cultural Safety
- Accountability to the community
- Culturally appropriate advocacy and support
- Supporting registration and Aboriginal Self-determination
- Performance standards for registered Aboriginal housing providers

The SHRR review supports Goal 5 of the Framework: *A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs*.

Improving Aboriginal Cultural Safety in the housing and homelessness system

To support the housing and homelessness system response in delivering culturally safe service response, core initiatives are underway across public and community housing and the homelessness sector.

Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic) are implementing a sector wide Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework. This enables community housing organisations to improve community housing outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. The Framework embeds Aboriginal cultural safety, accountability and monitoring into all aspects of their organisations. The work has been directly incorporated into core requirements of the BHB delivery programs for the community housing sector to demonstrate their commitment towards cultural safety.

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework has been developed for the specialist homelessness sector. It is specifically designed to assist specialist homelessness service providers to reflect on their practices and adopt strategies and actions that will improve the way they engage with and address needs of Aboriginal Victorians who experience homelessness.

Homes Victoria have commenced implementing an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework. This framework builds on the existing Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Cultural Safety Framework that will deliver a wide-ranging set of activities to increase staff's ability to work in a culturally safe manner with colleagues, community organisations and Aboriginal people.

Improving cultural safety for the Victorian Aboriginal Community within the mainstream social housing and homelessness sectors supports Goal 5 of the Framework: *A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs.*

Closing the Gap

The Victorian Closing the Gap (CtG) implementation plan (2021-2023) that was successfully delivered in partnership with Aboriginal communities, included the specific CtG outcome measure (Outcome 9): *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need*². Through the delivery of the implementation plan activities, key priorities identified within the existing VAHMF IWG work plan were incorporated to ensure alignment of resourcing and effort.

The CtG National Housing Sector Strengthening Plan (HSSP) is a joint National plan between the Commonwealth, States, Territories, and the Aboriginal housing sector. It provides a national framework for parties to deliver on a joint approach to sector specific actions.

The National CtG HSSP allows jurisdictions and its agencies the flexibility to utilise the plan in a way that aligns with their own jurisdictional housing policy. Furthermore, it does not prescribe jurisdictions to certain actions that do not fit within their own housing policy context.

Victoria's approach will look to deliver further resourcing to strengthen the Aboriginal sector, including:

- New social housing through the BHB
- Reducing the rates of homelessness by 10 per cent
- Increased rates of home ownership
- Better tenancy supports – enabling choice and control
- Strengthening existing governance approaches
- Building cultural capability of the mainstream housing and homelessness system.
- Data sharing and empowering Aboriginal communities

In addition to the important system reform work taking place, several programs that support the above strategic goals have also commenced in Year 2 of implementation. Further information on these programs and their resourcing can be found at **Appendix 1 and 2**.

² Victorian Government – Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023

Section 2:

Report against Outcome Measures

This section reports on data outcomes from the 2020 – 2021 financial year for approximately 20 measures from homelessness to home ownership. Where the data is available, the measures compare:

- Victoria's Indigenous outcomes relative to the national Indigenous rates³
- Victoria's performance relative to the previous year / time period
- Indigenous experience in Victoria relative to mainstream experience

Outcomes for all measures are derived from data provided by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services (RoGs), ABS Census data, and Victorian State Government agencies (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Treasury and Finance).

The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted some the measures outlined in this report due to the economic, mental, and housing stress it has placed on the community.

For most of the measures in the Annual Report Card, the data has remained mostly stable since 2019-20. This is significant, as identified in the previous Annual Report Card, Aboriginal Victorians are seeking homelessness support at ten times the rate they were ten years ago. The stabilisation of the data, instead of worsening, demonstrates that the infrastructure established in the past two years has slowed down this trajectory and continued investment will see these unacceptable numbers turn around.

The data in this year's Report Card has identified two priority areas that require further investment:

1. Improving capability within service systems to provide tailored support for Aboriginal Victorians at risk of homelessness.

The proportion of people with unmet mental health and unmet drug and alcohol support needs has continued to grow over the past decade, and in particular those exiting the justice system which continues to be a driver of homelessness. The increase in social housing stock generated through the Victorian Governments *Big Housing Build*, will provide higher levels of coverage for those requiring affordable housing. However, more people are requiring support and evidence shows that the current housing and homelessness system requires further investment to support the predicted increase. Prioritisation of safe and culturally appropriate short, medium and long-term accommodation with integrated support is crucial to reducing the rate of homelessness for Aboriginal Victorians.

2. Supplementing the high cost of housing with further investment in social housing

The private market for rental and ownership has increased significantly over the past few years and has become inaccessible for most. It is important to acknowledge barriers and challenges that accompany this growth and recognise that those who have been shut out of the private market require other tenure options.

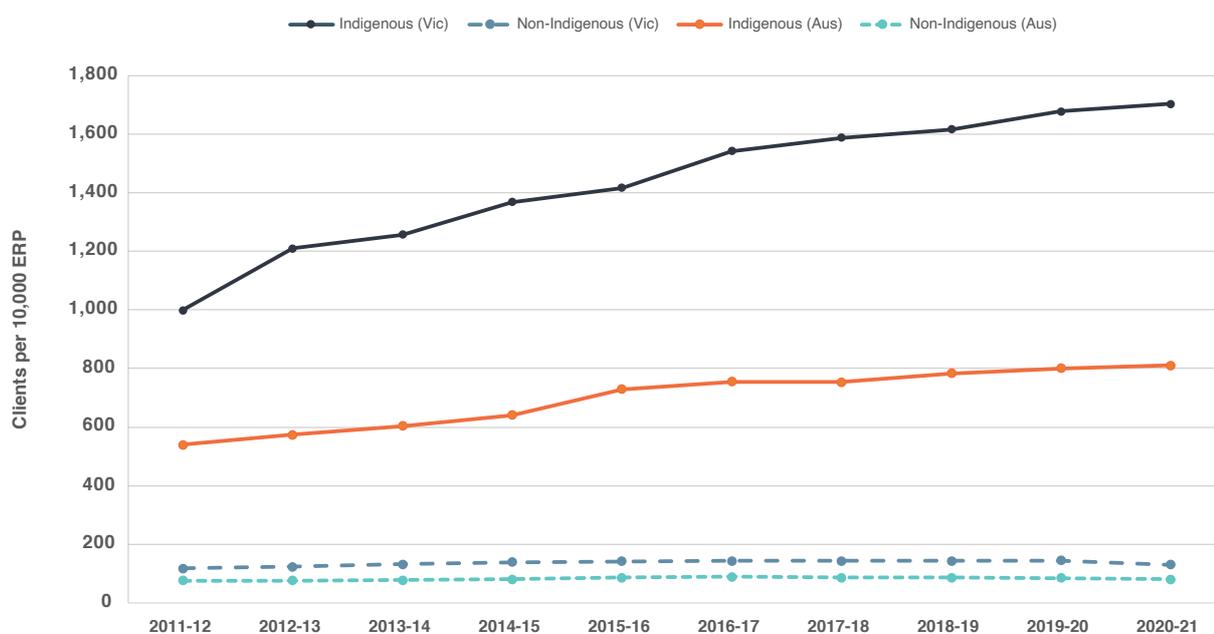
³ The term Indigenous within the report refers to language used within the data sets captured by AIHW. This term refers to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

M1: Receiving services from⁴ Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) per capita (clients per 10,000 population)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	1,677.9	1,703.2	799.9	810.6
Non-Indigenous	144.7	130.4	85.0	80.2

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 1: Rate of SHS clients in Victoria and Australia by Indigenous Status, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

In 2020-21, seventeen per cent of Aboriginal Victorians sought homelessness support in Victoria. This is unchanged from the previous year with homelessness continuing to remain at a crisis for Aboriginal Victorians, who are thirteen times more likely to seek SHS support than non-Aboriginal Victorians.

While the work undertaken since the release of the Framework in 2020 will support the reduction of Aboriginal Victorians requiring homelessness support, based on this data, further and sustained investment is required to achieve the goal in the Framework of reducing the rate of Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness by ten per cent per annum.

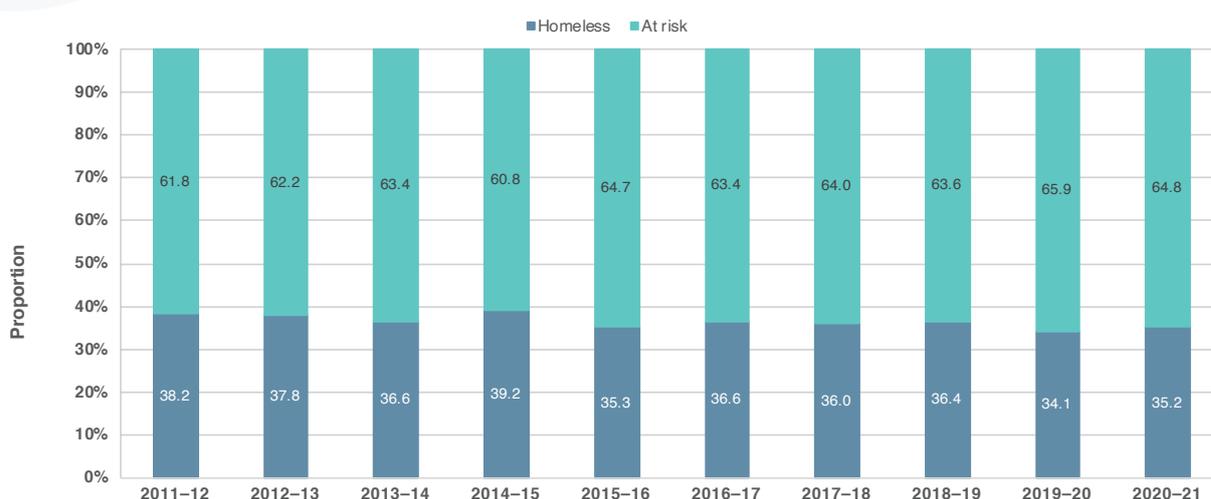
⁴ The title has been updated from the First Annual Report Card to represent the data more accurately

M2: Proportion of clients who exit Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) homeless (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	34.1	35.2	33.7	35.7
Non-Indigenous	29.1	30.6	30.3	31.6

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 2: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support, by homeless status at the end of support, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

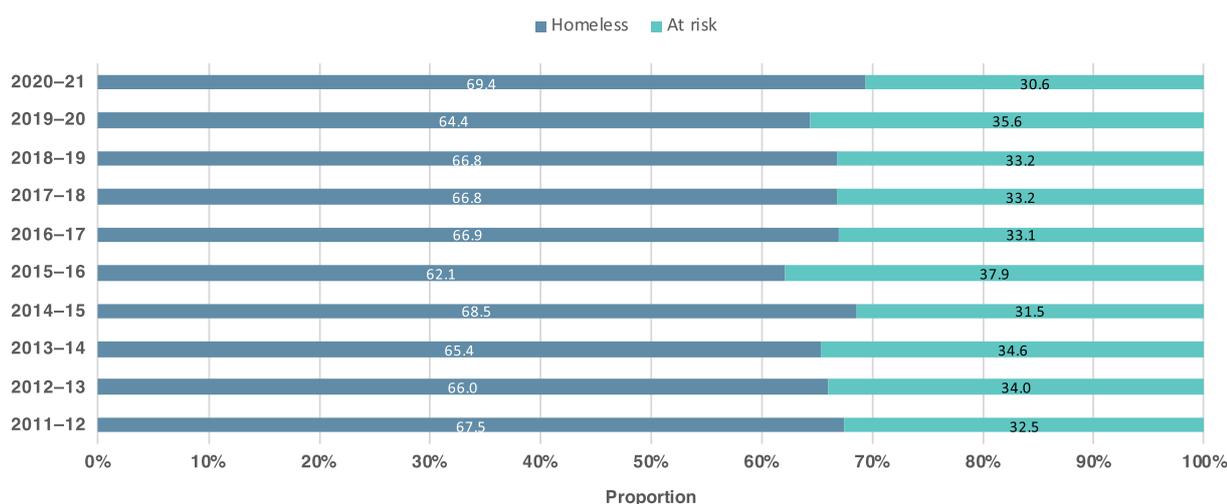
More than one in three Aboriginal Victorians who received support from SHS' in 2020-21 were homeless at the end of their support. Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to be homeless upon close of support than non-Aboriginal Victorians.

M3: Proportion of clients exiting the SHS system homeless who were homeless on entry (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	64.4	69.4	62.9	65.4
Non-Indigenous	68.3	68.5	61.1	62.1

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 3: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support who were homeless at the start of support, by homeless status at the end of support, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

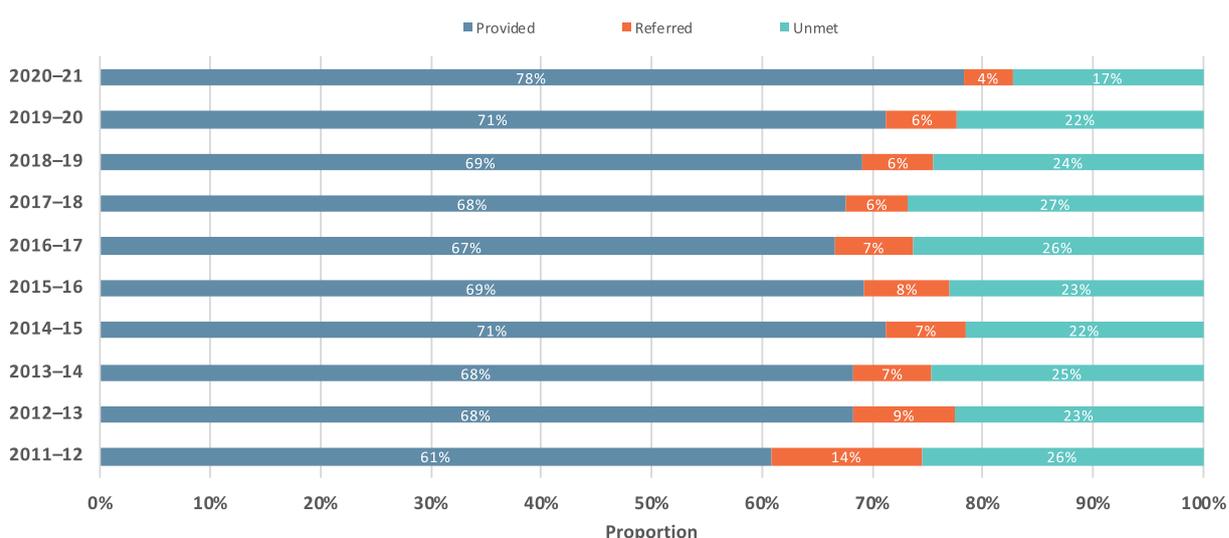
In 2020-21, almost seventy per cent of Aboriginal Victorians receiving SHS support were homeless both at the beginning and end of their support. This situation has worsened slightly from the previous years, which could be reflective of the Covid-19 pandemic. Full commitment by the Victorian Government to the implementation of options to better support Aboriginal Victorians out of the homelessness system from the *Improving Homelessness Services and Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians Project*, will support turning this measure around.

M4a: Unmet need⁵ for short term / emergency accommodation (including referral only) (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	22.3 (28.7)	17.3 (21.7)	25.8 (34.7)	26.5 (34.5)
Non-Indigenous	28.9 (33.7)	20.2 (24.1)	33.3 (44.1)	31.4 (42.1)

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 4: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with need for short-term accommodation support, by service provision status, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

Seventeen per cent of Aboriginal Victorians requiring short term / emergency housing in 2020-21 did not receive it through either provision of the accommodation or referral to another provider. This is an improvement of five percentage points from the previous year, which could be reflective of Victorian Government and Aboriginal Community Controlled service interventions, including the increase in family violence short-term accommodation support. However, almost 1 in 5 Aboriginal Victorians are left without emergency accommodation when they need it most.

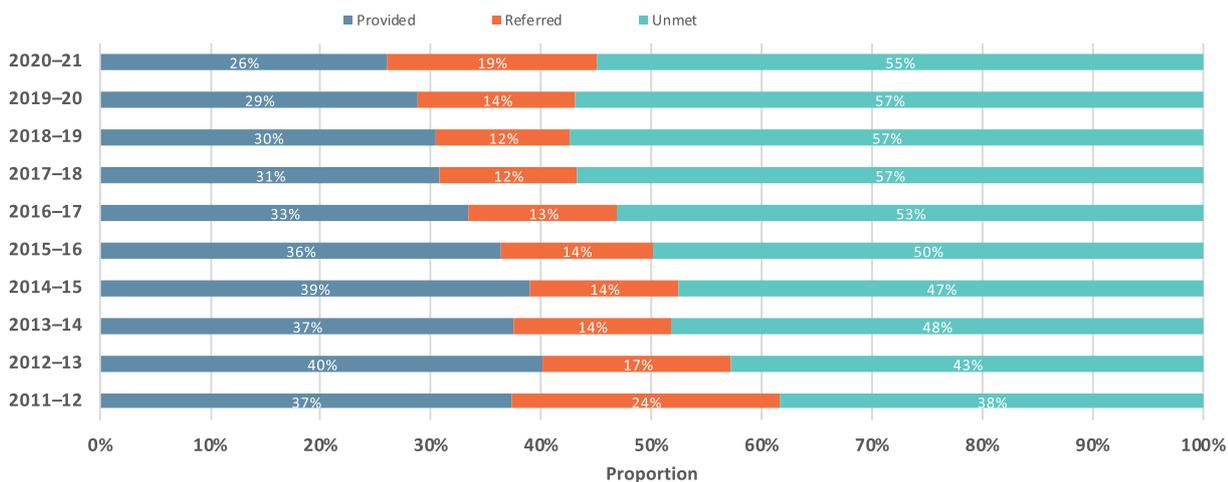
⁵ Neither provided nor referred

M4b: Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with unmet need for medium term / transitional housing 2011-12 to 2020-21 (including referral) (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	56.9 (71.2)	55.0 (73.9)	53.0 (72.9)	55.1 (73.1)
Non-Indigenous	60.9 (71.1)	57.4 (71.7)	57.6 (74.4)	56.9 (74.6)

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 5: Proportion of Indigenous SHS clients with unmet need for medium-term/transitional housing in Victoria, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

More than half of Aboriginal Victorians (55%) requiring medium term/ transitional housing do not receive it and remains relatively unchanged from the previous year. It is understood that the lack of culturally appropriate transitional housing effects the recovery of those exiting institutionalised settings. Safe and secure housing is crucial to a successful transition to independent living.

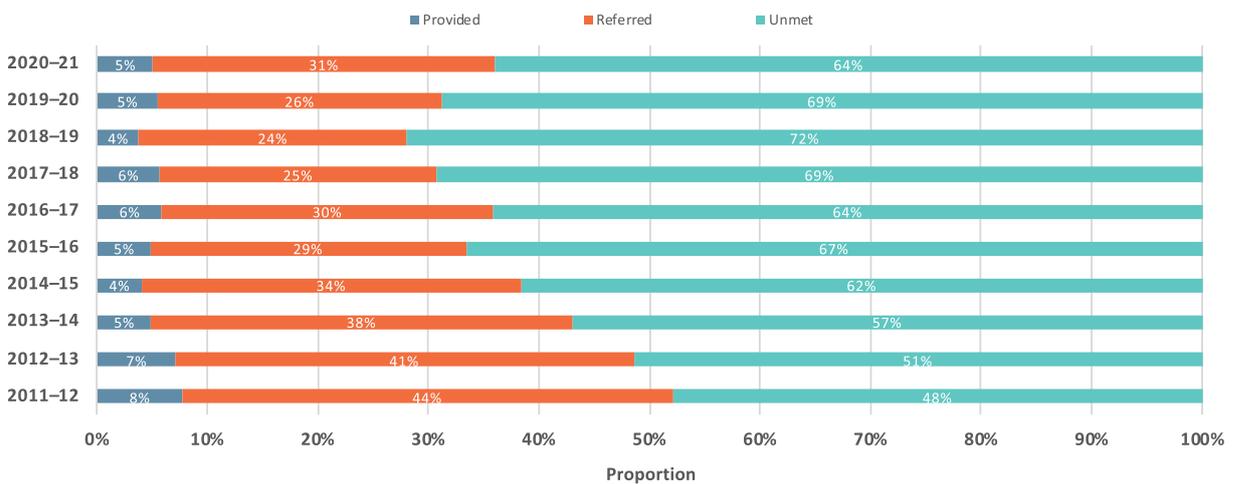
The Victorian Aboriginal community, the homelessness sector and Victorian Government continue to work together to increase cultural safety and awareness within the sector. This includes the development of the Councils to Homeless Persons Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework that increases the cultural understanding and awareness of the mainstream homelessness sector to support delivery of culturally safe service provisions.

M4c: Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with unmet need for long term accommodation, 2011-12 to 2020-21 (including referral)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	68.7 (94.5)	64.0 (95.0)	68.8 (96.5)	69.3 (96.6)
Non-Indigenous	74.9 (96.0)	70.3 (96.2)	71.4 (96.4)	69.8 (96.5)

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 6: Proportion of Indigenous SHS Clients in Victoria with unmet need for long term accommodation support, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

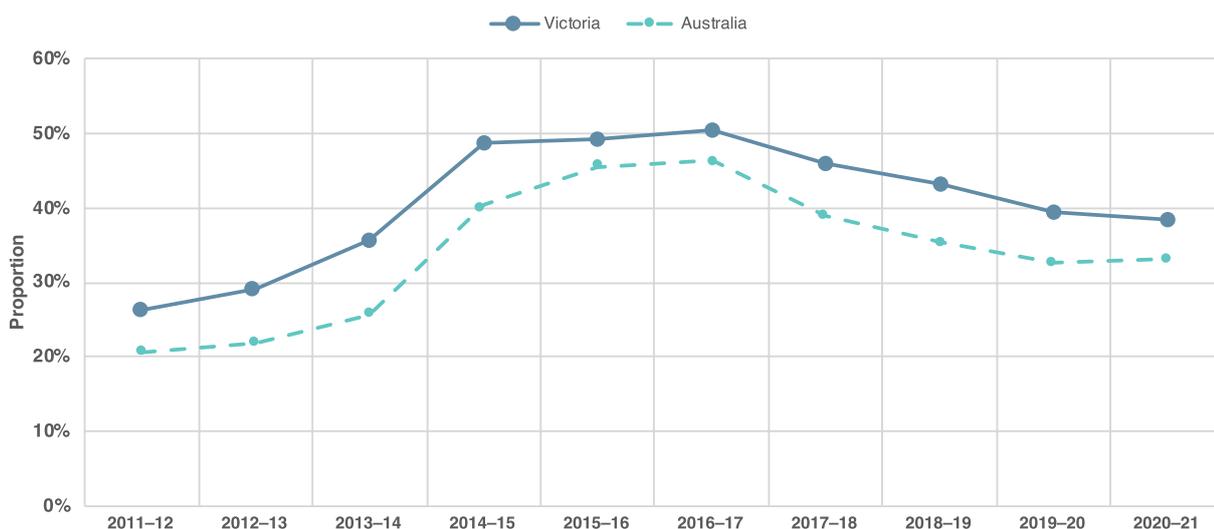
Only five per cent of Aboriginal Victorian SHS clients that require long term accommodation are provided with that housing directly through an SHS, and a further thirty-one per cent were referred in 2020-21. Further investment in long term housing options is necessary to see any improvement in Measures 1-3. The proposed expansion of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program will ease the pressure on the demand for long term housing, while the housing stock from the Big Housing Build is developed.

M5: Indigenous SHS clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis (%)⁶

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	39.4	38.4	32.7	33.0
Non-Indigenous	34.7	33.5	36.1	35.8

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 7: Indigenous SHS Clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

Aboriginal Victorians continue to present to SHS' due to housing crisis at a higher rate than non-Aboriginal Victorians. Despite the moratorium on evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, about forty per cent of Aboriginal Victorians sought homelessness support due to an eviction. This may suggest there are barriers for Aboriginal Renters in accessing support/dispute resolution processes.

The project that investigated the impacts of racial discrimination against Aboriginal Victorians in the private rental market has produced 14 recommendations that will address the barriers the Victorian Aboriginal community faces in accessing and maintaining private rental, including:

Recommendation 13: The Department of Justice and Community Safety in partnership with the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum leads further work to develop culturally appropriate dispute resolution processes for Aboriginal renters.

⁶ % of cohort seeking assistance due to housing crisis

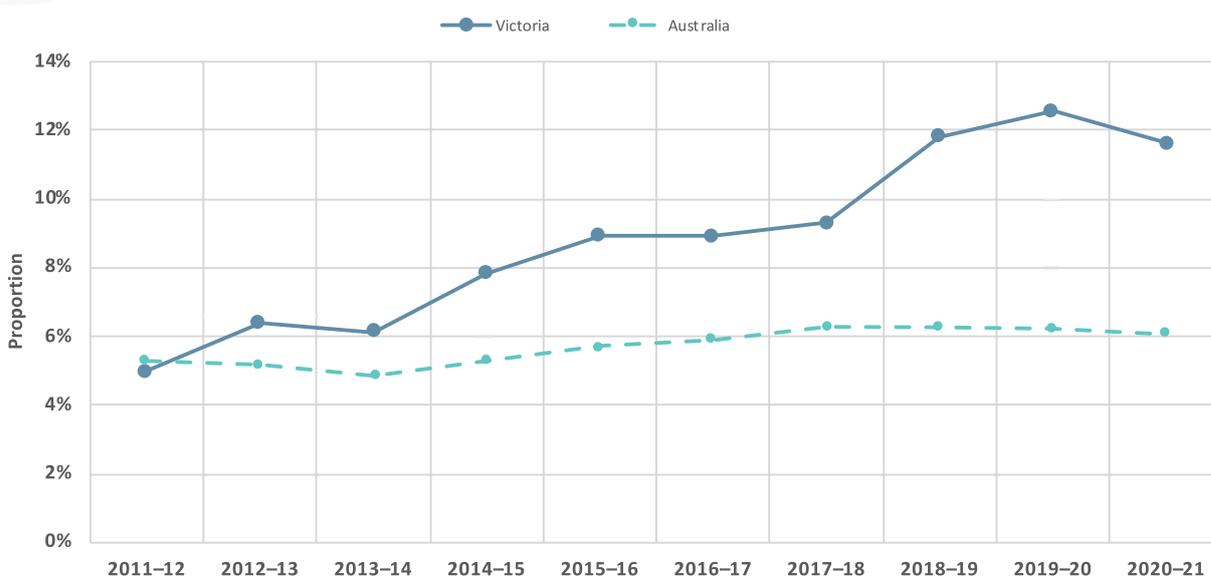
⁷ Housing crisis means client was formally evicted from their accommodation or the client was asked to leave their accommodation (SHSC definition)

M6: Indigenous SHS clients presenting for assistance following exit from custody (number)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	966	935	3290	3333
Non-Indigenous	4930	4667	8312	7808

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 8: Proportion of Indigenous SHS Clients exiting custodial arrangements in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

The criminal justice system is a driver of homelessness as Aboriginal Victorians are 18 times more likely to seek SHS support after exiting a custodial setting than non-Aboriginal Victorians. Lack of access to stable accommodation after exiting custodial arrangements is a driver of reoffending, as prisoners who are homeless upon exiting prison are more likely to return⁸.

Access to safe and culturally appropriate short, medium, and long-term accommodation with integrated support is crucial to reducing the rate of imprisonment and recidivism. Integrated, wrap around supports for individuals who have intersectional vulnerability, especially those who have engaged in institutional settings such as the corrections system, are critical for supporting Aboriginal Victorians exiting the justice system.

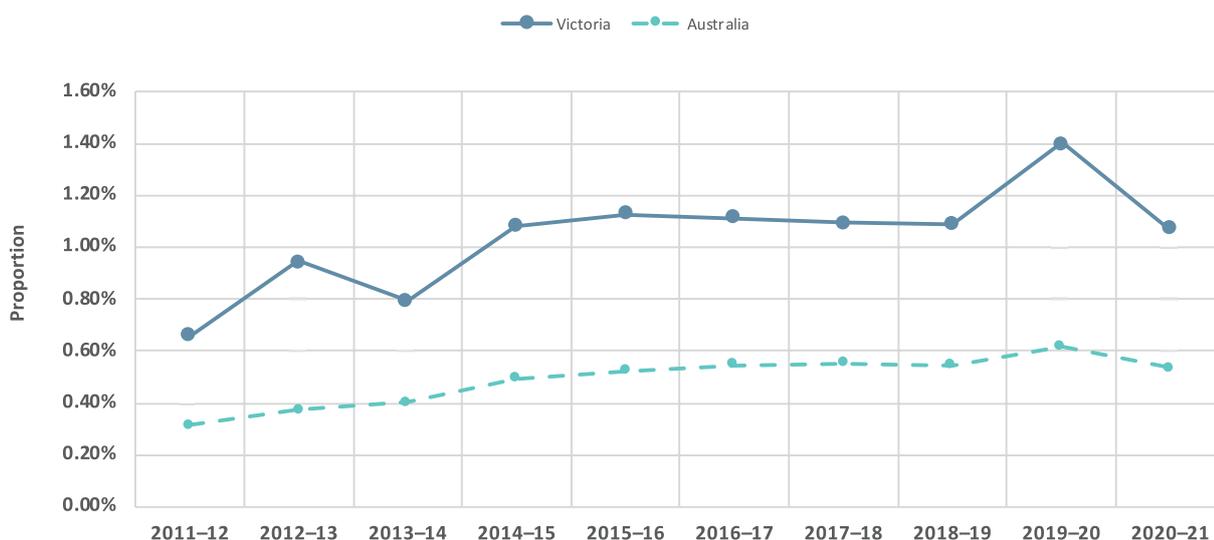
⁸ Australian Institute of Criminology, Research Report, *How much does prison really cost? Comparing the costs of imprisonment with community corrections*, (2018) https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/rr_05_240418_2.pdf pg. 55

M7: SHS clients in Victoria and Australia, by Indigenous status and interaction with psychiatric hospital/unit (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	146 ⁹	115	442	392
Non-Indigenous	1024	983	2219	2033

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 9: Proportion of Indigenous SHS Clients in psychiatric hospital/unit at the start of support in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

Comparative to the national Aboriginal rates, Aboriginal Victorians are overrepresented in those who are discharged from clinical psychiatric settings into the SHS system. In-reach services exist to support those transitioning out of Mental Health facilities, however those who require access to stable accommodation after exiting a mental health facility should receive it. Those needing mental health support have been identified as a priority cohort within the Big Housing Build, as transitional to long term housing options will ensure these numbers decline in the future.

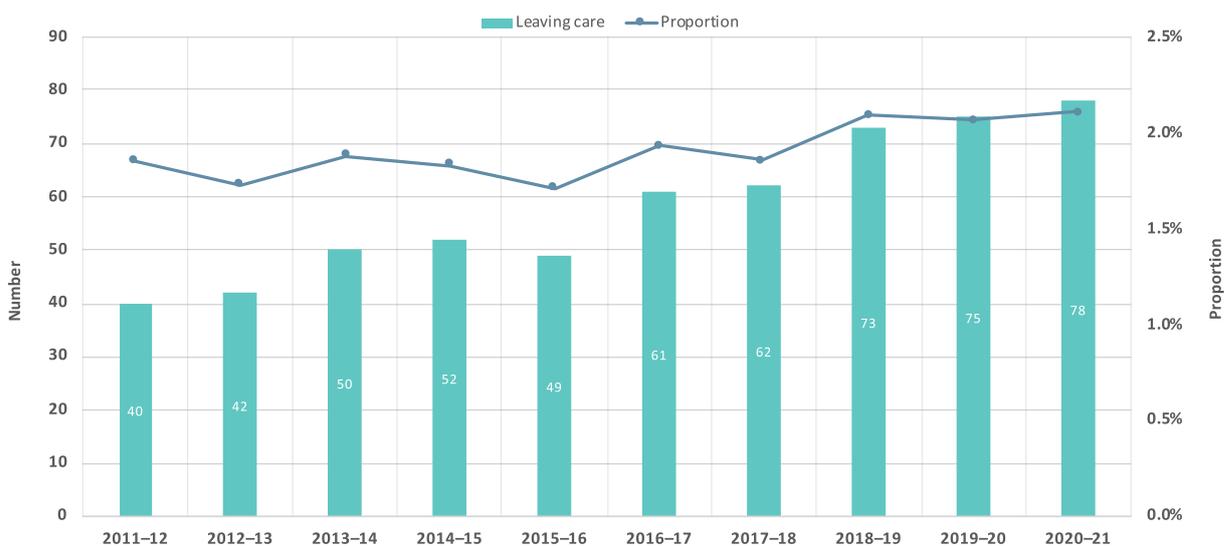
⁹ The 2019-20 numbers are different to the First Annual Report Card's data due to updates provided by AIHW.

M8: Indigenous SHS clients aged 20 or under¹⁰ leaving care in Victoria 2011-12 to 2020-21

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	75	78	290	276
Non-Indigenous	272	241	535	508

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 10: Indigenous SHS Clients aged 20 or under leaving care in Victoria, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Note. A client is identified as transition from care if in any support period during the reporting period, their reasons for seeking assistance was transition from foster care/child safety residential placements.

Commentary

In 2020-21, twenty-four per cent of SHS clients aged under 20 years old leaving care in Victoria were Aboriginal. Once in contact with care, it is often the start of a cycle of contact with other institutionalised settings, including the juvenile and adult justice systems. Aboriginal young people are overrepresented in care and have been identified as a priority cohort for housing support as part of the Victorian Governments investment through the *Big Housing Build* housing stimulus.

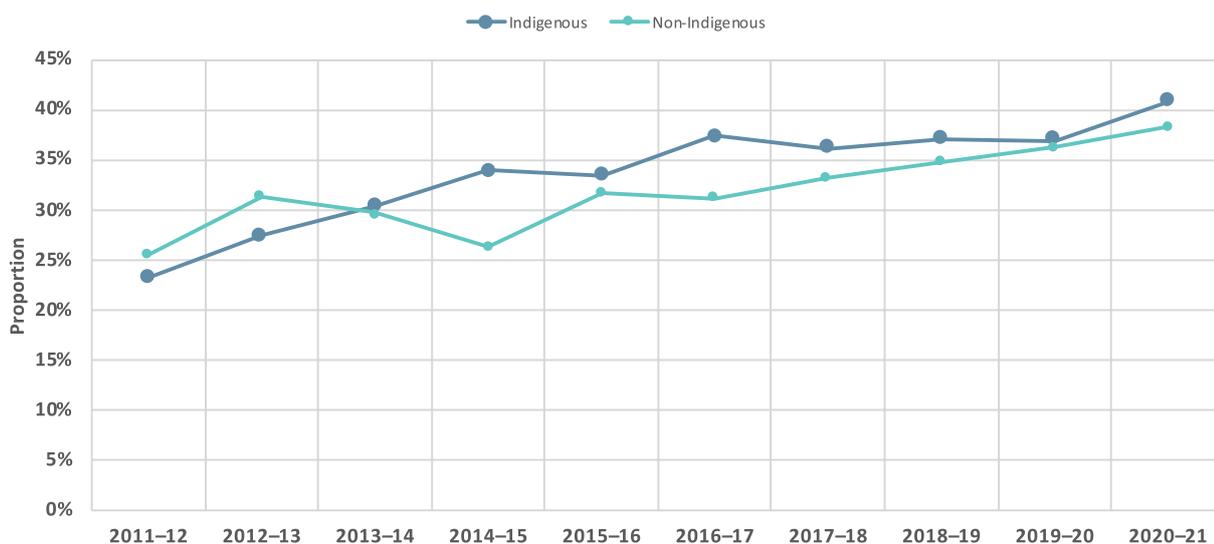
¹⁰ the data in last year's Report Card included all people leaving care at any age – this year's data is more reflective of the situation

M9: Proportion of SHS clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling¹¹

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	37.0	40.8	39.8	38.8
Non-Indigenous	36.4	38.4	35.9	36.7

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 11: Proportion of SHS Clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

The trajectory for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorian SHS clients with an unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling has continued to rise since 2011. In 2020–21, close to two in every five clients are not receiving support. Clearly, the support systems that are meant to address these issues are failing. If people are not provided long term support, statistically they will continue to return to the homelessness system. Goal 4 of the Framework calls for tailored support for those at high risk and an increase in supply of crisis and transitional housing. As the number of clients experiencing homelessness with an unmet need for drug /alcohol counselling continues to increase, this is a clear priority.

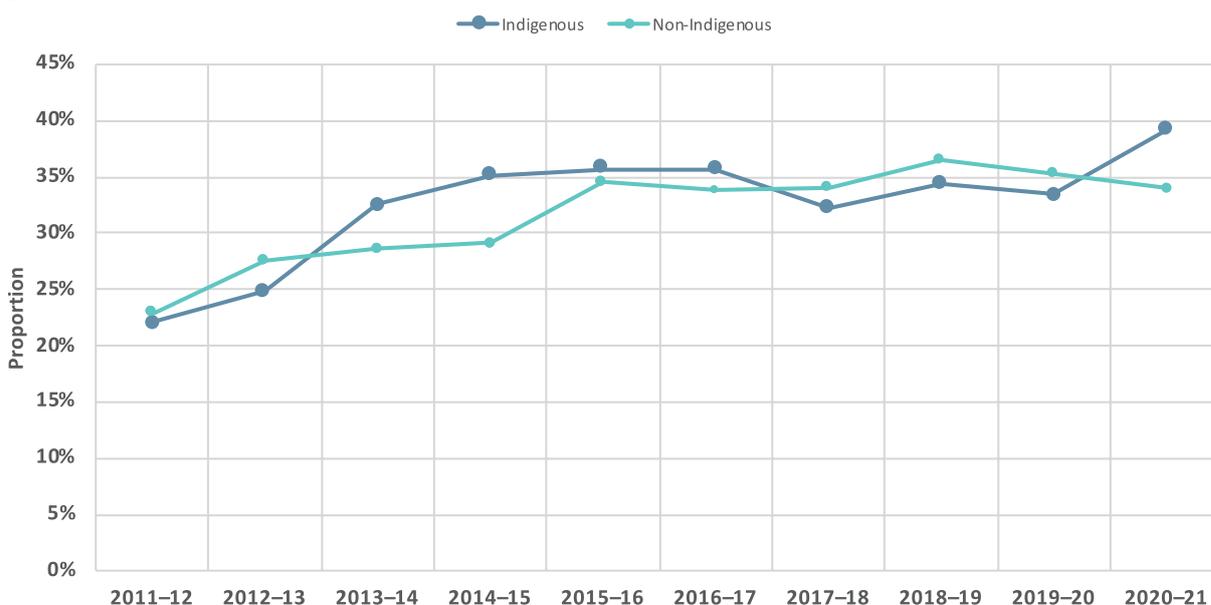
¹¹ Neither provided nor referred

M10: Proportion of Victorian SHS clients with unmet need for mental health support

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	33.5	39.2	35.3	38.5
Non-Indigenous	35.2	34.1	34.4	34.2

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 12: Proportion of SHS Clients with unmet need for mental health support in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

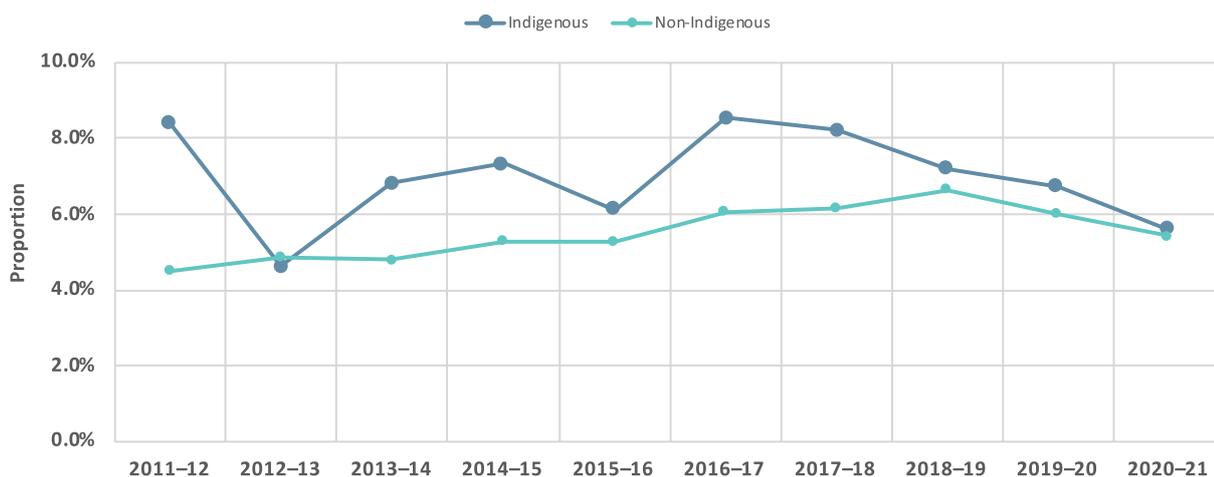
There has been an increase in demand for mental health support for Aboriginal Victorians in the past year, which in part may be reflective of the added stresses faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the increase in demand is not being met due to the failure of the service system surrounding those experiencing homelessness. If the current system is not capable of providing adequate support, people will continue to fall into the homelessness system. Ensuring the support systems are in place to support clients experiencing homelessness with intersectional vulnerabilities is a clear priority for implementation of the Framework and the Big Housing Build.

M11: Proportion of Victorian SHS clients with unmet need for family violence support (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	6.7	5.6	8.6	7.9
Non-Indigenous	6.0	5.4	8.0	7.9

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 13: Proportion of SHS Clients with unmet need for assistance for family/ domestic violence in Victoria, by Indigenous status, 2011-12 to 2020-21



Commentary

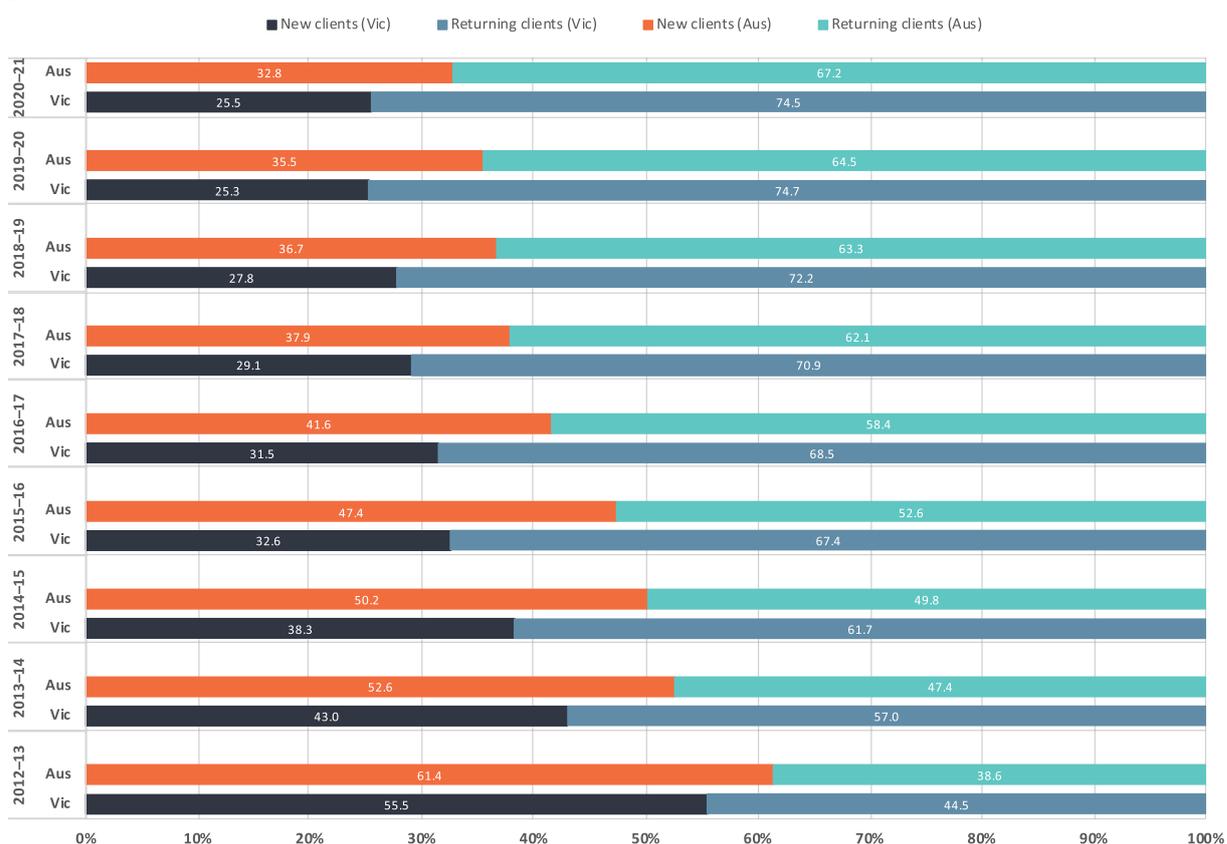
Since the Victorian Government's commitment to recommendations in the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016, the response to SHS clients with an unmet need for family violence support has continued to improve. This is the only measure in the Annual Report Card that has had a steady decline in the unmet need for support, which demonstrates the importance of providing sustainable investment to improve the outcomes for specific cohorts.

M12: Returning SHS clients (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	74.7	74.5	64.5	67.2
Non-Indigenous	60.8	64.4	57.1	59.6

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 14: Proportion of new and returning Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria and Australia, 2012-13 to 2020-21



Commentary

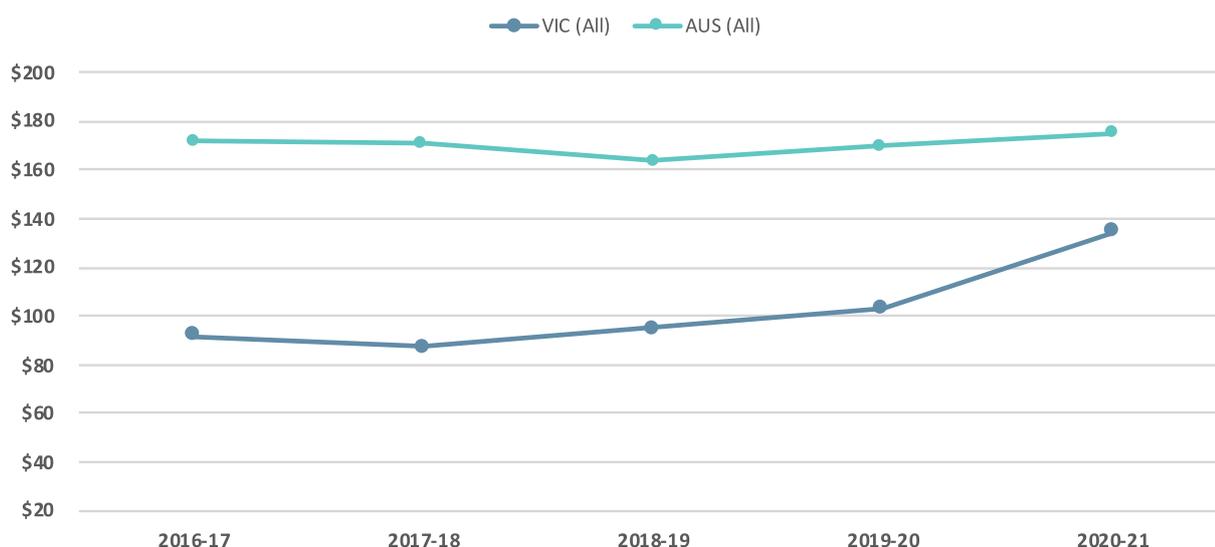
Three in four (74.5%) Aboriginal Victorians who received homelessness support in 2020-21, had received support in a previous year. From the options presented in the *Improving Homelessness Services and Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians Project*, the Victorian Government has so far only committed to implementing one Aboriginal Access Point into the homelessness system. While this is a welcome step, further investment will be required to ensure Aboriginal Victorians who access homelessness services will go on to have secure accommodation and therefore will not need to re-engage with homelessness services.

M13: Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population (\$/capita)¹²

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
All	\$102.9 ¹³	\$134.1 ¹⁴	\$170.1	\$174.7

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs

Figure 15: Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population, 2014-15 to 2020-21



Commentary

This figure is based on Victoria's recurrent expenditure on social housing, and only includes operating expenditure (ie tenancy management, maintenance, property costs) and does not capture capital expenditure. This figure does not include Victoria's significant investment through the Big Housing Build announced in November 2020, which committed \$5.3 billion to increase Victoria's social housing stock and does not reflect investment in early intervention through the homelessness and family violence systems.

¹² The measure on Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population is sourced from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services.

¹³ Productivity Commission, Table 18A.1 RoGS, 20221

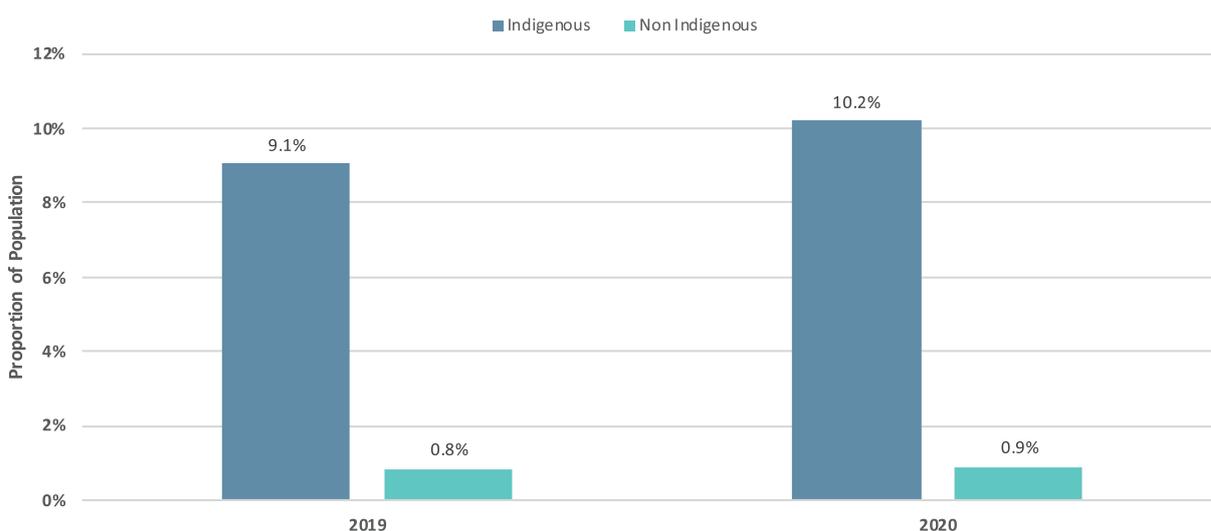
¹⁴ Productivity Commission, Table 18A.1 RoGS, 2021

M14: Proportion of Population on the Housing Register Waiting List – New and Transfer Applications % (Number)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	10.21 (4,879)	12.1 (5,796)	NA	NA
Non-Indigenous	0.90 ¹⁵ (53,120)	1.00 (59,409)	NA	NA

Source: Victorian Housing Register

Figure 16: Proportion of Population in Victoria to Lodge a New and Transfer Housing Register Application, 2020-21



Commentary

The number of Aboriginal Victorians on the waiting list for the Victorian Housing Registrar has increased by nineteen per cent since the last report card. While the number of other Victorians on the list has also increased, there is clearly an unacceptable over representation of Aboriginal Victorians waiting for social housing.

Additionally, the data identified that almost half (2,050)¹⁶ of Aboriginal Victorians waiting for a social housing unit have identified as homeless with support. The amount of Aboriginal Victorians who are homeless on the Victorian Housing Registrar's waiting listing demonstrates the serious need of further investment into social housing.

¹⁵ To ascertain the proportion, we have used the population number provided by the 2016 census for Victoria (5,926,624) and for Aboriginal Victorians (47,787).

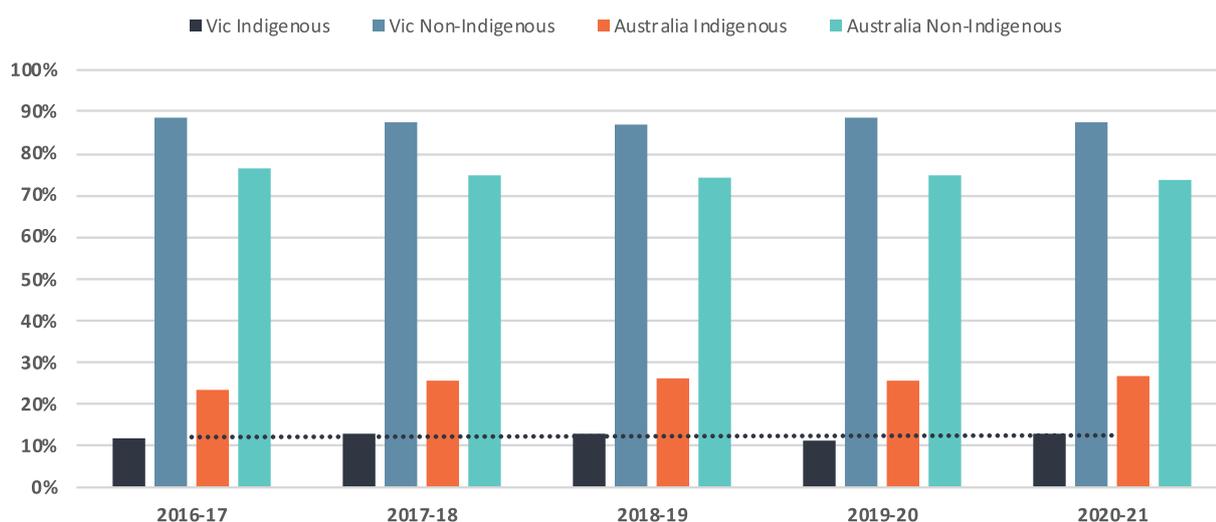
¹⁶ VHR data provided by Homes Victoria

M15: Recipients of New Victorian Public Housing Allocated (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	11.5%	12.7% ¹⁷	25.4%	26.5%
Non-Indigenous	88.5%	87.3%	74.6%	73.5%

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs

Figure 17: Recipients of new Victorian Public Housing Allocated, 2014-15 to 2020-21



Commentary

Close to thirteen per cent of new public housing stock is being allocated to Aboriginal Victorians, matching the proportion of need. Public Housing in Victoria continues to demonstrate leadership in their approach to allocations of new dwellings for Aboriginal Victorians.

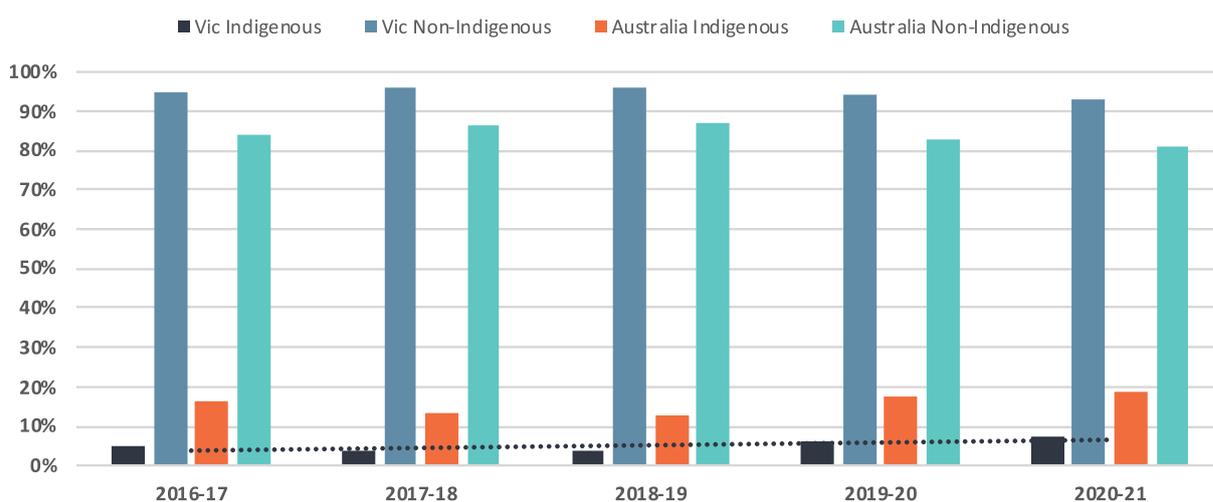
¹⁷ Source: Productivity Commission Tables 18A.4 and 18A.5 ROGS 2021

M16: Recipients of Mainstream Community Housing Units Allocated (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	6.0% ¹⁸	7.2%	17.4%	18.8%
Non-Indigenous	94%	92.8%	82.6%	81.2%

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs

Figure 18: Recipients of new Victorian Community Housing Units Allocated, 2016-17 to 2020-21



Commentary

Community Housing providers have increased the allocation of community housing stock to Aboriginal Victorians in 2020-21 by almost double since 2018-19. The attributing factor of the increase is the release of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* and launch of the CHIAVic Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework in 2020. This data indicates that community housing providers are becoming more confident in supporting Aboriginal clients. These numbers are trending in the right direction, but allocation needs to be at eleven to twelve per cent to match proportional need. The reform of the regulatory system should further embed cultural safety as a registration requirement. This will promote more culturally safe community housing options for Aboriginal Victorians and support greater allocations of community housing stock for community. In addition, the registration of more Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations will ensure Aboriginal self-determination across the housing system in Victoria.

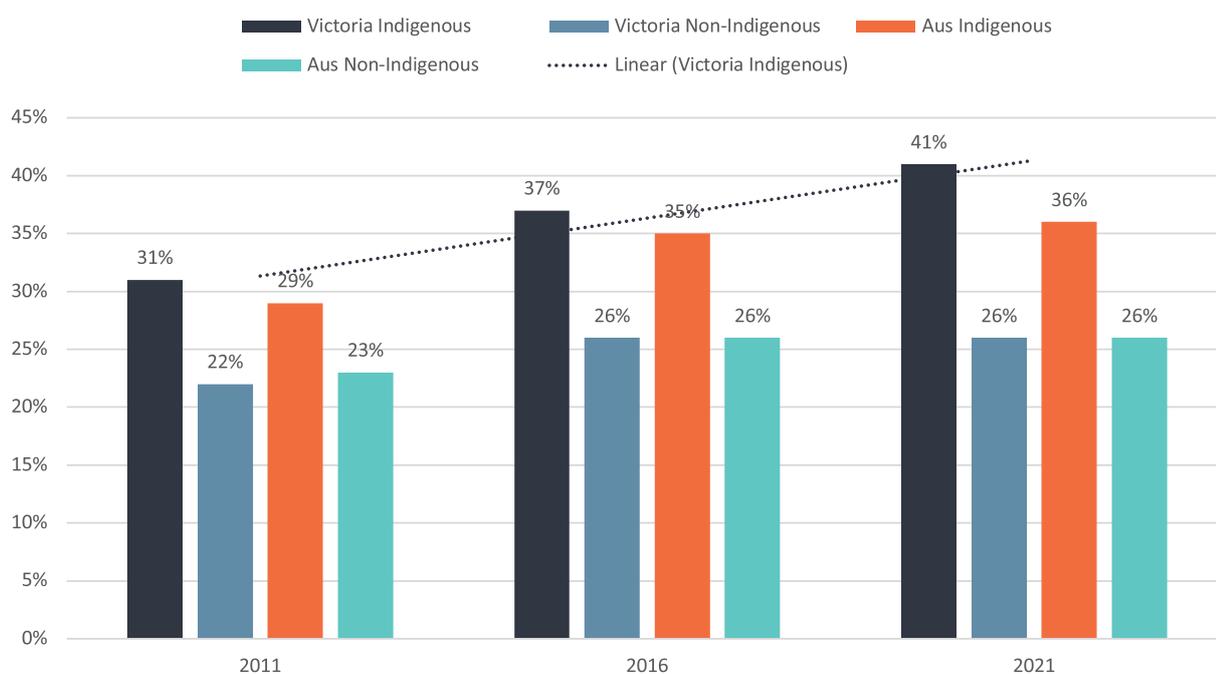
¹⁸ Source: Productivity Commission Tables 18A.7 ROGS 2021

M17: Comparative Private Rental Rate, 2011 to 2021¹⁹

	Victoria		Australia	
	2016	2021	2016	2021
Indigenous	37%	41%	35%	36%
Non-Indigenous	26%	26%	26%	26%

Source: AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2022 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 19: Comparative Private Rental Rate, 2011 to 2021



Commentary

The rate of Aboriginal Victorians engaged in private rental in the last ten years has increased by 10 percentage points. This may be driven in part by support from the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program, as covered at M18. However, the fact that Aboriginal Victorians continue to be more reliant on the private rental market than the mainstream population may also indicate barriers to home ownership that limit further transition through the housing continuum.

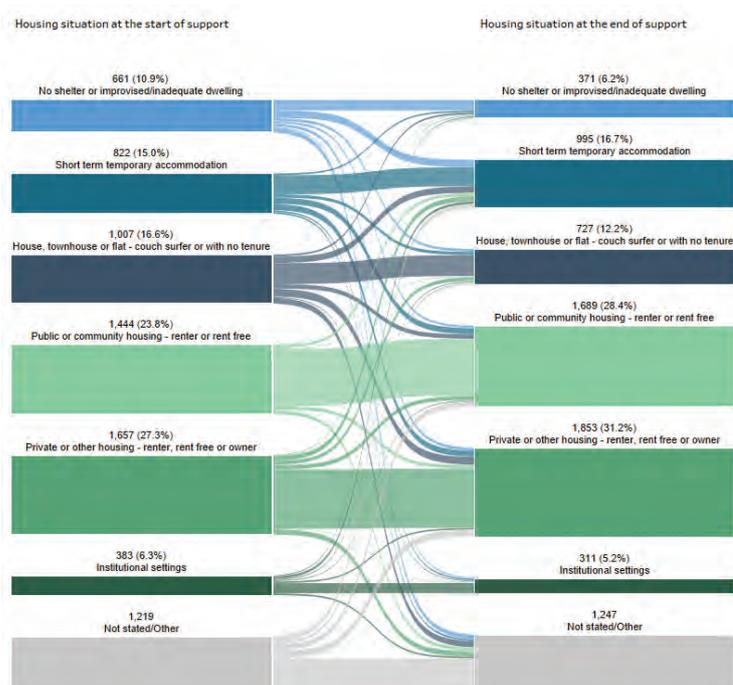
¹⁹ Data includes private rental of separate house, semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse and flat house or apartment from real estate agents and person not in the same household. This does not include 'other dwellings' or 'dwelling not stated'. It also includes 'person not in the same household'

M18: Transition from SHS into Private Market (% at Exit)²⁰

	Victoria	
	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous	25.3	31.2
Non-Indigenous	43.6	54.0

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021)

Figure 20: Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support, by housing situation at the start and end of support, 2020-21



Commentary

This diagram shows the various combinations of possible outcomes for Aboriginal Victorian SHS clients, and the outcomes presented describe the change in the clients' housing situation between the start and end of support.

The increase of those within private or other housing by the end of support has largely been driven through the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program as it provides additional support to those at risk of homelessness, supporting more Aboriginal Victorians into the private rental market.

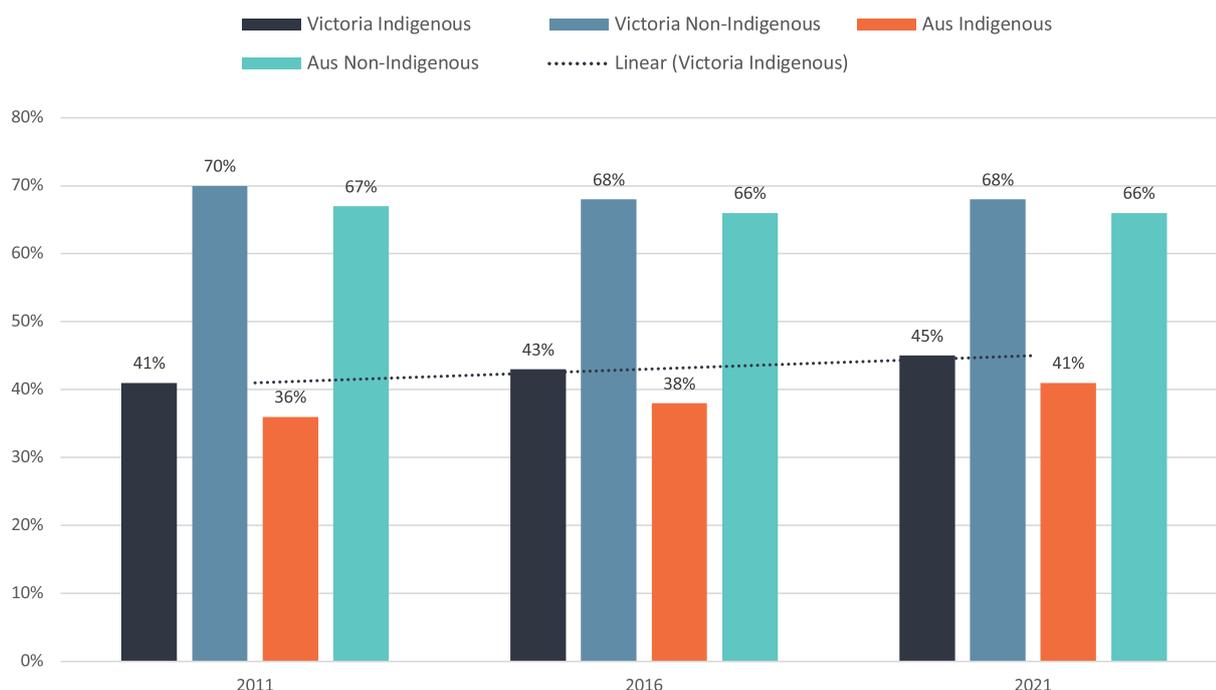
²⁰ This measure has been updated from the First Annual Report Card based on advice from AIHW

M19: Comparative Rates of homeownership, 2011 to 2021²¹

	Victoria		Australia	
	2016	2021	2016	2021
Indigenous	43%	45%	38%	41%
Non-Indigenous	68%	68%	66%	66%

Source: AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2022 Census of Population and Housing

Figure 21: Comparative Rates of Homeownership, 2011 to 2021



Commentary

The two percentage points increase in the rate of home ownership for Aboriginal Victorians over the five years since the 2016 Census represents a closing of the gap with mainstream home ownership rates, which have remained steady. However, the 23 percentage points difference still represents a significant gap and highlights the need for a targeted approach to support Aboriginal Victorians into home ownership. The Victorian Homebuyer Fund provides additional supports for Aboriginal Victorians, as outlined at M20.²²

²¹ Source: AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

²² Data includes both homes owned outright and owned with a mortgage. This does not include 'other dwellings' i.e. Caravan, Cabin/Houseboat, improvised home (including tents) or House or flat attached to a shop/office.

M20: Number Assisted by Government Shared Equity Program to Purchase a Home

	Victoria		Australia
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20 ²³
Indigenous	1	0 ²⁴	NA
Non-Indigenous	85	53 ²⁵	NA

Source: DTF/AHV

Commentary

The lack of uptake from Aboriginal Victorians in the Victorian Government's HomesVic shared equity pilot program during 2020-21 suggests that barriers continue to exist to Aboriginal home ownership. The Victorian Government is committed to working closely with Aboriginal Housing Victoria to address the challenges that are experienced by Aboriginal Victorians in the housing market. The Victorian Homebuyer Fund, launched on 8 October 2021, enables Aboriginal Victorians to purchase a home with a deposit as low as 3.5 per cent. Under the Homebuyer Fund, the Victorian Government also provides Aboriginal Victorians up to 35 per cent of the acquisition price for a home in exchange for a proportionate share in the property, which participants can buy back in their own time.

²³ No comparable program at a national level

²⁴ Source: Homes Victoria Program – AHV records

²⁵ Victorian Government Department of Treasury and Finance

Section 3:

Summary of Outcomes

Getting Better

For most of the measures in the Report Card, the data has stayed relatively stable since 2019-20. This is significant, as identified in the previous Annual Report Card, Aboriginal Victorians are seeking homelessness support at ten times the rate they were ten years ago. This stabilisation, rather than a worsening, demonstrates that the infrastructure established in past two years has slowed down this trajectory and with continued investment will see these unacceptable numbers turn around.

Public Housing in Victoria continues to support the community as thirteen per cent (13%) of new allocations are to Aboriginal Victorians, which matches the proportion of need. Community Housing providers have also increased their allocations to Aboriginal Victorians by almost double since 2018-2019, indicating that mainstream providers are feeling more confident in supporting Aboriginal Victorians, using the Framework to inform their approach and decision making.

The number of activities from the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) that have progressed in year two of implementation clearly demonstrates the Victorian Government's commitment to Aboriginal Self-determination. For example, the *Improving Homelessness Services and Outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians* project which was envisaged as providing advice on Aboriginal access points has now been delivered providing a blueprint to implement a broader systemic reform of homelessness services for Aboriginal people. Together with the recommendations from the Regulatory System, this will support greater access for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's to provide housing for community. The VAHHF IWG will continue to work alongside government counterparts to encourage the Victorian Government to support implementation.

Getting Worse

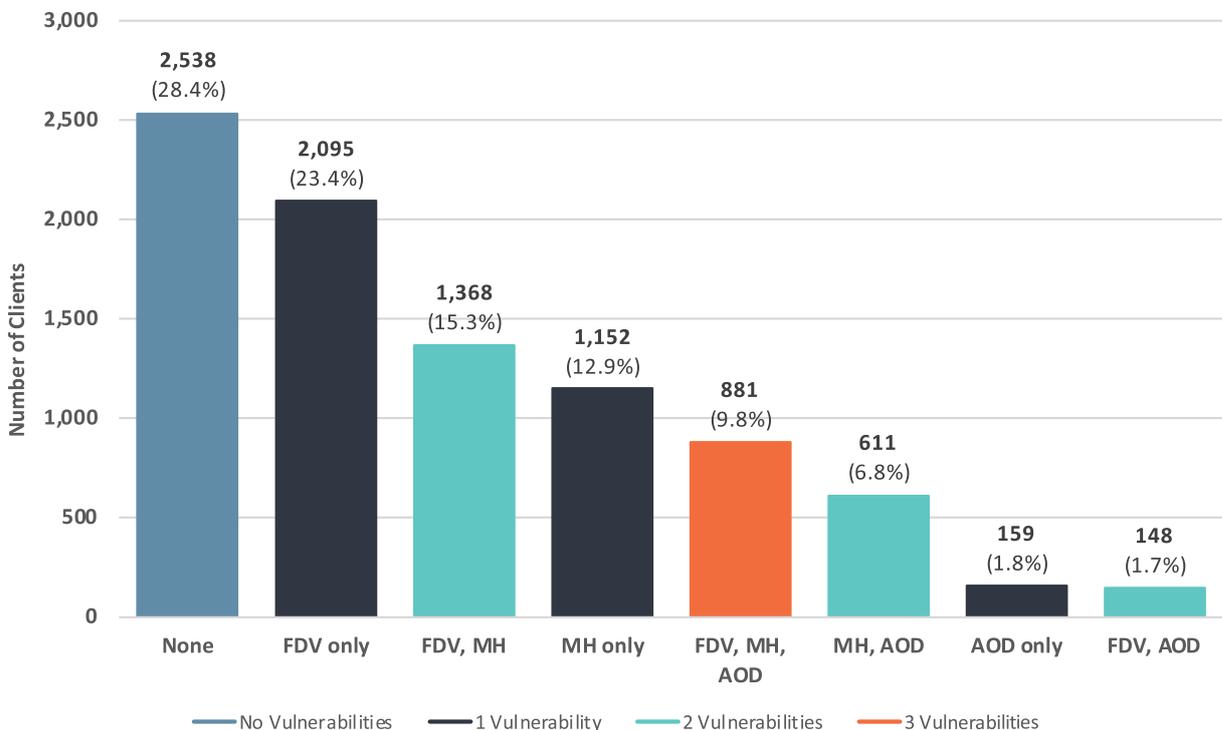
The data clearly indicates that the service systems are not adequately supporting the Victorian Aboriginal community and that access to appropriate housing with integrated supports options is a priority. The proportion of people with unmet mental health and drug and alcohol support needs has continued to grow over the past decade and exiting the justice system continues to be a driver of homelessness, as Aboriginal Victorians are 18 times more likely to seek homelessness support following exit from custody.

While the Big Housing Build will inject over 820 new social housing units for those experiencing intersectional vulnerabilities, the investment is focused on buildings, not people. From Homelessness to a Home program is supporting a small number of Aboriginal renters that require additional supports, however at this stage no further funding has been provided.

Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort identified that people who have experienced homelessness need more support than simply being placed in a home if they are to sustain their tenancies. With the increase of social housing from the Big Housing Build, more people will require support and the current system is not capable to support this increase. Prioritisation of safe and culturally appropriate short, medium, and long-term accommodation with integrated tenancy support is required to reduce the rate of Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness.

Figure 22: Indigenous Victorian SHS Clients selected vulnerability characteristics, 2020-21

Indigenous SHS clients selected vulnerability characteristics, 2020-21



Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2021).
Note: Includes SHS clients over 10 years of age.



Therefore, further investment is required against Goal 4 of the Framework and the following outcomes:

4.2 Provide tailored support for those at high risk.

- 4.2.1 Housing first approach is complemented by appropriate support to achieve sustainable housing outcomes.
- 4.2.2 Those at high risk are targeted – provide housing, support and pathways i.e. mental health, drug and alcohol, leaving out of home care, leaving justice system.
- 4.2.3 Develop and seek funding for transitional and long-term housing options for Aboriginal people who experience and/or use family violence that address their needs and promote and prioritise the safety of victims at a local and state-wide level.

4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing.

- 4.3.1 Aboriginal hostels and facilities are funded and recommissioned.
- 4.3.2 New transitional and emergency housing options are established to respond to the needs of high need cohorts, including people transitioning from institutional settings (former prisoners, young people leaving care, people with mental health issues) and family violence victims and perpetrators.

Year on year, the private market – rental and ownership – has continued to grow and become inaccessible for an average household. Additionally, half of Victoria's Aboriginal population lives in regional areas and over the past year the private rental market in these areas has become increasingly difficult to access due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as more and more people have relocated to regional areas, forcing more people into homelessness.

While the Victorian Government is doing what it can to support this, it only controls three per cent of the market. The Federal Government will need to engage in these challenges and create integrated policy that supports people to access the private market, such as adequate Commonwealth Rent Assistance and income support. These levers are critical in supporting Aboriginal Victorians to access private rental that is affordable thus, decrease the reliance the Victorian Aboriginal community has on social housing.

The first two years of implementing *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* has rightfully focused on averting the Aboriginal homelessness crisis through reforms and investments to strengthen the safety net of homelessness services and social housing supply for Aboriginal Victorians. There is little doubt that new investment and a reform focus must continue for many years before rates of Aboriginal homelessness reduce to levels that even match those of the general community. At the same time the Aboriginal community looks forward impatiently to an increasing focus in future years on the transformational goals of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*: **(1) Secure housing improves life outcomes** and **(3) Open doors to home ownership and private rental**. These goals are the ones that underpin achievement of a long-term aspiration of the Aboriginal community for housing self-determination. Secure housing is the base for people and families to build their long-term life aspirations, aspirations that support participation in community, education, training and work, and lead to inter-generational strength and empowerment. Home ownership can be part of this journey. Many Aboriginal families have never found a footing in private home ownership. Aboriginal people deserve at the very least the same access to private housing as the rest of the community, and the independence and wealth generation that go hand in hand with owning your own home.

This second-year report card details some initiatives that advance these goals, but greater sustained attention is required if we are to break Victoria's Aboriginal communities' reliance on government housing subsidies and support.

Appendix 1:

Year 2 Programs

Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program

In response to *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*, the Victorian Government committed over \$4 million in funding over two years for an Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP). The aim of the APRAP is to prevent or end homelessness experienced by Aboriginal households by:

1. Rapidly rehousing people capable of sustaining private rental after initial support;
2. Supporting at risk households to sustain affordable and appropriate housing in the private rental market; and
3. Assisting people who currently live in crisis, transitional or social housing to become independent in the private rental market, if appropriate and sustainable.

The program commenced at the end of 2020. Since then, there have been 187 clients from across five Victorian regions who have accessed APRAP, with an 82.4% met need for services. APRAP supports Goal Three of the Framework: *Open doors to home ownership and private rental*.

With the success of the program in opening access to private rental for Aboriginal Victorians, further funding beyond the first two years will ensure less reliance on the social housing system for the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal Home Connect

Resourced in the first year of the implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*, the Aboriginal Home Connect (AHC) program aimed to support over 4,000 social housing renters through the COVID-19 pandemic with telephone welfare checks and support referral pathways. The program is managed and delivered through Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) and became operational in March 2021. Since then, the program has supported over 438 social housing tenants.

The program helped to maintain community connection during the pandemic and has been a vital resource for hundreds of Aboriginal renters. The program has had an impact on Goal 1 in the Framework: *Secure housing improves life outcomes*.

More Than a Landlord

More Than a Landlord (MTaL) program is a tenancy support and well-being program managed and delivered by AHV, providing life skills and life coaching support to renters living in social housing managed by AHV. The program aligns with key frameworks to address the high incidence of Aboriginal homelessness, within a paradigm which supports and elevate Aboriginal self-determination at both an agency and individual level.

The program supports Goal 1 of the Framework: *Secure housing improves life outcomes*.

Aboriginal Advocacy Program

The Aboriginal Advocacy Program is a new initiative that creates an opportunity for Aboriginal social and community housing renters to access tenancy advocacy and supports. The program is delivered by the Victorian Public Tenants Association (VPTA) to ensure that renters have a neutral service that can assist them in resolving tenancy matters and provide advocacy and support that is in line with the renters best interest. The initiative aligns directly with the Goal 1 of the Framework: *Secure housing improves life outcomes*.

Program Evaluations

Evaluations of MTaL and AHC uncovered the significant need and demand for holistic assessment, referral and social support service for Aboriginal people in social housing. This demand pre-existed the COVID-19 pandemic and will likely remain after the intensity of the pandemic passes. Each of these interventions addressed a unique service gap with a culturally appropriate service model providing nuanced and flexible practical and social support for clients with varying intensity of need, including maintaining contact with clients waiting for intake to other services. The programs go beyond tenancy management to deliver whole of life support, including life coaching with participants achieving positive outcomes across health and wellbeing, financial capability and training and employment.

The MTaL evaluation found that the program demonstrated a commitment to serving a highly vulnerable client group through continuing to offer the MTaL program during the COVID-19 pandemic. MTaL has provided clients with the opportunity and support to visualise, pursue and achieve the life they want, outcomes they believe would not have been possible without the optimistic support of their MTaL worker.

The AHC program evaluation undertaken in 2021 found that AHC had a significant positive impact for individual clients and for AHV. The evaluation found that the program met the following objectives:

- improved culturally appropriate support and assistance to vulnerable Aboriginal households during the pre-vaccine phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, including physical and mental health, education, financial issues, housing and tenancy concerns, and education issues;
- supported communication of and compliance with social isolation, physical distancing and testing advice (to the extent required by clients); and
- undertook welfare checks and established positive social connections, in part to provide early identification of unmet needs and provide warm referrals to appropriate supports.

Appendix 2:

Resourcing

Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Resourcing	VAHHF Related Strategic Goal
10% of the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build's new social housing for Aboriginal Victorians, which will result in 820 new dwellings: This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% \$1.38 billion - Social Housing Growth Fund (includes: Rapid Grants Round, Homes for Aboriginal Victorians Round, Mental Health Round and Regional Round). 	2
Community Housing Sector Development Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$600k from the Community Housing Sector Development Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community brokerage role Feasibility of ACCOs (land assessments and financial sustainability) 	2
Building Works Package - maintenance, refurbishment, and upgrades for Aboriginal Victorians in social housing. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$35m for Aboriginal housing maintenance and refurbishment package led by Aboriginal Housing Victoria Over \$13m for Aboriginal projects to provide upgrades, maintenance and new builds for social and transitional housing. 	2
\$699.5k to support the VAHHF implementation	1-5
\$2.116m to extend the life of the <i>Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program</i> and expand delivery from 5 areas to 14 area	3
\$300k to extend the life of the <i>More Than a Landlord Program</i>	1
Implementation of a sector wide Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework with the Community Housing Industry Association of Victoria (CHIAVic) to guide mainstream social housing providers.	5
Development of an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for the Specialist Homelessness sector with the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)	5
Research project established with the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to investigate racial discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market.	3
\$400K feasibility study into reform of the homeless service system to improve homelessness services and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.	4
Commencement of the Victorian shared equity housing initiative, proposed in the VAHHF, designed specifically to assist Aboriginal Victorians to purchase houses.	3
\$425k secured to extend the life of the Aboriginal Home Connect project to enable welfare and education checks on over 4,000 Aboriginal families in social housing.	1
\$240k secured to implement the Victorian Public Tenants Association Aboriginal Advocacy Program	1
\$500 million for the Victorian Homebuyer Fund, which includes targeted support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians by allowing participants to purchase a home with a deposit as low as 3.5 per cent and with the Victorian Government contributing up to 35 per cent of the value of the property in exchange for an equivalent share in the property.	3

This document has been endorsed by the Koori Caucus, the elected representatives of the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum to the VAHMF IWG.



