

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION
INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

ATTACHMENT JT-2 TO STATEMENT OF JACQUALYN LOUISE TURFREY

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This is the attachment marked '**JT-2**' produced and shown to **JACQUALYN LOUISE TURFREY** at the time of signing her Statement on 16 July 2015.

Before me:



An Australian legal practitioner
within the meaning of the
Legal Profession Uniform Law (Victoria)

Attachment JT-2

Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 3 (AJA3)

A partnership between the Victorian
Government and Koori Community

KOORI Strong
KOORI Proud
KOORI Justice

The Victorian Department of Justice acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land. The department also acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of people who may have passed away since the time of publishing.

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Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 3 (AJA3)

A partnership between the Victorian
Government and Koori Community



Foreword

It was more than 20 years ago that the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody released its Final Report. The Royal Commission highlighted the need for Aboriginal people to be involved in the process of implementing its 339 recommendations. In 1997, the Kennett Government began charting a new direction for Victoria's justice system, a direction that has led to a partnership with the Koori community to tackle Indigenous over-representation.

This partnership has delivered significant improvements since the first Aboriginal Justice Agreement was reached in 2000. Perhaps the single clearest measure of the success of this approach is the rate at which Aboriginal Victorians are over-represented in the criminal justice system, which is significantly lower than the national average.

In 2013, the Victorian Government is committed to continuing to work in partnership with the Koori community to achieve improved justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. It is this partnership approach that has made the Justice Agreement relevant, durable and effective.

As the Aboriginal Justice Agreement enters its third phase, the partnership is focussed on improving justice outcomes by building stronger families and safer communities.

Work to improve educational outcomes, enhance opportunities for employment and strengthen our economy has direct and positive impacts on reducing youth offending, lowering imprisonment rates and tackling family violence.

This work is supported by every area of government, coordinated through the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF), as we progress towards a better future for Victoria's young and growing Aboriginal community.

The Justice Agreement is a key component of the VAAF and reflects the Framework's central principles of aspirations, accountability, engagement and inclusiveness.

We would not be launching the next phase of the Justice Agreement if not for the commitment, passion and leadership of the Aboriginal community in wanting a better future for their children.

I thank the Aboriginal Justice Forum and so many community members for their important work and I look forward to seeing many positive results as we work together under the third Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

Robert Clark, MP
Attorney-General

I am pleased on the behalf of the Koori Caucus to be able to contribute to the foreword of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement phase three (AJA3) with the continued promise of building on strong partnerships between Aboriginal people across Victoria and the Department of Justice to improve Koori justice outcomes.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia justice is often viewed as inequitable and is described by many as a system which treats our people unjustly. When a system is unable to make the best decisions and treat everyone equally then it is important to improve it. However, over-representation cannot be blamed solely on the justice system. We as Aboriginal people also have to take responsibility for our actions leading to our involvement in it. That is why Victoria's AJA is so important to the Victorian Aboriginal people.

Importantly, I want to give due recognition and acknowledgement of the role of the Victorian government in seeking to reduce Aboriginal over-representation in the justice system. I also want to acknowledge that there would not be an Aboriginal Justice Agreement without the ongoing commitment and support of the Koori Caucus, whose pursuit of genuine partnerships and leading role in establishing and driving outcomes has contributed to the success of AJA1 and AJA2 .

The development of each AJA has severely challenged the Koori Caucus and the Department of Justice given the breath of issues and the complexity of systems with which the partnership has had to work to achieve success. We can be well proud of the progress we have made to date.

The implementation of AJA3 will again challenge us as we focus on expanding the emphasis on crime prevention and diversion activities to reduce re-offending and over-representation. We know also that we need to better understand the key drivers of offending and work **with our people to address these issues earlier**. AJA3 will focus heavily on reducing conflict and violence across our community to improve community safety. We will only achieve this through collaboration and strong partnerships with and between all stakeholders.

Whilst we have seen significant improvements through our work on AJA1 and AJA2 across the State, it is clear we need to do a lot more in our response to specific issues for our women and to work with young women in the prison system both pre- and post release. But more importantly their initial diversion.

Fundamental to the work of the AJA3 must be mutual adherence by government and the Koori community to the principles of the Agreement. Both parties have to be accountable for the outcomes; both parties need to be transparent in the work they do and be inclusive of all.

Disconnection from land and people and a loss of culture has led to a breakdown in

traditional values and has severely impacted on our people, which is a key contributor to our over-representation in the justice system. A fundamental challenge will be to establish a strong cultural base and identity in our children and young people. We cannot afford a continuing cultural disconnect within our communities.

We need to ensure that in the 'justice system' that there are actions across the age spectrum to address parenting for Koori parents both in prison and upon release.

The Agreement moves to address a whole range of justice issues and I believe that Aboriginal people have embraced it, there is a high level of Aboriginal participation and involvement and a genuine willingness to embrace what we see as positive outcomes. I look forward to a continued improvement both in our relationships and in our ability to bring about long-term sustainable change.

Dr Alf Bamblett
Chairperson
Victorian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee



The Kurnai Shield and the AJA

Kurnai Shield © 2002 by artist Ms Eileen Harrison, a Kurnai woman from Gippsland “The markings on this shield represent our people and our country.”

Kurnai Shield is an acrylic on canvas which was created in 2002 and featured in the Mallacoota Arts Festival of that year.

In 2003, the artwork was purchased by the Department of Justice to feature as the visual emblem of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA). Since then it has featured prominently on all associated documents and publications, including the AJA1 and AJA2 (designed by Deadly Design).

In 2010 Ms Harrison agreed to allow a stylised version of the artwork to be created, enabling increased promotion of the AJA by the Department of Justice.

Aboriginal designer Marcus Lee developed the ‘Koori Strong, Koori Proud, Koori Justice’ emblem featuring a stylistic representation of the Kurnai Shield, signifying the evolution of the AJA and coinciding with its 10th Anniversary.

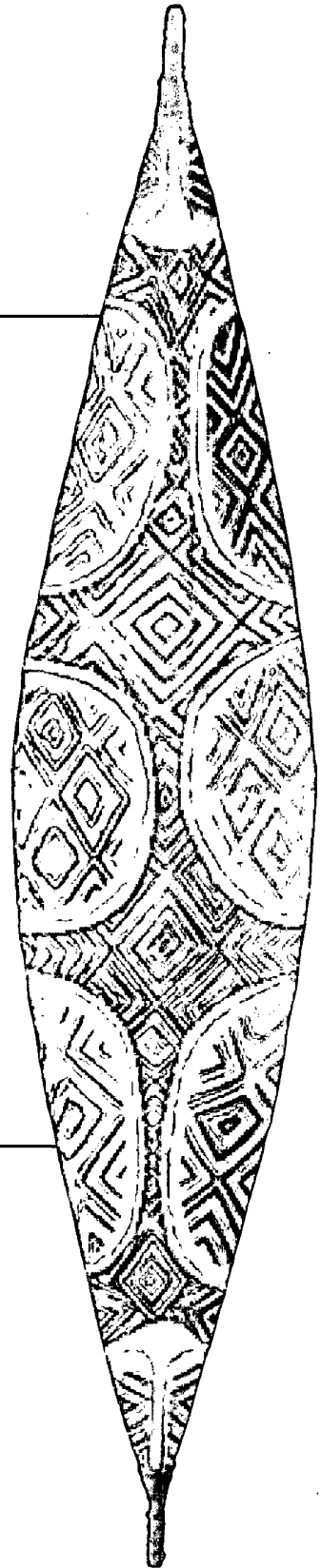


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Terminology

The terms Aboriginal, Indigenous, Koori and Koories are used throughout this document to describe the traditional inhabitants of Victoria. The Aboriginal Justice Forum and the Department of Justice have agreed with the Koori Caucus that for consistency, the term Koori (Koories for plural) is the preferred term for use in the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement and all related reports, policies, programs and initiatives.

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Part 1: Introduction

Overview: the third phase of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA3)

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) is an agreement between the Victorian Government and Koori community to work together to improve Koori justice outcomes.

The continuation of the AJA after completion of its first two phases (launched in 2000 and 2006 respectively), was recommended after an independent evaluation of AJA2, which found that a strong and enduring partnership had been built between justice agencies and the Koori community and that the partnership structures at state-wide, regional and local levels, had set a strong foundation for future initiatives. In responding to the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation, this Agreement builds on and extends the previous two Agreements and ensures its continued relevance.

The AJA3 was developed through the Aboriginal Justice Forum in a partnership process of extensive consultation and collaboration, resulting in a strategy which:

- maintains and continues to grow the strong partnership between the Victorian Government and Koori community
- recognises the importance of cultural identity, connection and strength in building the resilience, skills, economic participation and wellbeing of Koories and protecting against crime and violence
- provides a strategic direction that maintains and extends activity across the justice system, consistent with the AJA objectives and with government and Koori community priorities in key areas
- reinforces a targeted approach to key drivers of crime, violence and Koori over-representation
- includes a monitoring and evaluation framework that strengthens governance and reporting systems
- emphasises place-based approaches and seeks to improve the consistency, accessibility and availability of the program and service system across regions
- improves collaboration across government to address the underlying issues and work towards common goals.

AJA3 continues to be underpinned by the principles articulated in AJA2, which include acknowledging the uniqueness, diversity, history and culture of the Koori community, ensuring honesty, transparency and accountability, and supporting the right of Koori communities to participate as equal partners in all justice-related policies and programs that affect the Koori community.

AJA3 also contributes towards achieving long-term change within generational timeframes consistent with the Council of Australian Governments Closing the Gap policy. AJA3 is to be implemented over a five-year period (2013-18) and represents the midpoint of a long-term strategy, rolled out in stages until the gap is closed.

How the Agreement has evolved

Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 1

In Victoria, action to improve justice outcomes has its origins in the 1991 report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody¹ and the subsequent 1997 National Ministerial Summit into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, held to review implementation of Royal Commission recommendations. The first phase of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) was produced in direct response to the summit resolution to develop strategic planning, program delivery and monitoring frameworks in each jurisdiction, aimed at reducing Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system.

Critical to the development of AJA was the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, established under recommendations from the Royal Commission. Under the leadership of its Chair, Dr Alf Bamblett, the committee negotiated with government to shape the Agreement and paved the way for the partnership that exists today.

The AJA set out aims, strategies, principles, roles and responsibilities of its signatories, forming the basis for achieving equity between the government and the Koori community. It also identified key results for monitoring and evaluation and embarked on a range of projects and systemic reforms.

The first phase ran from 2000-06 and laid the foundation for improved Koori justice outcomes. Important achievements included:

- establishing robust partnerships between the Victorian Government and Koori community
- building infrastructure to assist in reducing over-representation
- introducing initiatives that improved justice-related outcomes for the Koori community.

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) was produced in direct response to the summit resolution to develop strategic planning, program delivery and monitoring frameworks in each jurisdiction, aimed at reducing Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system.

¹ The Royal Commission found that the high number of Aboriginal deaths in custody was related to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. The most significant cause of this over-representation was the extremely disadvantaged and unequal position of Aboriginal people within the broader society, which left them vulnerable to lifelong involvement with the justice system.

HOW THE AGREEMENT HAS EVOLVED

Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2

The second phase of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA2) was launched in 2006 and aimed to improve Koori justice outcomes through:

- minimising Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system
- improving Koori access to mechanisms designed to uphold their human, civil and legal rights
- eliminating inequalities in the justice system.

AJA2 again outlined aims, principles, objectives, roles and responsibilities for all parties and introduced a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.

It focused on preventing and reducing the progression of young Koories into the criminal justice system and in reducing re-offending of those young people and adults already in the system. It was built on a strategic framework of prevention, early intervention, increased diversion and reduced re-offending and looked at intervening at every point in the criminal justice system. It also focused on changing the justice system to be more responsive and inclusive in its approach to Koories.

The AJA2 took a place-based approach and aimed to expand the number of locations and initiatives that could be established in partnership with local communities. It recognised the importance of strengthening community and building capacity to enable crime and justice-related issues to be addressed locally.

Implementation and monitoring

AJA2 contained more than 50 initiatives with strategic objectives to:

- increase crime prevention and early intervention
- improve diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment
- reduce re-offending
- reduce victimisation
- increase responsive and inclusive services
- strengthen community justice responses.

Responsibility for delivering outcomes was shared between Department of Justice and Victoria Police, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Implementation of AJA2 was coordinated and managed through detailed plans presented as:

- **Koori Action Plans:** developed by each government business unit responsible for delivering AJA2 initiatives. The plans were developed by Koori Reference Groups that included Koori members of the Aboriginal Justice Forum, and progress against them was reported back at each forum meeting.
- **Regional Justice Plans:** developed by each Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, which identified critical justice issues in their region and contributed to achieving the AJA2 objectives. Committee Chairpersons reported on progress against their regional justice plan to the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

By 2012, the majority of AJA2 initiatives had been implemented across the justice system (on or before schedule) and are listed in Figure 1.

HOW THE AGREEMENT HAS EVOLVED

Figure 1: Key initiatives of the AJA

| Objective | Focus area | Key initiatives |
|--|--|---|
| Increase crime prevention and early intervention | Reduce risk factors for crime and strengthen protective factors for Koori youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontline Youth Initiatives and Community Initiatives Programs • Koori Early School Leaver Program and Youth Employment Service |
| Improve diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment | Increase diversion options at strategic points and strengthen system capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Victoria Police Koori Youth Cautioning Project • Victoria Police Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer and Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer programs • Koori Courts, including Koori Children's Courts and County Koori Court • Koori Youth Intensive Bail Support Program • Court Integrated Services Program • Local Justice Worker Program • Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place |
| Reduce re-offending | Address environmental and behavioural risk factors for re-offending | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program • Koori Cognitive Skills Program • Koori KONNECT transition and post release support program • Indigenous Community Corrections Officers Program |
| Reduce victimisation | Reduce the negative impact of the high rate of victimisation on the Koori community and reduce inter-generational contributors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koori Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal List • Victims Support Agency Indigenous Victims of Crime Officers and Support Strategy • Indigenous Family Violence 10-Year Plan |
| Increase responsive and inclusive services | Increase responsiveness to Koori culture in the justice system and strengthen Koori inclusion at all levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koori Action Plans • Koori Recruitment and Career Development Strategy • Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training • Aboriginal Community Justice Panels |
| Strengthen community justice responses | Increase community strength and capacity to develop local solutions to local justice issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee networks • Place-based strategies at Lake Tyers and Mildura • Koori Mediation Program pilot |

The AJA2 recognised the importance of strengthening community and building capacity to enable crime and justice-related issues to be addressed locally.

HOW THE AGREEMENT HAS EVOLVED

Evaluation of AJA2

In 2011-12 an independent evaluation of the AJA2 was undertaken by the Nous Group. It focused on change in Koori justice outcomes attributable to the AJA2 over its duration, looking at overall impact on Koori over-representation in the justice system and also performance against the objectives.

Key findings of the evaluation were that:

- Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system was still increasing, but would have increased more without the AJA2
- there had been positive outcomes against all objectives, but remained more to do (summarised in Figure 2 but provided in more detail in Appendix 1).

Figure 2: Summary of findings from the AJA2 evaluation

| Objective | Summary finding |
|--|--|
| Increase crime prevention and early intervention | Youth contact with police and incarceration has been reduced |
| Improve diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment | There has been no change at the state level, but most regions have improved |
| Reduce re-offending | Re-offending has been reduced |
| Reduce victimisation | Victimisation has worsened but services for victims have improved |
| Increase responsive and inclusive services | The inclusion and responsiveness of Justice services has generally increased |
| Strengthen community justice responses | The strength of community justice responses has increased |

HOW THE AGREEMENT HAS EVOLVED

Overall, the evaluation found that the AJA2 delivered significant improvements in justice outcomes for Koories in Victoria, resulting in lower numbers of Aboriginal people in prison, offenders and offences committed than estimated (based on 2001-06 statistical trends).

It highlighted the value of a place-based approach and demonstrating that regions were affected differently in Koori over-representation in prison. While over-representation decreased in all five non-metropolitan regions (with decreases ranging from 11-31 per cent), it remained the same in two of the metropolitan regions and increased the North Metropolitan region by up to one-third which impacted on the overall result state-wide.

In monetary terms, the evaluators calculated that the gross benefits to Victoria of the AJA2 was approximately \$22-26 million in 2011, representing a social return on investment between \$1.66-1.93 for every dollar invested.

The evaluation also found that the AJA2 partnership structures had set a strong foundation for achieving outcomes to date and for developing future initiatives

As a result, the overarching recommendation was for its continuation over a third phase (AJA3), enhancing the existing approach, as the best way to tackle the complex and intergenerational issues and achieve sustainable change over time.

Further recommendations, which significantly shaped the priorities for AJA3, were to:

- improve governance and reporting to actively drive outcomes
- address key risk points for Koories in the justice system
- improve consistency of service availability and access across and within geographic areas
- continue to focus on improving justice outcomes, while collaborating across government.

“The difference with the AJA is that it has a signed agreement with real ownership by Koories...it provides a real platform for voices of the community without fear” RAJAC Chair.

HOW THE AGREEMENT HAS EVOLVED

From AJA2 to AJA3

Each phase of the AJA builds and extends on the one that went before it. AJA3 consolidates and extends successful initiatives/components, ensuring it is well-placed to respond to new challenges.

AJA3 maintains AJA2's developmental approach by minimising risk factors and maximising protective factors for youth, targeting interventions at the key transition points in a youth's development that are most often associated with offending.

AJA3 maintains an emphasis on prevention, early intervention and diversion to reduce further progression into the justice system.

It also seeks to reduce re-offending and strengthen the focus on addressing drivers such as alcohol and drugs, mental health, unstable housing and unemployment through offender rehabilitation and behaviour programs, improved transition support and continuity of care to assist offenders reintegrate into the community.

AJA3 has an increased focus on improving the safety of Koori families and communities through reducing conflict, violence and victimisation and improving support for victims. AJA3 maintains a place-based approach and seeks to strengthen local community justice responses through community safety planning in key locations.

AJA3 continues to increase the responsiveness of the justice system through the implementation of the Justice Department's Koori Inclusion Action Plan *Mingu Gadhaba*, and implementation of the Department's Koori Employment Strategy 2011-2015.

AJA3 recognises the importance of cultural identity and connection and emphasises cultural strengthening as a vital foundation which builds the resilience, skills, participation and wellbeing of Koories and protects against crime and violence.

By seeking to break cycles of violence and offending, and increasing family and community safety, AJA3 assists in supporting young Koories to thrive by creating environments conducive to employment and economic development.

Figure 3 summarises the changes in focus between AJA2 and AJA3, highlighting the areas that have been rolled over and strengthened.

Figure 3: Primary focus of objectives across AJA2 and AJA3

| Phase 2 objective | Phase 3 objective |
|---|---|
| Increase crime prevention, early intervention | Continue to focus on crime prevention and early intervention |
| Improve diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment | Continue to emphasise and extend across the justice system |
| Reduce re-offending | Increase focus across the justice system |
| Reduce victimisation | Expand focus to include reducing conflict and violence as well as victimisation |
| Increase responsive and inclusive services | Increase focus through Koori Inclusion Action Plan and Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15 |
| Strengthen community justice responses | Expand focus to also include increasing community safety |

 KOORI CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



*Koori sporting clubs and organisations are the heart of many communities.
Photographer: Richard Kendall*



Koori justice workers recognised by the Institute of Public Administration Australia through Young Indigenous Leader Scholarship awards

Koori contact with the justice system

At the conclusion of AJA2, in Victoria there were 70 fewer Aboriginal people in prison, 200 fewer Aboriginal offenders and 1300 fewer Aboriginal offences in 2011 than expected (based on 2001-06 statistical trends) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Expected vs actual change in Koori justice outcomes for adults in 2011



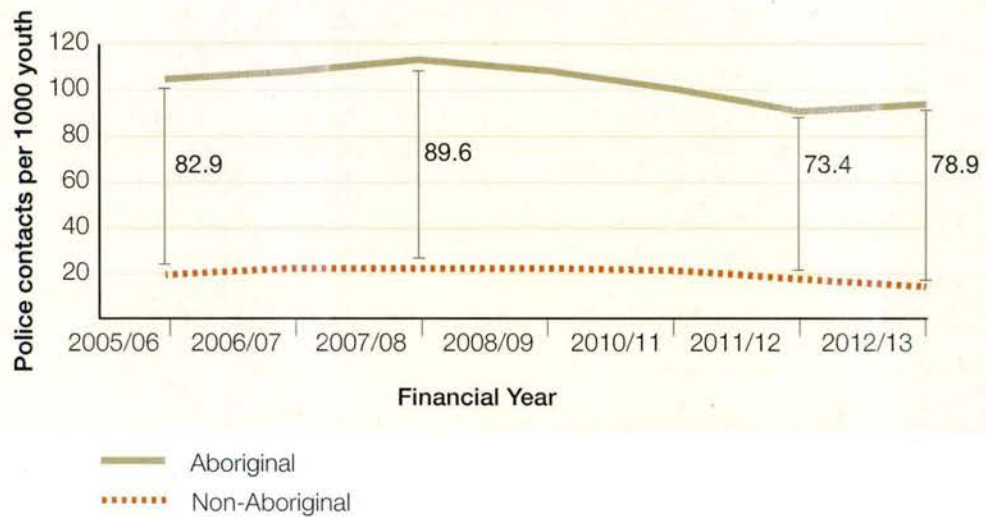
Source: NOUS Group, AJA2 Evaluation Report 2012

However, Koories remain over-represented across all stages of the criminal justice system, including the following examples:

- The rate of Aboriginal young people (10-17) processed by police has fallen in recent years from around 100 per 1000 to close to 90 per 1000. The percentage-point gap between the rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people processed by police has also fallen to 78.9. However the rate remains unacceptably high and is still over 6 times the non-Aboriginal rate.
- Similarly, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reported that in 2010-11 that 2.5 of every 1,000 Koori youth in Victoria were in youth detention, compared with 0.1 of every 1,000 non-Indigenous youth. Koori youth also enter the youth justice system at a younger age (AIHW, 2012).
- In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that Indigenous people in Victoria were imprisoned at a rate of 11.6 per 1,000 people while just over one per 1,000 non-Indigenous Victorians were in prison (ABS, 2012 Prisoners in Australia).

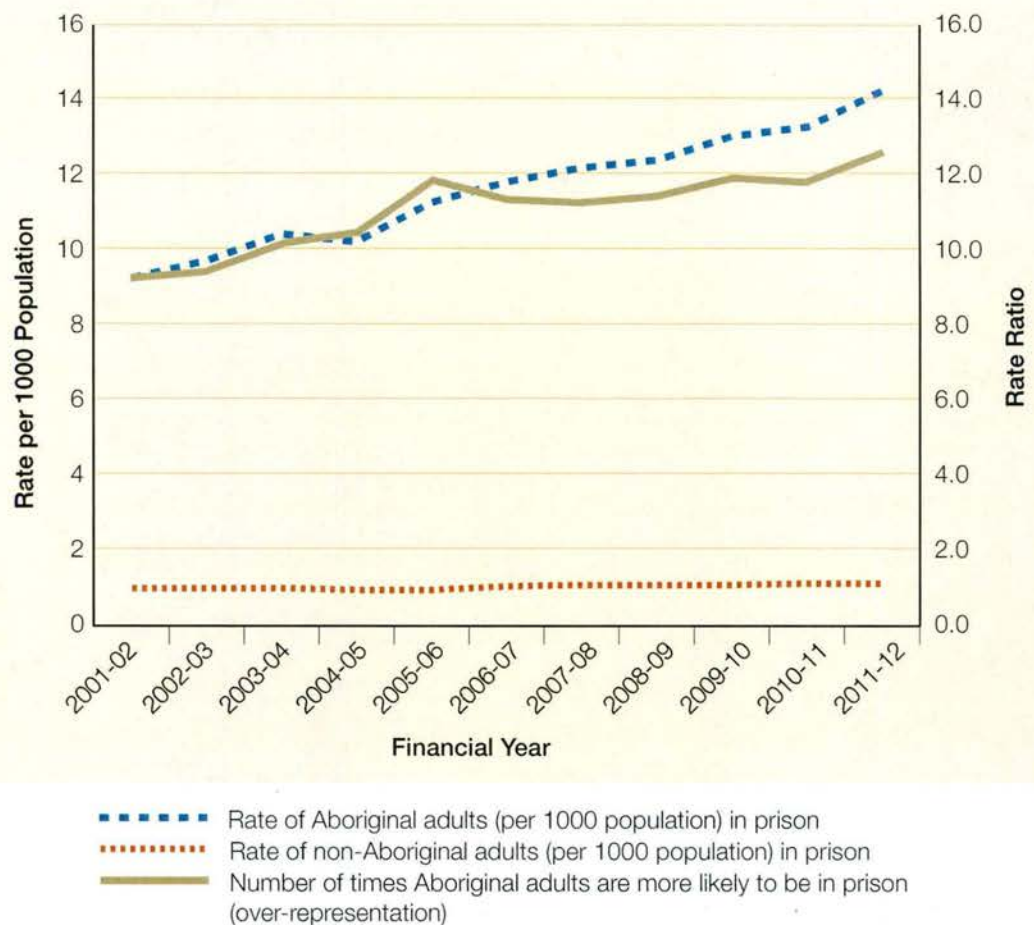
KOORI CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Figure 5: Youth contact with police (per 1000 population)



Source: Victoria Police Corporate Statistics, LEAP Database. Data extracted 21 December 2012.

Figure 6: Rate of adult imprisonment in Victoria (per 1000 population)



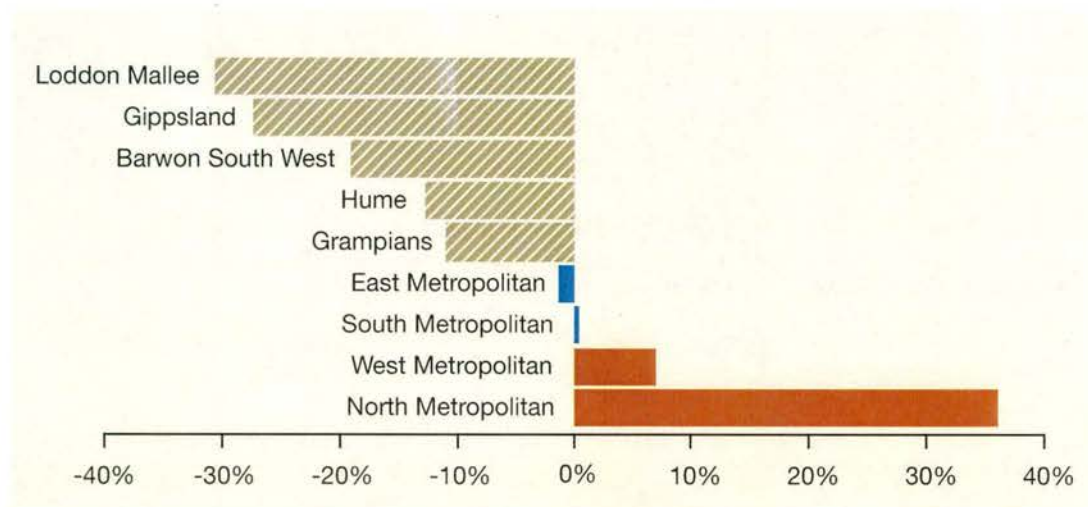
Source: Corrections Victoria

KOORI CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Different outcomes across Victoria

Across the whole Victorian Koori population, over-representation worsened between 2006 and 2011. However the AJA2 evaluation indicated that where there has been a clear focus and investment of resources, there has been a reduction in over-representation of Koories in prison (Figure 6). In particular there were decreases in over-representation in all five non-metropolitan regions from 2006-2011 (ranging from 11 per cent decrease in Grampians to 31 per cent decrease in Loddon Mallee). Over-representation in the South and East Metropolitan areas stayed the same, while in the North and West Metropolitan regions – the regions with the highest Koori population – over-representation increased by one-third. This also affected the overall outcomes state-wide (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Change in Koori adult over-representation in prison by region, 2006-2011²



Source: NOUS Group, AJA2 evaluation report 2012

Note: This refers to Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee regions

² This has been population adjusted using straight line extension of population growth between 2001 and 2006. Note that at the beginning of this period, East Metropolitan and West Metropolitan were part of South East Metropolitan and North West Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee regions respectively.

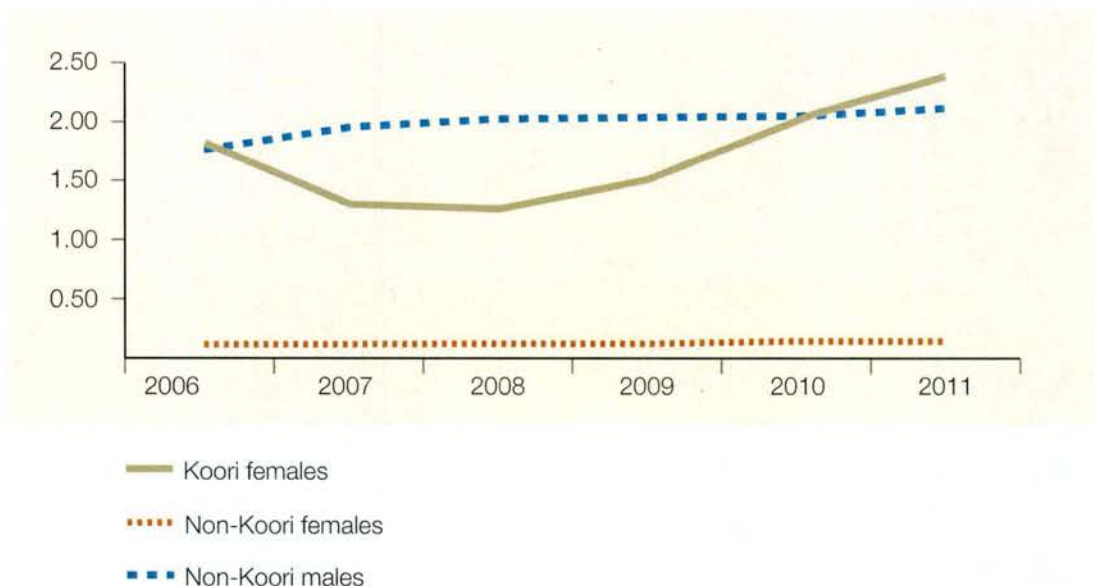
Comparison with other states and territories

The AJA2 evaluation compared Victoria with other states. It found that Victoria has maintained a relatively low rate of Koori over-representation in prisons over the last decade (only Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have a lower rate). It showed that while the Victorian rate increased slightly, the increase was much higher in other states such as South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales over the same period. These states also had a much higher overall rate of over-representation.

Imprisonment of Koori women is increasing

Whilst the great majority of Koories in prison are male, the evaluation also found that the number of Koori women in prison was increasing. Figure 8 shows that by 2011 the rate of Koori women in prison (per 1,000 population) exceeded the rate of non-Koori men, highlighting a lack of diversion options for those women.

Figure 8: Individuals in prison per 1000 in the population in Victoria, daily average 2006-2011³



³ In order to show the scale of change the rate of Koori males in prison is not shown on the graph. Koori males were imprisoned at a rate of 12.9 per 1,000 in 2006, dropping slightly to 12.1 per 1,000 in 2011.

KOORI CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



*Koori Pride Festival
Photographer: Ilana Rose*

Policy context

The policy context is a linked set of state and national strategies that aim to Close the Gap in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal outcomes. These frameworks and strategies form the basis of long-term generational change agendas that should maintain a consistent and sustainable approach over time.

Closing the Gap Statement of Intent

On 24 March 2011 the Premier signed the Closing the Gap Statement of Intent at Parliament House and recommitted the Victorian Government to the Closing the Gap agenda. In the Premier's outline of the government's approach to Aboriginal affairs, the commitments to closing the gap in health outcomes connected to the need to close the gap in a range of other areas, including justice, applying four guiding principles: accountability, aspirations, engagement and inclusiveness, and partnership building and a whole of community approach. These principles are closely aligned with the AJA principles, provided in Section 2 of this document.

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

Developed as part of the Premier's Closing the Gap commitments, the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18* is the overarching Aboriginal policy framework for the Victorian Government. It supports coordinated whole-of-government action on many of the underlying issues disproportionately present by Koori communities (such as socioeconomic disadvantage, marginalisation and disengagement) which drive contact with the justice system.

The major goal of the framework is to improve whole-of-life outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians in partnership with the Aboriginal community. It supports and connects major government plans and agreements in Aboriginal affairs, and recognises that sustained improvement will occur by 2031.

The conditions in which Koori children and young people can thrive, gain employment and contribute to sound economic development, depend on safe and secure communities.

POLICY CONTEXT

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework Strategic action areas

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18 focuses on six Strategic Action Areas:

1. Maternal and early childhood health and development
2. Education and training
3. Economic participation
4. Health, housing and wellbeing
5. Safe families and communities and equitable justice outcomes
6. Engaged people and confident communities

The framework takes a holistic life course approach that recognises that positive experiences early in life influence a person's life outcomes leading to more economic independence and resilience. It also gives focus to reform priorities for improved government effort, particularly to supporting strengthening Aboriginal culture, building economic participation and prosperity and improving the delivery of services including services that support and protect vulnerable children and families.

The AJA3 directly contributes to Strategic Action Area 5 of the framework (Safe Families and Communities and Equitable Justice Outcomes) by reducing crime and violence.

AJA3 also has a critical role supporting action in the other Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework Strategic Action Areas to improve social outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. This is because the conditions in which Koori children and young people can thrive, gain employment and contribute to sound economic development, depend on safe and secure communities.

Aboriginal Justice Target under the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework

Generational targets have been set for improving Aboriginal justice outcomes under the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework. This is the first time an Australian jurisdiction has set a target for closing the gap in justice outcomes. *The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18* includes a commitment to close the gap in the number of Aboriginal people (youth and adult) under justice supervision by 2031⁴. Headline indicators and targets of relevance to the AJA3 are included as part of the partnership agreement in Part 3 of this document.

Progress against these key justice indicators and targets will be reported in the annual Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report.

***Mingu Gadhaba: Beginning Together* the Department of Justice Koori Inclusion Action Plan**

Mingu Gadhaba: Beginning Together, the Department of Justice's Koori Inclusion Action Plan, aims to improve access, participation and effectiveness of justice programs and services to Koories. Developed in accordance with the Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework and containing 36 actions, *Mingu Gadhaba* frames the review and reform of current practices, to overcome systemic exclusion, and is an important component of the strategic actions around responsive and inclusive services in the AJA3.

⁴ Note: 'Close the gap' denotes there will be no gap by 2031.

The department recognises the importance of diversity in the workplace and the value that Koories bring to the Justice portfolio.

Koories are now represented in diverse roles, including management and direct service delivery, across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Victorian Public Sector Koori employment strategy *Karreeta Yirramboi* and the Department of Justice *Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15*

The Department of Justice *Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15* complements the *Victorian Public Sector Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Action Plan 2010-15: Karreeta Yirramboi*. The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework has set a one per cent Aboriginal employment target for the Victorian Public Sector to be achieved by 2018.

The department recognises the importance of diversity in the workplace and the value that Koories bring to the Justice portfolio. Its comprehensive Koori employment strategy 2011-15 is a high-achieving component of the AJA's strategic actions around responsive and inclusive services, having met, and in some areas exceeded its targets in increasing Koori employment across all divisions and business units. Koories are now represented in diverse roles, including management and direct service delivery, across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. The department is committed to continuing to grow, develop and retain its Koori workforce.

Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a Safer Future for Indigenous Families and Communities

Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a Safer Future for Indigenous Families and Communities is a 10-year plan developed by the Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum to address family violence in the Koori community. While the office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria provides the main policy support for the partnership forum, the Department of Justice shares responsibility with Victoria Police and the Department of Human Services for providing relevant and supportive services and responses.

There is cross-representation between the Aboriginal Justice Forum and the partnership forum. It is anticipated that the focus on reducing violence and victimisation under AJA3 will complement initiatives in the Indigenous family violence area by taking a broader approach. AJA3 priorities also include reducing conflict between families, lateral violence and Koori youth offending, and addressing the needs of Koori women in the justice system, particularly their history of trauma and victimisation.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Indigenous Reform Agreement

The National Indigenous Reform Agreement agreed by the Council of Australian Governments is the lead national agreement supporting efforts to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians within a decade. In 2008 the reform agenda established targets, which were reaffirmed in 2011, to close the gaps.

Safe Communities is one of seven critical building blocks which underpin the reform agreement for achieving the Closing the Gap targets, and outcomes pertinent to the AJA include:

- Indigenous children and families are safe and protected from violence and neglect in their homes and communities
- alcohol and other drug abuse among Indigenous people is overcome
- cycles of criminal behaviour and violence normalisation are broken.

Victorian and Commonwealth action to implement the reform agreement is outlined in an Overarching Bilateral Indigenous Plan signed with the Commonwealth in November 2010. The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework underpins the state component, under which the AJA3 is listed as one of the key actions to support the Community Safety Building Block.

The National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework

Three national frameworks support the Community Safety Building Block: the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework 2009-15, the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-20 and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22.

The National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework has the most relevance to the AJA. It was developed at a national level through the Standing Council on Law and Justice as a sustainable whole-of-government and community partnership approach to law and justice issues, with the aim of reducing the levels of disadvantage that are directly related to adverse contact with the justice system.

The justice framework articulates an agreed 'good practice' approach, based on available evidence that draws on existing State and Territory instruments such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice agreements. A Good Practice Compendium, in which the AJA2 and a number of related initiatives are featured, accompanies the justice framework to help inform local, regional and state or territory justice responses.

Safe Communities is one of seven critical building blocks which underpin the reform agreement for achieving the Closing the Gap targets, and outcomes pertinent to the AJA.

Other policies and plans

The AJA3 is aligned with and supports a range of other departmental strategies and plans including:

- the **Koori Alcohol Action Plan 2010-20** and the **Koori Suicide Prevention and Response Action Plan 2010-15** (Department of Health)
- **Koolin Balit** – Victorian Government Strategic directions for Aboriginal Health 2012-22
- the Victorian Government Youth Statement: **Engage, Involve, Create 2012**
- **Services Connect** – the new integrated human services system, 2012
- **Victoria's Vulnerable Children Our Shared Responsibility Directions Paper** and Five Year Plan on Vulnerable Aboriginal children and families
- The Human Services **Aboriginal Strategic Framework 2013-2015**
- The 2011 **Victorian Government Aboriginal Inclusion Framework** (Department of Planning and Community Development)
- **Wannik** and **Wurreker** Koori education strategies and draft whole of life course Aboriginal Education Strategy
- the whole-of-government **Victorian Alcohol and Drug Strategy**.



Celebrating NAIDOC Week

Challenges and opportunities

A key strategic focus of the AJA has been to prevent young Koories from coming into negative contact with the justice system, or if already there, to divert them from more serious contact. The other key focus has been to reduce re-offending and recidivism by those already in contact with the justice system.

While the AJA2 evaluation indicates this approach is yielding results, other challenges for the AJA3 include addressing increasing demand for existing programs and services due to rapid population growth, increasing violence and victimisation and the more complex needs of offenders with mental health, alcohol and drug and housing issues, particularly Koori women.

Furthermore, changes to policy settings and sentencing reform within the justice system, greater policing effort and more attention to crimes where Koori over-representation is already high may have a disproportionate impact on Koori communities across the State.



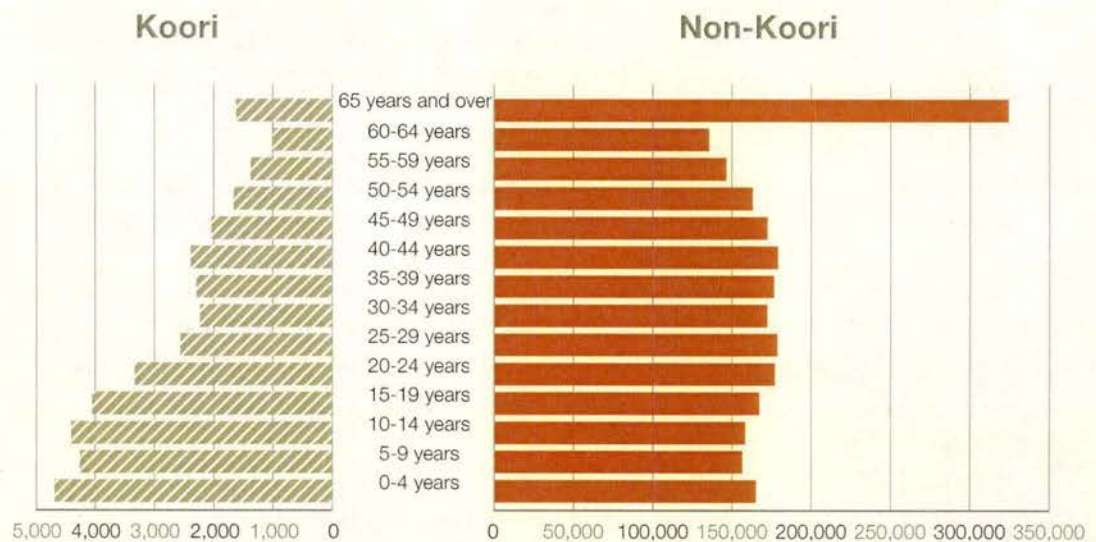
Koori graduates of Frontline Youth funded initiative Share Your Story Part 2 who obtained a Certificate IV in Youth Work.

Photograph: Care of Swinburne University of Technology

A rapidly growing Koori population

Victoria's Koori population is young and growing. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 47,327 Koories lived in Victoria in 2011⁵, and this is expected to rise over the next 20 years. The Koori population grew at a much higher rate than the non-Koori population in Victoria between 2006 and 2011 (29.2 per cent compared to 5.9 per cent).⁶ While much of this increase is due to many more people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander through formal channels such as the Census, it is also clear that the Koori population of Victoria also has a high 'natural increase' (based on the number of births and deaths) and a relatively young, and growing, population. Koori Victorians have a younger median age than non-Koories (22 and 37 years respectively at 2011), with 56.5 per cent of Koories under the age of 25 years, compared to 31.9 per cent of the non-Koori population (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Age distribution of Victorian population by Koori status



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census

These population pressures, combined with the increased risk for youth of adverse contact with the criminal justice system⁷ and the multiple disadvantage experienced by Koori youth, will increase the absolute numbers of young Koories coming into contact with police and other justice agencies.

AJA2 initiatives have had some success in increasing the proportion of young people diverted from further contact with the criminal justice system. It is important that AJA3 continue a developmental approach toward reducing risk factors and maximising protective factors to underpin youth-focused prevention and early intervention activities to respond effectively to population pressures.

⁵ Australian Demographic Statistics, Estimated Resident Population, Mar 2012, ABS (Cat. No 3101.0)

⁶ Australian Demographic Statistics, Estimated Resident Population, Mar 2012, ABS (Cat. No 3101.0)

⁷ Australian Temperament Project: Patterns and precursors of adolescent antisocial behaviour (first, second and third reports).

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Other challenges for the AJA3 include addressing increasing demand for existing programs and services due to rapid population growth, increasing violence and victimisation and the more complex needs of offenders with mental health, alcohol and drug and housing issues, particularly Koori women.

It is also important to continue with a place-based approach where local Koori communities continue to develop solutions responsive to local needs including those of Koori youth. From this perspective it is important to note:

- There are particularly high Koori youth populations in Greater Shepparton, Mildura, Greater Geelong and Greater Bendigo, which are also the highest populations of Koories in total (Greater Shepparton, 2,082; Mildura, 1,836; Greater Geelong, 1,788; and Greater Bendigo, 1,442; followed by Casey, 1,402).
- The biggest growth in Koori population between 2006 and 2011 occurred in Wyndham, Greater Bendigo, Mildura, Greater Geelong and the Mornington Peninsula.

Policy and legislation changes

Given that socioeconomic disadvantage renders many Koories more vulnerable to contact with the criminal justice system, a number of key government priorities and reforms may have a disproportionate impact on the Koori community. These include increasing the number of police, the introduction of new alcohol-related offences and increased penalties, the abolition of suspended sentences and the introduction of statutory minimum sentences.

Continued progress may require strengthening a number of existing AJA2 initiatives which have shown capacity to mitigate unintended consequences which may accompany justice reforms, including:

- the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer Program which works to improve local Koori community relations and assist increased numbers of police with cultural issues
- the Local Justice Worker Program and the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program, which have already proven effective in helping Koories to address fine payments, successfully complete community based orders, and reduce breach rates
- intensive bail support programs which assist Koories to meet bail conditions and stabilise them in the community.

Another important reform is the introduction of the single Community Corrections Order, which simplifies the community corrections system to a single order with multiple conditions. These may range from restrictions on movement to requirements to undertake offending behaviour programs. While increasing opportunities for rehabilitation, the multiple conditions may also carry an increased risk of non-compliance.

Equally, the single Community Corrections Order also has the potential to contribute to reducing Koori over-representation in prison through increasing judicial sentencing options and alternatives to prison. AJA3 initiatives that support Koori offenders' compliance with the Community Corrections Order conditions and increase opportunities for rehabilitation may increase judicial confidence in utilising this option.

The high proportion of Koori women on remand who subsequently do not get a custodial sentence is of particular concern, as is the finding that the rate of imprisonment per 1,000 Koori females now outstrips that of non-Koori males.

Underlying issues driving contact with the justice system

Underlying issues need to be addressed through the whole-of-government approach. Key drivers of contact with the justice system are located in the disadvantage experienced by Koori communities particularly in relation to education, housing and employment. This material disadvantage and marginalisation is compounded by the ongoing legacy of colonisation, dispossession and child removal practices such as psychological distress and social disorganisation, intergenerational trauma grief and loss. This is frequently associated with alcohol and drug abuse and violence which in turn undermines family stability and wellbeing leading to a self-perpetuating cycle of trauma, grief and loss and ongoing mental health issues for many vulnerable members of the Koori community.

Collaborating effectively across government

Coordinated action to address the drivers of contact with the justice system can be achieved through the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18*. A key challenge for AJA3 will be for the Aboriginal Justice Forum, in collaboration with other agencies and through whole-of-government processes, to determine the most efficient and effective mechanisms for managing these intersections, to minimise gaps and overlaps.

An increasing demand for Koori women's diversion

The development of effective diversion options for Koori women remains one of the main unfinished tasks from AJA2 and a priority recommendation from its recent evaluation. The high proportion of Koori women on remand who subsequently do not get a custodial sentence is of particular concern, as is the finding that the rate of imprisonment per 1,000 Koori females now outstrips that of non-Koori males.

Offending at a level that leads to incarceration places individuals at much higher risk of subsequent incarceration. Not only does incarceration have a significant impact on individual Koori women, but it also has significant consequences for their communities, potentially exposing children to the risks of neglect, abuse, hunger and homelessness, and increasing their likelihood of adverse contact with the criminal justice system in future.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Poor outcomes in metropolitan regions

As detailed earlier in 'Koori contact with the justice system', the AJA2 evaluation highlighted the value of a place-based approach and also demonstrated the different effects across regions in relation to Koori over-representation in prison.

Improving justice outcomes in metropolitan regions will be a strategic focus of AJA3, which will seek to improve justice outcomes in the North and West Metropolitan regions, including examining the reasons why more Koories are going to prison in these locations.

Conflict, violence and victimisation

Violence is a significant area of concern in the Koori community. Koories experience disproportionately high rates of violence, both as victims and as perpetrators. Family, community and lateral forms of violence are interwoven, and women and children are disproportionately affected. Alcohol is a significant factor and needs to be a central focus of any activities aimed at reducing violence.

While recent efforts under AJA2 have sought to improve victim support services and address family violence, there is still much to do. Lateral violence has been identified by the Koori community as an area requiring more attention.

Justice agencies and Koori communities can work together to reduce conflict and violence through crime and violence prevention activities, dispute resolution processes to reduce unresolved conflict and also through programs to reduce recidivism by high-risk violent offenders.

Re-offending and recidivism

For Koories already in contact with the criminal justice system, more intensive interventions are required to reduce re-offending and recidivism. Support is also needed to rehabilitate offenders and assist them to reintegrate into their communities.

There is still a high level of 'churn' amongst offenders already in the justice system. Interventions must address the underlying drivers of offending behaviour and those factors that increase the risk of subsequent contact with the justice system. There is a clear need for an enhanced focus on rehabilitation, transition support and community reintegration. This is particularly the case for Koori women.

The transition from prison back into the community is the time of highest re-offending risk with the great majority of re-offending occurring within one year of release.

Effective transition into a stable productive life in the community is the key to reducing recidivism. Further work needs to be done to strengthen transition planning and support.

The AJA2 evaluation identified barriers to employment and housing as the two greatest risks to successful reintegration. The barriers to employment for exiting prisoners are serious and include their criminal record, lack of skills, lack of recent work experience and poor education. Compounded by a lack of stable housing, these two factors combine to quickly produce circumstances likely to lead to re-offending.

Lateral violence has been identified by the Koori community as an area requiring more attention.

Consistency of service availability and access across and within geographic areas

As part of a place-based approach, available resources for AJA2 initiatives were allocated to priority locations on the basis of population size and levels of contact with the criminal justice system. Improvements in tangible justice outcomes in Loddon Mallee and Gippsland regions indicate that while, in the main, this has been an effective use of limited resources, it has resulted in an uneven distribution of justice services across the State. While improving the depth and coverage of successful initiatives is ideal, this may take time and will need to be balanced against low demand for services in other locations.

Flexible approaches to service provision may be required to link Koories to services in remote areas through improved transport or mobile/outreach services such as the justice bus and circuit courts. In addition, initiatives such as the Koori Inclusion Action Plan should improve Koori access and participation in culturally-appropriate mainstream services.

A stronger emphasis on access and outreach can also be achieved by considering the needs of local Koori populations from the outset of project planning including actions to increase referrals from other services.

It is also important to consider the hours of operation of services when aiming to increase access and availability. Contact with the justice system can happen any time of the day or night and on any day of the week. Service responses tend to be provided during standard business hours (from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday) and not necessarily during the periods they are most needed. Reviewing the hours of operation for many Koori justice-related services may be the key to improved uptake.



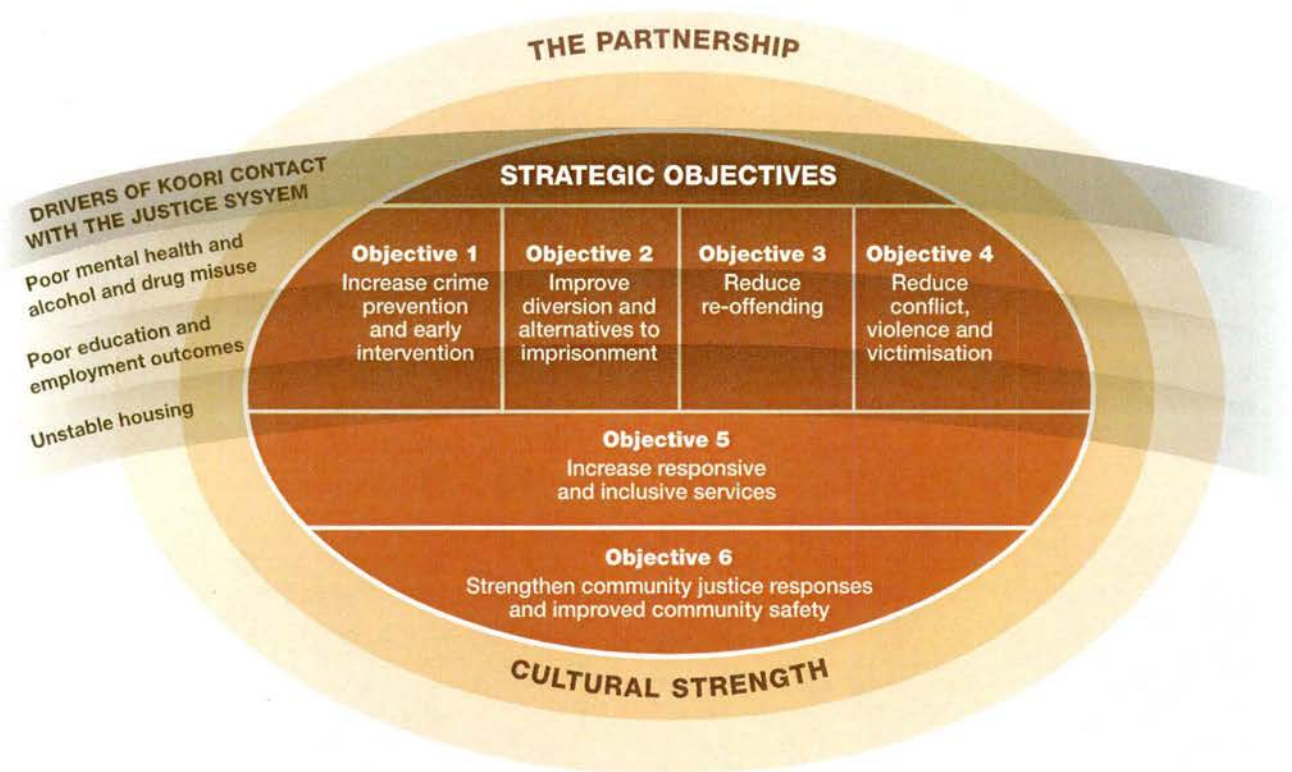
Loddon Mallee Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Chairperson and Executive Officer.



*Protocols of country are more commonly embedded within core government business: a traditional smoking ceremony by Koori Elder to open a new justice building.
Photographer: Ilana Rose*

Part 2: The model and approach

The approach underpinning AJA3, represented in the model illustrated below, builds on and refines that taken in AJA2, while strengthening the core elements that have contributed to its success. Each part of the model is discussed below.



THE MODEL AND APPROACH



The AJA simply cannot exist without partnership, expressed at local, regional and state level.

The partnership

The partnership between the Victorian Government and Koori community is fundamentally about relationships and surrounds the model. The AJA simply cannot exist without it, expressed at local, regional and state level. These partnership structures have matured over the years, enabling increased collaboration through a positive spirit of confidence and trust. These partnership structures (described in detail in Part 3) will continue to oversee and monitor all elements of the AJA3.



Koori community members and government representatives sit and talk at the Community Forum, an important part of each Aboriginal Justice Forum.

Case Study: Koori outcomes a testament to strength of partnerships

Since 2000, the Aboriginal Justice Forum has met more than 30 times throughout Victoria, each time an opportunity to generate broad discussion between local Koori community members and Justice officials on the importance of community being proactive and closely involved in the delivery of justice for Koories.

"The community forum has been a strong feature of the Aboriginal Justice Forum since its establishment," says Andrew Jackomos, Director of the Koori Justice Unit within the Department of Justice.

"Through the forum, the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee brings community and senior government representatives together to respond to issues as they are identified, playing a big part in the successful development and delivery of a wide range of regional and local AJA initiatives. Community leaders are central to the partnership. No community, no agreement and no forum."

Mr Jackomos says that the strong support for the Aboriginal Justice Forum from the Victorian Government is positive, particularly from Ministers with AJA responsibilities in their portfolios.

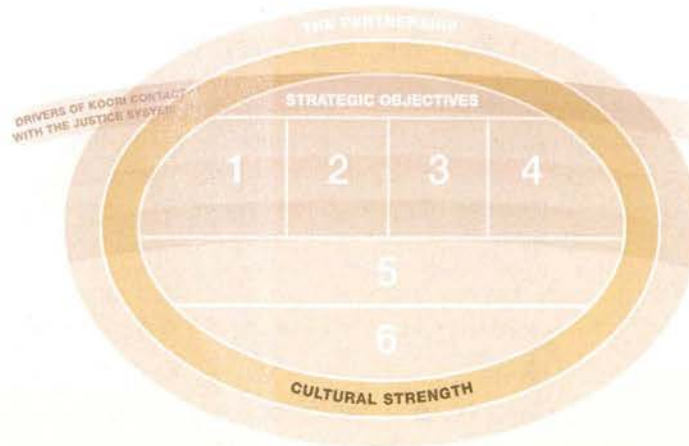
"As the peak body for the AJA, a highlight for the forum has been the attendance of Justice Ministers at various meetings and each time, their interest in participating as a guest speaker and also in sitting at the table and engaging in discussion with members," he says.



Members of the Koori Caucus, a part of the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

"Having all the key players around the table, and committed to improving outcomes, is a powerful thing" AJF member.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



Cultural strength, or 'being strong in culture', is recognised as an important protective factor that is closely linked to social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Cultural strength

Cultural strength, or 'being strong in culture', is recognised as an important protective factor that is closely linked to social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, and is the second theme surrounding the AJA model. Cultural strengthening activities reinforce a positive Koori identity, often by increasing connectedness to family, community and country, and building on existing strengths. Increasing resilience can buffer Koories from the high levels of environmental stress to which they are disproportionately exposed.

Carrying the theme of cultural strength over to all activities in AJA3 further lifts its contribution to improving Koori justice outcomes.

Expected benefits across the justice continuum include increased resilience of at-risk Koori youth and adults, the provision of a foundation which builds resilience, skills and participation, increased engagement of Koories in justice programs and services, increased effectiveness of those initiatives due to a greater sense of relevance and cultural responsiveness and the further development of a culturally-responsive service system.



Koori Youth Will Shake Spears performing traditional song and dance.
 Photographer: Bindi Cole

Case study: Camp looks to inspire tomorrow's leaders

Young Koories from Mildura have embarked on their journey to becoming future community leaders.

In 2011, 15 Koori students aged 13–17 years from Mildura came together for a five day residential camp. Its aim was to improve the students' individual and group self-esteem and help them become a strong network of positive role models for their community, while connecting them more closely with their culture. Held at the YMCA camp in Anglesea, the event was an initiative of the Department of Justice led Mildura Community Partnership Project.

Program activities included high ropes courses, traditional games, canoeing, impromptu public speaking, and an Aboriginal art class delivered by Uncle Peter Peterson, a Barkindji cultural man from Mildura, who also shared his stories around the campfire at night. Students even met renowned Aboriginal surfer Steve Parker and world junior surfing champion Nikki van Dijk at the famous Rip Curl surf tournament at nearby Bells Beach.

Says Rose, a 16-year-old TAFE student who aspires to work in family services: “[The activities] were kind of pushing us to go further and further to achieve what we never thought we could achieve.”

Says Mason, a Year 10 student in a remote town located west of Mildura: “To be a leader you need a bit of everything. You need good confidence and self-esteem and you need to have knowledge of what you're leading, including knowing about culture.” Mason's goal is to study law at Deakin University.

Since the camp, participants have retained connections with one another through social media. They want to hold a Koori leadership forum in Mildura and have regular events, such as traditional games, and researching leaders that inspire them.



Young Koories participate in leadership activities

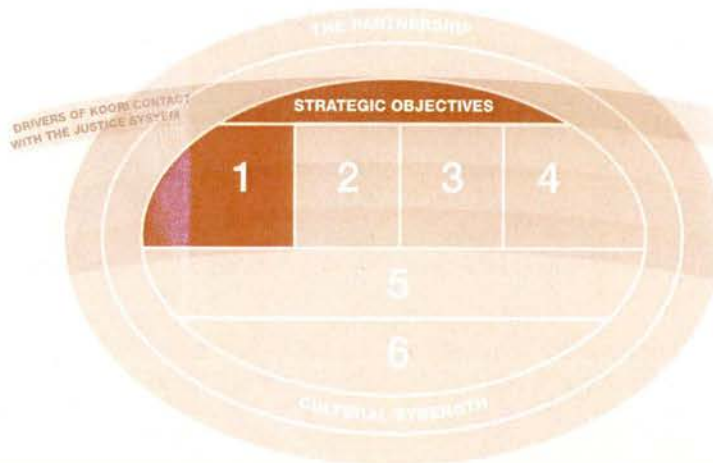
“To be a leader you need... good confidence and self-esteem and you need to have knowledge of what you're leading, including knowing about culture.” Koori youth.

“Our own culture is like water for the fish. We live and breathe through it.” Alf Bamblett Chair Victorian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH

Strategic objectives

The AJA2 objectives have been retained and in some instances expanded to more fully address issues around violence, victimisation and community safety in AJA3. The first four objectives corresponding to stages along the justice continuum, supported and enabled by the last two objectives.



Community-based justice programs targeting Koori youth continue to promote safe and healthy communities, initiated by community organisations that play a leading role in their development and delivery.

Objective 1

Crime prevention and early intervention

This focuses on preventing Koori youth from initial contact with the criminal justice system, by working collaboratively with other government agencies to strengthen protective factors and reduce risk factors to keep Koori youth and families strong.

Case Study: Community-based youth programs making inroads to local justice outcomes

Community-based justice programs targeting Koori youth continue to promote safe and healthy communities, supported by funding through the Frontline Youth Initiatives grants program, in operation since 2005. Over 50 programs have been delivered across the State to date, initiated by community organisations that play a leading role in their development and delivery.

One of several grants programs established under the AJA, Frontline programs aim to prevent at-risk Koori youth from contact with the criminal justice system, through initiatives that encourage youth to build positive and healthy lives, through leadership, sport, arts, education, training and community development.

The Koori community is involved at all stages and on both sides of the funding process, from application, development and implementation, to policy development, approvals and monitoring. Program funding is provided over several years, coordinated through the Koori Justice Unit of the Department of Justice, to enable programs to become established and grow.

Through the Frontline funding her organisation secured in 2012, Jessie Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer of the Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation looks forward to developing the next round of young people as potential new artists and sustaining the active and vibrant Koori arts scene in Melbourne.

"We've been running the Songlines Aboriginal Program for disadvantaged Koori kids since 2009 and with the latest round of Frontline funding, we have been able to focus on strengthening our youth program and invest time and energy to make sure it's solid," says Jessie.

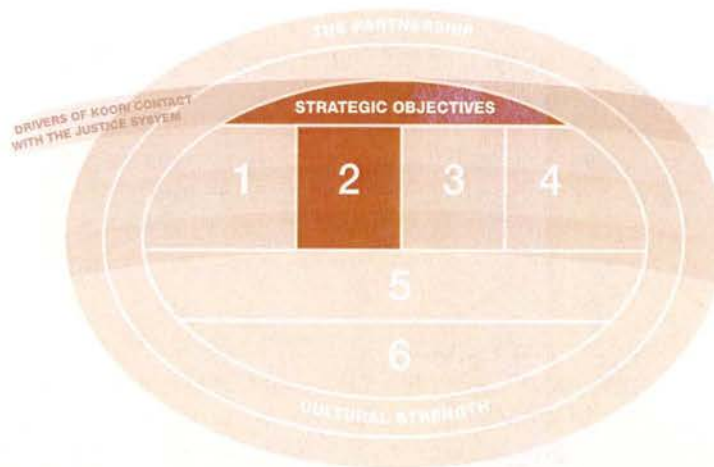
"One of our major partners over the last two years has been the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, and together with some local schools, they have helped us source participants and develop long term, sustainable relationships."



Frontline Community grants program supporting youth initiatives.
Photographer: James Henry

"Through music and dance we provide ways for Koori youth to connect to community, better understand their culture and develop their sense of identity." Jessie Lloyd, CEO, Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



The Victoria Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers Program and Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers Program have both thrived across the state, driving a wide range of positive initiatives to improve relations between the Koori community and the police.

Objective 2

Diversion and alternatives to imprisonment

This focuses on preventing Koories who have come into contact with police or courts from progressing further into the criminal justice system.

While considerable gains have been made over the past decade, the AJA2 evaluation identified three risk points where stronger responses are needed:

- services for alleged offenders prior to court
- bail support
- diversion options for Koori women.

AJA3 will maintain successful initiatives including the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Victoria Police Koori Youth Cautioning Project, the Koori Intensive Bail Support Program and the Court Integrated Services Program, strengthening or expanding them where possible.

Koori women's diversion is a leading concern for the Koori community and will be explored in AJA3, as a priority recommendation from the AJA2 evaluation.

Case Study: Building understanding, trust and respect between communities and police

The appointment of a full-time Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer in Warrnambool has produced a 40 per cent decrease in Koori contacts with police between 2010 and 2011. Working in collaboration with the Barwon South West Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee, the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer and local Aboriginal organisations, the establishment of the role has enabled a range of local issues driving high levels of police contact to be addressed.

The Victoria Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers Program and Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers Program have both thrived across the state, with 100 Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers in operation and nine Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer roles strategically placed in high-contact locations.

Both programs drive a wide range of positive initiatives to improve relations between the Koori community and the police, and are essential to the effectiveness of the Koori Youth Cautioning Program, the Victoria Police Family Violence Protocols and other diversion programs developed under the AJA.



Police Aboriginal Liaison officers and Aboriginal Community Liaison officers work with Koori communities.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH

Case Study: Koori courts a model for inclusion and responsiveness

Victoria's Koori court network, first established in Shepparton in 2002, has grown to comprise nine adult Koori courts, five Children's Koori courts and a County Koori Court by the end of 2012. It is one of the strongest examples of how an inclusive and responsive justice service can successfully operate within the context of the wider justice system.

In its first three years of operation, the Swan Hill Koori Court became the first Victorian court to include traditional language and Cultural Statements in its proceedings. Koori Court and Respected Persons (an integral part of the court process for all Koori courts) have introduced the Wamba Wamba language to open and close each court session and present Cultural Statements to defendants about how their actions relate to important cultural principles and how they must change.

The expansion of the Children's Koori Court to sit at locations in Melbourne, Mildura, Warrnambool, Bairnsdale and Latrobe Valley has the potential to continue across the State under the AJA3, following discussions with local communities. An independent evaluation of the Children's Koori Court in 2009 also showed strong community support, with high attendance levels by young people accompanied by family members.

Victoria's first County Koori Court sat for the first time in Morwell in 2008 and the establishment of partnerships and links with local community organisations, mainstream service providers and justice agencies to support defendants, beyond the court, in addressing offending behaviours is one of the key successes. The voluntary program at nearby Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, for offenders on community-based orders, is an important sentencing option.

Discussions within the AJA3 context are underway for a similar court in Melbourne in 2013.



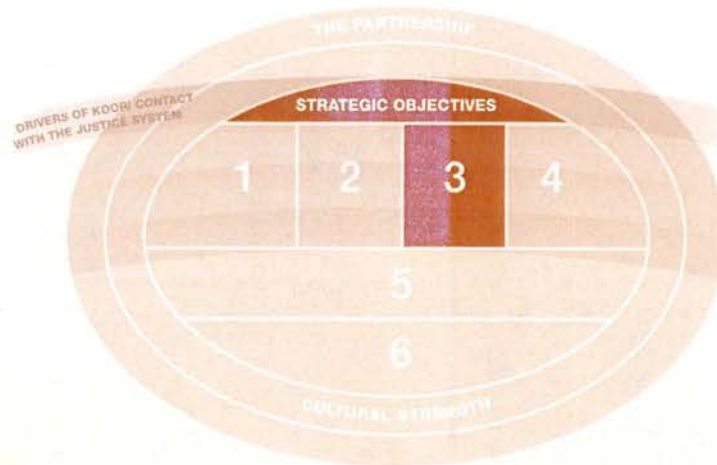
Elders and Respected Persons play in integral role in the success of the Koori Courts

"In the Children's Koori Court, the young ones don't sit behind a bench with their heads down ... they know they have to be prepared to open up and talk, in front of their parents, community and Elders."
Aunty Pam Pedersen, Melbourne Koori Court Elder.



*Opening of the Melbourne Children's Koori Court.
Photographer: Ilana Rose*

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



AJA3 will build on the work undertaken already to reduce re-offending rates of Koories involved in the criminal justice system.

Objective 3

Reduce re-offending

This focuses on preventing Koories already in the correctional system from re-offending. Moderate and high-risk offenders need the greatest attention under the AJA, as they commit the bulk of the crime, return back into the justice system at the highest rates and causing the greatest share of harm to the community.

AJA3 will build on the work undertaken already to reduce re-offending rates of Koories involved in the criminal justice system, and increase its focus in three strategic areas including:

- services to support Koori offenders' *compliance* with the conditions of their Community Orders
- *rehabilitation* programs in prison and in the community for moderate-risk and high-risk Koori offenders, especially in the areas of violence intervention and alcohol and drug misuse
- *transition* and post-release support for moderate-risk and high-risk Koori offenders, especially to help address barriers in relation to housing and employment.

Case Study: Local Justice Workers

The Local Justice Worker Program was established under AJA2 in 10 locations to assist Koori offenders with meeting the conditions of their community based orders and fulfilling their obligations to Infringement Management and Enforcement Services. Breach rates have reduced and successful order completions have increased in those locations.

In 2011, sentence reforms and the introduction of the single Community Correction Order have increased the number and stringency of conditions for Koori offenders in some cases. In response, Corrections Victoria has contributed funds enabling an expansion of the Local Justice Worker Program under AJA3, to increase the amount of support available.



Local Justice Workers and Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program workers come together to network and share ideas.

AJA3 will build on the work undertaken already to reduce re-offending rates of Koories involved in the criminal justice system through a range of activities.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH

Case study: Weeroona Cemetery and community work, a labour of love

Corrections Victoria has recorded an increase in the successful order completion rate for Koories since introducing Koori-specific community work sites such as Weeroona Cemetery in Greenvale, north of Melbourne.

The Weeroona Cemetery, established after lobbying by a number of prominent Aboriginal Elders, is an affordable and culturally appropriate resting place for community members living away from or disconnected from their traditional lands and family.

In a joint venture between Community Correctional Services, Kangan Institute and the Koori community, a sustainable work program based on the cemetery grounds was developed for Koories on community orders in the local area. The benefits of the project are twofold, with workers providing assistance in controlling vegetation and working the land, whilst gaining cultural knowledge and formal qualifications in Conservation and Land Management.

Work for prison industry has also been identified under the project, with workers at the Metropolitan Remand Centre Industries Unit providing security gates, a flagpole and a trailer for the cemetery, which is now growing in use by the Koori community as a valuable, safe place for group gatherings and the sharing of cultural knowledge and history.

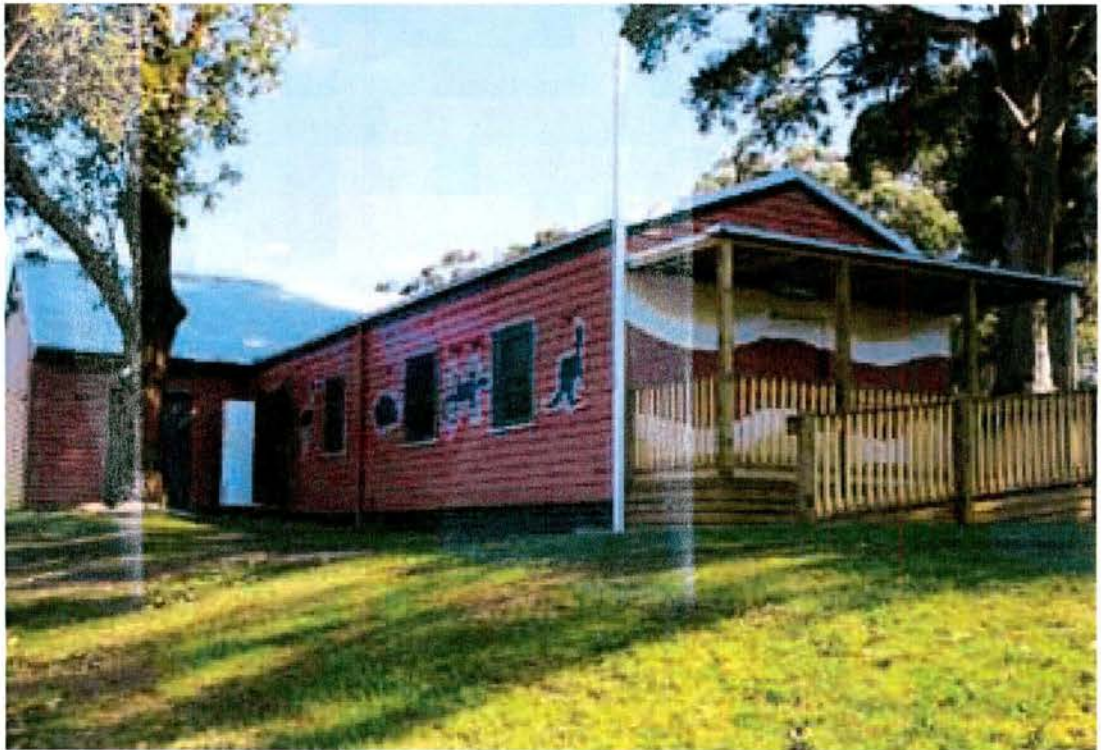


Weeroona Cemetery Project partnership between Koori Community and Corrections Victoria

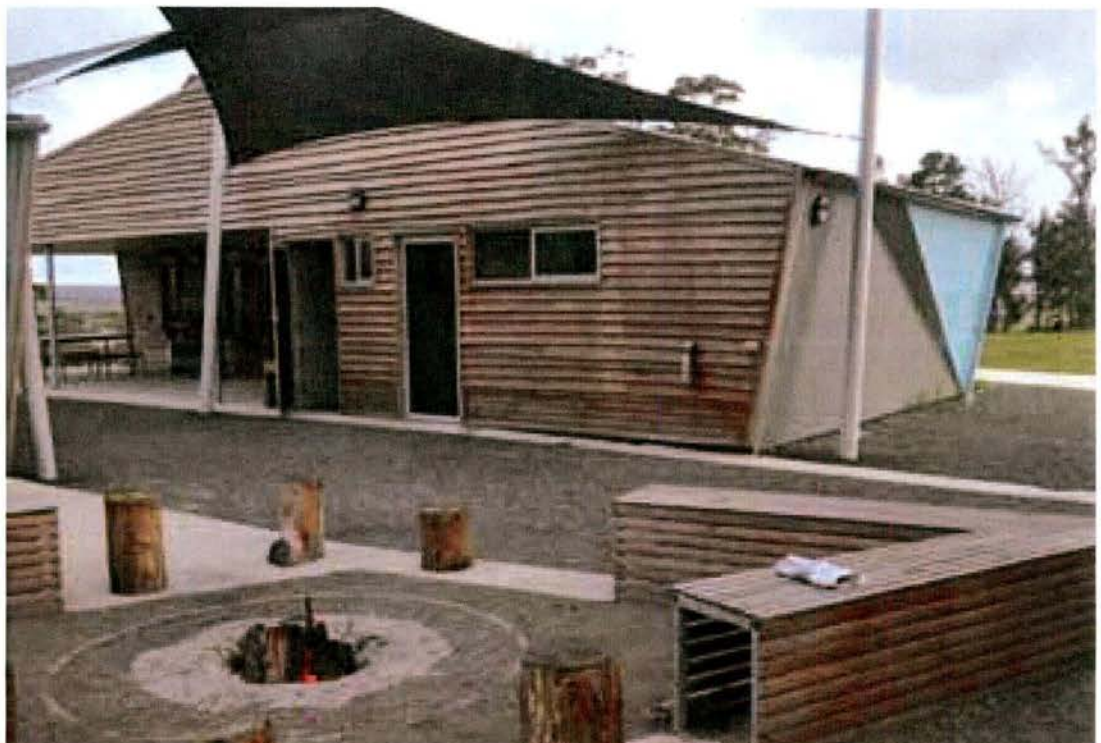
"We are seeing Corrections working with the community and individuals. As a result, people are completing their orders and not having to return to the system." RAJAC Chair.



THE MODEL AND APPROACH

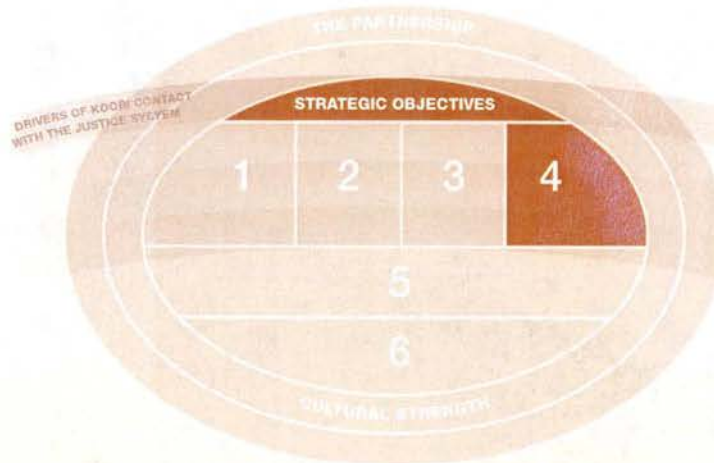


Kommall Koori Gathering Place: an old scout hall renovated for use as a community centre by participants in the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program in Morwell.



Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, a statewide residential alternative for Koori men on Community Orders, won an international Corrections and Prisons Association Award for innovative practice in community corrections.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



Funding through grant programs provides opportunities for Koori community organisations to develop effective local responses to violence, identified as a driver of youth disengagement and crime.

Objective 4

Reduce conflict, violence and victimisation

This has an expanded focus in AJA3 to include reducing victimisation as well as reducing conflict and violence. Despite improvements in Koori access to victim services over the course of the AJA, high levels of violence and conflict within Koori communities have continued to drive up victimisation rates.

By expanding this objective, AJA3 is able to more effectively interrupt intergenerational patterns of victimisation by more directly addressing influences in Koori communities that drive this behaviour, such as inter-family conflicts and lateral violence.



Koori Elders discussing important community issues at an Aboriginal Justice Forum.

Case Study: Strengthening communities and families to reduce conflict, violence and victimisation

As part of the Victorian Government's Reducing Violence against Women and their Children Grants Program, a \$2.4 million Koori Community Safety Grants Program is supporting several intensive community-based projects that aim to address the high level of violence in Koori communities.

The Koori Community Safety Grants Program, an initiative of the Community Crime Prevention Program, provides opportunities for Koori community organisations to develop effective local responses to violence, identified as a driver of youth disengagement and crime. This program supports initiatives that seek to prevent violence before it occurs, or intervene early in situations where the risk of violence is significant.

"The grants program provides a valuable opportunity across both metropolitan and regional Victoria to support local initiatives that acknowledge the unique origins of dysfunction in Koori communities as well as addressing the strong link between alcohol, drug abuse and violence," says Andrew Jackomos, Director Koori Justice Unit.

"This program will enable the community to respond to the many forms of family and lateral violence being experienced by Koories, through a range of activities including men's and women's groups, family days, community camps, education workshops and media campaigns. Through the program there is also significant work going into increasing the skills of community workers to extend these positive activities beyond the life of the individual projects."

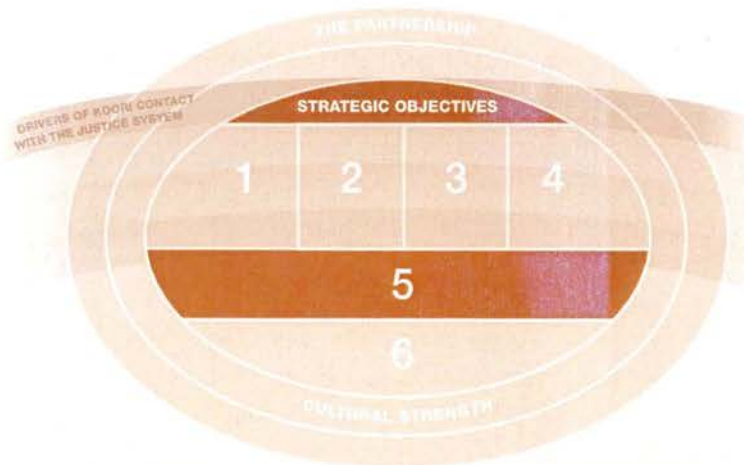
The Koori Community Safety Grants Program complements existing AJA community grant programs, by promoting a sustained approach to violence prevention and reduction.

Funding over a longer period will also enable data collection and evaluation on medium-term impacts and outcomes.



Recipients of Koori Community Safety Grants

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



A more culturally-inclusive justice system is gathering momentum, in which responsiveness to Koori issues is embedded in all policies and operations, and Koori culture is acknowledged and celebrated as an important contributor to improved outcomes across the justice system.

Objectives 5

Responsive and inclusive services

This focuses on maximising Koori inclusion and employment opportunities in Victoria's justice system, at every point along the justice continuum.

The AJA2 evaluation identified responsive and inclusive services as the strongest performing objective, with particularly impressive Koori employment outcomes. A more culturally-inclusive justice system is gathering momentum, in which responsiveness to Koori issues is embedded in all policies and operations, and Koori culture is acknowledged and celebrated as an important contributor to improved outcomes across the justice system.

This positive momentum will continue in AJA3, through the implementation of the Department of Justice *Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15*, and *Mingu Gadhaba*, the Koori Inclusion Action Plan.

Case Study: The Koori Employment Strategy is ensuring the Koori presence in Justice goes from strength to strength

There were just four known Koories working in the department when the AJA was first signed in 2000.

A decade on, well over 100 Koories are working across the Justice portfolio in diverse roles including management, policy development, projects, administration, and direct service delivery across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

A new Koori Employment Team has been established within the department's People and Culture branch to deliver the department's Koori Employment Strategy, developed as a response to the *Victorian Aboriginal Public Sector Employment and Career Development Action Plan 2010–2015: Karreeta Yirramboi*.

The Koori Employment Strategy has a range of initiatives to uphold Justice as an employer of choice, including actively promoting employment and training opportunities, supporting career pathways, focusing on staff retention, and developing a Koori friendly workplace.

Employment opportunities and pathways established under the Koori Recruitment and Career Development Strategy include an Indigenous Cadetship Support Program, a Koori Tertiary Scholarship Program and a five per cent target for Koori trainees across the department under the Victoria Works for Young People scheme. Various staff support networks are also in place, including a Koori Staff Network, Koori Youth Network and Regional Koori Staff Networks.

The Koori Employment Team acknowledges the importance of growing and strengthening the department's Koori Employment Strategy, aspiring to more regional employment opportunities and more Koories working in non-Koori roles and in both senior management and the executive.



*Department of Justice Koori Youth Network.
Photographer: James Henry*

“You just see more Koori faces these days working in justice. It means cultural safety”. Koori community member.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH

Case Study: Embedding Koori inclusion into core business

During NAIDOC Week 2012, the Department of Justice launched *Mingu Gadhaba: Beginning Together*, Koori Inclusion Action Plan, after months of extensive consultation with a variety of staff across all divisions and regions of the organisation.

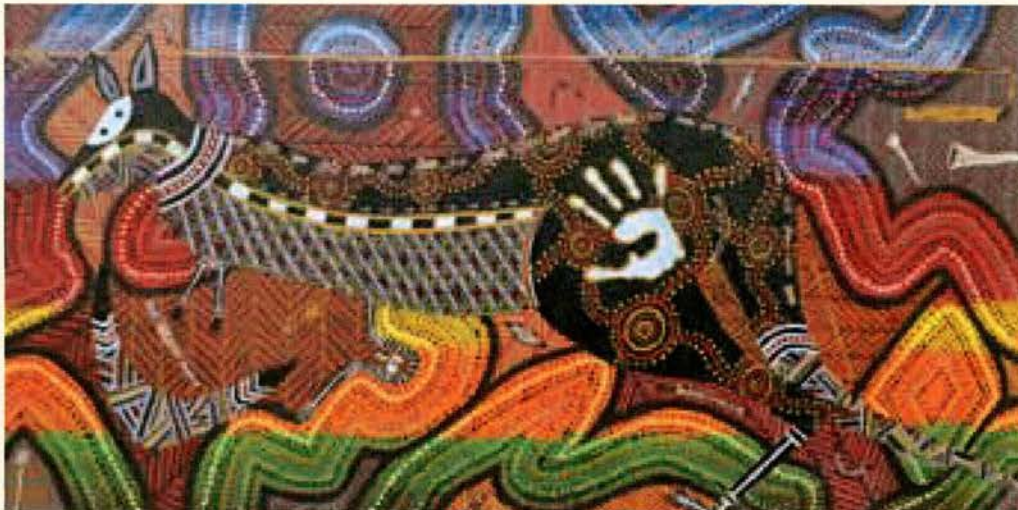
The first such initiative for the department, the plan is one of several across Victorian Government developed in response to a directive issued in 2011 with the aim of improving the responsiveness of government programs and services to the Koori community.

Mingu Gadhaba is a thematic summary of Koori inclusion activities across the department, containing 35 actions, with progress against these reported through the organisational Annual Report and the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework annual reporting process.

"The development of *Mingu Gadhaba* through the Koori Inclusion Action Plan project has been an excellent opportunity to showcase the work already undertaken in the department, particularly in relation to the AJA and the *Koori Employment Strategy*," says Andrew Jackomos, Director of the Koori Justice Unit.

"It will build a departmental workplace culture which recognises inclusion and reconciliation as a shared responsibility. The vision is that over time, no matter which services you are accessing in which region, community members will be able to access a respectful and responsive service."

As *Mingu Gadhaba* is being implemented, its development model and knowledge is being shared with statutory entities within the Justice Portfolio to support them in the development of their own Aboriginal inclusion plans.

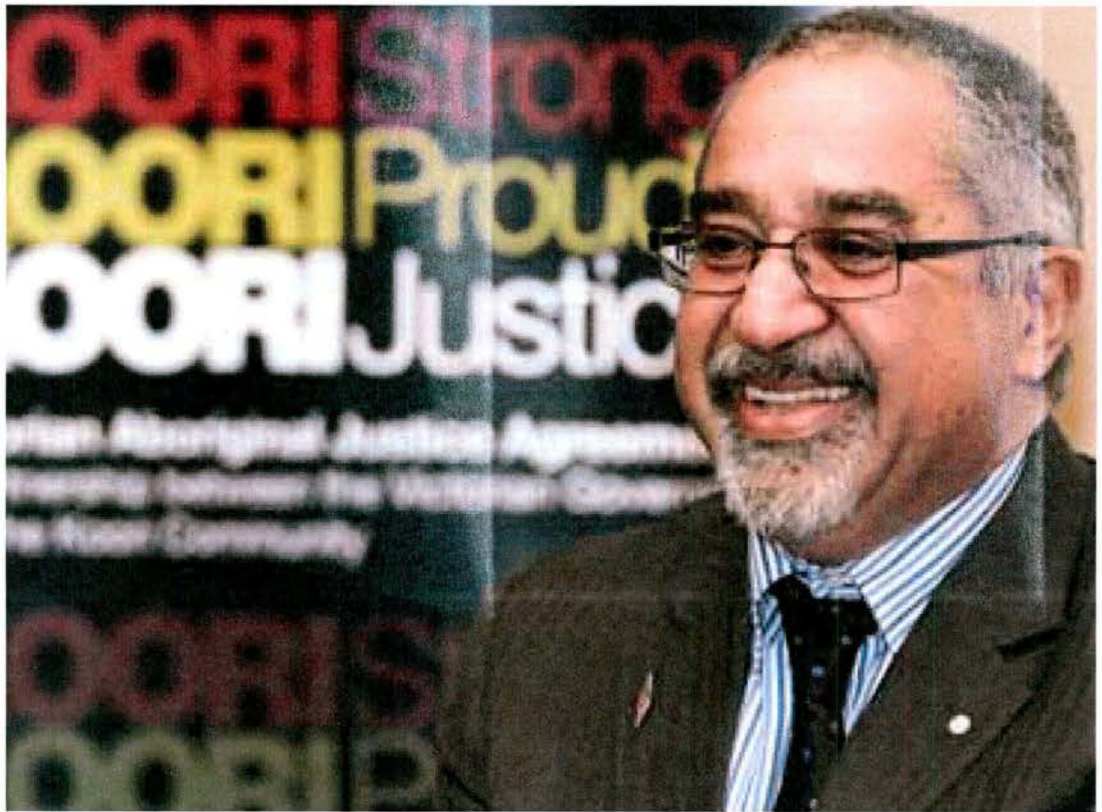


'Hunting Kangaroos' artwork by Bradley Brown featured in *Mingu Gadhaba*

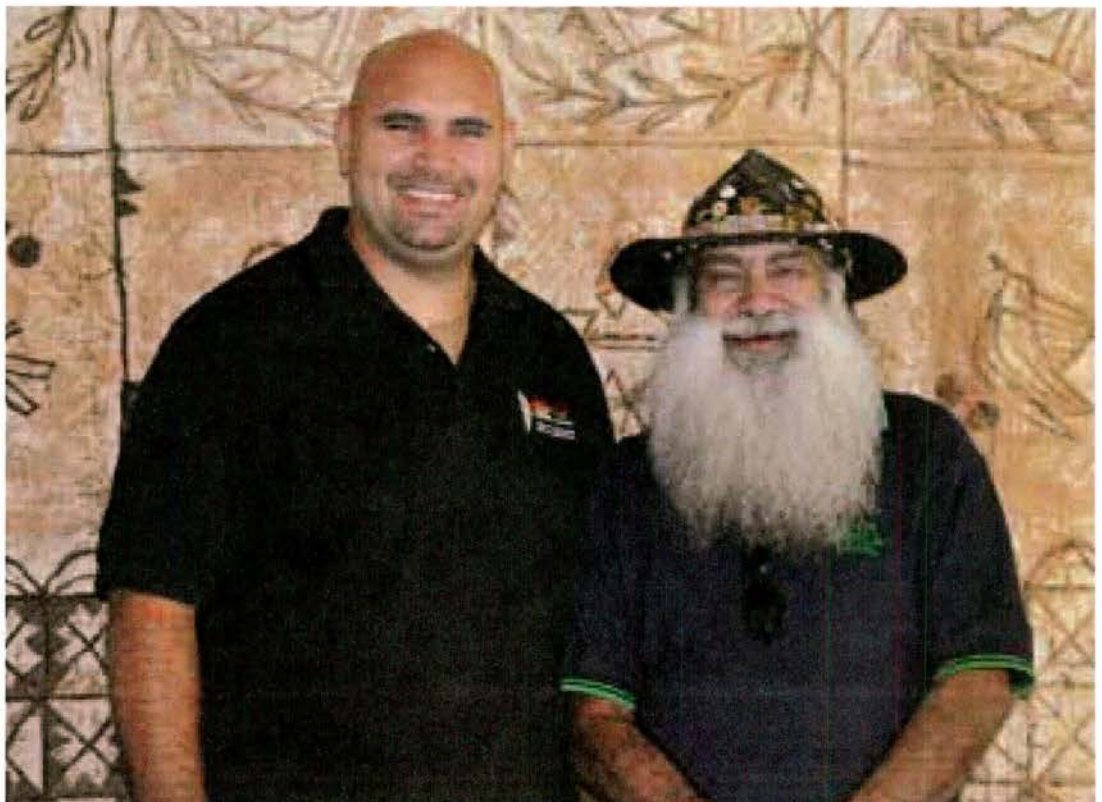
"In the journey towards genuine reconciliation... Koori communities need to have ownership for all relevant policies and programs, as well as adequate support and resources". Royal Commission Review.



THE MODEL AND APPROACH

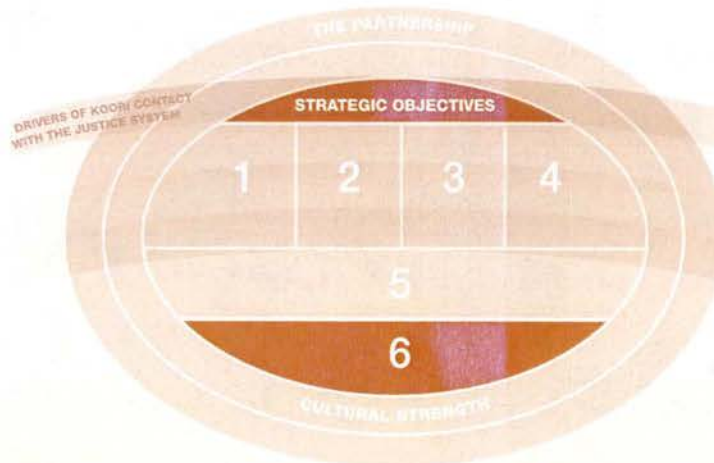


Koories in senior leadership roles are influencing policies and service delivery



Being strong in culture is part of the AJA.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



Improving community safety is an important component – and outcome – of a place-based approach.

Objectives 6

Strengthen community justice responses and increase community safety

Despite the positive outcomes across the justice system, rates of offending, violence and victimisation in the Koori community have continued to rise. A more intensive and targeted approach to community safety is required across the system, with particular attention to the development of strategies that respond to issues at the local level. So this objective has been expanded to focus on increasing community safety in AJA3.

It will build on the achievements so far, including establishment of the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee network, enabling more detailed local responses to justice issues by strengthening local community organisations and supporting joint initiatives developed through the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee regional justice plans, as well as intensive place-based responses at Lake Tyers and Mildura.

Place-based approaches

The AJA2 evaluation indicated that while Koori over-representation in imprisonment has decreased substantially in some areas, it increased by almost 30 per cent in the North Metropolitan region between 2006 and 2011. AJA3 will therefore implement a place-based approach that strengthens and mobilises resources in the North Metropolitan region. The North and West Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees will play a pivotal role in ensuring community and government partners work closely together to identify and respond to local issues that are driving this high imprisonment rate. Improving community safety will be an important component – and outcome – of this place-based approach.

Case Study: Regional and local partnerships vital to achieving AJA objectives

The Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee network was the first initiative established under the AJA in 2000. Each committee works with the Koori communities and justice organisations across its respective region to achieve the AJA objectives, and plays a representative role within the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

Each committee has a full-time Executive Officer based in the region, who manages daily activities and planning and works closely with the Chair, who is a respected community member. The original network of six committees in 2001 was expanded to nine committees by mid-2009 to reflect the needs of a growing Koori community.

Deputy Director of the Koori Justice Unit, Antoinette Gentile says the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees are a crucial part of the partnership between the Victorian Government and Koori community, delivering initiatives on the ground.

“The network has been vital to encourage real participation and ownership of initiatives in the Koori community rather than being assigned merely a consultative role,” she says.

In 2006, a Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee network was created, taking the work of the AJA to a local level, making it easier for community members to have a say on local issues. The local committees are represented on the regional committees and thereby represented at the Aboriginal Justice Forum.



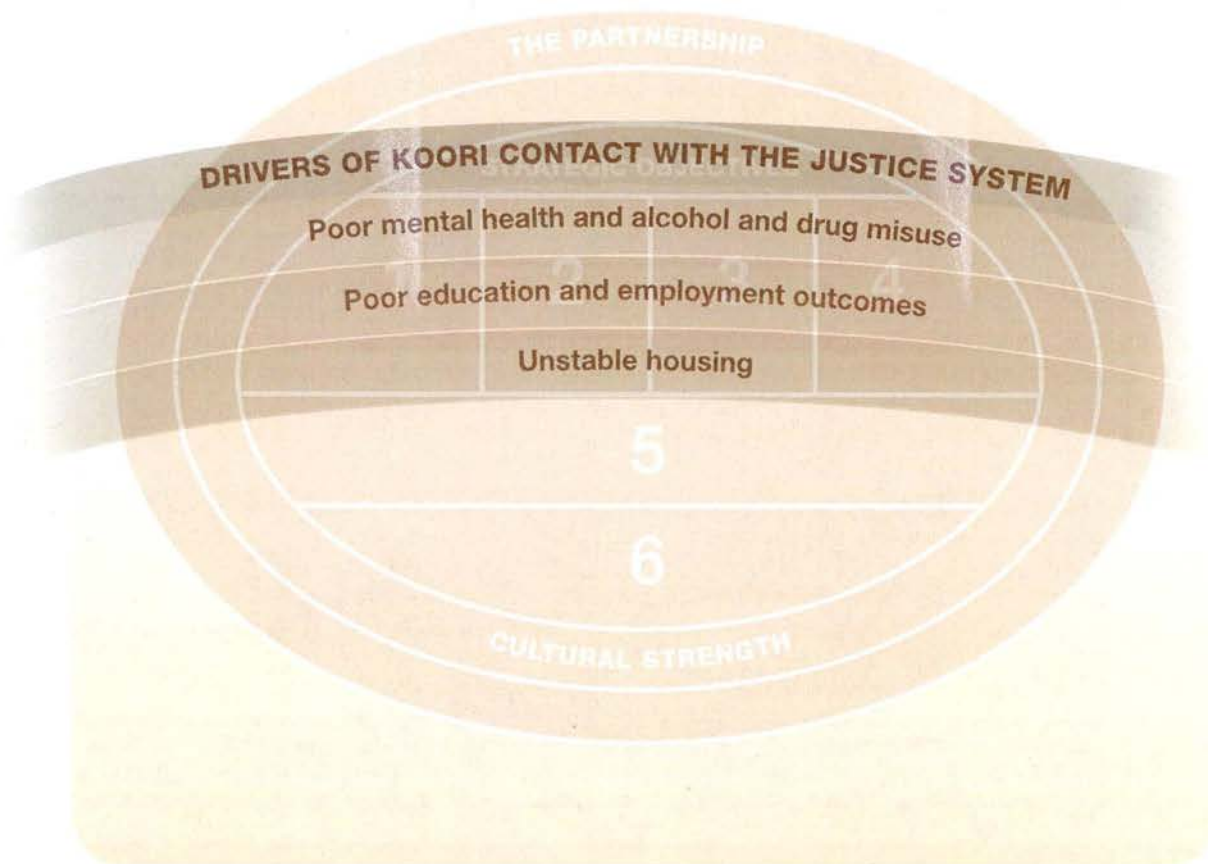
North Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Executive Officer and Chairperson

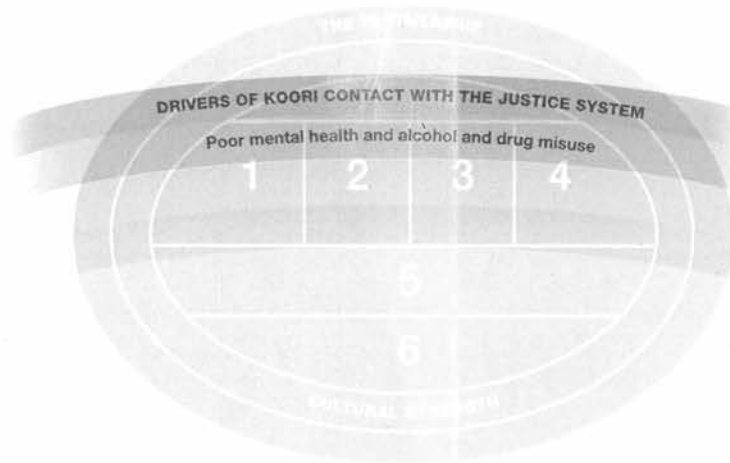
“The Northern suburbs of Melbourne provide a gathering place for Aboriginal community members from all over Australia, with so much historical relevance. We need to support our community based organisations to provide for a safe environment and strong families to build our communities of the future”. Troy Austin, Northern Metropolitan RAJAC Executive Officer.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH

Whole-of-government issues and intersection points

The final elements of the AJA model are the underlying drivers of Koori criminal justice contact that are a whole-of-government responsibility. AJA3 identifies these as strategic intersection points where the Department of Justice can work collaboratively with other departments and agencies when addressing the justice components of these issues.





The need to link strategies that address alcohol and drug misuse to the goal of reducing re-offending for Aboriginal people was identified by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody more than 20 years ago.

Poor mental health and alcohol and drug misuse

Persons from all population groups in the criminal justice system experience greatly elevated rates of mental illness, substance misuse, anxiety and depression, with prevalence rates approximately triple those of the general population. The mental health status of the Aboriginal prison population is even poorer, with substance abuse disorders the most prevalent. The need to link strategies that address alcohol and drug misuse to the goal of reducing re-offending for Aboriginal people was identified by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody more than 20 years ago, and has featured prominently in national and state level policy frameworks in the justice and health areas since then.

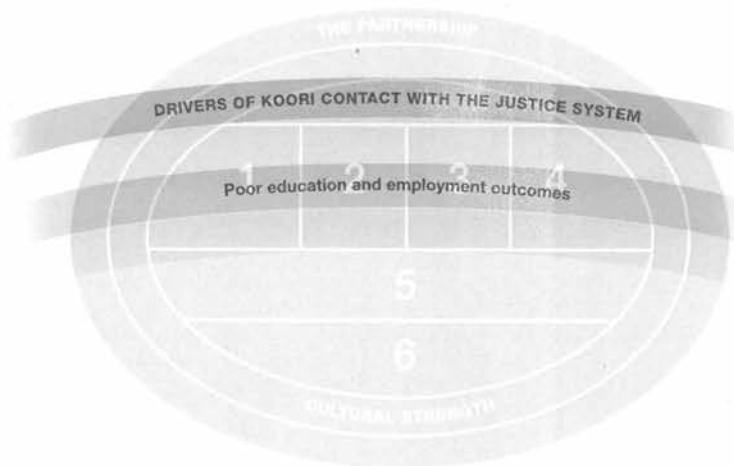
AJA3 will support collaborative work between the Department of Health and relevant government agencies and Aboriginal community organisations at strategic points within the justice system. Responses will be consistent with the social and emotional wellbeing model of mental health. Particularly important intersection points include:

- effective responses to public intoxication (links to objective 2)
- mental health services, including alcohol and drug services, to Koori men and women in prison and during transition back to community (links to objective 3).

Koori Mental Health and Cognitive Function Study

This study, undertaken by Monash University with support from the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, is an initiative due for completion in early 2013. Preliminary results have established that very high numbers of Koori men and women in Victoria's prisons meet the criteria for a past or present substance abuse disorder, most of whom also had a co-existing mental disorder such as depression or anxiety. Their social and emotional wellbeing was also compromised in areas including connectedness to family and culture. Rates of mental illness were higher for Koori women than for men. A second phase of the project, in progress as at late 2012, is developing recommendations for service delivery to Koories in prison and during transition back to their communities.

THE MODEL AND APPROACH



Having a poor education and being unemployed are both drivers of criminal justice contact, representing important issues in the justice area.

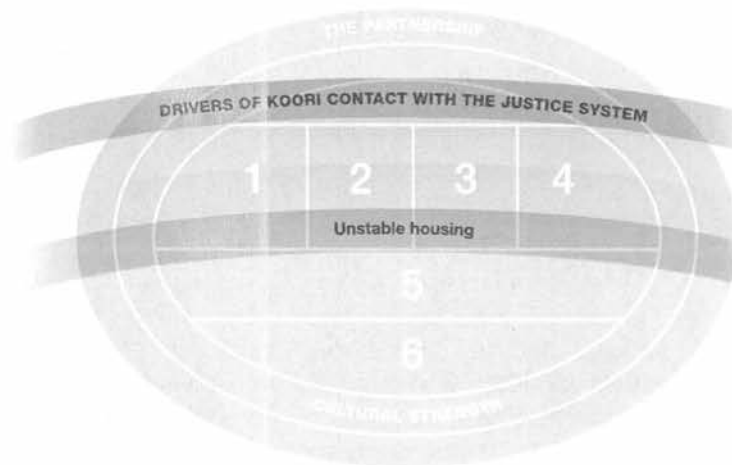
Poor education and employment outcomes

In Victoria, the gap in education and employment outcomes between Koori and non-Koori young people continues to be a major concern⁸. The disparity is even greater for Koories involved in the criminal justice system. Since having a poor education and being unemployed are both drivers of criminal justice contact, these represent important issues in the justice area.

AJA3 will promote and strengthen joint work by the Department of Justice and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, other relevant government agencies and Aboriginal community organisations. Two strategic intersection points along the justice continuum are of particular importance:

- *the re-engagement of Koori youth at risk with school*, vocational options or other learning environments to reduce risk of entry to the justice system through the Early School Leaver and Youth Employment Programs (previously described – refer to objective 1)
- *the improvement of employment prospects for Koories who are leaving prison* in response to the disproportionately high barriers to employment they experience. This will be achieved through the implementation of Corrections Victoria's Koori Education, Training and Employment Strategy 2011-2013.

⁸ According to the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2009, Victorian Koori 19 year olds attained a Year 12 certificate or equivalent at half the rate of non-Koories (37.1 per cent of compared to 76.2 per cent). Similarly, the unemployment rate of Koories aged 15-24 in Victoria is 2.5 times higher than for non-Koories (24.7 per cent, compared to 10.8 per cent), and this gap has actually increased over the past five years.



A shortage of private housing on the general market has greater impact on Koories due to their relatively higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Supported accommodation options are very limited. As a result, Koori offenders often move from one unstable living situation to another, which can result in an increase risk of re-offending and compromise community safety.

Unstable housing

While a shortage of private housing on the general market is a concern for all Victorians, it has greater impact on Koories due to their relatively higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage. The major issue for the justice system is the housing needs of Koori men and women transitioning from prison back to their communities. Existing transitional houses are oversubscribed, and there is little movement through them due to the shortage of affordable housing on the rental market. Supported accommodation options are very limited. As a result, Koori offenders often move from one unstable living situation to another, which can result in an increase risk of re-offending and compromise community safety. These issues are especially acute for Koori women leaving prison who cannot regain access to their children without safe, stable housing.

Part 3: The Agreement

Partnership agreement

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement is a formal agreement between the Victorian Government and Koori Community for working together to improve justice outcomes for the Koori community. Phase 3 (AJA3) continues the practice commenced with the first phase launched in 2000 and recommitment to a second phase in 2006.

The AJA3 presents a shared vision and agreed priorities for action within the government and community sectors. It also provides accountability by identifying a set of measurable outcomes and processes for transparent decision-making. The continuity of direction, effort and commitment afforded by the AJA has been identified as critical to achieving real outcomes and has a renewed commitment to action for 2013-18.

The framework and action plan with strategies and initiatives will be implemented by:

- lead business units or agencies, through Koori Action Plans developed in partnership with Koori Reference Groups
- Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, through regional justice plans.

These plans will be embedded in the core business plans for agencies who are signatories to the AJA3, forming the basis for coordination of action across agencies and portfolios at state-wide and regional levels.



1. Vision and aim

The **vision** articulated by the Koori Caucus and Aboriginal Justice Forum to guide the AJA is for:

A Koori community, as part of the broader Victorian community, living free from racism and discrimination, enjoying the same access to human, civil and legal rights, and experiencing the same justice outcomes through a justice system free of inequalities.

In working towards this vision, the **aim** is to:

Minimise Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system by improving accessibility, utilisation and efficacy of justice-related programs and services in partnership with the Koori community.

It is recognised and understood that achieving this aim will take generational change, the commitment to which is also articulated in the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18* which includes the headline target of closing the gap in the rate of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people under adult and youth justice supervision by 2031.

2. Strategic focus of AJA3

In line with the Aboriginal Justice Forum's priorities, Victorian Government's justice policies and the Council of Australian Governments' Closing the Gap Building Block on Community Safety, the AJA3 has an increased focus on improving the safety of Koori families and communities through:

- reducing conflict, violence and victimisation and improving support for victims
- preventing and reducing the further progression of young Koories into the criminal justice system
- reducing re-offending at all points of the justice continuum
- maximising Koori women's diversion
- addressing issues which drive contact with the justice system such as alcohol and drugs, unstable housing and unemployment in collaboration with other agencies and through whole-of-government processes
- continuing and strengthening the Koori community-government partnership in addressing Koori justice
- building and restoring cultural strength within the Koori community as a foundation for lasting change, and
- improving justice outcomes in the metropolitan regions, particularly in the north and west.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

3. Principles

To achieve this aim, it is agreed that all activities and negotiations will progress consistent with the principles outlined below. The AJA principles are the foundation of the partnership between the government and Koori community. In working towards the successful implementation of AJA3, the signatories commit to:

1. **Acknowledge diversity and the strength of connection by Koories to culture family and country** and respect the essential functions that culture and healthy and nurturing families perform in improving justice outcomes.
2. **Acknowledge the impact of dispossession** of traditional lands, languages and cultures, as well as past policies including the separation of children from families, continues to affect Koori communities today. It contributes to Koori over-representation in the justice system, as victims of crime and on the social and economic position of the Koori community.
3. **Respect and honour the strength and resilience of Koori families** and communities, and commit to building upon this as a foundation for successful justice outcomes.
4. **Agree that Koories are entitled to equitable justice outcomes**, enjoying the same rights as other Victorians, living in a safe, harmonious and nurturing environment, free from racism and discrimination.
5. **Be honest, transparent and accountable** in all facets of the AJA and its implementation, as it is essential to the maintenance of partnerships and achievement of outcomes.
6. **Ensure that arrest and imprisonment are sanctions of last resort**, while maintaining and strengthening their commitment to the other key principles and the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.
7. **Strengthen community justice responses** by supporting the right of Koori communities to participate as equal partners in the development, delivery and evaluation of all justice-related policies and programs specifically impacting the Koori community.
8. **Support partnerships built on genuine engagement and inclusion** of Koori communities across Victoria.
9. **Coordinate a whole-of-government approach** to actively and vigorously progress the aims and objectives of the AJA at all levels.
10. **Strive for best-practice** Koori justice initiatives that include:
 - the provision of adequate and sustainable resources, delivery of effective management and governance mechanisms and implementation of capacity building initiatives in both the community and in the justice system
 - the employment, nurturing and retention of Koori staff
 - increasing the level of understanding that non-Koori staff have about the Victorian Koori society, culture and history
 - providing holistic program development and service delivery processes with culturally-appropriate content
 - service development and delivery that is respectful of Koori status, gender and age.
11. **Ensure that services meet the needs of Koories** by adhering to the Victorian Government's set of Key Access Criteria outlined in the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18* (see Appendix 2).

**Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**

The operation of the AJA is consistent with and seeks to further the rights set out in the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter Act). The Charter Act recognises that human rights have a special importance for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, as descendants of Australia's first people and seeks to promote the distinct rights of Aboriginal persons as set out in s. 19(2) including the right to:

- enjoy identity and culture
- maintain and use language
- maintain kinship ties
- maintain a distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which there is a connection under traditional laws and customs.

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18

In addition, the AJA is consistent with the four guiding principles underpinning a strengthened Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and the Victorian approach to Closing the Gap, being:

- Aspirations for the future – every Victorian should have the opportunity to reach their potential.
- Accountability – accountability rests with all of us – both government and funded organisations must be accountable for delivering services that meet the needs of communities.
- Engagement and inclusiveness – partnerships built on genuine engagement with Aboriginal people across Victoria.
- Partnership – a whole of community approach – harnessing the resources and commitment of all sections of the community.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

4. Objectives

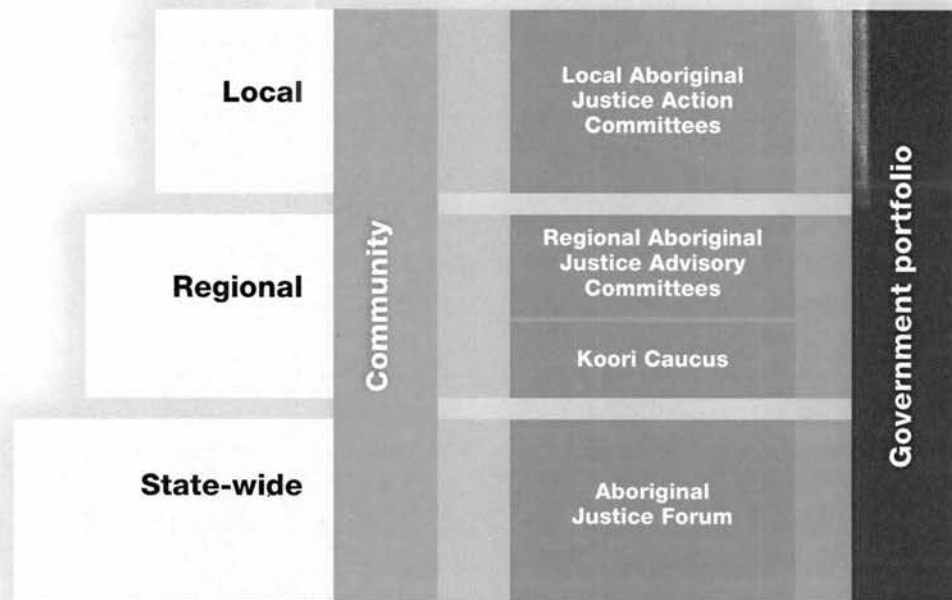
The AJA3 will address these challenges through pursuing a set of strategic objectives that operate at key points within the justice system:

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Crime prevention and early intervention | <p>Reduce the number of Koori youth coming into contact with the criminal justice system by promoting protective factors, including cultural identity and strength, and reducing risk factors for offending behaviour.</p> |
| 2. Diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment | <p>Increase the rate at which justice agencies are successful in diverting Koori offenders, particularly Koori women, from further contact with the justice system and strengthen community-based alternatives to imprisonment.</p> |
| 3. Reduce re-offending | <p>Reduce the rate at which Koories re-offend by changing environmental and behavioural factors that contribute to offending.</p> |
| 4. Reduce conflict, violence and victimisation | <p>Reduce the adverse, and often intergenerational, impacts of violence and victimisation on Koori communities, families and individuals, particularly women.</p> |
| 5. Responsive and inclusive services | <p>Make mainstream and positive justice-related services more responsive and inclusive of the needs of Koories.</p> |
| 6. Strengthen community justice responses and increase community safety | <p>Build capacity in and enable Koori communities to improve local justice outcomes and increase community safety, through place-based approaches to crime and violence.</p> |

5. Partnership structures

The partnership structures for the AJA are illustrated in Figure 10. They bring together community and government stakeholders across local, regional and state-wide levels.

Figure 10: Partnership framework for the AJA



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

6. Roles and responsibilities

Strengthening of the partnerships established through the AJA will continue to drive improved justice and safety outcomes through collaboration.

Victorian Government

In implementing the AJA3, the Victorian Government (primarily through the Department of Justice and Department of Human Services portfolios) will:

- adhere to the principles of the AJA and the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18* guiding principles
- work with the Koori community as equal partners to develop, implement and evaluate AJA initiatives
- establish accountability through measurement against benchmarks, performance indicators, targets and timelines for all AJA initiatives
- utilise the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework structures and processes to progress action on issues that drive contact with the justice system such as unstable housing, unemployment, mental health and alcohol and drug use
- improve whole-of-government coordination of Koori justice programs
- actively promote Koori-related justice programs using a range of communication strategies
- regularly provide data and related information to the Koori Justice Unit and the Aboriginal Justice Forum on Koori contact with the justice system.
- commit to and incorporate the AJA3 and Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee plans in their strategic and business plans
- include the successful implementation of AJA3 initiatives in performance plans of Executive Officers within AJA-related business units, agencies and regional offices
- maximise Koori membership on justice-related boards, committees and tribunals that make decisions impacting on the Koori community
- commit to appropriate levels of senior representation on the Aboriginal Justice Forum and the Regional Aboriginal Justice Agreement Committee and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee networks
- provide high quality services for Koories that are consistent with the key access criteria for effective service design outlined in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework
- support strong Koori organisations through building service and workforce capacity to partner with justice agencies in the provision of justice-related services and programs.



Aboriginal Justice Forum

The Aboriginal Justice Forum will continue to bring together the most senior representatives of the Koori community and the Justice, Human Services, Health and Education government portfolios as the peak coordinating body responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and direction of the AJA. A strong and enduring partnership has been built between justice agencies and the Koori community, most powerfully symbolised by the Aboriginal Justice Forum, which has been highly successful in improving Koori justice outcomes.

The Aboriginal Justice Forum demonstrates significant transparency, levels of accountability, ability to drive implementation, collaborative action and the high level of commitment from members to work toward the aims and objectives of the AJA.

The Aboriginal Justice Forum meets a minimum of three times per year to promote accountability, support community participation and engagement and provide momentum to progress major policies and initiatives. These meetings are held over two days, alternating between metropolitan and regional locations and include open community forums.

The Aboriginal Justice Forum will:

- promote and coordinate the AJA principles and initiatives in the Koori community and across the justice system
- promote discussion and awareness of Koori justice issues and the identification or development of solutions to address improved justice outcomes for the Koori community
- promote increased positive participation of the Koori community in the justice system and AJA
- promote greater accountability and transparency of the justice system in its relationship with the Koori community
- promote innovative and best practice approaches to the design, development, implementation and evaluation of AJA3 initiatives and other justice-related programs and services that impact on the Koori community
- report to the Victorian Government on justice issues impacting on the Koori community
- monitor, review and report on the implementation of AJA-related initiatives and other justice-related initiatives that impact on the Koori community
- monitor, analyse and report on data describing Koori contact with the justice system
- promote cross-sectoral linkages and partnerships with other Koori based structures in government and the community to tackle Koori disadvantage and over-representation.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Membership

Membership of the Aboriginal Justice Forum is drawn from the most senior representatives of the Koori community, Victorian justice system and related government departments:

Co-Chairpersons

Secretary, Department of Justice

Chairperson of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee for the region in which the forum will be hosted

Community

Chairperson, the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, Barwon South West Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, East Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, Gippsland Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, Grampians Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, Hume Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, Loddon Mallee Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, North Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, South Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Chairperson, West Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

CEO, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

Chairperson, Victorian Aboriginal Community Justice Panel Program

CEO, Victorian Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service

CEO, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Chairperson, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

Nominated Representative, Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum

State Coordinator, Koori Youth Council

Government

Chief Commissioner, Victoria Police
 Commissioner, Corrections Victoria, Department of Justice
 Commissioner, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
 Director, Aboriginal Health, Department of Health
 Executive Director, Mental Health, Drugs and Regions, Department of Health
 Director, Aboriginal Outcomes Branch, Department of Human Services
 Director/Sheriff, Infringement Management and Enforcement Services, Department of Justice
 Director, Koori Justice Unit, Department of Justice
 Director, Justice Health, Department of Justice
 Director, Victims Support Agency, Department of Justice
 Director, Koori Education Strategy Unit, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
 Assistant Director, Youth Justice and Disability Forensic Unit, Department of Human Services.
 Executive Director, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development
 Director, Strategic Policy and Coordination, Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development
 Executive Director, Community Operations and Strategy, Department of Justice
 Regional Director (nominated representative), Department of Justice
 State Manager, Victorian Indigenous Coordination Centre, Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Courts

The President of the Children's Court
 Chief Magistrate
 Chief Judge County Court

Observers

Regional Directors, Department of Justice
 Chief Executive Officer, Magistrates Court
 Chief Executive Officer, County Court
 Chief Executive Officer, Children's Court
 Ethical Standards Department, Victoria Police
 Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Executive Officers

Secretariat

Koori Justice Unit, Department of Justice

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Koori Caucus

The Koori Caucus comprises the Koori community members of the Aboriginal Justice Forum. They meet prior to each forum:

- on a day approximately six weeks out for agenda setting and consideration of minutes and actions arising from the previous forum, as well as discussing key issues of interest or concern
- on the day immediately before, to consider the agenda and share views on relevant issues.

A key feature of the Koori Caucus is that it provides an opportunity for members to discuss issues, share ideas and experiences, problem solve and develop a common view of key issues, prior to reporting to the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee network

The Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees are instrumental in developing and maintaining the strong partnerships between Koori communities and justice agencies that are crucial to delivering the strategy in the regions.

There are nine advisory committees in total, with four in metropolitan Melbourne (South, East, North and West Metropolitan) and five in regional Victoria (Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume and Loddon Mallee. Each is serviced by a full-time Executive Officer located in a Department of Justice regional office and who supports the Chairperson as well as managing the day-to-day committee activities and planning requirements. An important role for each Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and its Executive Officer is to grow the strong relationship and participation by Koori communities in their region and to build a strong partnership with relevant government agencies and other bodies.

The Department of Justice Regional Directors are the most senior government members of the advisory committees and are responsible for operational support including the development and implementation of Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Justice Plans that align with each phase of the AJA.

The role of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees has grown with each iteration of their regional justice plan as new activities, programs and initiatives have been developed and in AJA3, will continue to include:

- advocating for and promoting improved justice outcomes and AJA-related initiatives to both Koori communities and government agencies
- participating in and providing advice to the Aboriginal Justice Forum, the Koori Caucus and other related forums
- developing and implementing regional justice plans that address the AJA objectives, including regional level targets, performance measures and monitoring progress against these on a regular basis
- promoting AJA grant opportunities and assisting with the monitoring and support of grant projects
- in partnership, promoting and participating in cross-agency and cross-sectoral forums, plans and initiatives to address drivers of contact with the justice system
- working with other regional Koori advocacy groups
- maximising community participation and involvement through community forums prior to advisory committee meetings, and through maximising participation in existing forums (Local Indigenous Networks, Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups) or other innovative approaches to understand and respond to community justice-related concerns throughout the region
- monitoring and commenting on Koori contact with the justice system at a regional/state-wide level
- promoting and nurturing the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee network and providing advocacy for it at the regional level
- maintaining good governance and operating according to the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Framework of Operations.

Membership

The core membership for each Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee should comprise a range of senior Koori community and regional government representatives including:

Community

A member from each of the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees in the region (where established)

A representative from the Koori Youth Council

A Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service representative

An Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service representative (where available)

A representative from each of the Aboriginal Community Justice Panels in the region

A representative from community based organisations with justice-related programs

A representative from each of the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups

A Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group representative

A Koori Official Visitor (where available)

A Koori Bail Justice (where available)

An Elder or Respected Person from each of the Koori Courts in the region

At the discretion of the advisory committee, include other community representatives such as Local Justice Workers, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program Coordinator and Koori Youth Justice Workers.

Government

Regional Director, Department of Justice

Regional Director, Department of Human Services

Regional Director, Department of Health

Regional Director, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Local Government representative

Magistrate or Registrar

Community Correctional Services Location Manager

Sheriff's Operations Regional Manager

Victim Services Manager

Superintendent (Divisional Commander) or above, Victoria Police

Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Victoria Police (where available)

General Manager of prison (where located)

Koori Court Officer

Secretariat

Executive Officer, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee network

A network of 11 Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees has been established in locations across Victoria experiencing poor justice outcomes (Bairnsdale, Bendigo, Geelong, Glenelg, Heywood, Horsham, Mildura, Morwell, Robinvale, Swan Hill and Wodonga). They function as localised problem-solving mechanisms bringing together local Koori community members, justice agency and judicial representatives to develop and guide local responses to justice and safety issues.

In the AJA3, the action committees will continue to:

- identify and address justice issues that contribute to poor outcomes for the local Koori community. This will be done through the development and implementation of local justice plans/community safety plans
- advocate, monitor and comment on Koori contact with the justice system at the local level
- promote justice-related initiatives to Koori communities and government agencies
- promote Koori participation in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of local justice initiatives
- participate in and provide advice to the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee network and therefore to the Aboriginal Justice Forum, Koori Caucus and related forums
- develop, promote and participate in relevant and local cross-agency and cross sectoral forums and initiatives
- support the development of local alcohol accords, Koori community police family violence protocols, youth cautioning initiatives, education/youth justice school reengagement activities as determined by local priority and need.

Membership

The core membership for each Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee should comprise a range of Koori community and local government representatives including:

Community

A Koori Youth Council representative

A Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service representative

A local Aboriginal Community Justice Panel representative

A representative from local community based organisations with justice-related programs

A representative from the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group

A local Koori Official Visitor (where available)

A local Bail Justice (where available)

An Elder or Respected person from the local Koori Courts (where available).

A Local Aboriginal Justice Worker (where available)

A Koori Youth Justice Worker

A Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program Coordinator (where available)

An Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service representative, Family Violence protocol (where available)

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Drug and Alcohol Worker (where available)

At the discretion of the action committee, include other community representatives where available on an occasional or regular basis such as Closing the Gap committee, Local Indigenous Networks coordinator or representative, Koori Engagement Support Officers/Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Government

Department of Justice Regional Manager

Youth Justice Unit Manager

Local Government representative

Magistrate or Registrar

Senior Community Corrections representative

Senior Infringement Management and Enforcement Services representative

Officer in Charge, Victoria Police

Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Victoria Police

Senior Victims Services representative

Department of Health Manager - mental health/alcohol and drugs

Secretariat

Project Officer, Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee (where established) or

Executive Officer, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Koori Justice Unit

The core role of the Koori Justice Unit within the Department of Justice is to develop and support improved and equitable justice outcomes for the Koori community. For AJA3, the unit will:

- act on behalf of the Aboriginal Justice Forum to coordinate the delivery of the AJA and related programs
- provide advice and executive support services to the forum and the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee networks
- provide advice to Ministers and Executives on policy and program matters affecting Koori communities
- maintain a data base detailing Koori contact with the criminal justice system
- coordinate and monitor the annual AJA budget allocation
- coordinate the AJA contribution to the Victorian Government annual Aboriginal Affairs report
- coordinate, implement and support related grants and relevant community programs
- develop and implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework
- provide information to Koori community and government stakeholders about progress and activities
- support and monitor the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and Department of Justice regional offices in the delivery of AJA commitments.

Department of Justice regional operations

Regional operations and offices play an important role in supporting Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees in the development and implementation of regional justice plans and other initiatives under the AJA.

Strong coordination at the regional level can maximise the effectiveness of strategies designed to improve outcomes for local Koori communities. Action to address drivers of contact with the justice system can also be targeted through regional management forums, cross-agency and cross-sectoral forums. The implementation of plans and programs can also be compared across regions to identify and resolve gaps, overlaps or initiatives requiring further coordination and provide an opportunity to agree on how these can be addressed.

For the AJA3, Department of Justice regional operations and offices will:

- support the partnership principles, mechanisms and processes
- ensure there is high-level departmental representation at Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee meetings, thereby supporting the operations of both this and the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee networks
- support the development, implementation and monitoring of Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Regional Justice Plans
- provide administrative and management support to the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Executive Officer and any other AJA project staff
- nurture and support the Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (where established) and the development of local community safety plans
- support the development of local alcohol accords, Koori family violence police protocols, youth cautioning initiatives and education/youth justice school re-engagement activities as determined by local priority and need
- facilitate whole-of-government action through targeted coordination of government services that relate to the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee regional justice plans
- ensure all Department of Justice programs and services are accessible and inclusive of the needs of the Koori community, which is the focus of the department's Koori Inclusion Action Plan, *Mingu Gadhaba: Beginning Together*
- shape action on drivers of contact with the criminal justice system in cross-agency, cross-sectoral and regional management forums
- report on progress in implementing AJA initiatives and Koori Inclusion Action Plan activities
- assist in the collection of, and access to regional data on Koori justice outcomes.

7. Monitoring and measuring success

The partners commit to developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for AJA3, promoting transparency, accountability and demonstrated value for money through comprehensive audit and evaluation components.

Development of the framework up-front ensures clarity about what will be measured and how, including detailed responsibilities and timelines for reporting, monitoring and evaluating programs and initiatives, as well as the overall strategy.

Outputs from the framework will support the ongoing implementation of initiatives and programs. They will also inform future investments in justice responses, enabling better outcomes and decisions based on a strong and objective evidence base, in line with the Victorian Government's commitment to accountability and monitoring and measuring success under the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18*.

Content and structure of the monitoring and evaluation framework

The framework development will be overseen by the Aboriginal Justice Forum and will provide a concrete overview of the key monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities that will occur over the course of the AJA3.

It will indicate the timing of activities, ownership, responsibility and key decision-making points, as well as describing the tools and methods to be used in the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of AJA3.

The framework will reflect the core principles and components of the partnership agreement and include:

- a **Theory of Change** which will articulate how programs and initiatives undertaken contribute to the key outcomes being sought under the AJA
- **principles** which will apply to all work coming out of it
- **indicators** which will measure progress against objectives, as well as targets (where applicable), data required, collection methods and responsibility for collection
- **standard outputs, outcomes and measures** which are to be collected for individual initiatives and will constitute a minimum data set, relevant to strategic indicators
- documented **processes** and useful **templates** and **tools** to report implementation, outputs, outcomes and budget of initiatives to the Aboriginal Justice Forum
- **evaluation standards** which include agreed principles, approaches, methodologies and key evaluation questions which must be applied consistently across all initiatives
- an **evaluation plan** which outlines when key evaluation activities are to take place, including program and initiative level evaluations, as well as the strategy as a whole
- a **data improvement strategy**, which addresses critical gaps in data collection, including those identified in the AJA2 evaluation.

The reporting activity associated with the framework will also inform and guide performance management of other strategic frameworks including the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18*, the *Council of Australian Governments Close the Gap* national partnerships, the *Overarching Bilateral Indigenous Plan* and the *Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Ten Year Plan*.



 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework headline indicators and targets

The AJA3 directly contributes to the following headline indicators and targets in the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework:

| Headline indicator | Target |
|---|--|
| Reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people (youth and adult) under justice supervision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2031, close the gap in the rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people under youth justice supervision. • By 2031, close the gap in the rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people under adult justice supervision. |
| Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal people who return to prison within two years of release. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2031, close the gap in the proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal prisoners returning to prison within two years of release. |

Progress towards achieving these targets will be reported each year through the annual Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Report, which will draw from a selection of AJA3 performance indicators, ensuring that monitoring and reporting processes are aligned.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

AJA3 performance indicators

In order to measure progress towards the aims and strategic focus, a draft set of indicators has been developed to measure progress over the life of AJA3. These also act as intermediate indicators of progress towards the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework inter-generational targets. The indicators relate to each objective set out in Part 3 of this document and will be developed in the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Objective 1: Crime prevention and early intervention**What are we trying to achieve?**

Reduce the number of Koori youth involved in criminal activities by promoting protective factors, including cultural identity and strength, and reducing risk factors for offending.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- number of times Koori youth are processed by police (e.g. expressed as a comparison rate Koori/non-Koori) **(existing)**
- number of times Koori adults are processed by police (e.g. expressed as a comparison rate Koori/non-Koori) **(proposed)**.

Objective 2: Diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment**What are we trying to achieve?**

Increase the rate at which justice agencies are successful in diverting Koori offenders from further contact with the criminal justice system, and strengthen community-based alternatives to imprisonment.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- proportion of Koori youth cautioned by Police **(existing)**
- proportion of Koories (adult and youth, male and female) remanded in custody **(existing)**
- proportion of Koories (adult) receiving a prison sentence compared with those receiving a community correction order **(existing)**
- proportion of Koori youth sentenced to youth detention compared with those sentenced to community supervision **(existing)**
- proportion of Koori (youth and adults) successfully completing a community correction order **(proposed)**.

Objective 3: Reduce re-offending**What are we trying to achieve?**

Reduce the rate at which Koories re-offend by changing environmental and behavioural factors that contribute to offending.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- the proportion of Koori adults who return to prison under sentence within two years of release **(existing)**
- the proportion of Koori youth who return to youth detention within two years of release **(proposed)**
- the proportion of Koories (adults and youth) who re-offend during 12 month period **(proposed)**.

Objective 4: Reduce conflict, violence and victimisation

What are we trying to achieve?

Reduce the adverse, and often intergenerational, impacts of violence and victimisation on Koori communities, families and individuals.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- rate of reporting (family incidence reporting) of Indigenous family violence to police
- number of Koories on intervention orders (**existing – not reported**)
- number of Koories convicted for violent offences against the person (**existing**)
- number of Koories who are victims of crime (by offence category) (**existing**).

Objective 5: Responsive and inclusive services

What are we trying to achieve?

Make mainstream and positive justice-related services more responsive and inclusive of the needs of Koories.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- rate of Koori access to justice services (e.g. Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria, Victims Services, and Courts Integrated Service Program) (**proposed – Justice Koori Inclusion Action Plan**)
- rate of participation of Koori prisoners in education, training, general programs and work programs (**proposed – Justice Koori Inclusion Action Plan**)
- level of uptake of Koori cultural awareness programs across the justice system (**proposed – Justice Koori Inclusion Action Plan**)
- number/proportion of Koories accessing positive justice-related services (**existing – upgraded with Justice Koori Inclusion Action Plan**)
- proportion of Koories working within the justice system (**existing**).

Objective 6: Strengthen community justice responses and increase community safety

What are we trying to achieve?

Build capacity in and enable Koori communities to improve local justice outcomes and increase community safety through place-based approaches to crime and violence.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- number of Koori volunteers involved in Justice programs
- number of community-initiated and implemented Justice programs
- number of Koori organisations delivering Justice programs.

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The following new measures and indicators are proposed to specifically to the new strategic focuses of AJA3:

Key strategic focus area: Women's diversion

What are we trying to achieve?

Increase the rate at which justice agencies are successful in diverting Koori women offenders from further contact with the criminal justice system and strengthen community-based alternatives to imprisonment for Koori women offenders.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- proportion of Koori women (adult and youth) remanded in custody **(proposed)**
- proportion of Koori women (adult) receiving a prison sentence compared with those receiving a community correction order **(proposed)**
- proportion of Koori young women sentenced to youth detention compared with those sentenced to community supervision **(proposed)**
- proportion of Koori women (adult and youth) successfully completing a community correction orders **(proposed)**.

Key strategic focus area: Koori community-government partnerships

What are we trying to achieve?

Build capacity in and continue to strengthen the Koori community and government partnership in to address Koori justice issues.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- the strength and success of the Koori community-government partnership (e.g. degree of satisfaction with AJA structures, annual assessment of health of partnership etc.)

Key strategic focus area: Cultural strengthening

What are we trying to achieve?

Building and restoring cultural strength within the Koori community as a foundation for lasting change.

How will this be measured?

Example indicators:

- the success and prevalence of cultural strengthening initiatives (e.g. number of activities/initiatives/programs incorporating Koori specific cultural elements, levels of cultural engagement and transmission of culture, levels of participation and the number of new participants in activities and programs).



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Aboriginal Justice Forum Message Stick

A message stick, made by renowned Koori artist and Elder Uncle Albert Mullet, was introduced into the Aboriginal Justice Forum proceedings in 2010. It symbolises the important role of the Koori Co-Chair in the Aboriginal Justice Forum, and honours the work of these Elders and leaders in their communities.

Message sticks were used by many Koori peoples in Victoria and throughout Australia when communicating across different language groups. A message stick would be passed between leaders along with supporting verbal messages, and each leader would add their own before passing the message stick on.

In this way, the message stick became a record of decision making and agreement, and a symbol of the ties between all Koori people.

As a part of Aboriginal Justice Forum proceedings, the Co-Chair of the local Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee hosting the Forum engraves a message or a symbol on the message stick to represent their community or the goals of their region under the partnership. They then pass it on to the host and co-chair of the next Forum. The passing of the message stick reinforces the importance of the Co-Chair role, and the continuity of culture in contemporary Koori life.

The message stick symbolises the strength of the AJA, and provides an evolving history of the Forum's pathway throughout Victoria.



Signatories to the AJA3



Robert Clark MP
Attorney-General

Dr Alf Bamblett
Chairperson
Victorian Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Jeanette Powell MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Linda Bamblett
Chairperson
North Metropolitan
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Mary Wooldridge MP
Minister for Community
Services
Minister for Mental Health

Melissa Peters
Acting Chairperson
West Metropolitan
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Jamie Lowe
Community Member
Grampians
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

John Martin
Chairperson
Hume
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Irene Swindle
Chairperson
East Metropolitan
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Greg Kennedy
State Coordinator
Koori Youth Council

Wayne Bell
Chairperson
Aboriginal Community
Justice Panels

Jill Gallagher
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Aboriginal
Community Controlled
Health Organisation



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Bess Yarram
Chairperson
Gippsland
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Andrew McIntosh MP
Minister for Crime Prevention
Minister for Corrections

Marion Hansen
Chairperson
South Metropolitan
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Peter Ryan MP
Minister for Police and
Emergency Services

Lawrence Moser
Chairperson
Loddon Mallee
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Denis Rose
Chairperson
Barwon South West
Regional Aboriginal Justice
Advisory Committee

Antoinette Braybrook
Chief Executive Officer
Aboriginal Family Violence
Prevention and Legal Service

Wayne Muir
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Aboriginal
Legal Service

Geraldine Atkinson
Chairperson
Victorian Aboriginal
Education Association
Incorporated

Phil Cooper
Representative
Indigenous Family Violence
Partnership Forum



Part 4: The action plan

The implementation of the AJA3 identified in the following action plan has a two-stage process, where most actions are considered immediate and can be implemented in the first two years. A number of 'future actions' have been identified, which refer to subsequent activities to be implemented over the remaining years.



*Young Koori women participate in the Koori Pride Festival, as part of an AJA supported initiative run by Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation.
Photographer: James Henry*

Objective 1: Crime prevention and early intervention

Preventing crime and intervening early have been major focus areas for the AJA over the past decade. AJA3 maintains this forward momentum, with an emphasis on keeping Koori youth and families strong.

Objective 1 continues to focus on reducing exposure to risk factors for crime. This includes helping maintain families and communities that are free of substance misuse and enjoying a good standard of mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. Strengthening young Koories' connections to family, school, community and culture will also continue as important protective factors against crime.

Improved service coordination for at-risk Koori youth and families across the justice, welfare, health and education sectors is also a priority. Closer collaboration between frontline workers is promoted across these areas, supported by integrated cross-sectoral approaches to prevention and early intervention. This is expected to improve service effectiveness and efficiency, in turn increasing the capacity of the government and the Victorian Koori community to maintain the gains already achieved, and meet the increasing demands of a rapidly growing Koori youth population.

Strategies

- 1.1 Reduce risk factors associated with youth offending and increase protective factors.
- 1.2 Minimise the circumstances in which Koories are at risk of negative contact with police.
- 1.3 Increase opportunities for the ongoing involvement of Elders in AJA initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| 1.1 Reduce risk factors associated with youth offending and increase protective factors | | | |
|---|---|---------|--|
| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 1.1.1 | Support families to manage youth at risk | 1.1.1.a | Ensure culturally-responsive parenting and support programs are made available to Koori families of youth at risk of offending, and Koori youth at risk who themselves are parents. |
| | | 1.1.1.b | Strengthen referral processes between the Justice agencies and workers who identify youth at risk (e.g. Youth Justice Workers, police) and the providers of these services (government and community organisations). |
| 1.1.2: | Provide coordinated multi-agency responses to reduce progression from child protection to youth justice and adult justice systems | 1.1.2.a | <p><i>Services Connect will be the Victorian Government's integrated client service system for assisting vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and families. The system will connect people with the right support to address their needs, building their capabilities to improve their lives and overcome disadvantage.</i></p> <p><i>Services Connect currently includes all services delivered by Department of Human Services and will also include mental health and drug and alcohol services provided by Department of Health.</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services will ensure the Services Connect model is responsive to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable Koori youth and their families, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring opportunities for collaborating with other government agencies at the local level where we know our Koori clients are accessing other services. This could take the form of a single case plan or more joined-up case planning • strengthening internal communication within and between government agencies • keeping the Aboriginal Justice Forum informed of the development and implementation of the Services Connect approach, and relevant outcomes for services provided by Department of Health. |
| | | 1.1.2.b | Identify risk factors for Koori youth involved in multiple systems, and strategies that may reduce such involvement. |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| | | | | |
|-------|---|---------|---|--|
| 1.1.3 | Improve education and employment outcomes for at risk youth | 1.1.3a | Ensure the Koori Youth Justice Program has a strong focus on enabling young Aboriginal people to remain engaged or be re-engaged with appropriate education, training and employment opportunities. Activities in this area will include maintaining the Koori Early School Leaver and Youth Employment Programs and expanding these functions where possible. | <i>Department of Human Services</i> <i>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</i> |
| | | 1.1.3.b | Establish linkages and networks between Koori Youth Justice workers (and other relevant justice workers), Koori Engagement Support Officers and Koori Transition Officers, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connect Youth Justice Workers with the whole of the Wannik Strategy including Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, the Koori Education workforce, and the wide range of Aboriginal education and vocational programs • reconnect at-risk Koori youth with school, flexible learning options, vocational training or employment pathways • increase access to mentors in professional, para-professional and trades areas who can support Koori students to realise their educational and career development aspirations. | |
| | | 1.1.3.c | Undertake joint data collection between Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit) to identify priority locations for school re-engagement initiatives. | <i>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</i> & <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
|-------|--|---|---|
| 1.1.4 | Increase activity-based protective factors | <p>1.1.4.a <i>The Frontline Youth Initiatives Community Grants Program enables community organisations to implement projects that provide Koori children and youth with healthy and pro-social activities that reduce the likelihood of future negative contact with the justice system.</i></p> <p>Strengthen the Frontline Youth Initiatives Grants Program by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extending the duration and amount of Frontline funding • increasing Koori youth involvement in either project selection and monitoring or in the design, development and delivery of programs e.g. through participation of the Koori Youth Council and continuing Koori youth representation on Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees. <p>1.1.4.b <i>The Community Initiatives Program community grants program enables community organisations to implement pilot projects or research which provide community-based responses to justice issues.</i></p> <p>Maintain the Community Initiatives Program community grants program.</p> <p>1.1.4.c Improve project development and support activities to the Frontline and Community Initiatives Program community grant programs, including: streamlining the grants application process; enhancing monitoring and evaluation activities; reducing the administrative burden on community organisations; and strengthening relationships with potential funding partners.</p> <p>1.1.4.d Future action: Support the increased depth and coverage of prevention and early intervention activities to ensure responsiveness and equitable access across communities.</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| | | | | |
|-------|--|---------|---|--|
| 1.1.5 | Increase opportunities for positive community-based activities between Koori youth, communities and police | 1.1.5.a | <p><i>The Warrnambool Turnaround Project is an example of how activities and initiatives can be developed to bring police and Koori community members together in a positive way.</i></p> <p><i>A full-time Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer was engaged in Warrnambool from 2006, and has worked closely with the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, local Koori community organisations and Victoria Police, to coordinate sporting events, cultural camps, cultural training, flag-raising and cultural awareness activities with the local Koori community and the police. Local youth mentoring programs and youth employment initiatives have also been actively supported.</i></p> <p><i>A 44 per cent reduction in Koori representation in police contacts has occurred between 2006 and 2011.</i></p> <p>Maintain, where possible, initiatives that promote the building of trust between Koori youth, communities and police. Enable these initiatives to include youth who are doing well and youth at risk with evaluation built in.</p> | Victoria Police |
| 1.1.6 | Reduce risk factors for Koori youth contact with the justice system, including drug and alcohol use and mental health concerns | 1.1.6a | <p><i>Research has identified strong links between alcohol and drug use, mental health concerns and youth involvement in the criminal justice system. Risk factors for alcohol and drug misuse by young people include boredom, disengagement and family or community attitudes that condone substance misuse.</i></p> <p>Ensure Koori Youth Justice Workers, Koori Engagement Support Officers and Koori Transition Officers identify the needs of Koori youth who are diverted from the justice system and link them with appropriate services to meet their needs. This will include collaborative work to identify any alcohol or other drug or mental health issues that may be impeding engagement in school or vocational training [links to 1.1.3] and strengthening early identification and appropriate referral of Koori youth with mental health issues and/or alcohol/drug issues.</p> | <p>Department of Human Services & Department of Education and Early Childhood Development & Department of Health</p> |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
|--|--|--|---|
| | Reduce risk factors for Koori youth contact with the justice system, including drug and alcohol use and mental health concerns | 1.1.6.b Develop community education and community strengthening strategies in local communities to tackle under-age drinking and address family and community attitudes as a risk factor, as part of the Whole-of-government Alcohol and Other Drug Strategy 2012-20 and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide community education about the harms of binge drinking, e.g. peer education program 'Young Fellas Helping Young Fellas' (funded through Community Initiative Program initiatives) • challenge drinking culture by promoting and supporting alcohol-free community and sporting events • strengthen capacity of families to prevent/delay young people's access to alcohol and the age they initiate drinking (18 years) – e.g. as part of parenting and family support programs [links to 1.1.1] • educate adults about how to drink responsibly, including through relevant justice-related programs and services • support community education programs, improved services and cultural strengthening activities as outlined in the Koolin Balit: Aboriginal Health Plan. | |
| | | 1.1.6.c Address boredom and disengagement as a risk factor [links to 1.1.3 and 1.1.4]: Implement the Frontline and CIP initiatives and the youth education and employment strategies (above) in ways that strengthen resilience and reduce access to risk factors including alcohol and drug misuse and offending. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |
| | | 1.1.6.d Consolidate the Koori Youth Justice Program to ensure that all available capacity is utilised to divert young Koori people or assist in reducing the likelihood of return to the youth justice system, and that youth Justice staff are supporting young Koori people to achieve positive outcomes. | <i>Department of Human Services</i> |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

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| 1.1.7 | Increase Koori youth access to mainstream opportunities | 1.1.7.a | Consistent with the <i>Victorian Government's Youth Statement: Engage, Involve, Create, 2012</i> , strengthen mainstream youth service capacity to provide culturally-appropriate programs and services, by improving their coordination and linkages with Koori organisations. Priorities include sport, recreation, performing arts and employment services. | <i>Department of Human Services</i> |
| 1.1.8 | Address Koori-specific risk and protection factors | 1.1.8.a | <p><i>Research has identified cultural strength as a Koori-specific protective factor and racism and discrimination as Koori-specific risk factors.</i></p> <p>Strengthen cultural identity and connection to culture of Koori youth at risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring cultural strengthening activities are integrated into all existing programs and activities for Koori youth • ensuring Koori youth workers engage in cultural strengthening activities with youth at risk, including through song, dance, art, on-country learning, rites of passage • establishing Yarning Circles in local communities, bringing together Koori Elders and youth to foster transmission of culture [links to Strategy 1.3]. | <p><i>Department of Planning and Community Development (Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> |
| | | 1.1.8.b | Increase opportunities for positive Koori youth engagement with the justice system, including participation in the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee network, Koori Job Fairs, Koori Youth Networks and the Koori Youth Council. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| | Activity | | Details | Agency |
|-------|---|--------|--|---|
| | | | | <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 1.1.9 | Increase capacity of community service providers and government departments to respond to the rapid population growth of the Koori youth population | 1.1.9a | <p><i>Consistent with the Victorian Government's Youth Statement: Engage, Involve, Create (2012), it will be important to ensure service planning by mainstream and Koori community youth agencies takes into account the disproportionately rapid population growth of the Koori youth cohort.</i></p> <p>Hold a Koori Youth Roundtable in 2013 involving youth, Koori community and government representatives, which identifies youth at risk, and develops integrated cross-sectoral strategies for prevention and early intervention.</p> | <p><i>Department of Human Services</i></p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</p> |
| | | 1.1.9b | Develop age-appropriate and culturally responsive service delivery models such as wraparound services, to meet the needs of Koori youth, families and communities. The focus needs to be on outcomes rather than activities or processes. | |
| | | 1.1.9c | Future action: Following the Koori Youth Roundtable, support the development of an integrated whole-of-government Koori Youth Plan. Include consideration of service mapping and a clearinghouse approach to funding and services. | <p><i>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services</p> <p>Department of Planning and Community Development (Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria)</p> |

OBJECTIVE 1: CRIME PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

| 1.2 Minimise the circumstances in which Koories are at risk of negative contact with police | | | | |
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| 1.2.1 | Reduce Koories' negative contact with police arising from alcohol misuse | 1.2.1.a | Continue to support diversion models as alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal people who come into contact with police for public intoxication, or are at risk of such. | Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit) Department of Health |
| 1.2.2 | Reduce the number of alcohol-related arrests | 1.2.2.a | Aim to develop and enhance local strategies, agreements and protocols to reduce alcohol-related incidents leading to arrest or negative contact with police with a focus on custody as the option of last resort, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilising Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees or other appropriate local networks as the mechanism, to minimise the risk of Koories being disproportionately impacted through lawful interventions • engaging current human rights standards that inform culturally-responsive interaction with police. | Victoria Police Department of Health Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit) |
| | | 1.2.2.b | Report to Aboriginal Justice Forum on the number of Koories in police custody including for public drunkenness and behavioural offences. | Victoria Police |
| 1.2.3 | Support community policing approaches | 1.2.3.a | Maintain local community policing approaches that support crime prevention initiatives and link victims with support services. | Victoria Police |
| 1.3 Increase opportunities for the ongoing involvement of Elders in AJA initiatives | | | | |
| 1.3.1 | Support the involvement of Koori community leaders in the development and delivery of AJA activities | 1.3.1.a | Assist Koori community Elders and community leaders to promote messages that encourage resilience and discourage risk on matters including alcohol and drug misuse, community safety and lateral violence, through "Yarnin' with Elders" workshops, Koori Courts, cultural wraparound approaches with Koori offenders, and other AJA initiatives across the justice continuum. | Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunals Service, Koori Justice Unit) |
| | | | Include appropriate training and support for Elders in working with young people and offenders. | Department of Human Services (Youth Justice) Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit) |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

Objective 2: Diversion and strengthen alternatives to imprisonment

Providing diversion and alternatives to imprisonment is crucial to the effective reduction of Koori over-representation in Victoria's criminal justice system. Over the past decade the AJA has focused strongly on creating and strengthening diversion options at key risk points within the justice system in an effort to halt the progression of Koories into the criminal justice system. Considerable attention has been directed to the diversion of Koori youth.

Objective 2 of the AJA3 further strengthens successful diversion initiatives. These include Koori youth cautioning to reduce arrest rates at the point of police contact, bail alternatives to reduce the number of Koori youth and adults remanded into custody, Koori Court services and residential alternatives such as Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place.

AJA3 continues to strengthen the Koori diversion workforce that includes Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, Local Justice Workers, Koori Court Officers and Elders, who deliver and support these diversionary initiatives in partnership with justice agencies.

In AJA3, Objective 2 prioritises effective diversionary alternatives for Koori women and for Koories at risk of entering the criminal justice system due to alcohol or drug abuse. By increasing the focus on these important areas, the AJA demonstrates responsiveness to emerging issues and further strengthens the capacity of the government and the Koori community to reduce the progression of Koories into the criminal justice system.

Strategies

Increase the rate at which:

- 2.1 Koori youth are diverted from the youth justice system.
- 2.2 Koories are diverted from further contact with Victoria Police.
- 2.3 The court system diverts Koories from further contact with the criminal justice system.
- 2.4 Koories are diverted from further contact with the correctional system.
- 2.5 Infringement Management and Enforcement Services diverts Koories from further contact with the criminal justice system.

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

| 2.1 | | Increase the rate at which Koori youth are diverted from the youth justice system | | |
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| | Activity | | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 2.1.1 | Reduce the numbers of Koori youth on remand | 2.1.1.a | <p>Increase Koori youth access to bail by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and monitoring barriers to timely bail opportunities for young Koories, including monitoring the duration of detention reviewing the operational effectiveness of existing bail support programs aimed at keeping young Koories out of custody, including the Koori Youth Intensive Bail Support Program. Revise program/s as required to reduce the number of young Koories being detained ensuring Youth Justice Program Workers liaise with the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct Bail Coordinator to facilitate timely access to bail opportunities ensuring appropriate access to legal representation and advocacy at arrest and court. | <i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i> |
| | | 2.1.1.b | Consider internal resourcing capacity to increase access to bail and bail support services by young Koori people across Victoria by expanding the coverage of programs such as Koori Intensive Bail Support. | |
| | | 2.1.1.c | Future action: Explore the feasibility of family decision-making processes as a component of bail planning, to minimise duration of remand in custody wherever possible and appropriate. | |
| | | 2.1.1.d | Future action: Explore ways to increase access to bail support options of young Aboriginal people for the Children's Court. | |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

| 2.2 Increase the rate at which Koories are diverted from further contact with Victoria Police | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 2.2.1 | Provide a systematic, integrated inter-agency response to early youth contact with the justice system (“all doors are the right door”) | 2.2.1.a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing interagency bodies at the local level and in priority locations, such as the Youth Support Service Reference Groups or the Youth Partnerships reference groups to ensure young Koori people are accessing services on first contact with police. • Consider including Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Courts representatives to attend the Reference Group meetings to improve collaboration and coordination for at-risk children and young people upon first police contact. • Develop a common referral pathway for all three agencies that links at-risk youth to services that address the underlying issues (e.g. family or parenting difficulties, alcohol or other drug use, school disengagement). • Ensure that early intervention programs appropriately respond to young Koori people (for example, the Youth Support Service). | <i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i> Victoria Police |
| 2.2.2 | Continue to increase the proportion of Koories who are cautioned when processed by police, and ensure the cautioning process includes referral to appropriate services that address factors driving the problem behaviour | 2.2.2.a <p>Victoria Police will work in partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue the development of the Koori Youth Cautioning Program operating at local sites • strengthen cautioning responses in the North Metropolitan region • facilitate appropriate training of police at those local sites when required • raise awareness of the cautioning program among local Koori communities and service providers • develop strong local referral partnerships with services that can address the problem behaviour • build reporting and monitoring capacity at the local level to generate state-wide data (with regard cautioning criteria) that will inform both the Aboriginal Justice Forum and Victoria Police of cautioning rates for Indigenous people relative to the general population • develop other strategies that promote police understanding of the strategic importance of the cautioning and diversion initiatives. | <i>Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service</i> & <i>Victoria Police</i> |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

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| 2.2.3 | Continue to improve the relationship between the police and the Koori community | <p>2.2.3.a Strengthen the role of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the service delivery model for both programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building collaborative support between Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers and Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee/Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee • developing linkages between Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and the Koori Staff Network in Department of Justice to build collegial support and problem solving capabilities • conducting quarterly state-wide Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer meetings. • enhancing the cultural competency of Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers through locally developed and delivered cultural awareness training. <p>2.2.3.b Explore local police capacity to increase the number of Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, where the need is identified.</p> <p>2.2.3.c Explore local police capacity to increase the numbers of Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers across the State.</p> <p>Consider the appointment of additional or full-time Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers in locations with significant Koori populations.</p> <p>2.2.3.d Enhance the service delivery model for Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers to drive and support local initiatives in partnership with the Koori community and community agencies focussed on high risk issues such as alcohol and family violence.</p> <p>2.2.3.e Improve formal links between Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers/Police Aboriginal Liaison Officers and Aboriginal Community Justice Panels, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Aboriginal Justice Workers, Koori Youth Justice Workers and other community agencies [links to Activity 2.2.1].</p> | Victoria Police |
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OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| | (continued) Continue to improve the relationship between the police and the Koori community | <p>2.2.3.f Ensure ongoing development in cultural awareness and competency for all members of the Victoria Police workforce, as part of their formal training.</p> <p>Develop a framework to ensure appropriate development and delivery of cultural awareness training at the local level in partnership with the local Koori community.</p> <p>2.2.3.g In partnership with local Koori community stakeholders, install flags, paintings and other symbols of local Koori culture to promote police stations as culturally inclusive places.</p> <p>2.2.3.h Future action: Explore options to further expand, enhance and promote the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer Programs, and other initiatives that facilitate partnership between Victoria Police and the Koori community.</p> | |
| 2.2.4 | Increase the rate at which Koories are diverted from police custody | 2.2.4.a Investigate initiatives that enable Koori workers (e.g. Koori Drug Diversion Workers, Youth Justice Workers) to divert Koories into early intervention services at the point of police contact. | <i>Department of Health</i> Department of Human Services Department of Justice Victoria Police |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

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| 2.2.5 | Improve service responses for intoxicated persons who come into contact with the justice system | 2.2.5.a | Undertake a needs analysis for an after-hours response to intoxicated persons, to inform service model developments. | <i>Department of Health</i> Victoria Police Department of Justice |
| | | 2.2.5.b | In 2013, convene a Roundtable between the Aboriginal Justice Forum, Aboriginal health services and alcohol and drug services to develop responses to public intoxication arising from binge drinking and chronic use of alcohol [links to 2.2.4.a above]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop policy and service linkages between Koori Alcohol and Drug service networks and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations at local, regional and state-wide levels, to promote coordinated and informed responses • explore options for local service models to respond after-hours to the needs of intoxicated people, including service brokerage models offering appropriate medical support and a 'safe' place for a defined period. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> & <i>Department of Health</i> |
| 2.2.6 | Continue to increase the proportion of Koories bailed from police custody | 2.2.6.a | Ensure Koories have the same access to bail from Police custody as non-Koories, by encouraging Koories to take up Bail Justice roles, and maintaining Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service's support. Ensure cultural competency training for Bail Justices. | <i>Department of Justice (Bail Justice Program)</i> Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service |
| | | 2.2.6.b | Future action: Increase the number of Bail Justices in high-contact areas. | |
| | | 2.2.6.c | Support the Aboriginal Community Justice Panel Program, and investigate opportunities for further strengthening. | <i>Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service</i> & <i>Victoria Police</i> Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services, Koori Justice Unit) |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

| 2.3 | Increase the rate at which the court system diverts Koories from further contact with the criminal justice system | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <small>*Lead agency in italics</small> |
| 2.3.1 | Reduce the number of Koori adults on remand | <p>2.3.1.a Explore the feasibility of the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program working with Koories on bail.</p> <p>2.3.1.b Explore factors contributing to remand, particularly in relation to Koori women, including health and family concerns, identifying housing needs, providing supported accommodation options for Koori people seeking bail.</p> <p>2.3.1.c Utilise Koori Liaison Officers to ensure access and uptake by Koories of Courts Integrated Service Program, and strengthen linkages between the program and Koori Courts at La Trobe Valley.</p> <p>2.3.1.d Ensure Courts Integrated Service Program brokerage models connect Koories on bail to services that address underlying drivers of offending, including alcohol and drug abuse and mental health concerns, including services delivered through Aboriginal community controlled organisations.</p> <p>2.3.1.e Monitor and regularly report to the Aboriginal Justice Forum the numbers of Koories accessing bail, complying with bail conditions and the numbers remanded into custody.</p> <p>2.3.1.f Future action: Support the provision of culturally relevant bail support initiatives at all court locations with significant Koori population, and maximise Koori community engagement in these.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Courts and Tribunal Service)</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services</p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Service)</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services</p> |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

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| 2.3.2 | Implement initiatives that divert Koori women from prison, and reduce numbers on remand | 2.3.2.a | Koori Justice Unit will support an Aboriginal Justice Forum working group involving Koori Justice Unit, Corrections Victoria, Courts, Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Victoria Police and members of the Koori community to develop a community based diversion initiative for Koori women, and the supporting business case. | <i>Department of Justice</i> |
| | | 2.3.2.b | Undertake a research project that documents the experiences of Koori women within the justice system, particularly their experience of custody, and provides evidence to support the implementation of diversionary programs for Koori women. | <i>Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission</i> |
| | | 2.3.2.c | Future action: Based on the development of a viable Koori Women's diversion model, determine the most effective approach to implementation. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |
| 2.3.3 | Continue to strengthen community based alternatives to imprisonment | 2.3.3.a | Continue the Local Justice Worker Program supporting Koories on Community Corrections Orders through Corrections Victoria. The Koori Justice Unit will take the lead in Department of Justice to monitor and evaluate the Local Justice Worker Program's effectiveness and explore options for expansion. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit, Corrections Victoria, Infringement Management and Enforcement Services)</i> |
| | | 2.3.3.b | Future action: Explore the feasibility of alternatives to imprisonment that combine bail support, court advocacy and post-sentence intensive case management support for Koories who receive Community Orders. | <i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Service, Corrections Victoria)</i> |
| 2.3.4 | Continue to improve Koories' access to mainstream court diversion and support programs and decision-making courts | 2.3.4.a | Continue to develop and implement strategies to increase Koori offenders' participation in mainstream court diversion and support programs, including Courts Integrated Service Program. Possible options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing actions under the Koori Inclusion Action Plans [Activity 5.1.1] to increase the responsiveness of mainstream court diversion and support and decision making courts • ensuring cultural competency training of court personnel • providing support to the Courts Integrated Service Program Koori Liaison Officers, including regular video conferencing. | <i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> | |
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| 2.3.5 | Continue to enhance and expand the Koori Court network | 2.3.5.a | Progressively implement the Koori Courts Strategic Directions recommendations in line with priorities identified by the Aboriginal Justice Forum including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expanding the Koori Children's Court to existing Magistrates' Koori Court locations, including at La Trobe Valley, Warrnambool, Swan Hill and Bairnsdale considering the introduction of circuit courts, sitting days or lists in locations whose populations do not support a permanent Koori Court. | <i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services)</i> |
| | | 2.3.5.b | Continue the Morwell County Koori Court, and investigate adaptation of the model to new sites, including metropolitan Melbourne. | <i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services)</i> |
| | | 2.3.5.c | Future action: Explore options for expanding the depth and coverage of court-related services that have demonstrated responsiveness to the needs of Koories. | |
| | | 2.3.5.d | <i>The Victoria's Vulnerable Children - Our Shared Responsibility Directions Paper is committed to the development of a more child friendly legal system, including a funded position in the 2011-12 budget for a Koori convenor.</i> In line with the commitment in <i>Victoria's Vulnerable Children - Our Shared Responsibility Directions Paper</i> , continue to support and develop the Koori Family Support Program (in the Family Division of the mainstream Children's Court). This program will provide Koori families with information, advocacy, legal representation and case management. | <i>Department of Human Services & Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services)</i> |
| 2.3.6 | Investigate the impact of sentencing practices | 2.3.6.a | Complete the second stage of the Sentencing Advisory Council research project on sentencing outcomes for Koories. This will compare sentencing outcomes for Koori and non-Koories in the Magistrates' and higher courts, taking into account current and prior offending. Ensure the Project is guided by a Reference Group with significant Koori representation. | <i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services)</i> |
| | | 2.3.6.b | Seek Koori community membership on the Sentencing Advisory Council. | |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

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| 2.4 | Increase the rate at which Koories are diverted from further contact with the correctional system | | |
| 2.4.1 | Assist Koori offenders to meet the conditions of their Community Corrections Orders | <p>2.4.1.a Expand Community Corrections based delivery of culturally specific programs, consistent with the identified needs of Koori offenders. These enhancements are provided through the Sentencing Reform Implementation Project.</p> <p>2.4.1.b <i>Corrections Victoria is developing a cultural wraparound model to build its capacity to deliver offending behaviour programs to Koori offenders, including parolees, in Community Corrections settings. The model consists of a pathway between culturally-specific programs and mainstream therapeutic and skills-based programs, the recruitment of specialist staff to support the delivery of programs to Koories and the development of program guidelines to inform culturally-appropriate delivery.</i></p> <p>Implement Correction Victoria's cultural wrap around model to deliver offending behaviour programs to Koori offenders on community corrections orders through providing specialised cultural support.</p> <p>2.4.1.c Strengthen the capacity of the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program to support Koori offenders to meet the conditions of their Community Corrections Orders, through staff training and stronger linkages with Indigenous Leading Community Corrections Officers and community support services.</p> <p>2.4.1.d Continue to deliver the Koori Youth Justice Program.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Justice Health)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i></p> |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| 2.4.2 | Maintain and strengthen the diversion program for Koori men at the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place | <p>2.4.2.a <i>Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place is a culturally-appropriate 18-bed residential alternative for Koori men on Community Based Orders who would otherwise be at risk of imprisonment.</i></p> <p><i>Based in Gippsland, it became fully operational in May 2008.</i></p> <p><i>The facility aims to increase order completion rates, reduce re-offending risk and contribute to reducing Aboriginal over-representation in the Victorian criminal justice system. In 2012 Wulgunggo Ngalu received an injection of new funding under the Community Corrections Order Sentence Reforms and strategies for further strengthening the existing model are being explored.</i></p> <p>Expand Community Corrections based delivery of culturally specific programs at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, consistent with the identified needs of Koori offenders.</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i> |
| | | 2.4.2.b Explore options for strengthening Wulgunggo Ngalu's program effectiveness and maximising utilisation | |
| | | 2.4.2.c Continue to maintain Wulgunggo Ngalu's alignment with evidence-informed approaches to Aboriginal residential diversion. | |

OBJECTIVE 2: DIVERSION AND STRENGTHEN ALTERNATIVES TO IMPRISONMENT

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| 2.5 | Increase the rate at which Infringement Management and Enforcement Services diverts Koories from further contact with the criminal justice system | | |
| 2.5.1 | Continue to enhance the effectiveness of the Infringements Act and coordinate interagency fines systems | <p data-bbox="533 443 611 474">2.5.1a</p> <p data-bbox="650 443 1176 846"><i>Under AJA2, a partnership was developed with Koori communities, the Local Justice Workers, and the Sherriff's Office to prevent excessive contact with the Justice system due to unpaid fines. New police powers to issue on the spot fines for antisocial behaviour and alcohol misuse makes it even more important for Sheriffs to maintain and improve their responsiveness to Koori needs, to prevent fines leading to increased levels of financial hardship and escalated involvement in the justice system.</i></p> <p data-bbox="650 869 1152 996">Refresh the Infringement Management and Enforcement Services Koori Strategy with a focus on Sheriffs and Infringement Court activities, including:</p> <ul data-bbox="650 1019 1176 1541" style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing to increase program hours at key locations where possible • quantifying the contribution of the Loddon Mallee Sheriff Aboriginal Liaison Officer role • continuing to utilise Local Justice Workers to assist Koori offenders with managing fines and outstanding warrants • providing Infringements Court staff with Cultural Awareness Training • promoting the Infringements Court as a culturally safe place for Koori people to visit and work, including reviewing Infringement Court correspondence to ensure it is Koori-friendly. <p data-bbox="533 1563 611 1594">2.5.1b</p> <p data-bbox="650 1563 1176 1720">Future action: Consider options to expand services that have demonstrated positive diversionary outcomes for Koories in relation to Infringement Management and Enforcement Services.</p> | <p data-bbox="1199 443 1403 645"><i>Department of Justice (Infringement Management and Enforcement Services)</i></p> |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

Objective 3: Reduce re-offending

A majority of Koori prisoners and offenders have prior convictions. Therefore reducing re-offending is a particularly important priority for reducing Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system. The AJA3 expands the attention on prevention, early intervention and diversion along the justice continuum, making reducing re-offending a key priority.

Much of this objective concentrates on increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors for further offending by Koories already involved in the justice system. Important focus areas include mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, alcohol and drug use, education and employment, housing, and connection to family, community and culture. Particular attention will be given to the unique needs of Koori women offenders in these areas.

AJA3 ensures cultural-responsiveness is maintained in correctional programs and services through a strong Koori workforce within corrections and Koori community organisations and the provision of culturally-responsive service models developed in Community Corrections under the Sentence Reform Project. Greater opportunities to develop partnerships between government and Koori community organisations also continue to be explored.

The first six months after release from prison are an especially high-risk time for recidivism. Therefore this objective also responds to the vital issue of continuity of care and post-release support, to help drive down re-offending rates and reduce Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system.

Strategies

- 3.1 Ensure conditions support the rehabilitation of Koori offenders.
- 3.2-3.4 Address [3.2] cultural strength, [3.3] education, training and employment and [3.4] mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, as protective factors that will help reduce re-offending for Koori prisoners and offenders.
- 3.5 Address individual offence-specific characteristics that put Koori prisoners and offenders at high risk of re-offending.
- 3.6 Ensure that Koories in custody are able to reintegrate effectively into their communities upon release.

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| 3.1 Ensure conditions support the rehabilitation of Koori offenders | | | | |
|--|--|---------------|--|---|
| | Activity | | Details | Agency |
| | | | | <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 3.1.1 | Ensure the welfare of Koories in the justice system, particularly in prison | 3.1.1a | <p><i>The AJA2 evaluation found that prisons and Community Corrections are now significantly more responsive and inclusive of Koori needs. In prisons, the Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and the Indigenous Services Officers play a critical role in directly assisting Koori prisoner, as well as helping other prison staff to understand the needs of Koori prisoners.</i></p> <p>Strengthen the Aboriginal Wellbeing Officer and Indigenous Services Officer Programs, across the correctional system, including the links between these programs and transition and post release support services.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</p> <p>Victoria Police</p> |
| | | 3.1.1b | <p>Ensure current practice for the care and wellbeing of Koori detainees, prisoners and offenders complies with recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the 2005 Victorian Implementation Review of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission.</p> <p>Monitor and report to the Aboriginal Justice Forum on compliance of the care and wellbeing of Koori detainees, prisoners and offenders.</p> | |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| 3.1.2 | Address the health needs of Koori prisoners, including those with a disability | 3.1.2a Strengthen the capability of the prison health system to deliver culturally-safe and appropriate services, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring Justice Health development of health policy is informed by state-wide strategy, policy and action plans associated with Aboriginal health, including <i>Koolin Balit</i> and the <i>Victorian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention and Response Action Plan 2010–15</i> engaging Aboriginal health expertise on Justice Health's Clinical Advisory Committee, which provides guidance on policy development and planning supporting delivery of cultural awareness training to prison health staff, service managers and Justice Health staff monitoring implementation of standards of service delivery to Koori prisoners contained within the Justice Health Quality Framework exploring opportunities to improve data collection and aggregate reporting of Indigenous status in association with health services. | <i>Department of Justice (Justice Health)</i> |
| | | 3.1.2b Address the needs of Koori prisoners with a disability through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessing the adequacy of current programs and services to respond to Koori prisoners with a disability, specifically considering the complex needs of this subpopulation scoping of national practice in relation to the management of Aboriginal offenders with an disability, via the National Forensic Disability Working Group reporting to Corrections Services Administrators Conference exploring recommendations/actions arising from the Koori Prisoner Mental Health and Cognitive Function Survey for service delivery (links to Strategy 3.4 below) strengthening access of Koori staff within Corrections Victoria to disability training and disability staff to cultural competency training. | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Justice Health)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

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| 3.1.3 | Develop, implement and monitor culturally responsive frameworks to guide the rehabilitation of Koori offenders and prisoners | 3.1.3a | <p><i>Corrections Victoria is developing a cultural wraparound model to build its capacity to deliver offending behaviour programs to Koori offenders, including paroles, in Community Corrections settings [described in Objective 2, Activity 2.4.1].</i></p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Corrections cultural wraparound model (for offending behaviour programs) in addressing the complex needs of Koori offenders.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> |
| | | 3.1.3b | <p>Monitor Koori offender uptake, participation and completion of all offender rehabilitation programs, consistent with the Corrections Victoria Koori Inclusion Action Plan.</p> | |
| | | 3.1.3c | <p>Ensure the existing Offender Management Framework and the existing Intensive Case Management Model are inclusive, sensitive and responsive to the needs of Koori prisoners and offenders in consultation with the Koori Reference Group and Koori Caucus.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> |
| | | 3.1.3d | <p>Future action: Explore options for developing a Koori Offender Management Framework, which aims to reduce re-offending. The framework will map the strategic and operational objectives of managing Koori prisoners and offenders, including program pathways to reduce re-offending.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> |
| | | 3.1.3e | <p>Ensure assessment, case management, rehabilitation and reintegration services for young Aboriginal people detained in custody is provided in a manner that strengthens their connection to their family, community and culture.</p> | <p><i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i></p> |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| 3.1.4 | Develop and strengthen Corrections Victoria's and Justice Health's partnerships with Koori organisations in the provision of services to Koori prisoners and offenders | <p>3.1.4a Strengthen links between Corrections Victoria, Justice Health and Aboriginal community controlled organisations to enhance access to services for Koories in Community Corrections and prisons. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking a project (in partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation) that develops recommendations to improve continuity of health care for Koori prisoners released from prison • exploring options to increase engagement between prison health and community-based Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations at local and state levels, building on the joint project with Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation • developing partnerships between Corrections Victoria and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that will further strengthen the cultural wrap around model in community corrections settings. | <i>Department of Justice (Justice Health, Corrections Victoria)</i> |
| 3.2 | Address cultural strength as a protective factor that will help reduce re-offending for Koori prisoners and offenders | | |
| 3.2.1 | Expand cultural-strengthening programs and activities for Koori men and women in custody or on community orders | <p>3.2.1a Improve access to cultural-strengthening programs by Koori men and women in custody or on community orders.</p> <p>3.2.1b Maintain cultural celebrations such as NAIDOC Week and Koori art expos in prison and community corrections settings.</p> <p>3.2.1c Continue to consider other locally-developed cultural-strengthening programs designed for Indigenous offender populations (e.g. Dardi Munwurro, Koori Faces) for delivery within custodial and community-based settings as appropriate.</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

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| 3.3 | Address education, training and employment as protective factors that will help reduce re-offending risk for Koori prisoners and offenders | | |
| 3.3.1 | Increase Koori offender access to education, training and employment opportunities in prison and in the community | <p>3.3.1.a Implement the <i>Koori Education, Training and Employment Strategy 2011-13</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give Koori prisoners priority access to education and training to increase the number of Koori prisoners and offenders accessing education, training and employment initiatives • offer literacy and numeracy assessments to all Koori prisoners • deliver courses that are sensitive to the cultural needs and learning styles of Koori prisoners • develop and maintain connections with Koori Employment Broker/s. <p>3.3.1b Increase employment access and assistance for Koori prisoners, pre and post release.</p> <p>3.3.1c Ensure progress against the <i>Koori Education Training and Employment Strategy 2011-13</i> is monitored and informs the development of the next stage.</p> <p>3.3.1d Continue to strengthen opportunities for Koories on community orders to undertake community work at Koori-specific sites.</p> | <p>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</p> |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| 3.4 Address mental health and social and emotional wellbeing as protective factors that will help reduce re-offending risk for Koori prisoners and offenders | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 3.4.1 | Develop and implement a Koori Justice Mental Health Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy | 3.4.1a <i>A Koori Prisoner Mental Health and Cognitive Function Study is due for completion in 2013. It is expected that the findings of the study will guide improvements to services and inform future service planning and the provision of culturally-appropriate health care and support for Koori prisoners.</i> Develop a Koori Justice Mental Health Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is specific to the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing needs of Koori prisoners and offenders • responds to the findings and recommendations of the Koori Prisoner Mental Health and Cognitive Function Study • identifies modifications to existing programs and services that will be required to accommodate Koori prisoners and offenders with complex needs related cognitive disability and mental health concerns. | <i>Department of Justice (Justice Health, Corrections Victoria)</i> |
| 3.4.1b | | Implement the components of the above strategy that can be implemented within existing resources (e.g. reconfiguring existing services or practices), and scope those that require additional resources. | |
| 3.4.1c | | Future action: Pending the identification of additional resources, fully implement the Koori Justice Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy, with particular attention to services for Koories with complex needs related cognitive disability and/or mental health concerns, and ensuring long-term sustainability. | |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| 3.5 | Address individual offence-specific characteristics that put Koori prisoners and offenders at high risk of re-offending | | | |
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| 3.5.1 | Increase Koori participation in offender rehabilitation programs and services | 3.5.1a | Identify and respond to barriers to Koori offenders and prisoners accessing programs and services, including enhancing advocacy by Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers or Aboriginal Liaison Officers for Koori prisoners at Review and Assessment Committees. | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i> |
| 3.5.2 | Deliver and monitor culturally responsive alcohol and drug programs for Koori offenders in Community Correctional Services and prison | 3.5.2a | Develop a Corrections Drug Strategy to replace the Victorian Prisons Drug Strategy and Community Correctional Services Alcohol and Drug Strategy that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflects the whole-of-government Victorian Alcohol and Drug Strategy • takes into account the cultural, gender and disability-related needs of Koories. | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Justice Health)</i> |
| 3.5.3 | Ensure offending behaviour programs respond to the needs of Koori women offenders in Community Corrections and custody | 3.5.3a | Ensure that the cultural wraparound approach addresses the unique needs of Koori women who participate in mainstream offending behaviour programs. | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Justice Health)</i> |
| | | 3.5.3b | Ensure Koori women are able to access programs that meet their needs in custodial settings. | |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| 3.5.4 | Strengthen the case management approach of the Koori Youth Justice Program to ensure young Koori peoples' connection to family, community and culture | <p>3.5.4a Ensure that youth offending behaviour programs are holistic and include a cultural strengthening focus.</p> <p>3.5.4b Ensure young people are linked into services that will respond to their needs and strengthen their connection to family, community and culture through dissemination of appropriate information through the Koori Youth Justice Program.</p> <p>3.5.4c Review the numbers of young women coming to the attention of the Koori Youth Justice Program. Ensure the case management approach reflects the unique needs of young women.</p> <p>3.5.4d Explore the feasibility of including family decision making processes in the development of case plans that address young persons' needs, strengthens their connection to family, community and culture, and engages them with education, training or employment.</p> | <i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i> |
| 3.5.5 | Design family-based components into offending behaviour programs for Koories | <p>3.5.5.a Continue to support parenting programs for Koori prisoners and offenders who are parents (e.g. Koori Faces, Young Dads), to mitigate level of risk for their children.</p> <p>3.5.5.b Explore options for integrating family-based components into prison-based programs for Koori adults.</p> <p>3.5.5.c Future action: Explore options for integrating family-based components into community-based programs for Koori offenders, e.g. develop links with the Koori family therapists trained at the Bouverie Centre.</p> <p>3.5.5.d Future action: Explore options for incorporating restorative justice processes into prison-based and community-based offending behaviour programs for Koories convicted of family or community violence [links to Activity 4.1.4].</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Justice Health)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

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| 3.6 | Ensure that Koories in custody are able to effectively reintegrate effectively into their communities upon release | | |
| 3.6.1 | Assist Koori youth in detention to reintegrate into their communities | 3.6.1a | <p>Ensure that the case management approach of the Koori Youth Justice Program in Pre- and Post-Release Transitional Support for young Koori people meets their needs and is effective at supporting reintegration.</p> <p><i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i></p> |
| 3.6.2 | Increase support to Koories on parole | 3.6.2.a | <p><i>The AJA2 evaluation found that the proportion of Koori prisoners released on parole has remained at around 33 per cent. Presentations to the Aboriginal Justice Forum indicated positive outcomes for Koories on parole but that lower numbers of Koories were electing to take up this option.</i></p> <p>Promote the benefits of parole to Koories prior to release from prison.</p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria, Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Human Services (Youth Justice)</i></p> |
| | | 3.6.2.b | Expand membership of the Adult Parole Board and Youth Parole Board to ensure it includes both male and female Koori representatives. |
| | | 3.6.2.c | Continue to deliver services that support young Koories on parole including the Koori Intensive Pre and Post Release Support Program. |
| | | 3.6.2.d | Future action: Consider the feasibility of family mentoring approaches and other community support to assist Koori adult parolees with community re-integration. |
| | | 3.6.2.e | Future action: Explore ways to further strengthen support available to Koories on parole, including from Indigenous Leading Community Corrections Officers and culturally competent Community Corrections Officers. |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| 3.6.3 | Address transition support gaps and expand the range of options available to assist Koori adults to reintegrate into their communities | 3.6.3.a Strengthen links between Corrections programs and services such as health, mental health and alcohol and drug programs, consistent with the commitment of the Departments of Health and Justice to work together under <i>Koolin Balit</i> . | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Corrections Victoria, Justice Health) |
| 3.6.3.b Strengthen access to and utilisation of Intensive Transitional Support Programs, including Koori KONNECT, WISP and LINK OUT for male and female Koori prisoners and actively promote these programs to Koori internal and external stakeholders. | | | |
| 3.6.3.c Strengthen partnerships between Corrections Victoria's providers of WISP, KONNECT and LINK OUT and Koori community organisations, to deliver community-based support services to Koories upon release from prison. | | | |
| 3.6.3.d Strengthen the cultural-responsiveness and competence of existing mainstream re-integration services to meet the needs of Koori prisoners. | | | |
| 3.6.3.e Investigate evidence-based holistic models of post-release support such as the Circles of Support model (volunteer-based approach where government partners with faith-based organisations), and consider options for adaptation to the Koori context if viable. | | | |
| 3.6.4 | Expand the range of post-release housing and employment options available to Koori men and women leaving prison | 3.6.4a The AJA2 evaluation identified the two largest risks to successful reintegration as the transition into stable employment, and housing. Establish an Indigenous Homelessness Working Group. This group will include Department of Justice representation and will be responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying evidence-based housing and support models that assist Koori men and women exiting prison to make a successful transition to long term housing and reduce recidivism reviewing current models and identify areas of improvement that can be made within existing resources. | <i>Department of Planning and Community Development</i> (Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria) Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit, Corrections Victoria) Department of Human Services Aboriginal Housing Victoria Department of Business and Innovation |

OBJECTIVE 3: REDUCE RE-OFFENDING

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| | | 3.6.4b | As a focus for the above, and in conjunction with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, explore options to further develop transitional training and employment services starting in custody, which continue as work placements, traineeships or entry-level jobs. Match the training and job placements to individuals' interests and capacities. | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</p> |
| | | 3.6.4c | Increase Koori prisoners' access to and utilisation of the Judy Lazarus Transitional Centre. | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services</p> |
| | | 3.6.4d | Consider ways to improve access to post-release housing for Koori women, including opportunities for increasing planned exits and brokerage funding to explore long-term social housing, private rental and supported housing options. | <p><i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i></p> <p>Department of Human Services</p> |
| | | 3.6.4e | Future action: Increase availability of post release housing for Koori women. | Aboriginal Housing Victoria |
| 3.6.5 | Assist Koories to recover and maintain family links while in prison | 3.6.5a | <p><i>The Royal Commission established that Koories affected by Stolen Generations were dramatically over-represented in prison populations, and this pattern has continued in subsequent generations. Stolen Generation Services therefore provide an important resource for many Koori prisoners, enabling them to strengthen their cultural identity and connections to family, community and country.</i></p> <p>Explore protocols that formally link Koori prisoners and offenders with Stolen Generation Services including the Family History Service at the Koorie Heritage Trust, Link Up and Connecting Home [links to Activity 3.4.1, Koori Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing].</p> | <p><i>Department of Planning and Community Development (Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria)</i></p> <p>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</p> |
| | | 3.6.5b | Strengthen access to the Aboriginal Family Visits Programs enhancing the connection of Koori offenders with their families and communities. | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria)</i> |
| | | 3.6.5c | Future action: Explore options for the development/delivery of a Koori specific family module to be delivered to family, to complement Koori prisoners' engagement in mainstream offending behaviour programs [links to 3.5.5.b]. | |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

Objective 4: Reduce conflict, violence and victimisation

In its first decade, work under the AJA to reduce the disproportionately high rate of victimisation in the Koori population has drawn attention to the high rates of underlying conflict and violence in Koori communities. Violence is implicated in multiple areas of concern related to Koori contact with the justice system, including child abuse and neglect, youth disengagement, homelessness, imprisonment and victimisation. Alcohol and drug misuse has been identified as a major driver of conflict. Violence and victimisation is therefore a critical concern.

Consequently, the AJA has expanded its focus on reducing victimisation to also include direct responses to conflict and violence in Koori families and communities. Complementing work already occurring under the *Victorian Indigenous Family Violence 10-year Plan*, this enables a comprehensive, prevention-oriented and intergenerational approach to reducing victimisation in the Victorian Koori community.

Increasing the capacity of the Koori community is an important part of AJA3. This objective promotes and supports community-led initiatives in areas including lateral violence prevention, mediation, and healing models that address underlying causes. Given the role of substance misuse as a driver of violence, it also highlights the need for integrated responses that connect into the alcohol and drug service sector.

An important new activity to contribute to these efforts is the Koori Community Safety Grants Program. Funded in 2012 under the Community Crime Prevention Program, these grants support projects that prevent violence in Koori communities, especially in relation to its effect on women and children.

A logical and expected outcome of the expanded focus in AJA3 is an improvement in Koori community safety as well as contributing to reducing Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system.

Strategies

- 4.1 Develop the knowledge base on violence in Koori communities.
- 4.2 Prevent violence and increase the safety of Koori families and communities.
- 4.3 Address alcohol and drug abuse as a driver of violence.
- 4.4 Promote healing models for Koories that address underlying causes of violence and victimisation.
- 4.5 Reduce the impact of crime on victims.

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

| 4.1 Develop the knowledge base on violence in Victorian Koori communities | | | | |
|--|--|--------|---|---|
| | Activity | | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 4.1.1 | Undertake research on the prevalence, frequency, nature and extent of violence in Koori communities | 4.1.1a | <p><i>There are significant knowledge gaps about the prevalence, frequency, nature and extent of violence in Koori communities. Prevention and intervention responses need a strong localised evidence-base to maximise their effectiveness and succeed in improving community safety.</i></p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of a significant research project to identify and describe the types and patterns of violence in Koori communities. Consider possible consortium arrangements between the Koori Justice Unit, academic institutions and Koori community partners. Ensure the project includes a strengths-based focus, an explanatory model, and a pilot demonstration project so the research provides a direct-service benefit to the community.</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |
| 4.2 Prevent violence and increase the safety of Koori families and communities | | | | |
| 4.2.1 | Develop local community-led violence prevention initiatives | 4.2.1a | <p><i>The Koori Community Safety Grants Program provides opportunities for Koori community groups and organisations to work in partnership with government to design, deliver and evaluate initiatives that will help prevent violence in Koori communities, particularly against women and children.</i></p> <p><i>The grants will complement ongoing work in the Koori family violence area, by including consideration of all forms of violence and emphasising prevention. The three-year time frame, concentration of resources and emphasis on evaluation will allow the selected initiatives to function as demonstration projects.</i></p> <p>Implement the Koori Community Safety Grants projects, by supporting four three-year community-based projects that prevent violence in Koori communities, in particular violence against women and children.</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| | (continued) Develop local community-led violence prevention initiatives | 4.2.1b Explore opportunities for coordination or collaboration between the Koori Community Safety Grants projects and Indigenous Family Violence initiatives and networks. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit, Community Crime Prevention Unit) |
| | | 4.2.1c Future action: Based on the outcomes of the Koori Community Safety Grants projects, consider options to expand depth and coverage to additional high-needs locations. | Department of Planning and Community Development (Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria) Department of Human Services |
| 4.2.2 | Assist Koories to prevent and respond to lateral violence | 4.2.2a <i>Lateral violence, also known as horizontal or intra-racial violence, can take many forms, including bullying, shaming, excluding, family feuding, misusing social medial (cyber-bullying) and organisational conflict. It often occurs when a number of people work together to attack or undermine another individual or group, and can involve physical, social, emotional, economic or spiritual forms of abuse.</i> <i>The Social Justice Report 2011 notes that the unique feature for Koori communities is that lateral violence stems from the sense of powerlessness that comes from oppression.</i> Assist Koori community organisations to prevent and address lateral violence by providing capacity-building workshops on conflict resolution and dispute prevention for the Koori community, upon request. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria) |
| | | 4.2.2b Continue to explore ways to assist the Koori community in its efforts to address lateral violence. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit) |
| | | 4.2.2c Future action: Explore options to expand the depth and coverage of lateral violence initiatives that have demonstrated positive outcomes on issues of community concern, such as cyber-bullying and other forms of violence occurring through social media. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit, Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria) |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

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| 4.2.3 | Reduce dispute-related conflict in Koori communities | <p>4.2.3a A Koori Mediation Program Model has been piloted under the AJA in the Loddon Mallee region (identified from data as an especially high-needs region). These services have the potential to reduce conflict and lateral violence in the Koori community.</p> <p>Investigate a roll-out of the Koori Mediation Program to ensure Koori clients have access to a Koori mediation service, including trained Koori mediators when requested.</p> <p>4.2.3b Increase community capacity to reduce disputes and conflicts by providing flexible conflict resolution training for Elders and Respected Persons, promoted through the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (links with 4.2.2.a above).</p> <p>4.2.3c Future action: Explore options for supporting Koori mediation models more widely across Victoria, ensuring connection with other lateral violence responses.</p> | <i>Department of Justice (Dispute Settlement Centre Victoria)</i> |
| 4.2.4 | Investigate Restorative Justice responses to conflict, violence and victimisation in Koori families and communities | 4.2.4a Undertake research to determine appropriateness and level of resources required for restorative justice models to reduce conflict, violence and victimisation in Koori communities. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

| 4.3 Address alcohol and drug abuse as a driver of violence | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 4.3.1 | Reduce the contribution of alcohol to family and community violence | <p>4.3.1a <i>Research has demonstrated that the great majority of Aboriginal perpetrators and victims of violent crime are alcohol-affected at the time of the violent incident. High-risk alcohol consumption is more strongly associated with the risk of violent victimisation in Aboriginal communities than any other single factor.</i></p> <p>Support the development of strategies identified by the whole-of-government Victorian Alcohol and Drug Strategy and <i>Koolin Balit: Aboriginal Health Plan</i> to reduce the contribution of alcohol to family and community violence. Include attention to families and communities that are doing well.</p> | <p><i>Department of Health</i></p> <p>Department of Justice</p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</p> |
| 4.3.2 | Support linkages and joint training initiatives between Koori alcohol and drug services and violence and victim support services | <p>4.3.2a <i>Strengthening linkages between agencies and service providers, and improving coordination between specific initiatives is a priority for AJA3, including at the interface between alcohol and drug services for Koories and services addressing violence and victim support.</i></p> <p>As identified in the Koori Alcohol Action Plan, promote joint training initiatives between family violence workers and alcohol and other drug workers and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include justice workers who provide services to victims and perpetrators of all forms of violence • ensure training includes attention to the role of alcohol and drug abuse in family and community violence, including a focus on prescription drug abuse, ice and advice to families on how to respond to family members experiencing these issues. | <p><i>Department of Health</i></p> <p>Department of Justice</p> <p>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development</p> |
| | | <p>4.3.2b Future action: Support alcohol and drug workers and Indigenous family violence workers to integrate healing approaches into their work [Strategy 4.4], to effectively address underlying drivers of alcohol and drug abuse, including trans-generational trauma.</p> | <p><i>Department of Human Services</i></p> <p><i>Department of Health</i></p> <p>Department of Justice (Victims Support Agency)</p> |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

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| 4.4 | Promote healing models for Koories that address underlying causes of violence and victimisation | | |
| 4.4.1 | Increase access to promising healing approaches for Koories affected by violence | 4.4.1.a Research and community feedback consistently highlights the need to develop, support and evaluate local, community-driven initiatives that promote healing. Emerging local approaches include gender-specific healing circles for Koories that combine West and Koori-specific health perspectives. These approaches typically explore the intergenerational experiences of Koories affected by violence, and strengthen protective factors and coping strategies. Recognise the importance of incorporating healing approaches into existing services addressing violence, victim support and/or alcohol and drug misuse by Koories who come into contact with the justice system. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit, Victims Support Agency, Corrections Victoria)</i> <i>Department of Health</i> |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

| 4.5 Reduce the impact of crime on victims | | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> | |
| 4.5.1 | Increase Koori community involvement and ownership in the development and delivery of services to Koori victims of crime | 4.5.1a | <p><i>The AJA2 evaluation has indicated that while services for Koori victims of crime in Victoria have improved, recorded victimisation levels have increased. The evaluation infers that this is due to the higher levels of violent crimes and crimes against family members for Koories, and an increased willingness to report. It is important therefore to continue strengthening services to Koori victims of crime in ways that gain the Koori community's confidence, and equip services to respond to victims with significant trauma.</i></p> <p>Increase Koori community involvement in the ongoing development and implementation of culturally-competent victims support services for Koories, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting the Koori Victims Support Strategy, the Victims Support Agency <i>Aboriginal Victims of Crime Strategy 2012-15</i> and the Aboriginal Victims of Crime Team • supporting the <i>Standards for the Provision of Services to Victims of Crime 2011</i> that promote cultural competence and employment of Aboriginal victim support workers • promoting appropriate victim services more strongly to the Koori community, especially in high-crime, low-uptake areas • linking responses to Elder Abuse Prevention Initiatives including the Department of Health <i>Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Guidelines for Action 2012-14</i>. | <i>Department of Justice (Victims Support Agency)</i> |
| | | 4.5.1b | Future action: Consider options to further strengthen the Koori victim services workforce to further improve service responsiveness and increase service uptake. | |
| | | 4.5.1c | Continue to run the Koori list at the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal. | |
| | | 4.5.1d | Continue to explore options to ensure young Koories who have witnessed or are victims of violence are referred to appropriate support services [links to Objective 2], and report back to the Aboriginal Justice Forum. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit, Victims Support Agency)</i> <i>Victoria Police</i> |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

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|-------|--|--------|--|--|
| | | 4.5.1e | Investigate strategies to improve the outcomes of Apprehended Violence Orders for victims. | Victoria Police |
| | | 4.5.1f | Future action: Explore options for implementing strategies identified in 4.5.1.e above. | |
| 4.5.2 | Continue implementing the Justice components of the Indigenous Family Violence 10-Year Plan | 4.5.2a | <p><i>The great majority of violent incidents in the Koori community are perpetrated by persons related to or well known to their victims. The Strong Cultures Strong Peoples Strong Families Indigenous Family Violence 10-Year-Plan is the Victorian Government's primary mechanism for addressing family violence in the Koori community. It includes a number of justice components initiated under the AJA2 that need continued support and strengthening. Reporting progress against this strategy occurs under the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and the biannual Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum.</i></p> <p>Support the evaluation of the Koori Family Violence Police Protocols Project and continue to improve Indigenous family violence responses and service delivery at the local level. Ensure Victoria Police's Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers support the provision of the Protocols.</p> | <p>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</p> <p>Victoria Police</p> |
| | | 4.5.2b | Respond to the evaluation findings of the Koori Family Violence Court Support Program located at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court, which provides a culturally-appropriate response to Koori applicants and respondents and their children and families. | Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services) |
| | | 4.5.2c | Future action: Explore community based program options for young Koori males and females who display violent and aggressive behaviour and are at risk of becoming future adult perpetrators of violence. | Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services) |

OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| | (continued) Continue implementing the Justice components of the Indigenous Family Violence 10-Year Plan | 4.5.2d <i>The AJA2 evaluation recommended a continued focus on improving justice outcomes, while collaborating across government. The need for better coordination between government departments at a central and a local level was identified.</i> Formalise links between the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee/Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee Network and the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups in relation to the delivery of family violence prevention initiatives. Ensure annual joint Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group/Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee meetings to improve protocols. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> & <i>Department of Planning and Community Development (Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria)</i> <i>Department of Human Services</i> |
| 4.5.3 | Ensure that victims know when perpetrators are being released from prison | 4.5.3a Implement initiatives to increase and maintain Koori community awareness of the Victims Register, including engaging higher courts to educate court staff and facilitate referrals. | <i>Department of Justice (Victims Support Agency)</i> |
| 4.5.4 | Ensure that family violence programs are responsive to Koories' needs | 4.5.4a Ensure the Family Violence Courts are responsive to Koori community needs, and monitor Koori access to them. 4.5.4b Maintain and strengthen the delivery of culturally-appropriate Mandated Men's Programs for Koori men who perpetrate violence towards family members. This will be achieved by ensuring sufficient coverage across the state and linking with potential referral sources including Men's Time Out Centres, Koori Community Alcohol and Drug Resource Centres, and Corrections Victoria's services to Koori men on Community Orders who have been convicted of family-related violence. 4.5.4c Ensure that family violence and victim support services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate strategies to mitigate alcohol and drug misuse in families affected by alcohol-fuelled violence [links to 4.3] • draw on the strengths of families who are doing well • are culturally-appropriate and safe, especially for those delivering front line services • engage specialist service providers to facilitate joint training between the family violence and victim services sectors. | <i>Department of Justice (Courts and Tribunal Services, Victims Support Agency)</i> <i>Department of Human Services</i> <i>Department of Planning and Community Development</i> <i>Department of Health</i> |

Objective 5: Responsive and inclusive services

Responsive and inclusive services are fundamental to the aims of reducing Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system and providing an equitable justice system that is free of racism and discrimination.

Considerable progress in the Victorian justice system has been made in this area over the past decade. One indicator of this is the number of Koories working within the Department of Justice, which has increased from four in mid-2000 to 119 in mid-2012.

The AJA will maintain this forward momentum in a number of ways, some examples of which include ensuring cultural awareness and competency training across the justice sector, supporting Koori tertiary scholarships in relevant fields and implementing the *Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15*.

An important new strategy promoting responsive and inclusive services is *Mingu Gadhaba: Beginning Together*, the Department of Justice's Koori Inclusion Action Plan, which reviews and reforms current service practices to overcome systemic exclusion. Under this strategy, each departmental business unit develops its own Koori Inclusion Action Plan, including measurable targets to facilitate regular monitoring and review.

This objective of the AJA both promotes continuous improvement and supports the activities of the other objectives. AJA3 maintains a focus on high-quality data, research and evaluation relating to Koori contact with the criminal justice system and ensures that Koori Reference Groups, convened by each departmental business unit, develop action plans to monitor progress on AJA3 commitments, and regularly update the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

Strategies

- 5.1 Integrate AJA3 implementation into agency planning processes and operations.
- 5.2 Increase the number of Koories working in the justice system.
- 5.3 Ensure that justice agencies are culturally competent, responsive and inclusive.
- 5.4 Ensure that Koories have access to Koori-specific services.
- 5.5 Increase capacity to ensure high quality data, research and evaluation on Koori contact with the criminal justice system.
- 5.6 Increase the accountability of agencies that deliver justice services to Koories.

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

| 5.1 Integrate AJA3 implementation into agency planning processes and operations | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
| 5.1.1 | Develop and implement AJA Action Plans | 5.1.1a All departmental business units and related statutory authorities with responsibility for AJA initiatives will drive its implementation by developing, implementing and monitoring Action Plans (in partnership with Koori Reference Groups, see 5.1.2 below). All AJA Action Plans will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximise opportunities for Koori employment and career development • articulate the strategies to be used by business units and agencies to reduce Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system, and how and when they will be implemented • be informed through input from the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee/ Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee network and the Aboriginal Justice Forum • be reviewed annually and evaluated triennially in partnership with the Aboriginal Justice Forum • Include measurable targets to facilitate regular monitoring and review. The Department of Justice Koori Justice Unit will play a coordinating role as Secretariat to the Aboriginal Justice Forum. | <i>All agencies & Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |
| 5.1.2 | Strengthen the role and profile of Koori Reference Groups | 5.1.2a All departmental business units and related statutory authorities with responsibility for AJA initiatives will refresh their Koori Reference Groups as needed, so they provide regular updates to the Aboriginal Justice Forum on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the delivery of initiatives under their Action Plans • progress towards making service areas more culturally-inclusive of Koories (see also Koori Inclusion Action Plans under 5.3). | |

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

| 5.2 | Increase the number of Koories working in the justice system | | | |
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| 5.2.1 | Implement the Department of Justice Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15 | 5.2.1a | Implement the Department of Justice <i>Koori Employment Strategy 2011-15</i> to complement the <i>Victorian Aboriginal Public Sector Employment and Career Development Action Plan 2010-2015 - Karreeta Yirramboi</i> . | <i>Department of Justice (People and Culture)</i> |
| 5.2.2 | Increase the number of Koories studying in criminal justice-related fields | 5.2.2b | Continue to provide tertiary scholarships to Koories undertaking study in a broad range of justice-related fields, examples of which include law, legal studies, social work, psychology and mental health studies. | <i>Department of Justice (People and Culture)</i> |
| 5.2.3 | Increase the number of Koories working in law | 5.2.3a | Support the Indigenous Law Students and Lawyers Association of Victoria - 'Tarwirri' – which provides a range of services to assist Indigenous law students to graduate and continue working in law. | <i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

| 5.3 Ensure that justice agencies are culturally-competent, responsive and inclusive | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | Activity | Details | Agency <small>*Lead agency in italics</small> |
| 5.3.1 | Implement Koori Inclusion Action Plans | 5.3.1a Under <i>Mingu Gadhaba: Beginning Together</i> , ensure that all relevant justice agencies and statutory authorities deliver Koori Inclusion Action Plans, and provide regular updates to the Aboriginal Justice Forum. Plans need to champion Koori inclusion across the Justice portfolio, to contribute to a culturally-inclusive and responsive justice service system. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit). |
| 5.3.2 | Increase the understanding that non-Koories have of Koori culture | 5.3.2a Enhance the Department of Justice Koori Cultural Awareness Training program and deliver it to the Justice Executive Committee, supervisors of Koori staff, and staff working in agencies with high numbers of Koori clients including Courts, Corrections Victoria and Infringement Management Enforcement Services. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (People and Culture, Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit) |
| | | 5.3.2b Continue to deliver Koori Cultural Awareness Training in the regions, tailored to local issues and needs and including local communities. | |
| | | 5.3.2c Future action: Consistent with the evidence base, explore options for expanding Koori Cultural Awareness Training to provide more extensive training and to assess participants' application of new learning into their work practices. | |
| 5.3.3 | Develop responses to racism and discrimination across the justice system | 5.3.3a Develop strategies to reduce the potential for racist and discriminatory behaviour in the justice system in the areas of service provision and employment. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (People and Culture) |
| | | 5.3.3b Ensure procedures and grievance systems for remedying racist and discriminatory behaviour are effective and credible. | |

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

| 5.4 | Ensure that Koories have access to Koori-specific services | | |
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| 5.4.1 | Deliver programs that protect the rights of Koories with cognitive disabilities | 5.4.1a <i>The Independent Third Person's Program assists persons of any age, who have a cognitive disability (intellectual disability, acquired brain injury or dementia), or a mental illness, during an interview or when making a formal statement. The assisted person may be an alleged offender, a victim or a witness.</i> Continue to implement the Independent Third Person program's Koori Strategy, to help ensure Koori people are included in the ongoing development of the program, are recruited as Independent Third Persons and as users of the service have greater access to it. | Office of the Public Advocate |
| 5.4.2 | Deliver programs that seek to reduce discrimination experienced by the Victorian Koori community. | 5.4.2a <i>The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission will exercise its powers under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 and Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address discrimination, sexual harassment and vilification that is experienced by the Victorian Koori community • investigate systemic discrimination, sexual harassment and vilification affecting the Victorian Koori community • inform the Koori community of their rights under the legislation • support the Koori community through key partnerships with community organisations, such as the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service • conduct research on key issues. Regular reports will be provided to the Aboriginal Justice Forum on program activities and the number and nature of complaints received from Koories. | Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission |

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

| | Activity | | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| 5.4.3 | Increase Koories' representation on justice-related boards, committees and tribunals | 5.4.3a | <p>Continue to maximise Koori participation on Department of Justice and Department of Human Services advisory boards, tribunals, panels and committees.</p> <p>In particular, the government will promote the appointment of Koori men and women to such positions as Bail Justices and to such organisations as the Youth Residential Boards and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and will promote a gender balance for Koori representation on the Youth Parole Board and the Adult Parole Board.</p> | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit) |
| 5.5 | Increase capacity to ensure high quality data, research and evaluation on Koori contact with the criminal justice system | | | |
| 5.5.1 | Develop a detailed database describing Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system | 5.5.1a | <p>Continue to develop and maintain a criminal justice system database, drawing on data collected by partner agencies including Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria, Department of Human Services and the Courts. Include data collected through AJA Action Plans [links to Activity 5.1.1] and Koori Inclusion Action Plans [links to Activity 5.3.1]. When fully developed, the database will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inform place, regional and state-based decision making • identify points of the criminal justice system at which Koories are over-represented • provide a valuable resource for research into factors that contribute to Koori over-representation [links to Activity 5.5.3 below] • enable outcome evaluations of place-based initiatives • enable relevant community and justice agencies to access available data. | <p><i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit, Corrections Victoria, Courts and Tribunal Services)</p> <p>Department of Human Services</p> <p>Victoria Police</p> |
| 5.5.2 | Build the capacity of community organisations to design, monitor and evaluate their programs | 5.5.2a | Build the capacity of community organisations in program design, monitoring and evaluation, data collection and data improvement projects across the AJA and the justice system, for example through the provision of advice, technical assistance, training workshops or mentoring arrangements. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit) |
| | | 5.5.2b | Embed principles of participatory monitoring and evaluation throughout AJA3 initiatives. | |

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

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| 5.5.3 | Effectively use existing data and evidence, and undertake data improvement projects across AJA3 | 5.5.3a | Continue to build the evidence base about specific drivers for over-representation of Koories in the justice system, including through partnerships between government agencies, academic institutions and Koori community organisations, for example to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate issues identified in the AJA2 evaluation as needing further exploration understand the different geographical needs to better target programs. | |
| | | 5.5.3b | Develop a data improvement strategy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> address critical gaps in data collection identified in the AJA2 evaluation better understand current barriers to more complete identification of Koori contact with the justice system (from the perspectives of both Koori community and government), including police statistics work collaboratively across government partners to better use existing data, and identify areas for improvement and intervention identify opportunities to coordinate between data collection systems to better track Koories at each point within the justice system. | |
| 5.6 | Increase the accountability of agencies that deliver justice services to Koories | | | |
| 5.6.1 | Ensure that appropriate grievance procedures are available to Koories in justice agencies | 5.6.1a | Grievance bodies within the justice system, including those in Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria, Infringement Management and Enforcement Services, and Courts, will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> record the Indigenous status of complainants in their formal complaint and registration processes develop and deliver Koori specific communication strategies to assist Koori communities to better understand how to utilise their services report to the Aboriginal Justice Forum regularly on the number and nature of Koori complaints received. | <i>All Department of Justice agencies</i> |

OBJECTIVE 5: RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE SERVICES

| | Activity | | Details | Agency |
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| | (continued) Ensure that appropriate grievance procedures are available to Koories in justice agencies | 5.6.1b | Promote Ethical Standard Department complaints process to increase confidence and reduce barriers to the Koori community using the complaints process. Promote the Ethical Behaviour and Conduct Inspector position within the Ethical Standard Department, which is responsible for providing information regarding emerging trends in complaint types and behaviour and responding to queries regarding the handling of complaints made by the Koori Community against police. Ensure that the appointed Ethical Behaviour and Conduct Inspector within the Ethical Standard Department is appropriately trained in cultural awareness. | <i>Victoria Police</i> |
| 5.6.2 | Ensure the transparency of Koories' conditions in detention | 5.6.2a | Continue to appoint Aboriginal Official Visitors into the adult prison system. | <i>Department of Justice (The Office of Correctional Services Review)</i> |
| | | 5.6.2b | Identify and utilise opportunities for Aboriginal visitors to participate in the Independent Visitors Program for youth justice custodial centres. | <i>Commission for Children and Young People</i> |
| 5.6.3 | Ensure that Koories are supported when detained in police cells | 5.6.3a | Strengthen the Aboriginal Community Justice Panel Program to provide a wider and more effective practical advocacy service to Koories detained by the police. | <i>Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service & Victoria Police</i> |
| 5.6.4 | Improve the communication of information to relevant parties in the event of a Koori death in custody, including relatives of the deceased person and the Aboriginal Funeral Service | 5.6.4a | Improve the processes by which relatives are notified in the event of a Koori death in custody in accordance with privacy, legal, policy and practical implications of any policies. | <i>Department of Justice (Corrections Victoria) & Department of Human Services (Youth Justice) & Victoria Police</i> |
| | | 5.6.4b | Develop a protocol between the State Coroner's Office (Initial Investigations Office) and the Aboriginal Funeral Service, to authorise the release of information regarding the deceased and assist the families of the deceased who have engaged their services. | <i>Coroner's Court of Victoria & Department of Justice</i> |

 OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

Objective 6: Strengthen community justice responses and increase community safety

Over the past decade, a strong and active Koori community justice sector has partnered with the Victorian government through the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees. Created under the AJA, these structures are the primary mechanism for regularly bringing the Koori community and government together and underpin the work of the Aboriginal Justice Forum. The regional and local level partnerships have helped ensure effective local responses to Koori contact across the justice continuum.

Objective 6 further strengthens these processes by capitalising on the regionalisation of justice services, building on the existing place-based approach including the Lake Tyers and Mildura projects, and responding to data that will enable resources to be concentrated in areas of highest need. It also strengthens local community organisations and links them to local government resources and supports.

AJA2 evaluation data indicates Koori over-representation in the prison system has continued to increase in the North and West Metropolitan regions, whereas it has reversed in several other regions of Victoria, largely as a consequence of effective place-based initiatives. Therefore, AJA3 will include the development of a place-based strategy in the North and West metropolitan regions of Melbourne, driven through local community justice structures. Community safety is another priority, and will be promoted through community-led place-based Community Safety Plans and links to crime prevention committees.

By strengthening Koori community involvement in driving solutions at the local level, the fundamental aim of the AJA can be achieved.

Strategies

- 6.1 Support the provision of local, place-based approaches and solutions to crime and violence prevention, diversion, rehabilitation and re-integration.
- 6.2 Prioritise community safety planning as a place-based crime prevention approach.
- 6.3 Develop a place-based strategy covering the North and West Metropolitan regions.

OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

| 6.1 Support the provision of local, place-based approaches and solutions to crime and violence prevention, diversion, rehabilitation and re-integration | | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> | |
| 6.1.1 | Ensure that Koori communities and government agencies have the capacity to deliver local solutions | 6.1.1a | Develop linkages between Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees/Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees and other local level committees such as the Local Indigenous Networks to enhance capacity to develop integrated solutions and responses. Continue to support collaboration, coordination, engagement and problem solving between local communities and government stakeholders in place-based projects in Lake Tyers and Mildura. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Koori Justice Unit, Regional and Executive Services Division) |
| | | 6.1.1b | Support partnerships between justice services, local alcohol and drug services, and community health, local government and local Koori community organisations, to address alcohol and drug use, misuse and treatment. Ensure coordinated and appropriate responses and strategies are developed in consultation with Koori communities. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Regional and Executive Services) & <i>Department of Health</i> |
| | | 6.1.1c | Explore opportunities to coordinate cross-agency training in areas of locally-identified need, e.g. lateral violence, police or alcohol diversion options, men's/women's groups for community-based offenders, transition support options for parolees (link to objectives 3 and 4). | |
| | | 6.1.1d | Support and strengthen strategies to effectively reach rural and outlying areas, e.g. mobile services, building on existing services. | <i>Department of Justice</i> (Regional and Executive Services Division) |
| | | 6.1.1e | Explore social media as a strategy for raising community awareness and encouraging local involvement. | |

 OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

6.1.2 Strengthen the role of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees and Regional Office support for them

6.1.2a *The AJA2 evaluation identified the need to maintain active committees that strongly engage the community and provide opportunities for collaborative problem solving. The community has identified a number of activities to strengthen Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees to help achieve this.*

Department of Justice (Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit)

Strengthen meeting processes including timelines, reporting expectations, and consistency of senior stakeholder representation.

6.1.2b Six weeks before each Aboriginal Justice Forum, convene a meeting of the Koori Caucus and a meeting of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Chairs without government partners, to strengthen the community voice.

6.1.2c Explore ways to more actively involve local community, e.g. attach Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee meetings to a community event; convene 'community days' or 'relationship-building days', link with existing Koori men's groups, women's groups and youth groups.

OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

| | Activity | Details | Agency <i>*Lead agency in italics</i> |
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| | | <p>6.1.2d Strengthen Department of Justice Regional Offices' support for Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Executive Officers and Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee processes and help maximise use of Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees when managing regional priorities that affect Koories including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular engagement by Regional Directors in Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee processes • strengthening partnerships and joint activities with other government departments • facilitating links between Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and regional Department of Justice programs and services in targeted areas of local need (e.g. Koori-specific community work sites, alcohol and drug services) • ensuring alignment between Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee Plans and Regional Plans • ensuring support of Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee is a regional staff performance indicator. | |
| 6.1.3 | Ensure Koori communities continue to engage with the police to further increase their positive impact on local policing practices | <p>6.1.3a Continue to ensure police maintain strong engagement with Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees and Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees.</p> <p>6.1.3b Ensure police are strongly engaged in the development of Koori Community Safety Plans (links to 6.2 below), including investigating ways to enhance the contribution of community policing to local Koori Community Safety Plans.</p> <p>6.1.3c Utilise Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee and Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee mechanisms to negotiate and promote policing strategies and protocols with regard to alcohol, while ensuring the safety of the Koori community is maintained (links to 1.2.2).</p> | <i>Victoria Police</i> |

OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

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| 6.1.4 | Ensure that Koori communities are informed about justice-related issues | <p>6.1.4a Ensure the Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee network coordinates and promotes the delivery of Koori-responsive justice-related information to Koori communities.</p> <p>6.1.4b Take the Justice buses to community events to provide a mobile justice service, with particular attention to geographically isolated areas.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit, Strategic Communication Branch)</i></p> <p>&</p> <p><i>all Justice agencies</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> |
| 6.2 Prioritise community safety planning as a place-based crime prevention approach | | | |
| 6.2.1 | Develop localised place-based Koori Community Safety Plans | <p>6.2.1a Work with Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees to develop and subsequently implement Community Safety Plans in priority locations. Ensure the plans are supported by relevant government agencies and community groups, and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary crime and violence prevention (e.g. management of public events, safe points of contact for people to report concerns) • alcohol management plans and linkages to local alcohol and drug action plans • protocols, services and support for responding to crime and violence • publicity and community education about the plans • simple data collection systems to facilitate future evaluation. <p>6.2.1b Ensure Community Safety Planning processes establish strong links with regional Crime Prevention Committees.</p> <p>6.2.1c Future action: Evaluate the demonstration Community Safety Plans and consider options to expand to more locations, using a place-based approach.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit, Victims Support Agency)</i></p> <p>&</p> <p><i>Victoria Police</i></p> <p>&</p> <p><i>Department of Human Services</i></p> <p>&</p> <p><i>Department of Health</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit, Crime Prevention Unit)</i></p> <p><i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> |

OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

| 6.3 Develop a place-based strategy covering the North and West Metropolitan regions | | | |
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| | Activity | Details | Agency |
| | | | *Lead agency in italics |
| 6.3.1 | Establish the key issues and pressure points in the North and West Metropolitan regions that account for the continuing high levels of Koori over-representation in prison | <p>6.3.1a Develop a place-based strategy covering the North and West Metropolitan regions</p> <p><i>The AJA2 evaluation identified that Koori over-representation in the prison system is continuing to increase in the North Metropolitan region and to a lesser extent the West Metropolitan region, unlike several other regions of Victoria where sustained initiatives have been implemented resulting in a reverse in the trend.</i></p> <p><i>There is an urgent need to identify the reasons for the worsening trend in the North and West Metropolitan regions, and coordinate action to reverse this trend.</i></p> <p>Bring together North and West Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees and relevant Department of Justice staff to review existing data on Koori contact with the criminal justice system in the North and West Metropolitan regions to explore the following key issues and pressure points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues: Include consideration of larger population size and possibly a more transient, diverse and dispersed population, insufficient urban infrastructure (housing, public transport etc), greater access to criminogenic influences, higher level of burden on existing service structures, fragmentation/insufficient coordination between Koori community organisations and other services • Pressure points: Include consideration of sobering-up options, bail options, more serious offence profiles, few affordable housing and transitional options. | <i>Department of Justice (Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit)</i> |

 OBJECTIVE 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY JUSTICE RESPONSES AND INCREASE COMMUNITY SAFETY

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| <p>6.3.2 Develop a North and West Metropolitan place-based strategy to address Koori over-representation in the justice system.</p> | <p>6.3.1b Bring together the North and West Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, senior representatives of Koori community organisations, relevant government agencies and others with an investment in the northwest metropolitan area, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share information about key issues and pressure points (from 6.2.1.1) • showcase existing initiatives that are making a positive difference in the North and West Metropolitan regions • undertake a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to determine reasons for the identified problem of service fragmentation/lack of coordination between existing services in the northwest, and identify potential solutions • recommend concrete measurable actions to underpin a North and West Metropolitan Place-Based Strategy with a first phase based on more effective utilisation of existing services. | <p><i>Department of Justice (Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> |
| | <p>6.3.2a The Department of Justice regional offices work with the North and West Metropolitan Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees to drive the place-based strategy.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Regional and Executive Services Division, Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> |
| | <p>6.3.2b Develop pilot initiatives that coordinate or build on existing resources in government and community to tackle the most acute of the identified pressure points. Build in mechanisms to ensure community and government support.</p> | |
| | <p>6.3.2c Future action: Evaluate the North and West Metropolitan regions' place-based strategy and respond to the findings.</p> | <p><i>Department of Justice (Koori Justice Unit)</i></p> |

Part 5: Additional information and appendices

List of acronyms and glossary

The following is a list of commonly used acronyms and terms related to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement:

- ABS** – Australian Bureau of Statistics
- ACCHO** – Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation
- ACCO** – Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation
- ACJP** – Aboriginal Community Justice Panel
- ACLO** – Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer
- AFVPLS** – Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service
- AIHW** – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- AJA** – Aboriginal Justice Agreement
- AJF** – Aboriginal Justice Forum
- ATSI** – Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- AWO** – Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers
- CAT** – Cultural Awareness Training
- CCO** – Community Corrections Order
- CCS** – Community Correctional Services
- CIP** – Community Initiatives Program
- CISP** – Courts Integrated Service Program
- COAG** – Council of Australian Governments
- CPU** – Crime Prevention Unit
- CSAC** – Corrections Services Administrators Conference
- EBAC** – Ethical Behaviour and Conduct
- IFVFPF** – Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum
- IFVRAG** – Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group
- ILCCO** – Indigenous Leading Community Corrections Officer
- IMES** – Infringement Management and Enforcement Services
- ISO** – Indigenous Services Officers
- Karreeta Yirramboi** – Victorian Public Sector Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Action Plan
- KCAT** – Koori Cultural Awareness Training
- KESO** – Koori Engagement Support Officers
- KIAP** – Koori Inclusion Action Plan

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

- KIBS** – Koori Youth Intensive Bail Support Program
- KJU** – Koori Justice Unit
- KONNECT** – An intensive transitional support program
- Koolin Balit** – Victorian Government strategic directions for Aboriginal health 2012-22
- KOSMP** – Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program
- KTO** – Koori Transition Officers
- KYC** – Koori Youth Council
- LAECG** – Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups
- LAJAC** – Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committee
- LGA** – Local Government Area
- LIN** – Local Indigenous Network
- LINKOUT** – An intensive transitional support program
- LJWP** – Local Justice Worker Program
- MEF** – Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- Mingu Gadhaba** – The Department of Justice Koori Inclusion Action Plan
- NAIDOC** – National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee
- NILJF** – National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework
- NIRA** – National Indigenous Reform Agreement
- OBIP** – Overarching Bilateral Indigenous Plan
- OAAV** – Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
- PALO** – Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer
- RAJAC** – Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee
- RES** – Regional and Executive Services
- SAC** – Sentencing Advisory Council
- SALO** – Sheriff Aboriginal Liaison Officer
- SEWB** – Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Tarwirri** – Indigenous Law Students and Lawyers Association of Victoria
- VAAF** – Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework
- VACCHO** – Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- VAEAI** – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
- VAJAC** – Victorian Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee
- VALS** – Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- VEOHRC** – Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- VOCAT** – Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal
- VPS** – Victorian Public Service
- VSA** – Victims Support Agency
- Wannik** – Koori education strategy
- WISP** – An intensive transitional support program
- WNLP or Wugunggo Ngalu** – Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, a culturally-appropriate correctional facility
- Wurreker** – Koori education strategy

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Progress against AJA2 Objectives

The below diagrams represent the approximate progress to achieving each objective. While progress has been uneven, real progress is being made.

As such, results that for example indicate 25 per cent progress should be seen as just that: 25 per cent progress towards the objective, not 75 per cent underachievement.

For example,  indicates that the objective is approximately ¼ of the way to being fully achieved.

| Phase 2 Objective | Progress to date (Nous assessment) |
|---|--|
| Overall: To reduce Koori over-representation in the justice system. |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-metropolitan regions have seen a reduction in over-representation in prison; in some cases >25 per cent. • Metropolitan regions have worsened or stayed the same. • Overall over-representation has worsened, but by less than would have been expected without the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2. • Victoria continues to have lower levels of over-representation in the justice system than most other Australian States and Territories. • More can be done in all regions across Victoria. |
| Objective 1: Crime prevention and early intervention. |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with police for youth under 17 years old has reduced overall since 2002, although there have been some variations in each year. • The proportion of Koories under 18 years old who receive a caution when they come into contact with police has remained relatively flat. |
| Objective 2: Diversion/ Strengthening alternatives to imprisonment. |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some regions have seen improvements in the proportion of Koories sentenced to Community Based Orders rather than prison. This change has explained much of the change in over-representation in prison • Overall, currently Koories are less likely to be sentenced to Community Based Orders compared to prison than they were in 2005. • Youth are now more likely to be sentenced to other orders compared to youth detention than they were in 2005. • Community Based Order completion rates have improved. |
| Objective 3: Reduce Re-offending |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-offending has reduced since 2005. • However, the rate of re-offending is still high and contributes to Koori over-representation in prison. There is more to do. |

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| Objective 4: Reduce victimisation |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in underlying victimisation rates are almost impossible to discern, because the proportion of victims who report crimes has almost certainly increased over time. • We can infer changes in victimisation from changes in crime rates, which have worsened over time as discussed above, however limitations in data make it hard to know whether victims are Koori not. • Services for Koori victims have improved dramatically. |
| Objective 5: Responsive and inclusive services |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This objective has attracted the most Aboriginal Justice Agreement funding in Phase 2 and has had the most success. Justice agencies are now significantly more responsive and inclusive of Koori needs than they were before. • The level of improvement varies across regions and locations and across different agencies. |
| Objective 6: Strengthen community justice responses |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community empowerment has attracted significant investment and strengthened community justice responses, with expansion of the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, creation of Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees, the Frontline and Community Initiative Program grants and other initiatives. • Koori justice programs are now designed and delivered by or in close consultation with the Koori community. |

Appendix 2: Key access criteria for effective service design

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|------------------------|--|
| Cultural safety | The service provider understands client needs including cultural needs |
| Affordability | Clients can afford to use required services |
| Convenience | Clients can get to the service easily |
| Awareness | Current and potential clients are informed about the availability of the service and its value |
| Empowerment | Current and potential clients know which service they are entitled to seek |
| Availability | Service that a client needs are accessible |
| Respect | The service provider treats the client with respect |

(Source: Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-18)



