

# The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026

This resource has been prepared by Reconciliation Victoria to support Victorian local governments to understand and build capacity to implement the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026

## What is the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy?

The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (aka The Strategy) provides a comprehensive roadmap for local councils and Aboriginal Victorians wanting to work together to create and strengthen pathways to self-determination for First Peoples.

The Strategy recognises that to achieve self-determination for First Peoples, local governments need to build equitable partnerships, grounded in shared authority and decision-making, with Traditional Owner groups, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and all First Peoples residing in municipalities across Victoria.

The Strategy is the result of a rigorous policy development process which captured the unique voices and perspectives of Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Organisations, Aboriginal local elected representatives, Aboriginal staff at the grassroots level, local councils, peak bodies, and state government departments.



## The Strategy aims

The Strategy serves to help councils to recognise and enable Aboriginal self-determination.

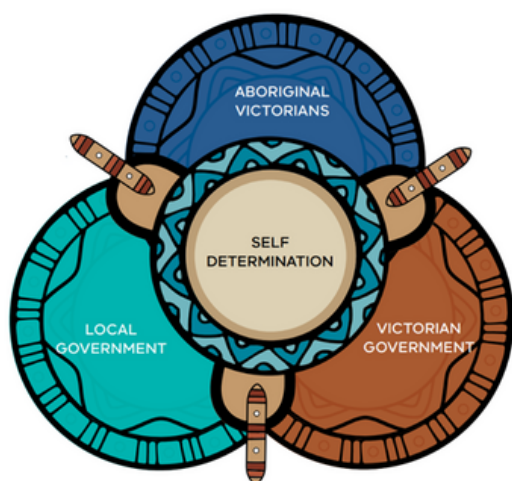
Advancing self-determination means Aboriginal Victorians can make decisions about matters affecting their lives and communities. This leads to sustainable solutions and improved outcomes for all First Peoples across the state.

The Strategy also seeks to remove barriers to self-determination from systems and structures at the state and local government level. It provides a practical framework for reform, guiding local governments towards shared decision-making and strong partnerships based on mutual respect, trust, and fairness.

## How to use The Strategy

The Strategy acknowledges that to achieve self-determination, all levels of government must change their ways of working and thinking to ensure First Peoples leadership, knowledge and systems are valued and respected.

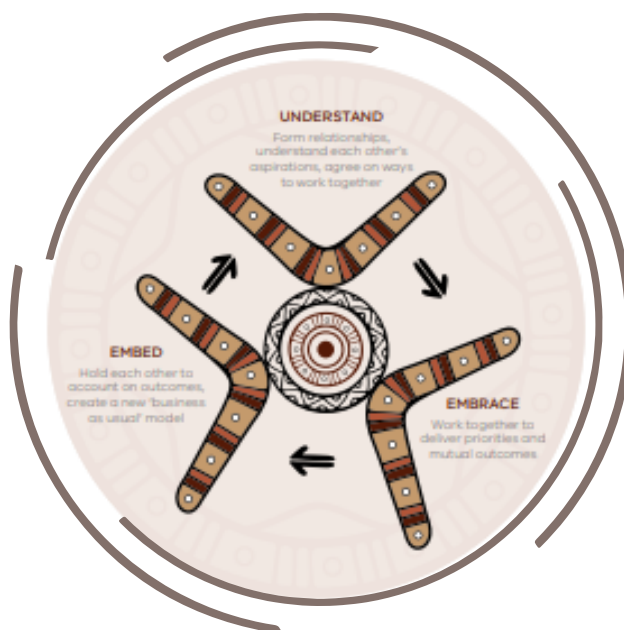
To reflect this, the Strategy outlines recommended **joint actions** for the Victorian Government, local governments, and Aboriginal Victorians.



The joint actions are structured around **seven strategic pillars**.

The recommended actions across all strategic pillars are then separated into **three stages: understand, embrace and embed**.

Local governments, and Aboriginal Victorians, can choose actions that reflect their stage on the pathway to self-determination. As the diagram shows, these stages are designed to be cyclical, returned to and developed over time.



The Strategy is designed to align with other state government strategies:

- Self-Determination and Reform Framework 2021
- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018 - 2023
- Victorian Treaty process
- Yoorrook Justice Commission
- Aboriginal employment and economic participation
- Local government's role in Aboriginal community health and wellbeing
- Victoria's Closing the Gap implementation Action Plan
- Traditional Owner Settlement Act (Vic)

The Strategy continues to be informed and developed through strong consultation with Aboriginal Victorians and a steering committee of stakeholder organisations, local government representatives, Traditional Owner groups, and peak bodies.

**The Strategy is a clear framework for Aboriginal Victorians and local councils to guide their shared decision-making processes and actions based on 7 strategic pillars.**



#### **Pillar 1: Culture respect and trust**

Fostering genuine partnerships between First Peoples, local councils and the Victorian Government based on trust and respect, that celebrate, understand, and embed Aboriginal cultures and histories.

#### **Pillar 2: Awareness and engagement**

Building open and ongoing collaboration between Aboriginal Victorians, local councils, and those who share Traditional Owner or council boundaries, to ensure agreement about priorities and mutual decision making.

#### **Pillar 3: Accountability and direction**

Guiding Victorian First Peoples and local councils to work individually and together across cultural and municipal boundaries to ensure shared purpose, genuine ownership, and accountability between all parties

#### **Pillar 4: Governance and participation**

Ensuring First Peoples cultural values, voices, knowledge, and rights are embedded in all levels of local council decision making.

#### **Pillar 5: Economic participation**

Helping local councils develop policies and pathways that ensure Aboriginal businesses and communities can actively participate in their local economies.

#### **Pillar 6: Health and Wellbeing**

Creating strong partnerships between Aboriginal Victorians, Aboriginal-controlled health and wellbeing services and local councils to support better health and wellbeing outcomes for First Peoples across the municipality.

#### **Pillar 7: Resourcing and funding**

Guiding Aboriginal Victorians and local councils on creating effective and sustainable funding models that support locally led collaboration and resource sharing.



Government  
Services

*Reconciliation Victoria acknowledges the support of the Department of Government Services*

*Reconciliation Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and recognises First Peoples continuing connection to lands, waters, and community.*