

Yuma Yirramboi: Invest in Tomorrow Achievements Report

June 2023–June 2026

VICTORIA State Government | Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, their ongoing connection to this land and we pay our respects to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of First Peoples communities to Victorian life and how this enriches our society more broadly. We embrace the spirit of self-determination and reconciliation, working towards equality of outcomes and ensuring an equitable voice.

Language Statement

We recognise the diversity of First Peoples living throughout Victoria. The term Aboriginal or First Peoples in Victoria is used throughout this document, to encompass Victorian Traditional Owners, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria.

The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) is referred to throughout this document as 'DJSIR' or 'the department'.

Koori Caucus Foreword

As we reflect on the journey of the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy, it is with deep pride and responsibility that we, the Koori Caucus, present this Achievements Report

Yuma Yirramboi: Invest in Tomorrow represents more than an economic strategy. It is a shared commitment to a future where First Peoples in Victoria determine, lead and benefit from economic opportunity on their own terms.

Grounded in the principle of self-determination, the Strategy recognises that strong economies are built on strong cultures, thriving communities and the enduring connection of First Peoples to Country. It reflects a fundamental shift in how government works with First Peoples in Victoria, from designing solutions for communities to partnering with communities to shape their own economic futures.

Since its launch in 2022, the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy has demonstrated what can be achieved when First Peoples leadership is placed at the centre of policy, investment and decision-making. Through the partnership between the Koori Caucus and the Victorian Government, significant progress has been made in creating the conditions for sustainable, community-led economic development across the state.

The achievements outlined in this report reflect more than individual programs or investments. They demonstrate growing First Peoples business capability, stronger pathways into meaningful employment, increased wealth creation, and greater opportunities for Traditional Owners and communities to lead economic development in ways that reflect their aspirations, knowledge and cultural authority.

Yuma Yirramboi has reinforced that culture is not separate from economic development – it is one of its greatest strengths. First Peoples businesses, entrepreneurs, creatives and Traditional Owners continue to demonstrate that cultural knowledge, innovation and enterprise are powerful drivers of prosperity, creating value for communities while enriching Victoria's broader economy.

The Strategy's six pillars – Culture, Business, Jobs, People, Wealth Creation and Accountability – provide a framework for lasting change. Together they support an economy where First Peoples in Victoria are not only participants, but leaders, investors, employers, innovators and decision-makers.

While there is much to celebrate, this report also reminds us that Yuma Yirramboi is a long-term journey. Systemic change requires sustained commitment, genuine partnership and continued investment in First Peoples-led solutions. The Koori Caucus remains committed to working alongside the Victorian Government, Traditional Owners, communities and industry to ensure the Strategy continues to evolve and respond to the aspirations of First Peoples in Victoria.

The achievements captured in these pages belong to the many First Peoples businesses, organisations, leaders and communities whose vision, resilience and determination continue to shape Victoria's economic future. They demonstrate what is possible when self-determination is matched by trust, partnership and investment.

Together, we are building an economy where First Peoples in Victoria can create wealth, strengthen culture, support future generations and realise their own ambitions – an economy that is more inclusive, more resilient and stronger for all Victorians.

Minister's Foreword

The Yuma Yirramboi Strategy was launched in 2022 as the Victorian Government's flagship First Peoples economic development strategy with a shared vision of achieving economic parity within a generation for First Peoples in Victoria

Yuma Yirramboi means 'invest in tomorrow' in the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung language. This has been our guiding principle and with $33.6 million in government funding has led to tangible and meaningful outcomes.

Self-determination is at the heart of what we do, because we know it works – the best outcomes are achieved when First Peoples drive the decisions about their lives, communities and futures.

I extend my thanks to the Yuma Yirramboi Council's Koori Caucus for their leadership in developing and implementing the strategy and for their advice to the Victorian Government on ways to grow the First Peoples economy and create lasting benefits for all Victorians.

As you'll read in this achievements report, since its launch in 2022, Yuma Yirramboi: Invest in Tomorrow has supported a range of community-led new initiatives across the state including:

- supporting 48 First Peoples businesses to attend trade missions to Europe, New Zealand and the United States to expand their reach and represent Victoria on the global stage
- funding to develop a five-year self-determined First Peoples Tourism Plan for Victoria 2025–2030 to drive new experience economy and cultural tourism offerings throughout regional Victoria
- funding to establish economic hubs across Victoria to drive localised economic development initiatives, developed and operated by Traditional Owners Corporations
- funding for Traditional Owner Corporations in Victoria to recruit a dedicated Economic Development Coordinator to support localised and self-determined economic and business development based on the needs of communities throughout the state
- new supports to grow Victoria's First Peoples business sector, including partnering with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce and sponsorship of the Annual Victorian Aboriginal Business Awards.

In June 2024, the Yoorrook Justice Commission heard evidence from State witnesses, Traditional Owners and First Peoples leaders on the economic injustices facing First Peoples in Victoria. We've learnt from these hearings that there is still more to do, but our steps to embed self-determined co-design principles and 'invest in tomorrow' are our way forward.

For the first time in Australia's history, a Treaty has been signed with First Peoples. Victoria's Statewide Treaty commenced on 12 December 2025. Treaty will pave a pathway for true self-determination and the empowerment of First Peoples communities and Traditional Owners throughout Victoria to build wealth and prosperity for future generations.

We said from the beginning that the Strategy set high expectations. I am very proud of the work that has been done across government and grateful to the First Peoples groups, businesses and Traditional Owners for their continued work with us towards our shared vision.

I look forward to continuing this important work and investing in tomorrow, together.



The Hon. Melissa Horne
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Jobs
Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing
Minister for Defence Industry

Yuma Yirramboi: Invest in Tomorrow

This report demonstrates progress, strengthens transparency and accountability, and centres First Peoples Voices

This Achievements Report provides a snapshot of what has been supported and funded through Yuma Yirramboi between June 2023 and June 2026.

The Victorian Government launched the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy in June 2022. Funding to support the strategy's implementation totals $33.6 million.

- Yuma Yirramboi is the state's First Peoples employment and economic strategy. The Strategy aims to achieve greater individual and collective wealth for First Peoples in Victoria through six strategic pillars: **Culture, Business, Jobs, People, Wealth Creation and Accountability**.

Our vision

- Aboriginal Victorians generate greater individual and collective wealth.

Our commitment

- The Victorian Government, recognising the inherent rights of First Peoples, will make long term, sustained investment in the six strategic pillars to ensure the vision is achieved.
- The pillars are activated through the championing of entrepreneurship, meaningful careers and harnessing culture, assets, knowledge and expertise.

The Yuma Yirramboi Strategy aims to:

- deliver parity for First Peoples of Victoria in employment, entrepreneurship and economic opportunities through implementation and actions
- create an enabling environment that supports First Peoples in Victoria
- activate economic opportunities for First Peoples in Victoria, individually and collectively
- support delivery of existing government policies and initiatives.

The Strategic Pillars

Culture
Aboriginal culture is our greatest asset.

People
Nurture a strong and ready talent pool.

Business
Grow in size, scale, diversity and maturity.

Wealth creation
Accelerate the growth of assets and opportunity for wealth generation.

Jobs
Generate jobs and careers to reach employment parity.

Accountability
Transparent reporting against commitments.

Yuma Yirramboi Council

The Yuma Yirramboi Council continues to provide valuable input into DJSIR's approach to First Peoples economic development

DJSIR partners with the Yuma Yirramboi Council to support First Peoples economic prosperity

- The Yuma Yirramboi Council (the Council) provides independent advice to government. The Council helped develop the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy.
- The Council includes First Peoples experts (the Koori Caucus) and Victorian Government executives. They consider and agree on opportunities and issues affecting the prosperity of First Peoples in Victoria.
- The Council is co-chaired by the Secretary of DJSIR and the Chair of the Koori Caucus.

Co-chairs of Yuma Yirramboi Council



Jason Mifsud
Chair of Koori Caucus



Matt Carrick
Secretary of DJSIR

The Council delivers on the strategy through five key deliverables:

01. Providing expert advice to DJSIR and the government to guide the delivery of the strategy.

02. Enabling shared decision-making on strategic issues and priorities for investment under the strategy.

03. Monitoring progress and performance under the strategy.

04. Identifying emerging opportunities for Victoria's First People in the economy to advance the strategy's goals.

05. Strengthening relationships among the Victorian Government, First Peoples businesses, Traditional Owner organisations, communities and industry.

Council's work will be informed by the Treaty process

- Treaty includes an economic focus, recognising that economic empowerment is crucial to reconciliation as First Peoples have been excluded from social and economic opportunities.

Koori Caucus

The Koori Caucus provides First Peoples expertise as part of the Yuma Yirramboi Council's mandate to advise the department on economic and employment issues as they pertain to First Peoples in Victoria

The Koori Caucus delivers self-determined centred collaboration

- To support self-determination the Caucus provides strategic advice and leadership on economic development, workforce development, industry growth, and regional prosperity for First Peoples in Victoria.

Key discussion topics between the Department, Ministers and the Koori Caucus will continue to include:

- new opportunities for First Peoples business investment
- collaboration opportunities between First Peoples, the Victorian Government, and private sector
- Traditional Owner Corporation economic partnerships and investments
- increasing domestic trade capabilities and opportunities for First Peoples businesses, with an eye towards international markets as individual business capacity increases
- additional systemic barriers to First Peoples employment and businesses, including access to capital.

Key activities with the Yuma Yirramboi Council over 2023 – June 2026

Workshop to develop ambitious 'moonshot' actions

A workshop was held with the Koori Caucus to develop areas of reform through the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy.

Key areas included:

- **reform of WoVG Social Procurement** policies to better leverage existing and future investments
- explore **targeted opportunities** to integrate First Peoples business and industry development as part of 'mainstream' DJSIR operations
- explore **innovative mechanisms** to create funding for First Peoples programs.

The majority of 'moonshot' actions are underway, with delivery efforts continuing into 2026/27 FY.

Shaping DJSIR's Social Procurement policies

The Koori Caucus has engaged with DJSIR's Procurement Centre to provide input into the department's social procurement policies. This has helped identify opportunities to strengthen procurement approaches that support First Peoples businesses and broader social outcomes. The Koori Caucus continues to advocate for WoVG procurement improvements.

Informing priorities for First Peoples economic development

The Koori Caucus has provided strategic advice to help inform departmental priorities and approaches to supporting First Peoples economic development outcomes.

Koori Caucus Membership

The Koori Caucus membership brings together First Peoples expertise to advise the Victorian Government on economic prosperity and employment



Jason Mifsud

Jason is a senior member of the Kirrae, Peek and Tjab Whurrong people of the Gunditjmara nation in south-west Victoria and has been leading significant cultural and organisational change through a number of high-profile positions over the past 30 years.

Jason's broad experience stems from his extensive background in First Peoples affairs delivering strategic and structural reform with a strong focus on economic outcomes including at the Australian Football League and the Victorian Government.



Dr Ash Francisco

Ash is a proud Wiradjuri woman who has grown up on Wurundjeri and Bunurong Country and is now based on Taungurung Country in North Central Victoria. She is committed to advancing regional First Peoples businesses and opportunities in her community and across Australia. She directs a small research business, NgaYarra and her drive is to continue to bring academic rigor to corporate challenges by removing the barriers between the social sciences and business.



Rod Jackson

Rodney is a proud Palawa and Cherbourg man, with a breadth of senior leadership experience and knowledge that bridges Government and First Peoples businesses. Past roles include General Manager Operations TTLine's MVSpirit of Tasmania , Port of Portland Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive of four First Peoples organisations being Gunditjmara, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS), Wathaurong and Ngwala Willumbong.



Paul Paton

Paul is a Gunnai and Monaro man and has connections to the Gunditjmara people of Western Victoria. Paul has long been involved in reconnecting individuals and communities with language, culture and identity. Paul is the former CEO of the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC), the state-wide body that advocates for the rights and interests of Traditional Owners.



Daniel Miller

Daniel is a Yuin man from the First Peoples of the South Coast in New South Wales. He has served as the former CEO of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) in Gippsland, Victoria, and served as Chair of the Board for Original Power.

Koori Caucus Membership Cont.



Ian Hamm

Ian is a Yorta Yorta man and is Chair of the Indigenous Land & Sea Corporation and the First Nations Foundation. He is a board member of Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Healing Foundation, Holmesglen TAFE, and Killara Foundation Board. Ian is also the former President of the Community Broadcast Foundation.



Kaley Nicholson

Kaley is a First Nations woman with family line connections to the Taungurung, Barapa Barapa, Bunurong/ Boonwurrung, Latji Latji, Mutthi Mutthi, Wamba Wemba, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta peoples. Kaley currently serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC), and has previously held senior leadership roles including CEO and Managing Director of Yilam Pty Ltd, and Director of Business Development and Performance at Wanyaari Aboriginal Consultancy.



Paul Stewart

Paul is a Taungurung man with connections to Central Victoria. He is currently the CEO of the Lowitja Institute. Paul has over 20 years of experience in leadership roles across various sectors, including First Peoples health, sport, government, and education, both locally and internationally.



Karinda Taylor

Karinda Taylor is a Wamba Wamba woman from the northwest of Victoria.

Karinda is CEO of First Peoples' Health and Wellbeing and has more than 20 years of experience in Aboriginal health, community development and leadership across Victoria. Karinda's career has been dedicated to improving outcomes for First Peoples through strategic leadership, policy development and community-centred approaches.

Social Procurement and Jobs

The Victorian Government established Nyaal Banyul as the gold standard for social procurement in government-led projects

Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCEC) Early Engagement Social Procurement (GEESP)

This program supported social procurement strategies for the delivery of the Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre. This enhanced opportunities for local workers and businesses, including First Peoples.

This program helped achieve the following procurement and employment outcomes.

This includes:

First Peoples represented 1.44 per cent of total contracted hours under the program, exceeding the minimum commitment of 1 per cent. The program surpassed its participation target for First Peoples.

$3.08 million had been spent on Registered or Certified Victorian First Peoples Businesses. This represents a direct investment in First Peoples businesses through the program.

This program supports Yuma Yirramboi Strategy **initiative 2.1**, which focuses on supporting First Peoples in Victoria and connecting them with opportunities through career and mentoring programs.

Naming Nyaal Banyul

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation has gifted a name to the Geelong Convention and Event Centre.

The convention centre building (and by extension the public plaza) is named the Nyaal Banyul, Geelong Convention and Event Centre. Pronounced 'N-yaal - Bahn- Yule'.

This name is returning Wadawurrung language to country at a site that was originally used for gatherings known as barrier. The name Nyaal Banyul means: 'open your eyes to the hills.' This name was chosen to encourage people at the site to take time to appreciate the landscapes of Wadawurrung Country.

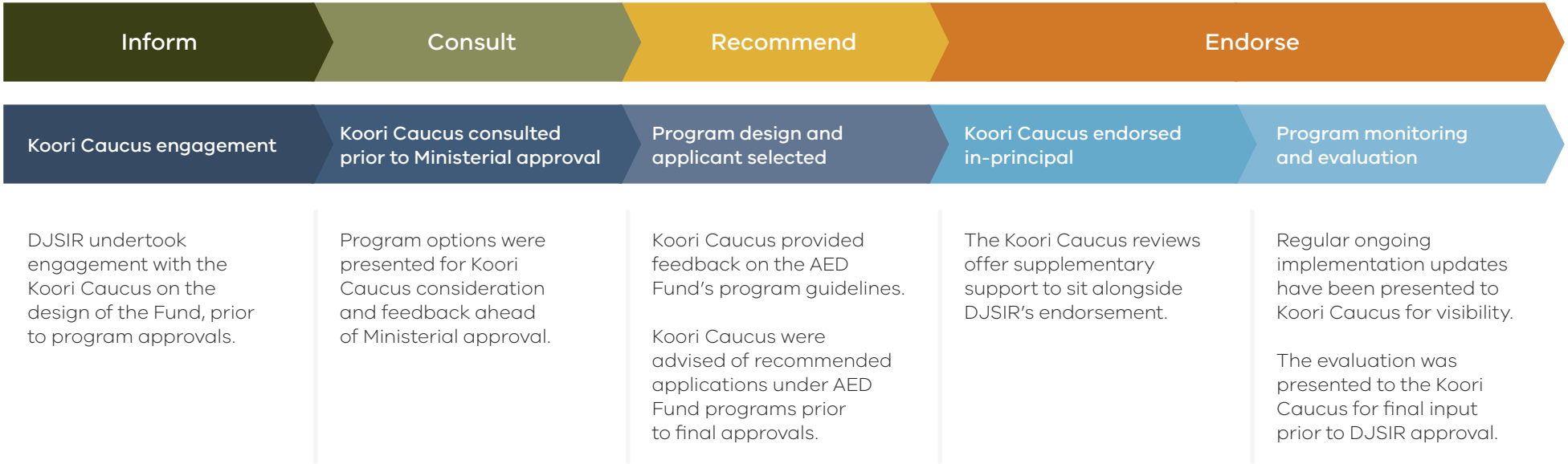
The Victorian Government and the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation have collaborated closely through the initial briefing and request for proposal stage and will now join with the Plenary Conventions consortium members to further integrate Wadawurrung culture and history into this important community asset.



The Nyaal Banyul mural, by Geelong artist Rone, features the faces of 14 local, including seven with a connection to Wadawurrung history and the community's changing and evolving storyline. Photo by Shannyn Higgins.

Case Study: Koori Caucus in action

During 2023 the Koori Caucus supported the development of policy proposals for the Aboriginal Economic Development (AED) Fund



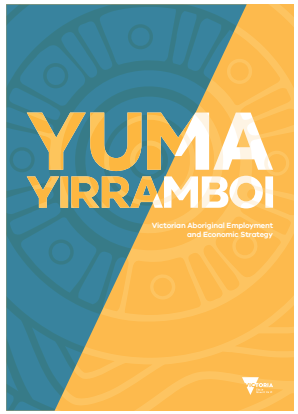
This engagement pathway is in line with DJSIR's 'Yuma Yirramboi Council Decision Making Framework'

In 2021, DJSIR's Koori Caucus endorsed the Yuma Yirramboi Council Decision Making Framework to align DJSIR's program approval pathway with the Victorian Self-Determination Reform Framework's four self-determination enablers:

- **Prioritise culture**
- **Address trauma and support healing**
- **Address racism and promote cultural safety**
- **Transfer power and resources to communities**

Achievements Report

This Achievements Report is structured under the Strategic pillars of the Strategy



This report is a commitment to culturally safe, respectful, and collaborative partnerships with First Peoples communities in Victoria.

These partnerships are vital to fostering cultural integrity and amplifying authentic community voices in all decision-making processes.

This report provides:

- a **snapshot of work across the department** to address Yuma Yirramboi outcomes
- a sample of **case studies** based on what we have heard from delivery partners.

This report has aligned work across the department to address the outcomes of Yuma Yirramboi Strategy against its six strategic pillars:

- Culture
- People
- Business
- Wealth creation
- Jobs
- Accountability

Accountability is at the core of this report

This report seeks to live up to the value of transparent reporting against our commitment to the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy, Treaty and self-determination processes.

DJSIR's commitments to accountability include:

- strengthen First Peoples voices, leadership and advisory capacity to government in employment and economic policy
- develop and report against Aboriginal Economic Outcomes Framework
- elevate the importance of Aboriginal Economic Development within DJSIR
- evaluate implementation phases
- support and implement the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy.



Strategic Pillars



Culture

Initiatives focused on First Peoples knowledge, cultural knowledge and practices to realise economic benefits

Culture

People

Business

Wealth creation

Jobs

Accountability

Pillar	Pillar outcome	Yuma Yirramboi Delivery 2023–2026
1. Culture **Aboriginal culture is our greatest asset** We will invest in Aboriginal knowledge, cultural beliefs and practices to realise economic benefits for Aboriginal Victorians	1.1 Aboriginal Victorians own, protect and commercialise their cultural knowledge language and practice	**First Peoples Tourism Plan 2025–2030** • Launched the First Peoples Tourism Plan for Victoria 2025–2030, a 5-year self-determined plan to grow First Peoples tourism in Victoria. The plan was developed after extensive community engagement and positions Victoria as a leading destination for diverse experiences led by First Peoples. • The plan aims to support First Peoples communities and businesses as they build intergenerational wealth, strengthen cultural pride and create a sustainable ecosystem for First Peoples tourism. **First Peoples Tourism Industry Strengthening Program** • Support for Victoria's Registered Aboriginal Parties to enhance their capability and capacity to engage in tourism-related economic development activities, enabling a First Peoples-led approach to identifying and implementing priority tourism initiatives. **First Peoples Tourism Pilot** • Support to Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation. Through the First Peoples Tourism Pilot they will undertake tourism product analysis and develop Cultural Tourism Plans to realise community aspirations in the visitor economy. **First Peoples Tourism Growth Program** • Launched the First Peoples Tourism Growth Program, a competitive grants program open to Victorian First Peoples-owned and operated businesses, Traditional Owners, Traditional Owner Corporations and Registered Aboriginal Parties. • Funding will help businesses to grow and educate more visitors about the culture, history and practices of First Peoples communities in Victoria. **Aboriginal Language Program** • Two dual sector universities have been funded to deliver the program which includes Certificate II and Certificate III in Learning an Australian First Nations language. The delivery of accredited language training via the TAFE Network has now formally commenced in Victoria.

First Peoples Tourism Plan

The First Peoples Tourism Plan is supporting First Peoples in Victoria to commercialise cultural knowledge and practices

Community engagement

To support the development of the First Peoples Tourism Plan, a First Peoples-owned and operated business, Karabena Consulting, was engaged to facilitate community engagement. Community engagement identified the shared vision, tourism product opportunities, challenges and long-term industry development priorities.

Community engagement took place across Victoria throughout 2024 via:

- online and in-person workshops
- targeted interviews
- two surveys (one for the general public; one targeting First Peoples businesses)
- one-on-one conversations.

Almost 100 participants contributed across both surveys, with in-person workshops held in Bendigo, Shepparton and the Mornington Peninsula to capture perspectives from across Victoria.

The engagement program attracted diverse views from a mix of stakeholders, including:

- 11 First Peoples businesses and organisations
- 8 of 11 Registered Aboriginal Parties
- 8 of 12 Regional Tourism Boards or Visitor Economy Partnerships
- other tourism industry organisations like Visit Victoria and the Victorian Tourism Industry Council.

Key themes arising from community engagement were:

- **cultural empowerment and recognition**
  prioritise protecting and promoting First Peoples' cultural heritage, history, and intellectual property in mainstream tourism
- **self-determination in tourism development**
  ensure First Peoples have autonomy in setting tourism development priorities, acknowledging their unique perspectives, needs, and aspirations for sustainable tourism
- **promoting cultural competency**
  enhance understanding and cultural proficiency in the tourism sector to ensure respectful engagement with First Peoples cultures, creating an inclusive tourism environment
- **career pathways and economic prosperity**
  foster economic prosperity by creating meaningful career pathways in tourism for First Peoples. This includes skill development, mentorship, training, and business development programs to empower success in the tourism industry.



Smoking Ceremony, Bendigo Community Engagement Workshop, photo by Tiffany Garvie Photography

People

Programs invested in developing First Peoples' skills, capabilities and career pathways, reflecting diverse strengths, interests and aspirations

Culture

People

Business

Wealth creation

Jobs

Accountability

Pillar	Pillar outcome	Yuma Yirramboi Delivery 2023–2026
2. People **Nurture a strong and ready talent pool** We will prepare Aboriginal Victorians for, and support them throughout, their careers	2.1 Aboriginal Victorians sustain meaningful careers in all sectors	**Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place strengthened employment pathways for First Peoples** • Delivered 34 employment-related training completions, including 12 Responsible Service of Alcohol certificates, 18 food-handling certificates and four barista certificates. • Created ongoing employment for three Aboriginal staff members in part-time and casual roles across catering, hospitality, youth programs and community activities. • Supported Aboriginal young people to move from training and community programs into paid employment, volunteering and professional development opportunities. • Provided tailored employment support through an occupational therapist, helping community members establish vocational goals and address barriers to workforce participation. • Delivered practical work experience in horticulture, native-food production, hospitality and garden maintenance through partnerships, volunteering and the Work for the Dole program. • Expanded Mullum Creations' commercial catering capacity, including delivering catering for 450 people at Coranderrk and employing its largest catering team to date.
	2.2 Aboriginal Victorians are supported through their careers, particularly in growth and transition industries	**First Nations Foundation: My Money Dream** • First Nations Foundation has provided financial literacy education to build understanding of western economic systems vs traditional Indigenous practices and how this translates in the Australian context. • Exceeded the target of 10 financial literacy workshops by delivering 20 workshops, 10 face-to-face and 10 webinars to 313 participants. • Delivered two highly attended Fireside Yarn business finance events. • Developed the My Business Dream workshop and self-paced learning portal with six financial literacy modules. • Produced an Accessing Capital panel video, with two additional videos nearing completion. • Created 10 business finance factsheets and 15 business, entrepreneurship and career-related articles and interviews. • Provided tailored support through self-paced learning, small-group training, workshops, webinars, resources, coaching and networking.

Business

Initiatives supported First Peoples businesses to strengthen capability, expand operations, create jobs and generate wealth

Culture

People

Business

Wealth creation

Jobs

Accountability

Pillar	Pillar outcome	Yuma Yirramboi Delivery 2023–2026
3. Business **Growth in size, scale, diversity and maturity** We will take a coordinated, consistent and long-term approach to supporting Aboriginal business growth and economic development	3.1 Strong and growing Aboriginal business sector	**Aboriginal Business Capital Investment Program** • First Australians Capital is supporting access to capital, the lack of which is a systematic barrier for First Peoples businesses. • Deployed or committed over $800,000 in grants and loans across at least 14 businesses, with additional disbursements scheduled prior to program close. • Delivered capacity-building support to over 40 additional businesses across key areas such as cashflow management, marketing, business planning, and investment readiness. • Created or sustained more than 30 jobs, including within women-led and regional businesses. Directed over 58% of investments to women-led businesses, and 29% to regional businesses.
		The Yuma Yirramboi Events and International Trade initiative • This initiative supports the Victorian First Peoples business sector and organisations to engage and participate at business events, including exhibitions, conferences, conventions and trade shows.
	3.2 Increased capacity and capability of Aboriginal businesses, entrepreneurs and Traditional Owner groups	**Building Capability for the Aboriginal Business Sector** • **Ngarrimili:** Funding enabled Ngarrimili to provided capacity building and mentoring support for aspiring and established First Peoples-owned businesses in Victoria. • **Kinaway:** Funding provided to Kinaway has supported ongoing capability and capacity building for First Peoples business community, including through its Kin-Fashion initiative.
		Killara Business Mentor Program • Killara delivered the business mentor program, lead by a First Peoples mentor and administered grants to support First Peoples business across Victoria.
		Investigate options to increase advocacy and representation for First Peoples businesses operating in the visitor economy • This work contributed to the development of the First Peoples Tourism Plan, including recommendations to strengthen First Peoples voices and engagement across the tourism sector.

Events and international trade

The Yuma Yirramboi Events and International Trade program supports First Peoples businesses to build export readiness and position themselves for future export growth

Support includes financial assistance for small and medium First Peoples-owned entities to network, promote and grow domestically and internationally.

To date, 69 First Peoples businesses have been supported through domestic events and international trade initiatives.

Trade Mission to New Zealand

DJSIR supported a trade mission in February 2024 to Aotearoa New Zealand with a group of leading Victorian First Nations food and beverage businesses.

Participants took part in networking and business matching, visited different companies and participated in cultural exchanges.

Kinaway Kansas International Business Development

DJSIR provided funding to Kinaway to deliver an International Business Development Mission which took place in the Midwest of the United States on 17-26 March 2024.

41 people participated, including 22 Victorian business owners representing 25 Kinaway certified businesses.

Aboriginal Business Excellence and Innovation Awards

DJSIR is the major sponsor for the Victorian Aboriginal Business Awards presented by Kinaway.

The awards recognise First Peoples businesses achieving outstanding outcomes in their field. The awards also recognise corporate partners who have collaborated with Kinaway certified businesses.

The event attracted 700 attendees in 2023 and was most recently held at Marvel Stadium in 2025 with over 640 in attendance.

World Expo in Japan

DJSIR funded a delegation of ten Victorian First Peoples' agri-food and tourism businesses to attend Te Aratini Indigenous Peoples Week at the World Expo in Osaka, Japan, from 4–10 August 2025. Held every five years since 1851, the Expo fosters global solutions to social challenges and emerging technologies.

Te Aratini featured masterclasses, cultural performances, panel discussions, and networking opportunities. DJSIR, with support from Austrade and Department of Affairs and Foreign Trade (DFAT), developed a six-day program, coordinated Victoria's Entrepreneurship Panel, and provided in-market expertise to drive export growth for First Peoples businesses.

The event showcased the importance of leveraging Victoria Government Trade and Investment (VGTI) Offices to identify priority First Peoples industries and match capabilities with international opportunities.

World Indigenous Business Forum

DJSIR funding **Kinaway Chamber of Commerce** to host the World Indigenous Business Forum in Naarm/Melbourne on 28–30 October 2025, attracting over 500 delegates from 15 countries.

The forum created opportunity for First Peoples businesses and leaders to share knowledge, build international networks and explore new pathways for economic and business development. Supported by Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), the forum showcased Victoria's leadership in First Peoples economic development and strengthened connections between Indigenous businesses, governments and organisations across Australia and internationally.

Business

Yuma Yirramboi business initiatives have increased support for First Peoples entrepreneurs and businesses, improving capability and expertise

Yurringa Energy

Pioneering First Nations Leadership in Australia's Energy Sector

Yurringa Energy is Australia's first First Nations-owned energy retailer, creating new opportunities for First Peoples to build careers in commercial, operational and leadership roles within the highly regulated energy sector. Victorian Government grant funding supported the establishment of critical billing systems, digital infrastructure and business capability needed for the company to enter and compete in the national energy market. Since receiving the investment, Yurringa Energy has grown from a start-up concept to a business generating approximately $30 million in annual revenue, while maintaining a target of at least 50 per cent First Nations employment as it expands.

The company supplies renewable electricity to major infrastructure projects, including North East Link and the Suburban Rail Loop North tunnelling package, and provides energy to nbn across Queensland and South Australia. The investment helped Yurringa Energy overcome early barriers to private capital and establish a commercially viable platform that demonstrates First Nations-owned businesses can compete successfully in complex national industries.

The company is now pursuing retail licences across multiple jurisdictions and developing First Nations-led renewable energy, Traditional Owner equity and benefit-sharing opportunities.

NLA Trucking

Building an Aboriginal woman-owned transport success story

NLA Trucking is a 100 per cent Aboriginal woman-owned trucking and plant hire business delivering quality services across Victoria. Founded by Nicole Appleton in 2016 with a single owner-operated truck, the business has grown to operate from two locations, with more than 15 pieces of equipment and a network of over 150 independent contractors.

Victorian Government grant support has contributed to the business's capacity to expand its operations and pursue new commercial opportunities. NLA Trucking is strongly committed to creating employment and economic opportunities for women and First Peoples. This includes its Path to Business Ownership program, which supports participants to develop the capability and confidence to establish their own businesses. Nicole's leadership and the company's growth were recognised through the Business Victoria – Women in Business Award.

Ngarrimili

Building Capability for the First Peoples Business Sector

Ngarrimili hosted workshops through its Murran Hub attended by over 100 people. Topics have included legal advice, how to start a business and planning.

Over 40 businesses have been supported through this initiative across diverse industries including arts/creative, music, retail, accounting, beauty/fashion, consultancy and service provision.

The initiative has provided over 300 mentoring sessions on topics such as wellbeing, digital, strategy, accounting/financial and branding/marketing.

Ngarrimili has worked with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation to maximise tourism opportunities within the hub.

First Australians Capital

Right capital, right support

Through Yuma Yirramboi, First Australians Capital delivered the Aboriginal Business Capital Investment Program Business Growth from January 2023 to May 2025. The program addressed barriers to finance by combining grants and flexible loans with culturally responsive business advice.

Across two phases, $826,500 in capital was deployed or approved. Seventeen businesses received funding, and over 40 received capability-building support. The program engaged more than 70 businesses and supported the creation or retention of 32 jobs.

With 75% of supported businesses previously unable to access capital and 80% reporting increased confidence, the program demonstrated how Aboriginal-led, relationship-based investment can unlock business growth and strengthen economic self-determination.

Wealth creation

Building First Peoples wealth and unlocking lasting economic opportunities for Traditional Owner Corporations

Culture

People

Business

Wealth creation

Jobs

Accountability

Pillar	Pillar outcome	Yuma Yirramboi Delivery 2023–2026
4. Wealth creation **Accelerate the growth of the Aboriginal Estate and opportunities for wealth creation** We will facilitate greater wealth-generating resources and commercial expertise to accelerate the growth of the Aboriginal Estate in step with the pursuit of Treaty	4.1 Growing Aboriginal estate and collective community wealth (economic and non-economic)	**Aboriginal Economic Hubs** Grants have been provided to Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to support and resource development of economic hubs in Bendigo, Gippsland and Ballarat. In early 2025, under the Regional Package, the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund supported the establishment of 6 additional Aboriginal Economic Hubs the: • Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation • Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation • Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation • Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation • Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation • Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation.
	4.2 Aboriginal Victorians and Traditional Owners at the forefront of decision-making impacting country, culture and the Aboriginal estate	**Yuma Yirramboi Economic Development Innovation Program** • Grants have been provided to support 10 TOCs towards employment outcomes and continue to progress economic priorities through developing strategic approaches, creating partnerships and realising goals for self-determination within the business and tourism sector. **Traditional Owners Economic Development Coordinators** • Grants have been provided to 10 TOCs to each recruit an Economic Development Coordinator. These roles are supporting economic development initiatives across the TOCs, for example supporting established TOC-led businesses and plans, regional partnership building and engagement with other areas of DJSIR and across government.

Wealth creation

The Victorian Government funded economic development initiatives that give Traditional Owners greater freedom to make their own economic and social decisions for the future

DUMAWUL Creative Art and Cultural Tourism Hub (Dja Dja Wurrung)

The Dja Dja Wurrung Cultural Tourism and Creative Arts Hub is open in the Hargreaves Mall in Bendigo.

The Hub supports local First Peoples entrepreneurs and artists, offers cultural education programs, and facilitates networking and cultural tourism activities.

Highlights include:

- a fully operational creative arts space with 8 out of 10 spots currently occupied by local artists. All 5 hot desk spaces are being used
- workshops are being held regularly, with a recent workshop attended by 22 participants
- the gallery/event space has been booked for 4 upcoming events, showcasing local and visiting artists
- cultural tours have been successfully launched, with an average of 3 tours conducted weekly
- two networking events with over 30 attendees each, fostering collaboration and business opportunities among First Nations creatives.

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation Hub

The GLaWAC Office and Community Hub spaces have been used by GLaWAC staff since mid-October 2023 and have hosted several partner and community group meetings. The Hub was officially opened on 7 March 2024.

Programs and initiatives up and running include:

- existing and aspiring business owner networking and business support events and 1:1 sessions
- weekly cuppa and yarn sessions
- gallery and retail space
- meeting room bookings by other organisations e.g. VACCA, VACCHO, Ramahyuck.

Taungurung Land and Waters Council Economic Development Innovation Program

Taungurung were one of 10 Traditional Owner Corporations to receive funding. For Taungurung, this was provided to its subsidiary 'Biik Cultural Land Management Natural Resource Management Enterprise' (BiiK).

This investment enabled BiiK to purchase equipment for vegetation management, develop a business plan and position Biik to secure contracts. It has become a key contractor in natural resource land management.



Left: Tanya Taylor, Middle: Rebecca Phillips, Right: Sharon Brindley

Jobs

Strengthening employment pathways and creating meaningful career opportunities for First Peoples across Victoria

Culture

People

Business

Wealth creation

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Pillar	Pillar outcome	Yuma Yirramboi Delivery 2023–2026
5. Jobs **Generate jobs and careers to reach employment parity** We will generate more jobs and meaningful careers (working with public, private and community sectors)	5.1 Meaningful employment parity for Aboriginal Victorians	**Dardi Pathways to Employment** • The program provides access to casework support and mentoring for First Peoples to support them to prepare résumés, apply for and participate in certificate-level training and other skill development, apply for job opportunities, and overcome challenges that could impact their sustained engagement with employment. **Social Enterprise and Mullum Creations** • Mullum Creations is sharing cultural knowledge and connection through Native foods training, education, and catering; whilst supporting pathways to employment for First Peoples in Victoria. It is providing culturally appropriate job placement support and mentoring – along with scoping an accredited native foods training suite. **DJSIR First Peoples Staff Network Leadership** • This initiative supports and facilitates career pathways and trajectories for First Peoples employees, placing a strong focus on career development. **Aboriginal Employment Action Research** • Greenshoot Consulting were awarded funding to conduct targeted employment research within 4 priority regions. Gippsland, Mallee, Loddon Mallee and Wimmera South Mallee. Key Findings included: Establish a First Peoples-led Employment and Training Hubs and Fund literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy programs, and work with TAFEs. **Geelong City Deal Partnerships** • **Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) Partnership:** This initiative funded the employment of a Project Coordinator. The project coordinator increased the capacity of EMAC to support a partnership approach with Geelong City Deal delivery team. • **Wadawurrung Capacity and Urban Design Guidelines:** The project supported the development of Wadawurrung Urban Design Guidelines. This included the integration of Wadawurrung led design principles into the planning of public spaces in central Geelong.

Skills and employment pathways

Yuma Yirramboi initiatives have supported skills and employment pathways to help generate more jobs and meaningful careers

Dardi Pathways to Employment

The Pathways to Employment project run by Dardi Munwurro is part of the broader Employment Pathway program which achieved the following outcomes:

- a total of 136 clients participated in accredited training programs, collectively completing 264 training sessions
- 77 clients were placed into paid employment, with an additional 3 pending employment start dates
- Dardi supported 126 active clients in the pre-employment and employment stages
- Dardi has successfully partnered with the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP), which has provided 14 clients so far through its rail training programs.

Partnerships cultivated by Dardi included:

- **Wesfarmers**, including Kmart, Target, Bunnings, and Officeworks. Several clients have been supported through the application and interview process with Kmart and Bunnings.
- **Bridge Darebin**, who are delivering Job Readiness training to prepare clients for employment pathways, including roles within Bunnings Cafés.



Social Enterprise and Mullum Creations

The Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place program:

- delivered upskilling workshops and pathways towards employment for community
- established a mentor and support system for young adults looking to join the workforce and adults looking to re-join the workforce
- developed pre-employment programs and is working towards curating accredited training opportunities.

Partnerships cultivated by Mullum Creations included:

- **William Angliss Institute**, which delivered multiple training sessions to support community members to obtain their Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) and Food Handling certificates.
- **Maroondah Federation Estate**, with whom a low-cost lease has been negotiated for a café space. This native foods café will provide employment opportunities for community members who have completed their Barista Basics, RSA, and Food Handling training.

Accountability

Strong First Peoples-led governance drives Yuma Yirramboi's success, strengthening accountability and maintaining focus on economic outcomes

Culture

People

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Wealth creation

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Accountability

Pillar	Pillar outcome	Yuma Yirramboi Delivery 2023–2026
6. Accountability **Transparent reporting against commitments** We will provide structured and transparent reporting of impact	6.1 Strong community accountability and impact	**Advancing Aboriginal Self-determination toolkit** • The toolkit provides information on how the Department can better embed First Peoples self-determination in our work. **Establishment of the Advancing First Peoples Self-determination Committee of DJSIR Executive Board** • The Advancing First Peoples Self-determination Committee at DJSIR works closely with the Yuma Yirramboi Council to support the delivery of Yuma Yirramboi, including responding to advice from the Executive Board and setting accountability standards. • This committee aims to maximise the Yuma Yirramboi Council's strategic expertise in the delivery of Yuma Yirramboi and increase awareness of the Council's role in informing the delivery of the Strategy. **Yuma Yirramboi evaluation 2023** • DJSIR's evaluation found that Yuma Yirramboi is an important and necessary program that is delivering early positive outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. The evaluation found strong delivery against key indicators, with funded activities improving access to capital, business mentoring, financial advice, employment pathways, skills development and economy-focused capability in Traditional Owner Corporations. It also found the program is increasing access to targeted supports for Aboriginal businesses and individuals, with early signs of contribution to employment, business and community outcomes across Victoria. **Victorian Aboriginal Sporting Partnership (VASP)** • The VASP is a formal agreement between the Victorian First Peoples community and Sport and Recreation Victoria, embedding First Peoples self-determination principles and co-design in Victoria's approach to sport and active recreation. **marra ngarrgoo, marra goorri: the Victorian Aboriginal Health, Medical and Wellbeing Research Accord (the Accord)** • Funding to support the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) with implementation of the Accord. The Accord sets out principles that aim to assist researchers and research organisations to improve their ethical standards and to implement national ethics guidelines at a local level.

DJSIR has worked DJSIR has worked with the Koori Caucus to build an Outcomes Framework to ensure strong accountability for delivering Yuma Yirramboi

The Yuma Yirramboi Council requested DJSIR develop an Outcomes Framework for the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy.

DJSIR's Aboriginal Economic Development Branch has worked with DJSIR's Design and Evaluation Branch to define:

- what successful delivery of the Strategy looks like
- what needs to change to get there
- how to know if that change is being delivered.

A comprehensive suite of outcomes and indicators have been developed for each strategic pillar: culture, people, wealth creation, business, jobs and accountability.

The draft framework was presented to the Yuma Yirramboi Council for endorsement with the full range of outcomes indicators endorsed in principle.

DJSIR has distilled these to a smaller number of priority indicators to focus on.

The Department has engaged a consultant to deliver the Outcomes Framework in 2026. This work will support effective reporting and monitoring of the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy.

Outcomes Framework

Component	Description	Example
Yuma Yirramboi pillars	Strategic pillars for each initiative	Business pillar
Outcomes	Desired end goal based on each Yuma Yirramboi pillar's objective	Strong and growing First Peoples business sector
Indicators	What needs to change to achieve the outcome, including direction of change (eg, increase, decrease, maintain)	Increase in the number of First Peoples businesses between 2023 and 2026
Measures	How we know if we are making progress, including size, amount or degree of change?	Number of First Peoples businesses in 2023 Number of First Peoples businesses in 2026

Next steps

In 2026/27 FY, the Koori Caucus will continue to support the delivery of the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy

Treaty Implementation

Victoria's Statewide Treaty has been signed, cementing Gellung Warl as a permanent representative and decision-making body for First Peoples within the existing democratic system.

Victoria's Treaty is about First Peoples developing and delivering solutions at the local level. Treaty is a practical way to create a stronger, fairer Victoria – for all of us.

Koori Caucus priorities for 2027

The following priority actions will be the focus of the Caucus' ongoing discussions and engagement with DJSIR and ministers:

- economic empowerment through skills and market access
- First Peoples inclusion in infrastructure projects
- procurement policy reform
- state economic planning
- cultural and intellectual knowledge and data.

DJSIR's Yoorrook Justice Commission Commitments

The Victorian Government has committed to considering and responding to the 100 recommendations contained in the *Yoorrook for Transformation* report which span a wide range of portfolios and include economic prosperity.

During hearings in 2024 the former DJSIR Secretary set an internal First Peoples procurement target of 1 per cent by value and 3 per cent by volume, to be achieved within the next two years.

Yuma Yirramboi Program Delivery

The Caucus has been consulted and was instrumental in developing specific budget initiatives from the Victorian Government's budget outcomes. Collective decision-making has played a key role in shaping strategic issues and investment priorities under the strategy.

These included funded programs to:

- support First Nations businesses to compete locally and globally, and funding to host the World Indigenous Business Forum in 2025
- pilot Aboriginal Community Controlled vocational education and training models and grow the First Nations VET workforce
- the Self-Determined Aboriginal Employment Initiative (SAEI) is funded through both the Commonwealth Government's Outcome Fund, as well as the Victorian Government through the Aboriginal Economic Hubs, and enables TOCs to co-design and deliver local employment projects that deliver on the unique objectives and aspirations of their community in a self-determined manner.



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