

ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION MAPPING PROJECT

MAPPING INITIATIVES
DELIVERED 2016 – 2021

Prepared for
DHELK DJA



DHELK DJA
SAFE OUR WAY
STRONG CULTURE
STRONG PEOPLES
STRONG FAMILIES

Written in partnership with
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Final Report

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Respect Victoria is the dedicated organisation for the prevention of family violence and violence against women in Victoria. Our vision is a Victorian community where all people are safe, equal and respected, and live free from family violence and violence against women. To achieve our vision, we lead and support evidence-informed primary prevention and act as a catalyst for transformational social change.

Respect Victoria acknowledges Victoria's Aboriginal peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways on which we rely. We recognise the ongoing leadership role of Aboriginal communities in addressing and preventing family violence and violence against women. We acknowledge the significant disruptions to social and cultural systems and the ongoing hurt caused by colonisation. We are proud to work alongside Dhelk Dja to contribute to knowledge building efforts about Aboriginal-led family violence work. We commit to working in collaboration with First Peoples to eliminate family violence and violence against women from all communities.

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TERMINOLOGY

We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria have different preferences for the way their communities are collectively or individually referred to (including Koorí, Koorie, Indigenous, First Nations, First Peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples). This document adopts 'Aboriginal' in the context of its use within *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, and 'First Nations', except where referencing a specific document.



Urbis acknowledges the important contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make in creating a strong and vibrant Australian society.

We acknowledge, in each of our offices, the Traditional Owners on whose land we stand.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

Urbis, in partnership with Karen Milward, was commissioned to undertake a project to map Aboriginal-specific family violence prevention initiatives across Victoria. The project is a distinct action under Dhelk Dja Strategic Priority Two: Aboriginal-led prevention, which means 'prevention must be grounded in cultural strengthening, cultural expertise and education that is Aboriginal community-led and driven.'¹

The project was jointly commissioned by Respect Victoria, the Aboriginal Strategy Unit Family Safety Victoria (FSV) and the Office for Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination, Fairer Victoria Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) on behalf of the Dhelk Dja Strategic Priority Two Sub-Working Group of the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum.

This Final Report presents findings regarding government investment in family violence primary and secondary prevention initiatives targeting Victorian Aboriginal communities from 2016 to 2021.

Purpose and scope

The primary purpose of the project is to provide Dhelk Dja with a strategic overview of primary and secondary prevention activity and investment made by government and non-government agencies across Victoria. A secondary purpose is to share with Victorian Aboriginal communities an overview of prevention activities collected as a part of this project. The scope of the project includes:

- government and non-government-funded primary and secondary prevention initiatives delivered in Victoria that aim to prevent family violence in Victorian Aboriginal communities
- initiatives delivered from 2016 to 2021.

Methodology

The project was delivered over two key phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Mapping government-funded initiatives focused on mapping initiatives funded by Family Safety Victoria, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and other government departments.
- Phase 2: Mapping non-government-funded initiatives focused on deepening findings from Phase 1 through stakeholder interviews and mapping additional information and initiatives as relevant.

This report combines findings from Phase 1 and 2 and is informed by the following activities:

Mapping development

We reviewed key policies and frameworks to develop a set of mapping categories and worked closely with the Project Management Working Group to refine the categories based on their key information needs.

Document review and mapping

We reviewed over 150 documents provided by the Project Management Working Group and other government agencies and mapped each initiative identified towards the mapping categories.

Stakeholder consultation

We conducted interviews with n=20 government stakeholders (Family Safety Victoria, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, National Indigenous Australians Agency) and n=28 non-government stakeholders (Aboriginal Community Control Organisations (ACCOS) and mainstream family violence organisations).

Analysis and reporting

We analysed, tabulated, and charted the mapping data and undertook thematic analysis of the interview data. We then held an internal analysis workshop to triangulate the data and to identify key findings, which are presented in this report.

¹ Victorian Government (2018). Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Cultures, Strong Peoples, Strong Families, p.36.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

Key findings from mapping analysis

This section presents an overview of government funded initiatives providing details on the funding sources, location, delivery mode and setting, timing, reach and evidence of success.

Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 251 government-funded initiatives were identified and mapped. Funding has been provided to 132 organisations (or consortia/partnerships). ACCOs and community groups made up a large majority of all funded organisations (88%), with the remaining 12% mainstream organisations. Most organisations that have been provided funding have delivered one initiative (69%), while a smaller number have delivered two initiatives (14%) and three initiatives (5%). One organisation (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency) has delivered 21 government-funded initiatives. Information on delivery partnerships was available for less than one-quarter of initiatives (24%). Of these initiatives, a large majority had at least one partnership in place (83%), while 17% had no partnerships.
Funding and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our analysis estimates that since 2016 more than \$18.7 million in funding has been allocated to the 251 initiatives. The majority of funding has been provided by the Victorian government through FSV and DFFH, which are responsible for four major grants programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSV – Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund (199 initiatives) FSV – Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund (11 initiatives) FSV – Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund (21 initiatives) DFFH – Aboriginal Innovation Fund (14 initiatives). Six initiatives outside of these grant programs were identified and mapped, with funding for these initiatives provided by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (4 initiatives), FSV (1 initiative) and Latrobe City Council (1 initiative). Almost three-quarters of initiatives received \$49,999 or less in funding (72%), while one in ten received between \$50,000 and \$199,000 (9%).
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each initiative was mapped to the Dhelk Dja region/s in which it was based, with this information available for all 251 initiatives. Our analysis found some variation in the number of initiatives funded in each region. For example, the Grampians and the South Metro region have had the largest numbers of initiatives funded (33 and 29 respectively), while Inner Gippsland and the Mallee have had the smallest numbers of initiatives funded (17 and 14 respectively).
Delivery mode	<p>The top three delivery modes for funded initiatives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops/sessions (105 initiatives) Cultural activities (83 initiatives) Event/camp/forum (68 initiatives).

Setting	<p>The top four settings for funded initiatives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health, family, and community services (162 initiatives) ▪ Sports, recreation, and leisure spaces (34 initiatives) ▪ The arts (14 initiatives) ▪ Education and care settings for children and young people (14 initiatives).
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on the duration of initiatives was only available for less than one-third of all initiatives (30%). Of these, the most common duration was 1-2 years (35%), followed by more than two years (32%), 7-12 months (28%), one-off or short period of time (6%) and 1-6 months (3%). ▪ Of the 251 initiatives identified and mapped, just over two-thirds have lapsed (70%), while less than one-third are ongoing (30%). ▪ All 177 initiatives for which duration could not be determined were funded under the Community Initiatives Fund, which only provides funding for a maximum of 12 months. As such, it can be inferred that most initiatives ran for less than 12 months (80%).
Target cohorts	<p>The three most common target cohorts for initiatives were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women and/or girls (66 initiatives) ▪ Children and young people (65 initiatives) ▪ Community members (59 initiatives).
Strategies used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The <i>Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework</i> (IVFPPF) identifies six mutually reinforcing strategies likely to have the most positive effect in the primary prevention of family violence against Victorian Aboriginal people. ▪ 23 initiatives were required to nominate which of these prevention strategies they drew on as part of their reporting. Most of these initiatives indicated they drew on all six strategies (16 initiatives).
Evidence of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our analysis found 35 initiatives have undertaken some form of evaluation, including informal monitoring and evaluation (10 initiatives), internal evaluation with external support (24 initiatives) and external evaluation (1 initiative). ▪ Common outcomes reported by initiatives relate to strengthening well-established protective factors against family violence. ▪ Common barriers reported include COVID-19 restrictions; lack of ongoing funding; and staffing/organisational challenges and underestimation of resources required. ▪ Common enablers reported include the capability and dedication of staff; the involvement of Victorian Aboriginal people (particularly Elders and/or children and young people) in design and delivery of the initiative; local networks and partnerships with other ACCOs; and transport and food assistance for participants.
Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reach data was available for a small number of initiatives (13%). ▪ One-third of initiatives for which this data was available reached 11-50 participants (33%), followed by 51-100 participants (18%), 201-500 participants (15%), 100-200 participants (12%), less than 10 participants (12%) and more than 1000 participants (9%). None of the initiatives for which reach data was available were within the 501-1000 participant range.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY CONTINUED

Key findings from consultations

This section presents a summary of key findings and insights from consultations with government and ACCO stakeholders.

Family violence prevention activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ACCOs and community groups are undertaking extensive prevention activity that is not funded by government, including initiatives that seek to address the underlying drivers of violence and to strengthen the protective factors against violence. ▪ Activities include community events, cultural, recreational, and social activities, and culturally safe and holistic service responses. Many of these activities do not explicitly aim to prevent family violence and therefore do not meet the scope of this project. ▪ The distinction between family violence prevention and response is not always clear, as ACCOs and community groups deliver a range of initiatives and activities across the prevention continuum.
Successes and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overwhelmingly, stakeholders consulted reported that funding arrangements for Victorian Aboriginal-specific prevention initiatives are not commensurate with the level of need and the time required to achieve prevention outcomes. ▪ The establishment of new, longer-term Victorian Government grant programs over the past four years signals a shift in how prevention is funded. However, some stakeholders question whether grant programs are the most appropriate funding mechanism to achieve the desired prevention outcomes. These stakeholders identified that ongoing or longer-term funding is needed to deliver effective prevention activities. ▪ ACCOs and community groups face workforce challenges that can negatively impact on the delivery of their initiatives. Key challenges include staff shortages, high turnover, burnout, and high incidence of lateral violence within some organisations. ▪ Reporting requirements are burdensome and are often not relevant to ACCOs and community groups. Stakeholders suggested reporting could be improved by: co-designing reporting templates with funded organisations; more flexibility in reporting content; and a stronger focus on outcomes over outputs. ▪ COVID-19 disruptions necessitated a focus on emergency-type responses, meaning there has been less attention on prevention in recent years.
Gaps and opportunities	<p>Stakeholders highlighted several gaps in prevention programming to be addressed, including the need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for a stronger focus on some cohorts and forms of violence in prevention programming (such as Elder abuse, LGBTQI+, perpetrators and lateral violence) ▪ to have stronger language and terminology about family violence prevention and that this is targeted not just to say 'Aboriginal family violence' which gives the assumption that all Aboriginal people are violent in their communities ▪ to provide additional investment in some regional and rural areas. <p>Stakeholders also highlighted a number of opportunities to improve prevention outcomes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ embedding self-determination in prevention efforts targeting Aboriginal communities, particularly in relation to funding arrangements and reporting requirements ▪ building capacity of ACCOs and community groups to monitor and evaluate their projects, while ensuring data sovereignty principles are upheld ▪ culturally tailored education on healthy relationships ▪ sustainable funding for prevention initiatives and more opportunities to celebrate successes and achievements ▪ a holistic, trauma-informed approach to family violence prevention.

01 INTRODUCTION

01 INTRODUCTION

Urbis, in partnership with Karen Milward, was commissioned to undertake a project to map Aboriginal-specific family violence prevention initiatives across Victoria. Karen Milward co-led the project and led all consultations with Aboriginal stakeholders, enabling an Aboriginal-led approach to all project activities. Karen Milward is a proud Yorta Yorta woman who was born and raised in Melbourne. She is a strong advocate for developing culturally appropriate solutions to the issues confronting Aboriginal people that empower individuals and communities so they can confidently and effectively move forward.

The project is managed through Respect Victoria (RV) and is implemented in partnership with Aboriginal Strategy Unit, Family Safety Victoria (FSV) and the Office for Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination, Fairer Victoria Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) on behalf of Dhek Dja Strategic Priority Two Sub-Working Group. The Project Management Working Group (PMWG) is comprised of representatives from each of these organisations.

This is the Final Report of the project.

BACKGROUND

Family violence in Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal definitions of family violence are broader than those used by non-Aboriginal people.² The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force defined family violence as:



an issue focused around a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. It extends to one-on-one fighting, abuse of Indigenous community workers as well as self-harm, injury and suicide.³

While family violence can impact anyone, Aboriginal people – especially women and children – experience significantly higher rates of and impacts from family violence relative to the general population.⁴ For example, Aboriginal women are more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence, more likely to be murdered by a family member, and more likely to have their children removed, compared with non-Aboriginal women.⁵

² Victorian Government (2017). *Free from Violence*, p.2.

³ Victorian Government (2003). *Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force: Final Report*.

⁴ Our Watch (2018). *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*.

⁵ AIHW (2019). *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story*.

While there is no single cause of violence against Aboriginal women, family violence research highlights three key underlying drivers which overlap and intersect in complex ways:

- ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities, including intergenerational and collective trauma, systemic oppression, disempowerment and racism
- ongoing impacts of colonisation for non-Aboriginal people and society, including racialised structural inequalities of power and entrenched racism in social norms, attitudes and practices
- gendered factors, including gender and inequality in a general sense, and specific gendered drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women that are a consequence of colonisation.⁶

Efforts to prevent family violence in Victorian Aboriginal communities must focus on addressing these three underlying drivers, including by:

- healing the impacts of intergenerational trauma, strengthening culture and identity
- challenging and preventing all forms of racism, indifference, ignorance and disrespect towards Aboriginal peoples and cultures
- implementing intersectional approaches to preventing violence against women across the Australian population
- working with men, including those who use violence, to support their healing journey.⁷

It is also critical that efforts to prevent family violence in Aboriginal communities recognise that violence against Aboriginal women and children is not part of Aboriginal culture, and that perpetrators of violence include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and men and women.⁸

As stated in *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women*:



Family violence is not and has never been a part of Aboriginal culture. Rather, the impact of white settlement, colonisation and the violent dispossession of land, culture and children has displaced traditional Aboriginal roles and resulted in an accumulation of trauma across generations.⁹

Family violence primary prevention

Australia has adopted a public health approach for the prevention of family violence. Under this approach, primary prevention strategies are those which prevent violence before it occurs. Strategies can be delivered to a whole population (universal) or specific population groups at high risk of using or experiencing violence (targeted or selective).¹⁰

Primary prevention is distinct from secondary prevention and tertiary response (also known as early intervention and tertiary prevention respectively), which focus on stopping early signs of violence from escalating, preventing a recurrence of violence, or reducing longer-term harm.¹¹ Primary prevention must be effectively linked with secondary prevention and tertiary response efforts, as the different strategies reinforce and build on each other to prevent violence and make communities safer (see Figure 1 overleaf).

⁶ Our Watch (2018). *Changing the picture*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Our Watch (2018). *Changing the picture*.

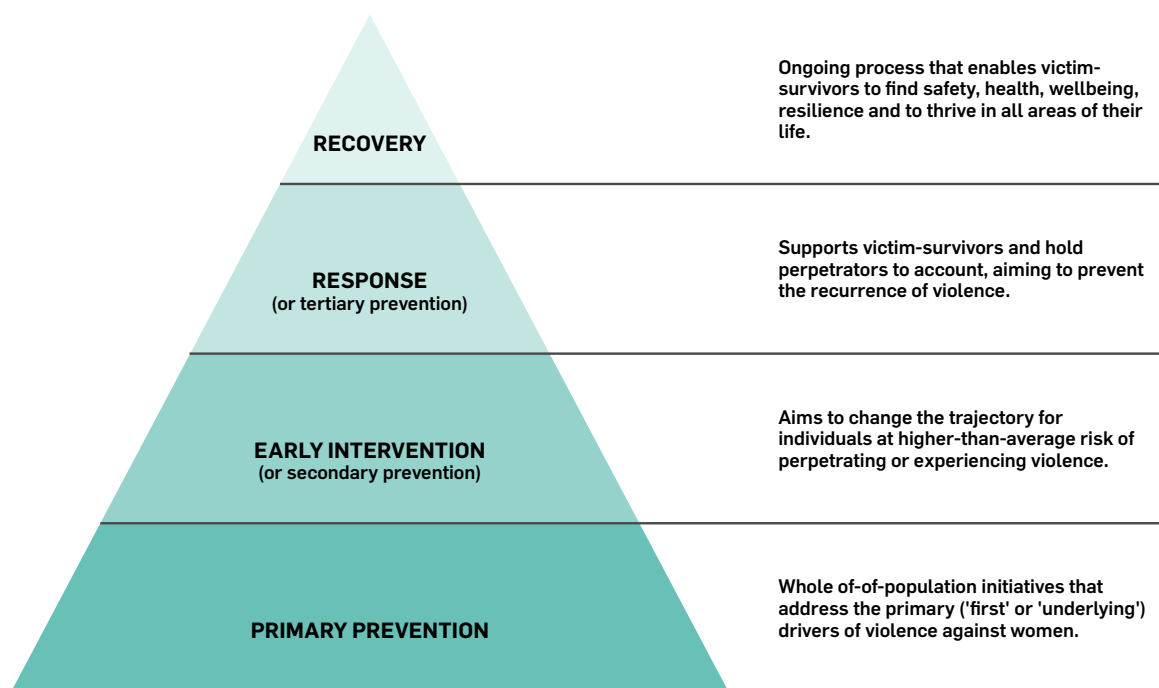
⁹ Victorian Government (2017). *Free from Violence*, p.21.

¹⁰ VicHealth (2009). *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*.

¹¹ Our Watch (2015). *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*.

01 INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Figure 1 The relationship between primary and secondary intervention and tertiary response to address family violence



Source: Our Watch, Change the Story, Second Edition (2021)

Aboriginal-led family violence prevention initiatives deliver a range of activities across the prevention continuum. As outlined in *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028*:

“**initiatives... work across all types of prevention – primary prevention, secondary prevention (early intervention) and tertiary prevention (response) – and [are] underpinned by culture, cultural strengthening, healing and strengthening protective factors.**¹²

Policy context

The Victorian Government is committed to family violence reform that supports Aboriginal self-determination. Key policies, strategies, and frameworks that guide and support family violence prevention efforts in Victorian Aboriginal communities are summarised below.

Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework (2012)

The *Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework* (IFVPPF) was developed in response to the Victorian Government's commitment to develop an Indigenous-specific prevention framework for family violence. The framework is designed to support primary prevention capacity building, effective and sustainable prevention activities, and ownership and leadership within Aboriginal communities.¹³

¹² Victorian Government (2018). *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way*.

¹³ Victorian Government (2008). *Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework*, p.1.

Safe and Strong (2016)

Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy (Safe and Strong) sets out a framework for action to progressively build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality. The strategy recognises that gender inequality does not impact Aboriginal women in the same way, and that Aboriginal Victorians are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to gender equality.¹⁴

Balit Murrup (2017)

Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017–2027 (Balit Murrup) is part of the Victorian Government's commitment to providing a long-term vision to improve the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes for Aboriginal communities. The prevention of family violence is identified under Domain 2 of the framework – 'Supporting resilience, healing and trauma recovery'.¹⁵

Korin Korin Balit-Djak (2017)

Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027 (Korin Korin Balit-Djak) provides an overarching framework for action to improve the health, wellbeing, and safety of Aboriginal Victorians. Increasing access to Aboriginal community-led family violence prevention and support services is a priority focus under Guiding Principle 4 of the framework – 'Safe, secure and strong families and individuals'.¹⁶

Free from Violence (2017)

Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women (Free from Violence) sets out a primary prevention approach that focuses on addressing the drivers of violence and the reinforcing factors that contribute to violence against women. The strategy includes a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in recognition of the disproportionate impact of family violence they experience.

Free from Violence affirms the Victorian government's commitment to ensuring that all prevention initiatives focused on Aboriginal communities are developed in partnership with Aboriginal communities.¹⁷

The *Free From Violence Second Action Plan 2022-2025* was released in December 2021, outlining the key priorities to guide primary prevention work over the next three years. Priority 3 of the action plan is 'Aboriginal-led prevention', which means primary prevention activity is underpinned by self-determination and alignment with Dhelk Dja.¹⁸

Changing the Picture (2018)

Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children (Changing the Picture) was produced by Our Watch, a not-for-profit organisation established to drive the prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.¹⁹ *Changing the Picture* contains a set of clear actions that are needed to address the complex drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.²⁰

Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way (2018)

Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 2018-2028 (Dhelk Dja, the agreement) is Victoria's 10-year Aboriginal-led agreement to address family violence in Aboriginal communities. *Dhelk Dja* commits Aboriginal services and government to work together and be accountable for ensuring Aboriginal people, families and communities are stronger, safer, thriving and free from family violence. *Dhelk Dja* sets out five strategic priorities as follows:

- Aboriginal culture and leadership
- Aboriginal-led prevention
- self-determining Aboriginal family violence support and services
- system transformation based on self-determination
- Aboriginal-led and informed innovation, data, and research.²¹

¹⁴ Victorian Government (2016). *Safe and Strong*.

¹⁵ Victorian Government (2017). *Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027*.

¹⁶ Victorian Government (2017). *Korin Korin Balit-Djak: Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027*.

¹⁷ Victorian Government (2017). *Free from Violence*.

¹⁸ Victorian Government (2021). *Free From Violence: Second Action Plan 2022-2025*.

¹⁹ Our Watch (2018). *Changing the picture*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Victorian Government (2018). *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way*.

01 INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Specific actions against each strategic priority are outlined in the *Dhelk Dja 3 Year Action Plan 2019-2022* (the Action Plan) and measures to track progress and outcomes against each strategic priority are included in the *Dhelk Dja Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan* (the MEAP). The Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum is responsible for governing *Dhelk Dja*, the *Action Plan*, and the *MEAP*.²²

Nargneit Birrang - Aboriginal holistic healing framework for family violence (2019)

The *Nargneit Birrang Framework* (Nargneit Birrang) was developed in response to the Victorian Government's commitment to develop an Aboriginal-led and co-designed family violence holistic healing approach for Aboriginal communities across the state. Informed by the principle of self-determination, the purpose of the framework is to guide the flexible design, funding, implementation and evaluation of Aboriginal-led holistic healing programs for family violence in Victoria.²³

Burra Lotjpa Dunguludj (2020)

The *Aboriginal Justice Agreement* (AJA) is a long-term partnership between the Aboriginal community and Victorian Government that seeks to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people. Prevention and early intervention of family violence are identified under Outcome Domain 1 of Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja (AJA Phase 4) – 'Strong and safe Aboriginal families and communities'.²⁴

National Plan to reduce violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (2021)

In recognition of the disproportionate impact of family violence on Aboriginal communities, the Australian Government has committed to developing a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The 13-member Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council will lead development of the plan, which advocacy groups say must prioritise the leadership of Indigenous women while increasing investment in Aboriginal-led prevention.²⁵

22 Victorian Government (2020). *Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan for Dhelk Dja: Safe our way – Strong Cultures, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*.

23 VACCA, ThinkPlace & Family Safety Victoria (2019). *The Nargneit Birrang Framework*.

24 Victorian Government (2020). *Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja*.

25 Department of Social Services (2021). *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council to inform the next National Plan to end family, domestic and sexual violence*. Media release. Retrieved from <https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/7266>

02 METHODOLOGY



02 METHODOLOGY

DHELK DJA STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO

As noted above, Strategic Priority Two of Dhelk Dja is Aboriginal-led prevention. This means 'prevention must be grounded in cultural strengthening, cultural expertise and education that is Aboriginal community-led and driven.'²⁶ The Dhelk Dja Strategic Priority Two Sub-Working Group is a working group of the Dhelk Dja Partnership Forum and is responsible for:

- leading and monitoring the delivery of supporting activities under Strategic Priority Two
- making decisions regarding the scope and progression of supporting activities under Strategic Priority Two
- making recommendations regarding the completion of supporting activities under Strategic Priority Two.

The two actions for Strategic Priority Two in the Dhelk Dja Action Plan for year one are:

- map all Aboriginal-specific family violence prevention initiatives and investments across Victoria to provide Dhelk Dja with a strategic overview across both Aboriginal and mainstream prevention programs
- showcase successful Aboriginal community-led prevention initiatives to inform communities and share best practices.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The primary purpose of the project is to provide Dhelk Dja with a strategic overview of primary and secondary prevention activity and investment made by government and non-government agencies across Victoria. The project captured strengths of existing initiatives as well as gaps and opportunities to build the evidence base for effective prevention initiatives in Aboriginal communities and help to establish a sound roadmap for future investment.

A secondary purpose is to share with Victorian Aboriginal communities an overview of prevention activities collected as a part of this project.

Initiatives in scope for this project include:

- government and non-government-funded primary and secondary prevention initiatives that have been delivered in Victoria with the aim to prevent family violence in Aboriginal communities
- initiatives delivered within the past five years.

Initiatives out of scope for this project include:

- initiatives that are focused on responding to family violence against Aboriginal people, such as legal services, crises accommodation and counselling
- initiatives that address racism and the ongoing impacts of colonisation but that don't explicitly aim to prevent family violence.

²⁶ Victorian Government (2018). *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way*, p.36.

OUR APPROACH

The project was conducted over three stages from June 2021 to April 2022 as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Overview of methodology

PROJECT PLANNING June to August 2021	PHASE 1: MAPPING GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES August to November 2021	PHASE 2: MAPPING NON-GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES January to April 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team mobilisation Project Plan Inception meeting Rapid desktop review Development of mapping tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review and mapping of documents provided by FSV, DFFH and other government agencies Analysis of key findings Interviews with staff from FSV, DFFH and NIAA to deepen findings from the document review Report summarising findings from Phase 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with ACCOs, community groups and other organisations delivering family violence prevention initiatives Mapping of additional information provided through the consultations Analysis of key findings Presentation of findings and report combining analysis from Phase 1 and 2

The key activities informing this report are detailed below.

Mapping analysis

We undertook a rapid desktop review of key policies, frameworks, and strategies to develop proposed categories to include in the mapping analysis. Documentation reviewed included Change the Story and Changing the Picture (Our Watch), the IFVPPF, Balit Murrup, Korin Korin Balit-Djak, Free from Violence, Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way and Nargneit Birrang.

We mapped and coded each initiative identified within the documentation, capturing key dimensions of initiatives including name and organisation, delivery mode, setting, timing, target cohort, location, funding arrangements, evidence of success, reach and IFVPPF strategies used. We undertook an internal process to ensure initiatives were mapped consistently and methodically, whereby two members of the team mapped the same small subset of initiatives and then met to discuss how they coded the information.

Document review and mapping

Following endorsement of the mapping categories by the PMWG, we undertook a desktop review of documentation provided by the Aboriginal Strategy Unit FSV and the Office for Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination, Fairer Victoria DFFH containing information about relevant initiatives funded by these agencies since 2016. Over 150 documents were reviewed including application forms, project proposals, project plans, work plans, progress reports and evaluation reports.

For some initiatives, there was limited information available to draw upon to complete all categories. In close consultation with the PMWG, a decision was made to capture as much information as possible and at the same time, highlight the initiatives and categories for which there are key information and data gaps.

02 METHODOLOGY CONTINUED

The PMWG also provided a list of contacts to provide advice regarding prevention initiatives funded by other government agencies. This included representatives from:

- Local government agencies: Latrobe City Council, City of Darebin, City of Whittlesea, and East Gippsland Shire Council
- Victorian Government agencies: Department of Education and Training, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Health, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Department of Treasury and Finance, Magistrates' Court of Victoria and Victoria Police
- Commonwealth Government agencies: Commission for Children and Young People and National Indigenous Australians Agency.

With assistance from the PMWG, we contacted each of these stakeholders to request information regarding prevention initiatives funded by their agencies. We reviewed all documentation that was provided to determine whether initiatives met the scope for inclusion and mapped initiatives as appropriate.

Stakeholder consultation

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

- n=20 stakeholders from government agencies including staff from FSV, DFFH and NIAA.
- n=28 stakeholders from ACCOs, community groups and mainstream organisations involved in family violence prevention in Victoria.

The purpose of these consultations was to validate information captured in the mapping analysis and to identify additional initiatives for inclusion. Interviews also explored systemic issues regarding funding arrangements for prevention, project reporting, challenges facing the ACCO family violence sector, and gaps and opportunities for future investment. All consultations were conducted online via Microsoft Teams and were led by Karen Milward with a member of the Urbis team present to take notes. With consent, the interviews were electronically recorded with transcriptions downloaded from Microsoft Teams.

Karen Milward supported a culturally safe environment in all consultations. In practice, this included informing participants they did not have to answer questions if they did not want to, they could ask for more information as prompts to a question that might not be understood directly and allowing for storytelling rather than just data and statistical information to be provided. Mutual respect was always shown, considering deep listening techniques, and allowing for appropriate breaks. Consent was always asked for at the beginning, during and at the end of conversations held.

A full breakdown of the stakeholders consulted for this project is provided in Appendix C.

Analysis and reporting

Following the mapping exercise, the data was analysed, tabulated, and charted in Excel. Thematic analysis of interview data was undertaken and the extent of agreement and divergence of opinion across the interview questions was documented. The team then conducted an internal analysis workshop to triangulate the data and discuss key findings, patterns, and themes, which are presented in this report.

Case studies

Drawing on the findings from the mapping analysis and the stakeholder consultation, we developed four case studies which each focus on a different target cohort for family violence prevention initiatives. The target cohorts for the case studies are men, women, children and young people, and Elders. Each case study provides a summary of initiatives delivered to the target cohort, highlights some examples of highly effective initiatives, and documents lessons and success factors that may be relevant for future initiatives. The case studies were selected in collaboration with the PMWG to provide insight into what works, for whom, and why. Case studies are presented in Appendix A.

Criteria for successful Aboriginal community-led initiatives

Drawing on the IFVPPF as well as the findings from the mapping analysis and the stakeholder consultation, we identified a set of criteria for successful Aboriginal community-led initiatives. The purpose of the criteria is to support the identification of initiatives for the showcase of projects for Dhelk Dja Sub-Working Group 2 Project Action 2. It is important to note that the criteria are intended as a guide only and are based on the data collected and analysed for this project. We recognise that ACCOs are best placed to determine what works in their communities. As such, initiatives which do not meet the criteria should not be excluded if ACCOs, Dhelk Dja and/or other relevant stakeholders believe they are successful and/or show promise for community. Criteria are presented in Appendix B.

LIMITATIONS

The following limitations should be considered when reading this report:

- Several government agencies were not responsive to our requests for information regarding family violence prevention initiatives they fund. This includes local government agencies (City of Darebin, City of Whittlesea, and East Gippsland Shire Council) and Victorian Government agencies (Department of Education and Training and Department of Justice and Community Safety). As such, the information contained within this report and the mapping analysis may not be representative of total government investment in family violence prevention targeting Aboriginal communities.
- Twenty-two organisations (ACCOs, community groups and mainstream organisations) that we sought to engage with as part of Phase 2 consultations were not responsive to our requests for interviews or were not available to participate. As such, the perspectives contained within this report may not be representative of all stakeholders. It is important to note that many ACCOs and community groups have been consulted by Urbis and Karen Milward on different family violence related projects in the last two years for the Victorian Government and so these organisations might see consultation for this project as an 'overload' or feel it is a repetitive process to be discussing similar aspects to the earlier projects funded.

- In consultation with the PMWG, a decision was made by research team to adopt a flexible threshold for inclusion of community-led initiatives, in recognition that many ACCOs and community groups deliver a range of activities across the prevention continuum. As such, a small number of initiatives which combine elements of primary and secondary prevention and tertiary response have been included.
- There was considerable variation in the completeness and availability of documentation pertaining to each initiative. While we received extensive documentation for some initiatives (such as an application form, several progress reports and an evaluation report), others were only referred to in grant funding round summaries. Attempts were made to gather as much information about initiatives as possible within the timeframe, however some documents could not be located, and some details could not be verified. Key data gaps are discussed in the relevant sections of this report.

THIS DOCUMENT

This is the Final Report combining findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 3: Overview of government-funded initiatives – Presents key findings regarding government investment in prevention targeting Aboriginal communities since 2016.
- Section 4: Key findings – Presents key findings regarding non-government-funded initiatives, successes and challenges in preventing family violence against Aboriginal people, and gaps and opportunities for future investment.
- Section 5: Conclusion – Summarises the success factors for prevention initiatives based on the information collected for this project.
- Appendices – Case studies, proposed criteria for successful Aboriginal community-led initiatives, stakeholders consulted, references.

A misty forest scene with tall, thin trees and two people sitting on a log in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

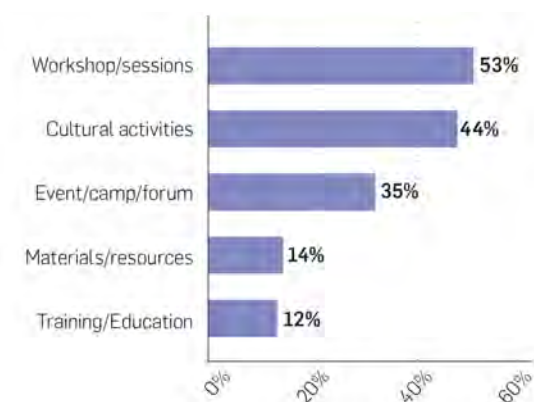
03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT- FUNDED INITIATIVES

03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES

This section presents key findings regarding government investment in prevention targeting Aboriginal communities across Victoria since 2016.

Figure 3 Overview of government-funded initiatives

MOST COMMON DELIVERY MODES



TWO VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND FOUR MAJOR GRANTS PROGRAMS ACCOUNT FOR 94% OF FUNDING

Funded by FSV:

- Community Initiatives Fund – 178 initiatives
- Preventing the Cycle of Violence Fund – 11 initiatives
- Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund – 21 initiatives

Funded by DFFH:

- Aboriginal Innovation Fund – 14 initiatives

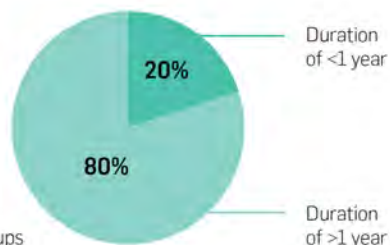
MOST COMMON SETTINGS

	Health, family and community services	83%
	Sports, recreation and leisure spaces	17%
	Education and care settings	7%
	The arts	7%

132 ORGANISATIONS FUNDED



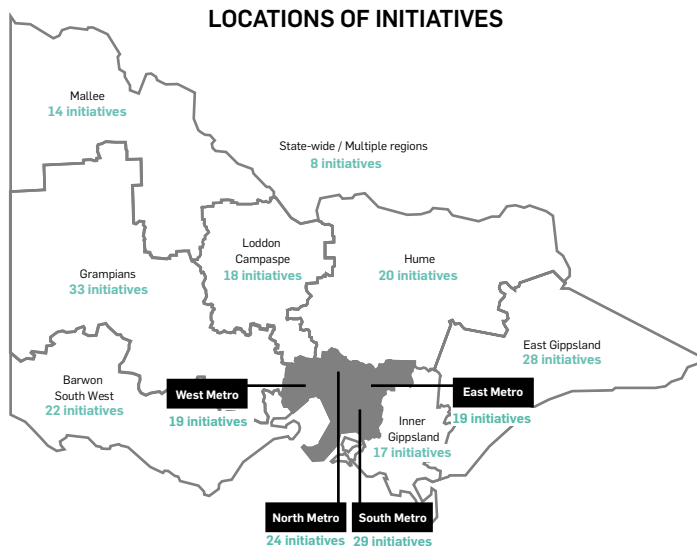
TIMING



MOST COMMON TARGET GROUPS

	Young people	29%
	Women and/or girls	29%
	Communities members	26%
	Men and/or boys	13%
	Families	11%
	Specific cohorts	10%
	Elders	9%

LOCATIONS OF INITIATIVES



03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

FUNDAMENTALS

Funded initiatives and organisations

Based on the information provided, it is estimated that government agencies have allocated at least \$18.6 million in funding for prevention initiatives targeting Victorian Aboriginal communities since 2016. Funding has been provided to 132 organisations (or consortia/partnerships) to deliver 251 initiatives, with ACCOs and community groups representing a large majority (88%) of all funded organisations. Of the initiatives delivered by mainstream organisations, one-fifth were delivered in partnership (20%), while this information could not be determined for the remainder of initiatives. Additionally, most of the funded mainstream initiatives were funded through the CIF 2016-17 and 2017-18. Since this time, eligibility criteria for the CIF have been updated to specify that funding be restricted to ACCOs and community groups.

Table 1 below presents a breakdown of the number of initiatives funded per organisation. More than two-thirds of organisations have been funded to deliver one initiative (69%), followed by 14% funded to deliver two initiatives.

Organisations which have been funded for six or more initiatives include:

- Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association (six initiatives)
- Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) Ltd (six initiatives)
- Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative (eight initiatives)
- Djirra (formerly Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Victoria) (eight initiatives)
- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC) (10 initiatives)
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) (21 initiatives)

Partnerships

While it is recognised that many prevention initiatives targeting Victorian Aboriginal communities are delivered in partnership with other ACCOs, community groups, or mainstream providers, information on delivery partnerships was only available for around one quarter of initiatives (24%). Of the 59 initiatives for which information was available, 49 initiatives had at least one partnership in place, while ten had no partnerships. Documented partnerships were with a range of organisations including ACCOs and community groups, state and local government agencies, schools, sporting clubs and associations and mainstream health and community services.

Table 1 Initiatives per organisation

Number of founded initiatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	21
Number of organisations	92	18	7	5	4	2	2	1	1

FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION

Agencies and grants programs

A large majority of funding information included in the analysis was provided by the Victorian government through two agencies: FSV and DFFH, with four major grants programs accounting for almost the full amount (94%). A summary of these grants programs is provided in Table 2 overleaf.

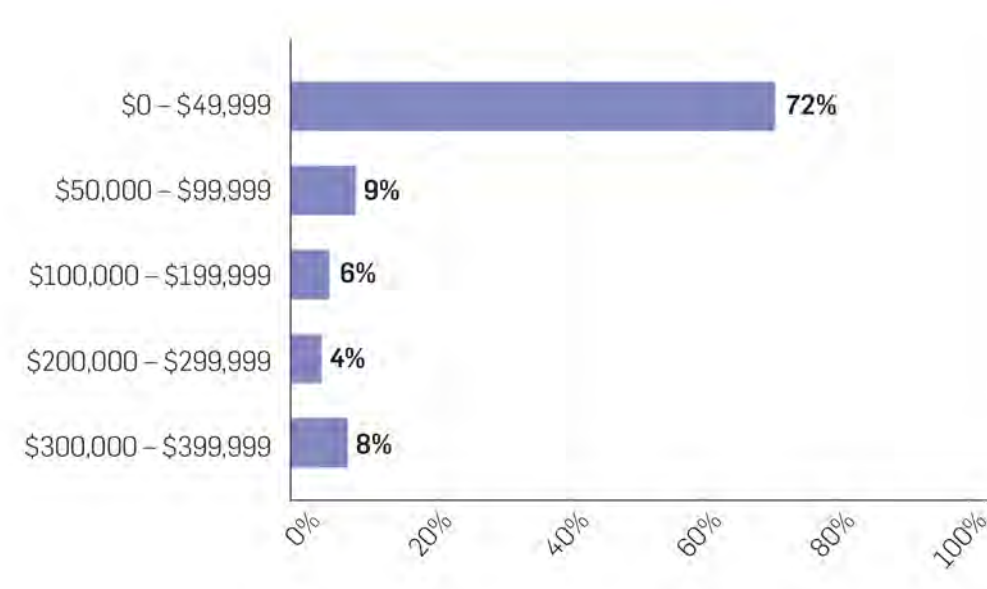
Our desktop review and consultations found that National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has funded four Aboriginal-specific family violence prevention initiatives since 2016, accounting for 4% of total funding. Additional funding for prevention has been provided by Latrobe City Council (toward the First 1000 Days Project) and FSV (toward the Stronger Youth, Safer Community project).

While other government agencies are involved in the funding and delivery of family violence prevention initiatives in Victoria (including DET and DJCS), these agencies were not responsive to our requests for information regarding their initiatives (as noted in Section 1).

Funding amounts

Based on available information, the majority of initiatives (72%) received less than \$49,999 in total funding. As shown in Figure 4 below, the remaining 28% of initiatives received between \$50,000 to \$399,999. Funding information was available for around nine in ten initiatives (92%). Of the 19 initiatives for which the funding amount was not available, a funding range was identified for 14 initiatives.

Figure 4 Funding amount, total funding per initiative



Base n=246

Note: Reduced base size due to n=5 initiatives for which information was not available

03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

Table 2 Victorian Government grants programs

AGENCY AND GRANT	DESCRIPTION	INITIATIVES FUNDED SINCE 2016	EST. FUNDING (\$)
FSV – Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund (CIF)	The CIF is an annual grants program which provides \$1.1 million for community-led projects that educate, prevent, reduce, and respond to family violence in Aboriginal communities across Victoria. Projects funded through the CIF support and address priorities identified by the 11 Dhelk Dja Action Groups to address family violence at a local level. ²⁷	199 initiatives funded through six funding rounds (2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2020-22)	\$5.9 million (32% of total funding)
FSV – Preventing the Cycle of Violence (PCV) Aboriginal Fund	In 2018, the Victorian Government announced the PCV Aboriginal Fund, making available a total of \$2.7 million over two years to Aboriginal-led organisations and community groups to deliver family violence prevention and early intervention projects. The PCV aimed to achieve respectful, culturally rich, strong and healthy relationships for Aboriginal people in Victoria. ²⁸	11 initiatives funded through one funding round (2018-20)	\$2.7 million (15% of total funding)
FSV – Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund (DDFVF)	The DDFVF was announced in 2020 to provide Aboriginal organisations with funding over two years, giving them greater certainty in planning how they deliver family violence services tailored to the needs of their communities. Funding was provided across four streams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aboriginal frontline family violence services ■ Holistic healing ■ Preventing the Cycle of Violence ■ Aboriginal family violence workforce capacity building.²⁹ 	21 initiatives funded through one funding round (2021-23)	\$5.5 million (30% of total funding)
DFFH – Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Innovation Fund (AIF)	The Aboriginal Innovation Fund supports Aboriginal-led organisations to trial, test and evaluate the effectiveness of a range of new and innovative primary prevention initiatives for Aboriginal people and their communities, across a range of settings and contexts. ³⁰	14 initiatives funded through one funding round (2017-20)	\$3.2 million (17% of total funding)

Source: CIF Funding Guidelines (2020), PCV Funding Guidelines (2018), DDFVF Funding Guidelines (2020), AIF: Key Evaluation Findings (2021)

²⁷ Victorian Government (2021). *Aboriginal Community Initiatives Fund – Funding guidelines (2021-2022)*.

²⁸ Victorian Government (2018). *Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund Guidelines 2018-2020*.

²⁹ Victorian Government (2020). *Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund: Call for funding submissions*.

³⁰ Victorian Government (2021). *Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Innovation Fund: Key Evaluation Findings*.

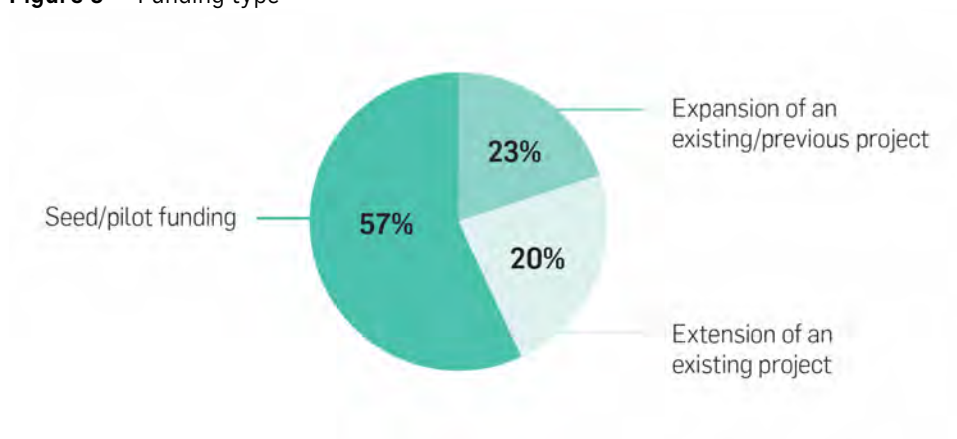
Funding types

Where possible, we also mapped each initiative to the type of funding received, that is:

- seed or pilot funding (i.e., funding for a new initiative)
- extension of an existing project
- expansion of an existing/previous project.

We were able to determine the funding type for less than one quarter of initiatives (24%). As shown in Figure 5 below, most of the initiatives for which this information was available received seed/pilot funding (57%).

Figure 5 Funding type



Base n=61

Note: Reduced base size due to n=190 initiatives for which information was not available

LOCATION

There are 11 Dhelk Dja Action Groups which represent Aboriginal communities across Victoria. Each Dhelk Dja Action Group is responsible for developing Regional Action Plans to drive local and regional action and partnerships between Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal services, government, mainstream services, and the broader community to prevent and address family violence.³¹

³¹ VACCA, ThinkPlace & Family Safety Victoria (2019). *The Nargneit Birrang Framework*.

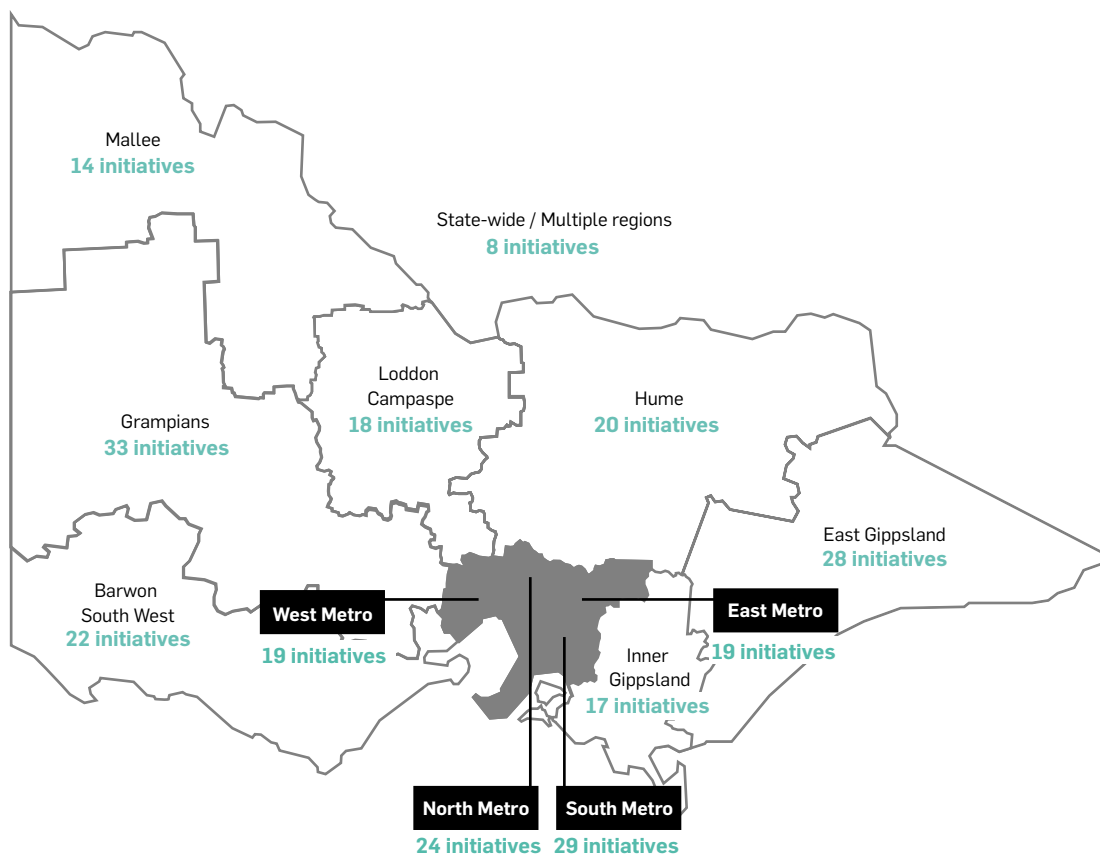
03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

To support alignment with Dhelk Dja, we coded each initiative to the Dhelk Dja Action Group region/s in which it was based. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 6 below, there is some variation in the number of initiatives that have been funded in each Dhelk Dja region since 2016.

Table 3 Regions of initiatives

Dhelk Dja Action Group region	Barwon South West	East Gippsland	East Metro	Grampians	Hume	Inner Gippsland	Loddon Campaspe	Mallee	North Metro	South Metro	West Metro	Multiple	State-wide	Total
Number of initiatives	22	28	19	33	20	17	18	14	24	29	19	5	3	251
Proportion of total initiatives (%)	10	12	8	14	9	7	8	6	11	13	8	2	1	100

Figure 6 Regions of initiatives



DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING

As discussed previously, the spread of initiatives funded in each Dhelk Dja region is not uniform. For this reason, we undertook analysis to determine the distribution of funding for each region and in doing so, to understand whether larger scale initiatives were delivered in regions where the number of funded initiatives was lower.

Funding amounts were not available for 17 of the 251 funded initiatives. Of the initiatives for which funding amounts were available, we calculated the total funding provided to each region. As shown in Table 4 below, the amount of funding provided to each region varies considerably.

Table 4 Distribution of funding

Dhelk Dja region	Number of initiatives ³²	Funding
Barwon South West	18	\$ 1,335,126
East Gippsland	28	\$ 1,572,269
East Metro	17	\$ 1,178,272
Grampians	33	\$ 1,175,600
Hume	19	\$ 1,289,871
Inner Gippsland	14	\$ 973,614
Loddon Campaspe	17	\$ 916,000
Mallee	14	\$ 642,027
North Metro	22	\$ 1,851,787
South Metro	26	\$ 1,641,560
West Metro	19	\$ 723,548
Multiple	5	\$ 1,458,800
State-wide	2	\$ 702,720

Source: Urbis analysis of the 17 initiatives for which funding amounts were not available indicates that four were in Barwon South West, two were in East Metro, one was in Hume, three were in Inner Gippsland, one was in Loddon Campaspe, two were in North Metro, three were in South Metro and one was state wide.

³² Excludes initiatives for which funding amounts were not available

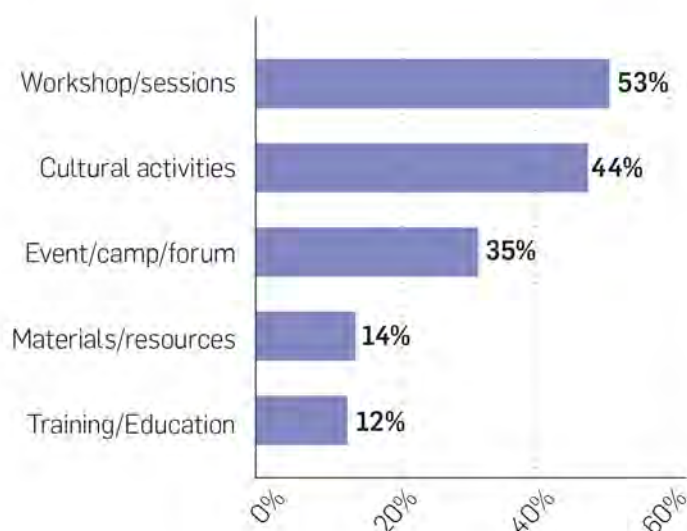
03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

DELIVERY MODE

Family violence prevention initiatives targeting Aboriginal communities use a range of delivery modes (i.e. approaches to provide support and deliver activities). For the purposes of this project, each initiative was assigned a primary delivery mode and a secondary delivery mode (if relevant) based on available information.

The codes under the delivery mode category are informed by our review of key policies, strategies and frameworks, and our experience evaluating community-led prevention initiatives. As shown in Figure 7 overleaf, the most common delivery mode was workshops/sessions (53%), followed by cultural activities (44%).

Figure 7 Delivery mode



Base n=196

Note: Reduced base size due to n=55 initiatives for which there was insufficient information to assign a delivery mode/s

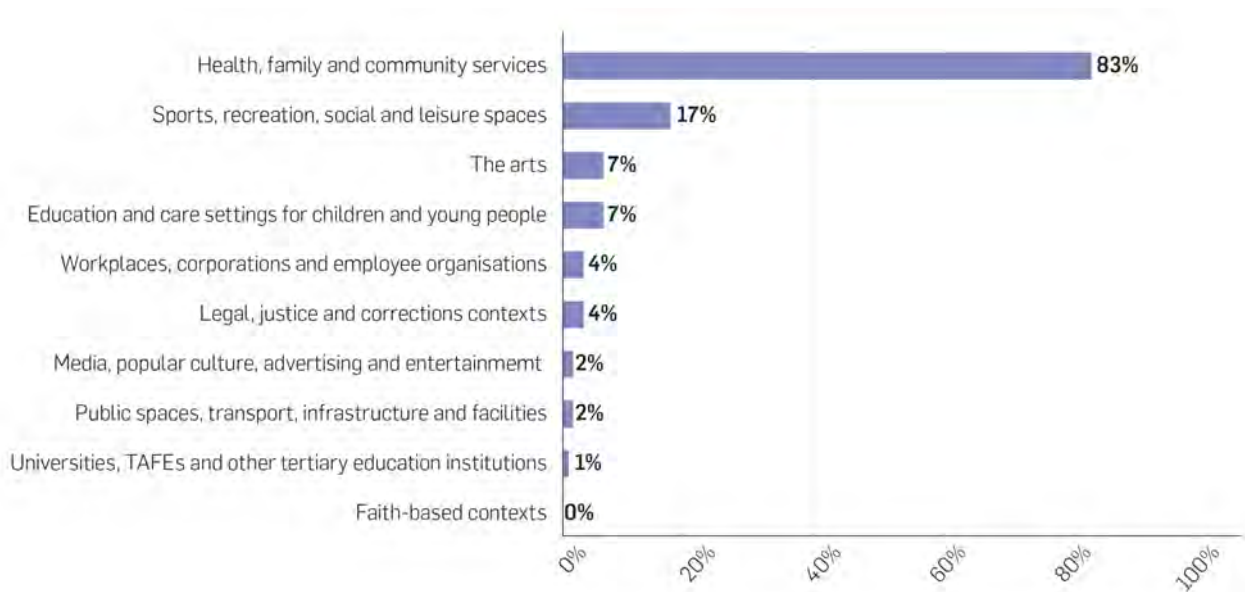
Note: Total does not add up to 100% due to some initiatives being assigned multiple delivery modes

SETTINGS

Settings are the places where family violence prevention initiatives happen. For the purposes of this project, initiatives were assigned a primary setting and a secondary setting (if relevant) based on available information.

The codes under the setting category are adopted from Our Watch's *Change the Story*, which identifies priority settings where there is significant practice expertise and/or evidence that demonstrates their potential for impact.³³ As shown in Figure 8 overleaf, a large majority of initiatives identified to date have taken place in health, family, and community services (83%), followed by sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces (17%).

Figure 8 Settings



Base n=196

Note: Reduced base size due to n=55 initiatives for which there was insufficient information to assign a setting/s

Note: Total does not add up to 100% due to some initiatives being assigned multiple settings

³³ Our Watch (2015). *Change the Story*.

03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

TIMING

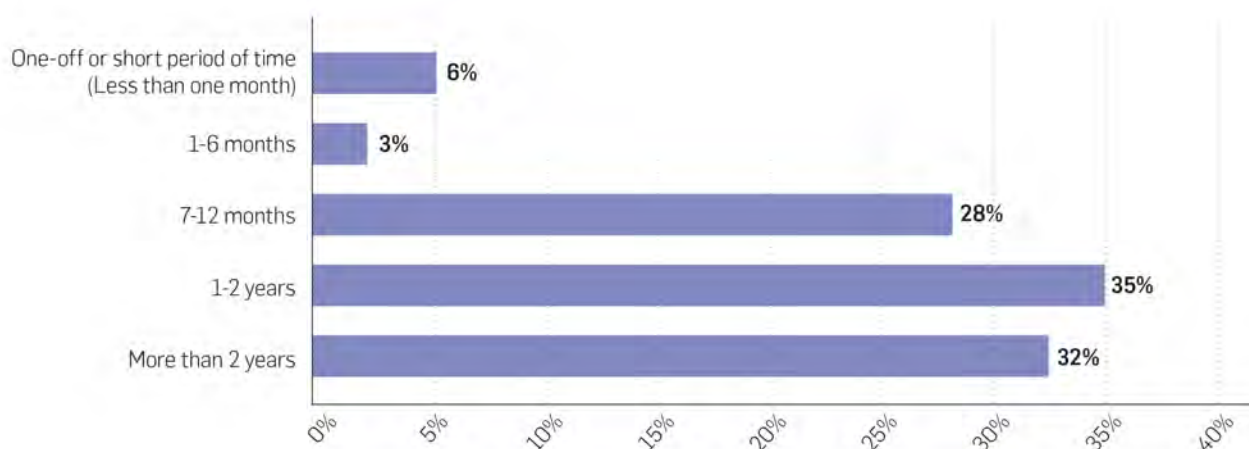
Ongoing/lapsed

Of the 251 initiatives that were identified, 176 have lapsed and 75 are ongoing. Of the 75 initiatives that are ongoing, most were funded through the CIF 2021-22 (28), the DDFVF (21), CIF 2020-21 (20).

Initiative duration

Information on initiative duration was available for less than one-third of all initiatives (30%). As shown in Figure 9 below, where this information was available, the most common duration of initiatives was 1-2 years (35%), followed by more than 2 years (32%). However, it is important to highlight that all 177 initiatives for which duration could not be determined were funded under the CIF. The CIF provides funding for a maximum of 12 months, and therefore it can be inferred that a large majority of all 251 initiatives ran for less than 12 months (80%).

Figure 9 Duration



Base n=74

Note: Reduced base size due to n=177 initiatives for which information was not available

TARGET COHORTS

Prevention initiatives must be tailored to different communities, contexts and audiences to ensure activities are appropriate and meaningful.³⁴ Working closely with the PMWG, we identified eight target cohorts (and associated sub-cohorts) for initiatives focused on preventing family violence in Aboriginal communities, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Target cohorts

Cohort	Sub-cohorts (if relevant)	
Men and/or boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men Boys Men and boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dads Dads and children
Women and/or girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women Girls Women and girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mothers Mothers and children
Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early childhood Primary school aged High school aged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16-25 years of age All young people
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	
Elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elders (men) Elders (women) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elders (all genders)
Specific cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees / service providers LGBTQI+ community People with disability Children and young people in out-of-home care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice involved Grandparents Family violence survivors Other

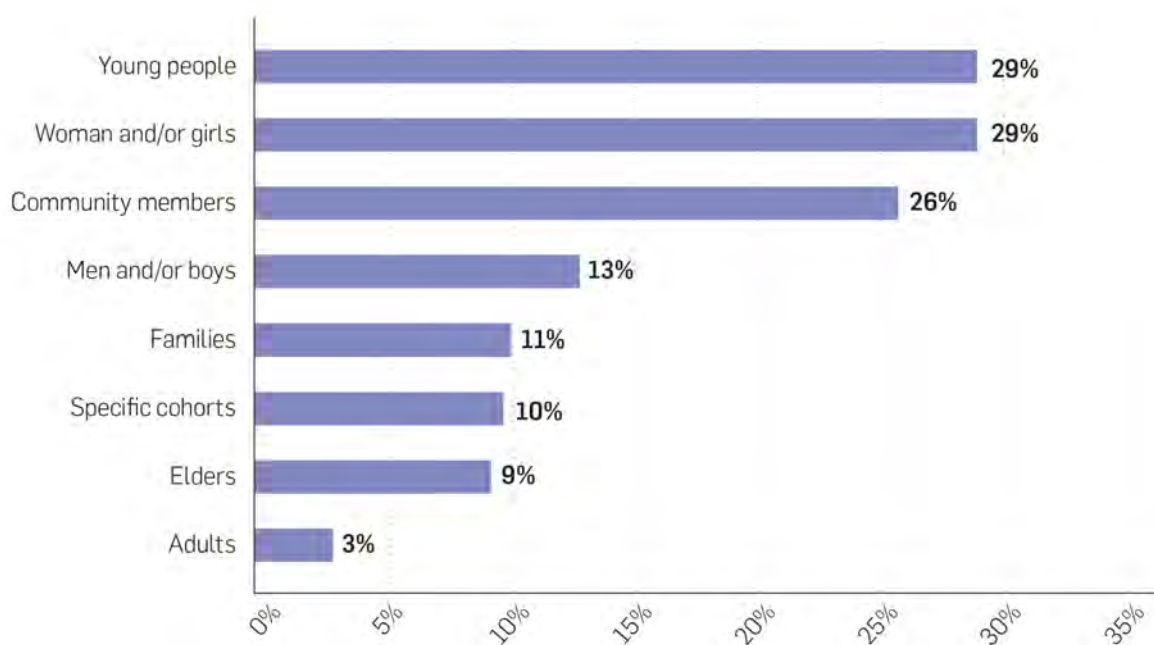
³⁴ Ibid.

03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

For the purposes of this project, each initiative was mapped to a cohort and a sub-cohort (as relevant). Where initiatives targeted multiple cohorts, this was also captured. For example, if an initiative targeted boys who were primary school aged, both 'boys' and 'primary school aged' were selected.

Similarly, if an initiative targeted women and girls of all ages, both 'women and girls' and 'Elders (women)' were selected. As shown in Figure 10 below, more than one quarter of initiatives identified to date have targeted young people (29%), and the same number have targeted women and/or girls (29%).

Figure 10 Target cohorts



PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The IFVPPF identifies six mutually reinforcing strategies likely to have the most positive effect in the primary prevention of family violence against Aboriginal people. These are:

- raising community awareness
- family strengthening
- cultural strengthening
- responding to grief and trauma
- community information and education
- self-esteem and resilience building.³⁵

23 initiatives were required to nominate which of these prevention strategies they drew on as part of their reporting. Most of these initiatives indicated they drew on all six strategies (16 initiatives).

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Evaluation is critical to building the evidence base for effective family violence prevention approaches in Aboriginal communities. Evaluation also ensures achievements, success stories and lessons learned are captured and used to inform improvements and to target funding for improved outcomes for Victorian Aboriginal communities.

Through the mapping, we sought to capture the number of initiatives that have undertaken evaluation (including the data sources used), key outcomes achieved and barriers and enablers to success.

³⁵ Victorian Government (2008). *Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework*.

Evaluation

We found evidence that 35 of 251 initiatives (14%) have undertaken evaluation to measure outcomes from their activities. Of those 35 initiatives, 24 undertook internal evaluations with external support, 10 had informal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place, and one was evaluated by an external provider. Where evaluation was undertaken, common data sources included surveys/feedback forms, staff reflections/observations, yarning sessions, media including video footage and photos, recorded attendance figures and social media posts and engagement data.

In addition to these initiative-level evaluations, an evaluation of the AIF was undertaken in 2021 by Karabena Consulting. The purpose of this evaluation was to support the administration, monitoring and evaluation of AIF-funded projects and to inform future primary prevention policy and programmatic directions and investments. Ten of the 13 funded organisations participated in the evaluation, which found the AIF achieved most of its intended objectives, specifically:

- to support Aboriginal-led organisations to design and deliver family violence primary prevention projects
- to test new forms of partnership and collaboration
- to grow or upscale existing ways of working.

Key outcomes

Our analysis of initiative-level evaluations found that most initiatives sought to strengthen well-established protective factors against family violence. For example, evaluation provided evidence that initiatives contributed to the following common outcomes:

- enhanced connection to culture
- increased community awareness and knowledge of available services and supports
- participants are more connected to each other and community
- increased opportunities for healing and participants are more confident and resilient
- increased awareness of family violence and its impacts
- participants have a safe space to go and share their stories
- increased understanding of healthy and respectful relationships.

Barriers and enablers

Thirty-three initiatives reported barriers and enablers to achievement of outcomes as part of their evaluations. Common barriers and enablers reported are set out in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Barriers and enablers

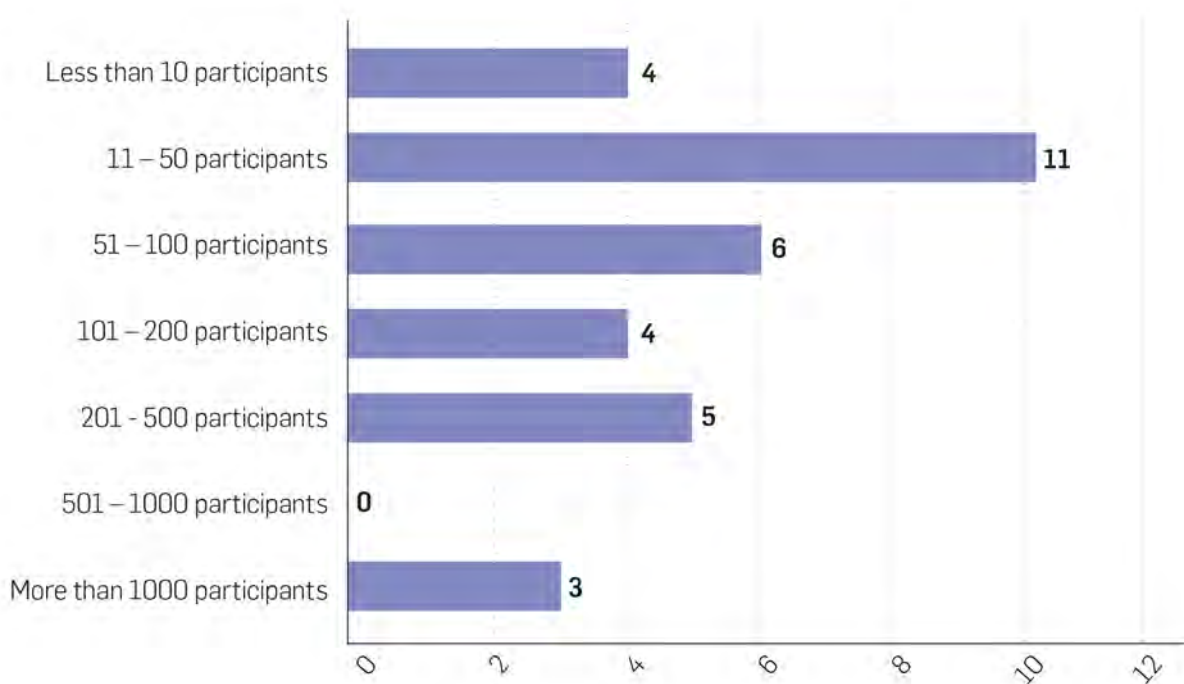
Barriers	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ COVID-19 restrictions▪ lack of ongoing funding▪ staffing/organisational challenges such as recruitment issues, staff turnover and organisation restructures▪ underestimation of resources (including time, funding and staffing) required to deliver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ capability and dedication of staff▪ the involvement Aboriginal people (particularly Elders and/or children and young people) in initiative design and delivery (co-design is a key approach to improve program delivery)▪ local networks/partnerships with other ACCOs▪ provision of transport and food assistance for participants.

03 OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED INITIATIVES CONTINUED

REACH

Reach data (i.e. the number of people who participated in an initiative) was only available for 33 initiatives (13%), meaning this data is not representative of all initiatives. Where reach data was available, we coded the total figure to a 'reach range'. As shown in Figure 11 below, the most common reach range was 11-50 participants, and the least common was 501-1000 participants.

Figure 11 Initiative reach



Base n=33

Note: Reduced base size due to n=218 initiatives for which reach information was not available

Note: Data has been reported as counts rather than proportions due to small sample size

04 KEY FINDINGS



04 KEY FINDINGS

This section presents key findings regarding family violence prevention activities, successes and challenges in preventing family violence against Aboriginal people, and gaps and opportunities for future investment.

FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES, SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

While ACCOs and community groups are undertaking extensive prevention activity that is not funded by government, such activity does not explicitly aim to prevent family violence.

As discussed in Section 2, this project sought to map government and non-government-funded family violence prevention initiatives targeting Victorian Aboriginal communities. However, our consultations and desktop review did not identify any such non-government-initiatives which explicitly aim to prevent family violence, and therefore they do not meet the scope of this project.

Stakeholders explained there is extensive prevention activity occurring in Aboriginal communities and that everything ACCOs do includes prevention as a core element. By providing culturally safe support, services, and Gathering Places for the Aboriginal community, ACCOs offer opportunities for healing while also playing a critical role in supporting and strengthening families, communities, culture, and identity. In this way, the work ACCOs undertake contributes to prevention in both:

- addressing the underlying drivers of violence, particularly in terms of the legacies and ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families, and communities
- strengthening protective factors against violence, such as enhanced resilience, self-esteem, cultural identity and connection to family and community.

Stakeholders provided a range of examples of activities undertaken by ACCOs and community groups, and which contribute to addressing the underlying drivers of violence and/or strengthening protective factors against violence but do not explicitly aim to prevent family violence. These include community events, cultural, recreational, and social activities, and culturally safe and holistic service responses.



If people are strong in culture and strong in community and strong in identity that really helps with their inner self and their behaviours. When they're present and engaged in community activities and events, and there's Elders or Aunties there, and if they are needing support or they need to be pulled into line, they kind of get put on the spot there... I think just gentle messaging like that [is important]... Activities could range from community family day events through to yarning circles or... family violence marches and walks.

(Government stakeholder)

Stakeholders suggested the ongoing stigma surrounding family violence may be one reason that some initiatives do not explicitly aim to prevent family violence. It was noted that use of strengths-based language and gentle messaging are critical to engaging community and that including the term 'family violence' in an initiative name or description may deter potential participants. However, some ACCO/community group stakeholders suggested it is important to destigmatise family violence by talking about it more openly.



Talking about family violence more openly without it being such a stigmatized topic [is important] ... The one thing that we need to do to stamp it out is to call it out for what it is.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)



I think the stigma of involved with [family violence is a key challenge], so you'd notice a lot of titles wouldn't call themselves family violence projects or activities, the language is important to get that initial engagement.

(Government stakeholder)

It should also be noted that most ACCOs and community groups receive base funding from government, and so it is difficult to determine the specific funding sources for the types of initiatives discussed above.

Initiatives often incorporate elements of prevention and response

As noted in Section 2, ACCOs and community groups deliver a range of initiatives and activities across the prevention continuum (i.e., primary prevention and secondary prevention through to tertiary response). Stakeholders explained that concepts such as primary and secondary prevention are often not relevant in an Aboriginal context where many interventions adopt a holistic approach that includes healing, cultural connection, and trauma-informed approaches. For this reason, many of our consultations with ACCOs and community groups were wide-ranging and explored initiatives which include elements of prevention and response. Several government stakeholders suggested there may be value in building awareness of what prevention means among ACCOs and community groups which are funded to deliver prevention initiatives. This was raised in the context of some funded organisations having broad experience in response and case management but limited experience in prevention.



I think it would have been beneficial... at the start [to provide] an overview of what prevention is. I'm sure there are materials that [they] could read but bringing them together and really having that discussion would be really beneficial...a lot of these projects were coming to this really new.

(Government stakeholder)



There's a recognition that [government] can't silo this type of work into prevention alone, and there needs to be early intervention, if not response considerations, when doing this work in Aboriginal communities [to give] organisations that flexibility to do and design the work in a way that best suits and meet the needs of the communities that they're working with.

(Government stakeholder)

Funding arrangements are not commensurate with the size of the need and the time required to achieve prevention outcomes

Our document review and mapping found that government investment in prevention has increased over recent years. However, there was consensus among stakeholders regarding the need for greater investment and ongoing or longer term funding to prevent family violence against Victorian Aboriginal people. Stakeholders felt funding for family violence prevention is inadequate to reorient the system towards prevention rather than crisis response.



Sometimes government just wants to support people that are in crisis or vulnerable families but there are opportunities in the prevention space to support families [that are less vulnerable] and encourage them to stay on that path.

(Government stakeholder)

ACCO/community group stakeholders raised two key issues regarding funding arrangements that act as barriers to designing and delivering effective family violence prevention initiatives. These are discussed in the following.

Short-term funding inhibits ongoing community action

As discussed in Section 3, the majority of initiatives funded since 2016 have been less than 12 months in duration (80%). Stakeholders explained that this is often not sufficient time to plan, implement and deliver initiatives nor to be able to measure impact and show proof of concept. By their nature, prevention initiatives seek incremental change, meaning outcomes take time to emerge. In addition, ACCO/community group stakeholders reported that short-term funding limits the ability to develop and implement a strategic approach to prevention programming, and that this is a missed opportunity to create lasting change in community.

04 KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED



Because there's these little bits of money that are all siloed it, it makes it challenging to then have a strategic approach to your programming. So, it almost seems like the funders are setting up for you not to be able to do that more strategic work [which is challenging] especially when everybody [understands]... changes happen over a very long period of time.
(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

While short-term, pilot funding (such as through the CIF) is important to provide opportunities for innovation and creativity, it is essential that there are opportunities for ACCOs and community groups to secure long-term, sustainable funding for prevention initiatives proven to be effective.

Lack of flexibility in how funding is allocated

ACCO/community group stakeholders explained that there are often constraints on how government funding can be used, and this can negatively impact their capacity to deliver prevention initiatives. For example, several stakeholders reported that being unable to use funding for staff wages created increased workloads for existing staff and disrupted continuity of initiatives, which then limits the effectiveness of activities for participants. In addition, stakeholders felt that placing such constraints on spending was at odds with the principles of self-determination.



We have a vision around working across the continuum and building primary prevention, [including] some great opportunities to be doing more work on Country in ways that work for individuals and families. But when you have funding that's very prescriptive and time-limited, you're not able to work as flexibly as you'd like.
(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

The establishment of new, longer term grant programs over the past four years signals a shift in how prevention is funded

The establishment of the PCV, the AIF and most recently, the DDFVF, suggest the Victorian government is committed to providing more funding certainty to ACCOs and community groups delivering family violence prevention initiatives. As noted above, stakeholders we spoke with emphasised the importance of long-term funding to enable organisations to better plan, deliver and evaluate their initiatives, which will ultimately lead to better prevention outcomes for community. However, many stakeholders felt that grants programs should not be the primary funding mechanism for prevention and that ACCOs should have access to ongoing funding.



The intention [for the CIF] was for innovation and creativity and community-led projects, there was never an intention that CIF should be the ongoing source of funding for projects... but there hasn't been a lot of support for the next steps, so if a project was proven successful and that there's a demand and a need in community, there was no transition... that's where PCV's comes in... it's the opportunity to expand and grow CIF projects.
(Government stakeholder)



Grants need to stop, [organisations] need to be funded directly... reapplying every year is a barrier, it's an administration burden. The way community operates and do their business, there's always a prevention element in everything they do... There needs to be a shift, if we do more work in prevention and early intervention, we wouldn't need so much investment in [crisis response].
(Government stakeholder)

ACCOs and community groups delivering prevention initiatives face workforce challenges

Stakeholders consistently raised workforce challenges as a key barrier for ACCOs and community groups' capacity to deliver family violence prevention initiatives. Common issues raised include staff shortages (especially in rural and regional areas and as a result of COVID-19), high turnover, and the challenging nature of the work itself, leading to burnout. Stakeholders described that workforce challenges can negatively impact delivery of their initiatives, as well their ability to apply for further funding, noting that funding applications can be complex and onerous.



Finding people to fill jobs in this line of work is extremely, extremely challenging... So whilst you might have great, terrifically qualified, culturally safe folks who are working in this space, they're just exhausted.

(Government stakeholder)

In addition, many stakeholders considered the involvement of Aboriginal staff in the design and delivery of initiatives as critical to their success but explained that there are not enough Aboriginal workers to fill all available roles. It was further noted that Aboriginal staff can experience lateral violence in the workplace, and that ACCOs and community groups, particularly smaller organisations, often do not have the resources or infrastructure to provide adequate cultural supervision.



The workforce needs cultural safety, cultural supervision because they bear the front of lateral violence. Mob working with mob is a challenge in itself.

(Government stakeholder)



The workforce is at capacity...we're struggling to fill... jobs across the state.... It's getting harder.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

Reporting requirements are burdensome and are often not relevant to ACCOs and community groups

Reporting requirements for family violence prevention initiatives funded by government were generally viewed by ACCOs/community group stakeholders as burdensome and overly prescriptive. While some felt that reporting requirements have improved over time, there was consensus that opportunities exist to increase the relevance of reporting to better reflect Aboriginal experiences and cultural contexts. For example, the following improvement opportunities were raised:

- co-designing the reporting template with funded organisations at the outset of the project
- more flexibility in reporting, including opportunities to incorporate more visual and/or verbal content to allow for non-linear storytelling and opportunities to share successes and learnings
- a stronger focus on holistic community and family outcomes rather than outputs
- reporting templates tailored in line with the level of funding provided.



Reporting focuses on numbers, it's not about outcomes or seeing things holistically. It doesn't realistically acknowledge how long this [prevention] work takes, and you don't get to tell the whole story.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

04 KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED



People are really proud of their work, and I think giving them a platform to share that rather than just on in a written government reporting template [would be great].

(Government stakeholder)



There could be different templates or reporting styles depending on how much funding they receive, so if it is you know less than \$10,000 keep it to one page. If it's \$50,000, it may be a bit more expanded a little bit, opportunities for some flexibility there [are needed] ... we've heard all along [about] the administration burden for a small amount of money.

(Government stakeholder)

Some stakeholders indicated the reporting requirements were mismatched with the level of funding for prevention initiatives, and that this was sometimes a deterrent in applying for funding. It was noted that the time required for reporting meant less time spent on the ground supporting community and that ACCOs and community groups were constantly grappling with this, particularly in the context of the workforce challenges discussed above.

Most government stakeholders we spoke with agreed that reporting requirements may not be fit for purpose, noting it was often difficult to obtain timely and complete reports from funded organisations, particularly during the various COVID-19 waves in Victoria. ACCO/community group stakeholders reflected positively on their experiences with reporting during these periods, explaining that government offered them significant flexibility on timing and level of detail for reporting and this was appreciated.



We found getting reports off some organisations was really difficult. It took us a long time... Perhaps we need to take a look at... reports because I don't think it was necessarily fit for purpose for this program.

(Government stakeholder)



During COVID we were very flexible with all of the reporting requirements, like if they needed more time, we absolutely gave them more time.

(Government stakeholder)



We weren't able to do a lot of the things that we said we wanted to do because of COVID and it changed the relationship between government and ourselves in a positive way... I can't fault them... they walked beside you and they helped you to develop up and understand what the reporting requirements were.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

COVID-19 disruptions necessitated a focus on emergency-type responses, meaning there has been less attention on prevention in recent years

COVID-19 caused significant disruption to prevention initiatives funded since 2020, with lockdowns and social distancing requirements resulting in the cancellation or postponement of many planned activities. In addition, ACCOs and community groups were focused on providing emergency-type responses to community members impacted by the pandemic and associated lockdowns (including those experiencing or at risk of family violence). For many ACCOs and community groups, prevention was 'put on the backburner' during the various waves of COVID-19 in order to meet the needs of community. However, some were able to successfully pivot their prevention initiatives to an online or hybrid format.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT

Consultations highlighted a number of gaps in prevention programming to be addressed

Consultations with government and ACCO/community group stakeholders raised several gaps in prevention programming to be addressed to improve family violence prevention outcomes in Aboriginal communities. These are discussed in the following.

There is a need for a stronger focus on some cohorts and forms of violence in prevention programming. As discussed in Section 3, prevention initiatives must be tailored to different communities, contexts, and audiences to ensure activities are appropriate and meaningful. However, stakeholders explained that investment in initiatives targeting certain cohorts has been insufficient. For example, it was suggested that there is a need for a stronger focus on Elders (in particular, preventing Elder abuse), LGBTQI+ community, perpetrators of family violence (predominantly men), and lateral violence.

Some regional and rural areas are under-resourced. Several stakeholders highlighted that it can be difficult delivering prevention initiatives in regional and rural areas due to staff shortages, higher costs involved in servicing a large geographic area, and variable levels of community engagement among those who are geographically isolated. It was noted that further investment is needed to attract staff to regional and rural areas and toward ACCOs/community groups covering large areas. In addition, it was suggested that offering transport options to community members supports greater engagement geographically isolated community members.

Several opportunities exist to improve prevention outcomes in Aboriginal communities

Consultations with government and ACCO/community group stakeholders raised a number of opportunities for future investment to improve family violence prevention outcomes in Aboriginal communities. These are discussed in the following.

Embedding self-determination in prevention efforts targeting Aboriginal communities, particularly with regard to funding arrangements and reporting requirements. As noted in Section 3, the Victorian Government has outlined a commitment to family violence reform that supports Aboriginal self-determination. Over recent years, there has been a positive shift in how prevention initiatives are funded, such that ACCOs and community groups are funded to design and deliver activities for their communities. However, ACCO/community group stakeholders reflected that there remains a need for more flexible funding arrangements and reporting requirements to enable them to deliver initiatives in ways that they see fit, and in doing so, be self-determining.



Prevention, from what I've seen in community is its... got to come from community. It can't be written for us; it's got to be written by us.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

Building capacity of ACCOs and community groups to monitor and evaluate their projects, while ensuring data sovereignty principles are upheld. Stakeholders explained that ACCOs and community groups are not adequately resourced nor supported to monitor and evaluate their prevention initiatives in culturally appropriate ways. Providing capacity building support and additional funding for evaluation represents an important opportunity to ensure that successes and lessons from initiatives are captured and shared to improve outcomes for community. It was noted that there is a paucity of evidence regarding the effectiveness of Aboriginal-specific prevention initiatives, and that long-term funding and longitudinal data is essential to understanding what works for different cohorts and why. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring all efforts to monitor and evaluate Aboriginal-specific prevention initiatives be done in partnership with ACCOs and community groups and ensuring the principals of Aboriginal data sovereignty are upheld.



I think that sitting down and co-designing the monitoring, evaluation and reporting approach would have would be beneficial... working out what's going to work for these organisations in terms of the time and the and the funding that they have available. I think we kind of have a one-size-fits-all approach, sometimes with this with our approach to our monitoring these projects.

(Government stakeholder)

Culturally tailored education on healthy relationships for Aboriginal children and young people. A number of stakeholders reflected that the Victorian Government's Respectful Relationships program which aims to teach children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence,³⁶ is not specifically tailored for Aboriginal children and young people. Stakeholders felt an opportunity exists to provide more targeted and tailored education for Aboriginal children and young people that emphasises culture, family, community, and connection to Country.

Sustainable funding for prevention initiatives. As previously discussed, stakeholders highlighted the importance of improving funding arrangements for family violence prevention initiatives targeting Aboriginal communities. It was noted that funding for prevention is typically short-term and small amounts, and that this does not match the size of the need in community nor the long-term prevention outcomes are needed to ultimately reduce the incidence of family violence against Aboriginal people.

More opportunities to celebrate successes. ACCO/ community group stakeholders emphasised the importance of providing opportunities to celebrate successes and achievements in the Aboriginal family violence prevention sector. It was suggested that these types of strengths-based approaches can facilitate continuous improvement and learning among ACCOs and community groups, which ultimately leads to better outcomes for community.

A holistic, trauma-informed approach to family violence prevention. A strong theme that emerged through our consultations with Aboriginal stakeholders was the importance of adopting a holistic and trauma-informed approach to family violence prevention. In practice, this can mean tailoring and targeting approaches to meet the needs of different cohorts but ensuring that all initiatives are grounded in family, community, and culture. Stakeholders emphasised that prevention approaches must not be siloed and must consider the complex and interweaving drivers of family violence against Aboriginal people.



Prevention [is about] healing, culture, family strengthening... a positive, strengths-based and trauma-informed approach... and community engagement.

(Government stakeholder)



It needs to be trauma-informed approach because obviously the intergenerational trauma that we've experienced has impacted, the ability to build some of those strong and respectful relationships.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)



In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context, [the concept of family violence] is quite fluid because it also includes lateral violence, it could include spiritual abuse. It could include technology facilitated abuse, which is rife in communities, because you might only have one phone for one family, making sure we're not siloing approaches [is important].

(Government stakeholder)

³⁶ Victorian Government (2022). Respectful Relationships. Retrieved from <https://www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships>

05 CONCLUSION



05 CONCLUSION

Drawing on the findings discussed previously, we have identified a number of success factors for prevention initiatives which can be understood as systemic and contextual factors, organisational factors, and project design factors.

Systematic and contextual factors

- place-based, community-led projects that respond to local need
- access to pilot funding to support innovation
- access to sustainable funding for projects proven to be effective
- funding for outcomes rather than project outputs
- flexible reporting arrangements that allow for culturally relevant data collection
- empowering ACCOs delivering prevention initiatives to explicitly call out the aim of preventing family violence to contribute to data collection and build the evidence base for what works in Aboriginal communities.

Organisational factors

- Aboriginal-led design and delivery of initiatives
- access to cultural supervision and support for Aboriginal staff to strengthen their capacity in project delivery and monitoring and evaluation
- staff with lived experience or expertise in family violence
- local networks and partnerships with both mainstream organisations and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations
- opportunities to share and celebrate successes and lessons learnt.

Project design

- involvement of Elders and young Aboriginal people in project design and delivery
- focus on strengthening protective factors against family violence – cultural strengthening and family strengthening
- gentle messaging that de-emphasises 'family violence' in project promotion activities
- holistic approach that involves the whole family and community.



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APPENDIX A

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

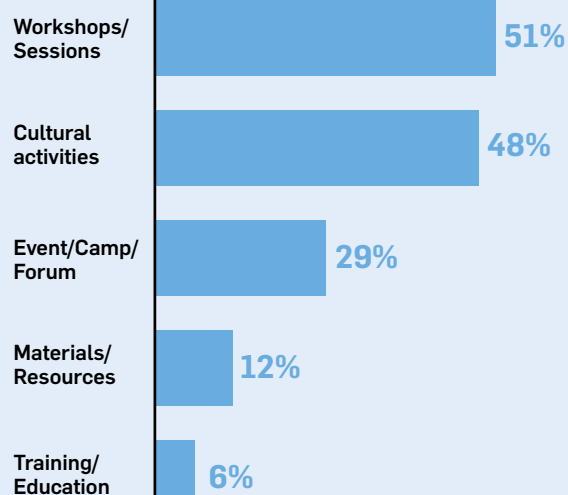
69 INITIATIVES DELIVERED SINCE 2016
TARGETED CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

Over \$5.4 million of funding provided to initiatives targeting children/young people since 2016

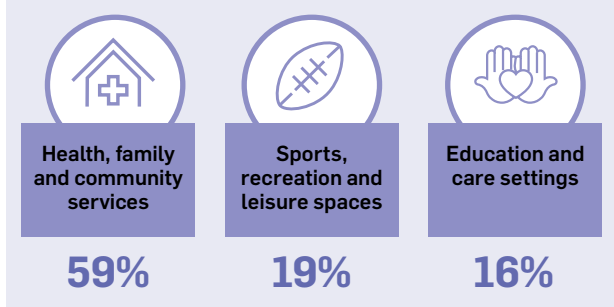
TOP SUB-COHORTS FOR INITIATIVES



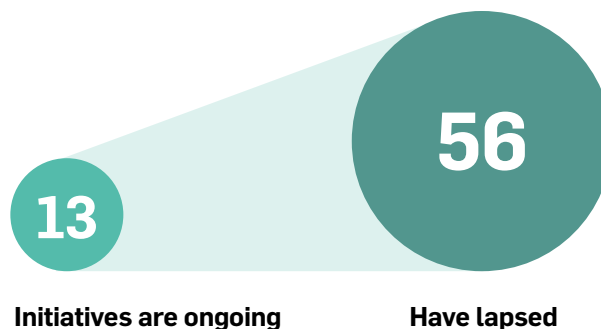
DELIVERY MODES FOR INITIATIVES



TOP 3 SETTINGS FOR INITIATIVES



TIMING



44 ORGANISATIONS FUNDED, INCLUDING:



VACCA
Connected by culture



BUNJILWARRA
Koorie Youth Alcohol & Drug Healing Service



OVERVIEW

Since 2016, 69 initiatives targeting children and young people have been delivered by 44 organisations. Initiatives targeting children and young people comprised 27% of all 251 initiatives, meaning this cohort was the most commonly targeted cohort for initiatives. Around one-third of initiatives targeting children and young people specifically targeted girls and young women (22 of 69), while just one initiative specifically targeted boys and young men. The remainder of initiatives targeted all genders.

Findings from the mapping analysis and stakeholder consultation show family violence prevention initiatives targeting children and young people incorporate a range of activities, including:

- **education and awareness raising:** culturally appropriate education on healthy and respectful relationships including through workshops, conferences, and dissemination of educational resources (including via social media)
- **cultural strengthening:** cultural camps; yarning sessions; and opportunities to get out on Country
- **self-esteem and resilience building:** culturally appropriate activities to support girls' empowerment, including through referrals and increased service access.

INITIATIVES SHOWING PROMISING PRACTICE

Young Luv (Djirra): Young Luv is an early intervention and prevention workshop designed for 13 to 18-year-old girls which seeks to reinforce concepts of healthy positive relationships within a framework of Aboriginal culture, experience, and values. The initiative supports girls to develop healthy relationships, including through information and communication practices which promote positive and safe behaviours. Topics covered in the workshops include identifying unacceptable behaviours and warning signs of family violence and safety while using social media.

Burron Guli (Boy to Man) (Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative): Burron Guli is an 8-week primary and secondary school program for boys and young men which seeks to create attitudinal change among participants to contribute to the prevention of family violence.

It includes cultural education and role-modelling by Elders focused on building positive relationships, increasing emotional intelligence, and promoting positive attitudes towards women and children.

LESSONS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Building children and young people's connection to culture can help to prevent family violence. ACCOs who deliver family violence prevention initiatives to children and young people emphasise the importance of strengthening connection to culture as a key strategy for prevention. When children and young people understand their role within their family and the Aboriginal community more broadly, they are considered less likely to perpetrate violence and less likely to accept violence.

Adopting a whole-of-family approach is a key success factor for initiatives targeting children and young people. Involving family and community networks in initiatives delivered to children and young people is important for prevention. This may include involving family, such as parents and cousins, to connect Elders and young people in the delivery of initiatives so that messaging on healthy and respectful relationships can be reinforced in the home and the community.

Initiatives targeting children and young people must use strong messaging that emphasises family violence is at odds with Aboriginal culture. ACCOs agree on the need to educate children and young people about healthy and respectful relationships from an early age. Education activities must be culturally tailored and must acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation and intergenerational trauma as drivers of family violence among Aboriginal communities.



[It's important] to make sure young people understand their role within an Aboriginal community and understand that their culture and respect is a big part of that... [as well as] opportunities to get back to Country and understand where you sit within the family.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

CASE STUDY 2: WOMEN

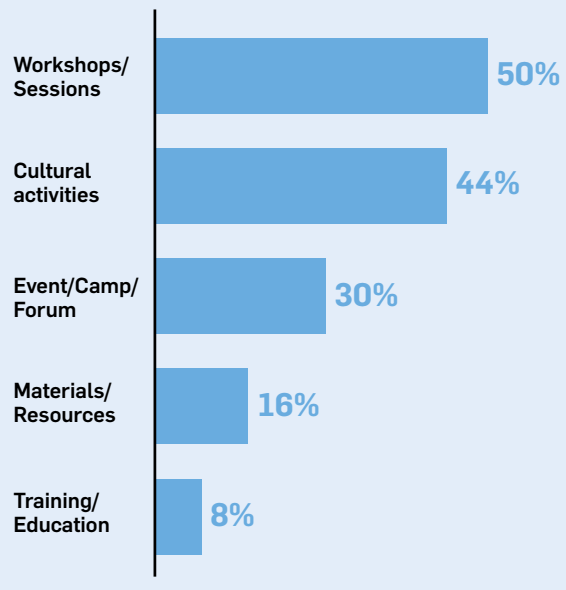
50 INITIATIVES DELIVERED SINCE 2016 TARGETED WOMEN

Over \$2.1 million of funding provided to initiatives targeting women since 2016

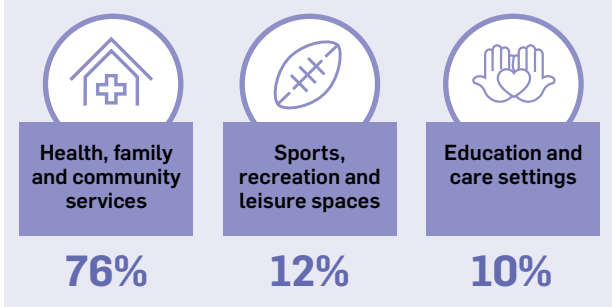
TOP SUB-COHORTS FOR INITIATIVES



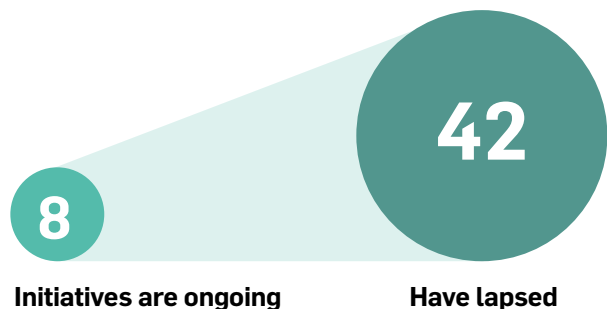
DELIVERY MODES FOR INITIATIVES



TOP 3 SETTINGS FOR INITIATIVES



TIMING



34 ORGANISATIONS FUNDED, INCLUDING:



OVERVIEW

Since 2016, 50 initiatives targeting women have been delivered by 34 organisations. Initiatives targeting women comprised 20% of all 251 initiatives, meaning this cohort was the second most commonly targeted cohort for initiatives, following children and young people. More than half of initiatives targeted women only (28 of 50), while the remainder targeted women as well as other cohorts (including children and young people, families, Elders, men, specific cohorts, and community members). Only one initiative was targeted at mothers.

Findings from the mapping analysis and stakeholder consultation show family violence prevention initiatives targeting women incorporate a range of activities, including:

- **self-esteem and resilience building:** activities to empower women to recognise the signs of family violence, make their own decisions and heal
- **cultural strengthening:** cultural camps; yarning circles; connecting with Elders; art and traditional practice workshops
- **parenting programs:** culturally safe supports and activities to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

INITIATIVES SHOWING PROMISING PRACTICE

Sisters Day Out (Djirra): Sisters Day Out is a women's wellbeing workshop comprised of four key components: access to services (mainstream and Aboriginal-specific); self-care and wellbeing (pampering and dance); access to information (physical resources and contact information); and education (information session on family violence). Sisters Day Out workshops focus on family violence prevention by drawing on cultural strength to increase resilience and healing and raising awareness of family violence and family violence 'red flags'.

Wellah Women (Spark Health): Wellah Women is an Aboriginal women's health and support group delivered over eight weeks that seeks to create a safe space for Aboriginal women to get healthier and happier. Sessions include guest speakers, workouts, and opportunities for participants to engage with other women. By improving the health, wellbeing and resilience of women, Wellah Women aims to empower women to make healthy and positive choices in their lives.

LESSONS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Initiatives targeting women must focus on women's strengths. ACCOs agree adopting a strengths-based approach which emphasises women's inherent strengths and self-determination is a critical success factor for family violence prevention initiatives. Strengths-based approaches encourage women to see themselves at their best, which supports increased self-esteem and resilience.

Building women's cultural resilience supports prevention and healing. All initiatives targeting Aboriginal women incorporate cultural elements into their design, which ensures they are meaningful, appropriate, and relevant to participants. Strengthening culture among women helps to build their capacity to respond to violence and heal, and is a well-established protective factor against family violence.

Teaching women about different forms of violence and how to recognise the signs of violence is key component of many initiatives. ACCOs consistently observe that many women do not know how to spot the warning signs of family violence, particularly for that which does not involve physical abuse (such as verbal, psychological, cultural, and financial abuse). For this reason, equipping Aboriginal women with an understanding of family violence in all its forms is critical to prevention.



Our women have experienced violence in all sorts of forms since colonisation... the work that we do in prevention is to work with women's strengths and cultural resilience so that they're... more likely to recognise [violence], see it and value their own worth and have the tools and skills to reject it.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

CASE STUDY 3: MEN

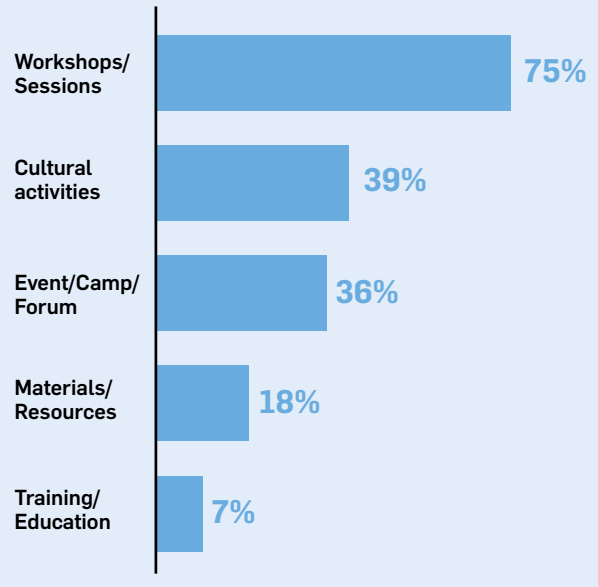
33 INITIATIVES DELIVERED SINCE 2016 TARGETED MEN

Over \$2.9 million of funding provided to initiatives targeting men since 2016

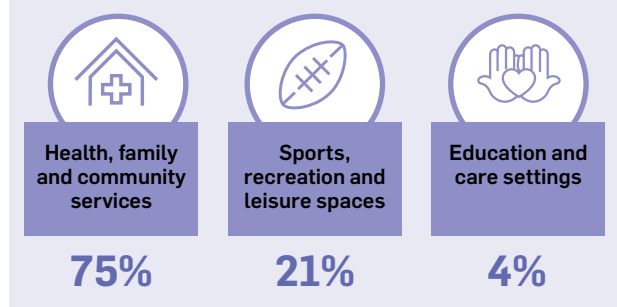
TOP SUB-COHORTS FOR INITIATIVES



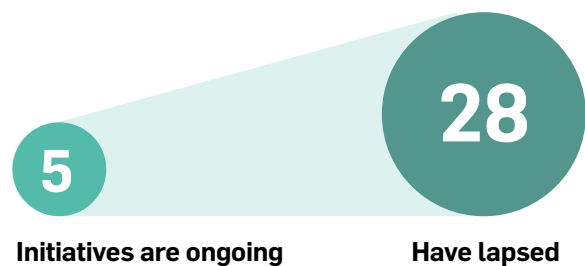
DELIVERY MODES FOR INITIATIVES



TOP 3 SETTINGS FOR INITIATIVES



TIMING



23 ORGANISATIONS FUNDED, INCLUDING:



OVERVIEW

Since 2016, 33 initiatives targeting men have been delivered by 15 organisations. Initiatives targeting men comprised 13% of all 251 initiatives, meaning this cohort was the fourth most commonly targeted cohort for initiatives following children and young people, women, and community members. Most initiatives targeted men only (26 of 33), while the remainder targeted men as well as other cohorts (including children and young people, families, Elders, women, and specific cohorts).

Findings from the mapping analysis and stakeholder consultation show family violence prevention initiatives targeting men incorporate a range of activities, including:

- **cultural strengthening:** men's groups; cultural camps; traditional practice workshops; getting out on Country
- **education:** information and awareness raising activities; promoting positive attitudes toward women; role modelling by male peers and/or Elders
- **self-esteem and resilience building:** camps; sporting activities.

INITIATIVES SHOWING PROMISING PRACTICE

Men's Healing and Behaviour Change Project (DDACL and Dardi Munwurro): The Dandenong Men's Healing and Behaviour Change Project aims to equip Aboriginal men in the region to become leaders, role models and mentors within their communities. The project involves men coming together in a culturally safe and non-judgemental environment to discuss topics such as understanding agreements, accountability, Aboriginal identity and connection, conflict resolution, understanding emotions, understanding violence and respectful relationships.

Deadly Dads (Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place): Deadly Dads is a fortnightly workshop which aims to support Aboriginal men through a primary prevention lens and strong connection to culture. Along with appropriate service referrals, engagement and prevention work, Deadly Dads offers a safe, culturally appropriate environment for those men who are currently or have previously perpetrated some form of family violence. Deadly Dads adopts a strengths-based approach to activities including support for workshop participants to act as community leaders and mentors.

LESSONS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

Men respond better to strengths-based, non-judgemental approaches. There is evidence that initiatives that are tailored to focus on men's strengths and are delivered in a non-judgemental environment are more likely to be successful. These types of approaches may include delivery of activities by other men (including those with lived experience of perpetrating or experiencing family violence) and creating safe spaces for men to reflect on their behaviour so healing and behaviour change can take place.

There is a need for more initiatives that target male perpetrators of family violence. ACCOs and community groups agree on the need for more family violence prevention initiatives targeting male perpetrators. It is important to note that while both men and women perpetrate family violence, most perpetrators are men. Despite this, there are fewer initiatives that specifically target men, and this has been consistently identified as a key gap by ACCOs and community groups.



One thing that really works [with men] is building trust, and then from there, yarning circles are really good... If you can get [men] to engage in men's behaviour change programs... they can really take something away from it... but it's a process.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

CASE STUDY 4: ELDERS

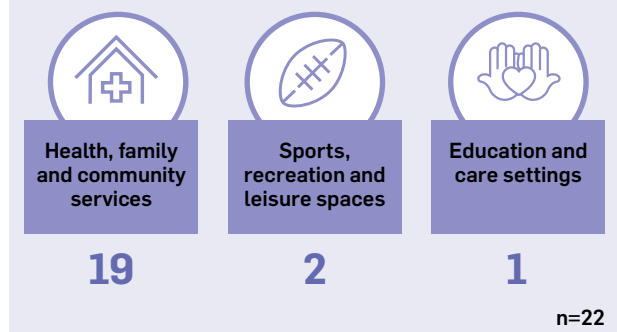
21 INITIATIVES DELIVERED SINCE 2016 TARGETED ELDERS

Over \$1.2 million of funding provided to initiatives targeting Elders since 2016

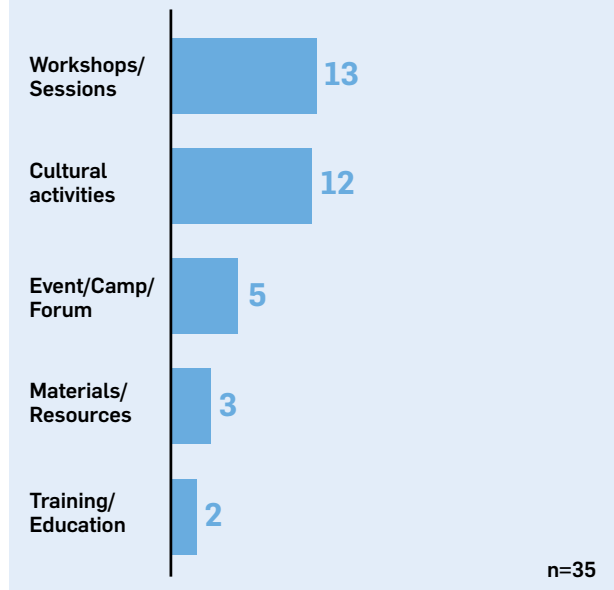
TOP SUB-COHORTS FOR INITIATIVES



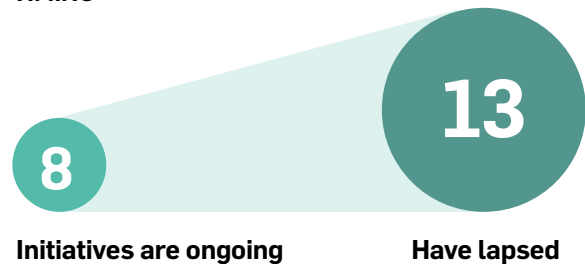
TOP 3 SETTINGS FOR INITIATIVES



DELIVERY MODES FOR INITIATIVES



TIMING



18 ORGANISATIONS FUNDED, INCLUDING:



OVERVIEW

Since 2016, 21 initiatives targeting Elders have been delivered by 18 organisations. Initiatives targeting Elders comprised 8% of all 251 initiatives, meaning this cohort was the seventh most commonly targeted cohort for initiatives. Around half of initiatives targeted Elders only (12 of 21), while the remainder targeted Elders as well as other cohorts (including children and young people, families, community members, and specific cohorts).

Findings from the mapping analysis and stakeholder consultation show family violence prevention initiatives targeting Elders incorporate a range of activities, including:

1. **cultural strengthening:** art and cultural artefact workshops; yarning circles
2. **education and awareness raising:** conferences; information sessions
3. **healing:** workshops; yarning circles.

INITIATIVES SHOWING PROMISING PRACTICE

Elders Awareness Forum (Aboriginal Community Elders Service): The Elders Awareness Forum aims to strengthen the response from ACCOs and mainstream services to Elders and to highlight what supports are available supports to community members.

Holistic Healing Groups (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency): Holistic Healing Groups aim to provide Aboriginal Elders who have been impacted by family violence opportunities to heal, feel more empowered and strengthen social and cultural connection within a group setting. The model includes flexible weekly sessions and is designed to be strong in culture and rich in community values to mitigate social isolation, a well-established risk factor for family violence.

LESSONS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

There is a need for a stronger focus on Elder abuse in efforts to prevent family violence. ACCOs involved in family violence prevention consistently highlight a lack of initiatives targeting Elders as a key gap in prevention programming.

Initiatives targeting Elders typically incorporate elements of prevention and response. Ensuring Elders are provided with opportunities to connect with their peers in a culturally safe space is important for both healing and prevention.

Involving Elders in initiatives targeting other cohorts is an important success factor for prevention. The critical role that Elders play as leaders and mentors within their communities is well-established, with many family violence initiatives targeting children and young people, women, men, and community members involving Elders in their design and delivery.



When I think about Elders in a preventative context, Elders need to be able to recognise the signs that might be family violence, like taking money off nan... they may not recognise it for what it is – financial abuse. Providing information [is important] so that he or she may be able to go ‘hang on this isn’t right, where can I go for help before this escalates’.

(ACCO/community group stakeholder)

APPENDIX B

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY-LED PREVENTION INITIATIVES

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY-LED PREVENTION INITIATIVES

The following set of criteria draws upon the success factors and lessons identified from the mapping analysis and consultations. The criteria are not prescriptive and can be used as guide, along with input from Aboriginal communities who know about what works best in their local context.

Table 7 Proposed criteria for successful Aboriginal community-led initiatives

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT
Priorities	The initiative responds to community priorities and/or to Dhelk Dja Action Group priorities	Y / N
Activities	Activities aim to prevent family violence before it occurs, recognising many initiatives include elements of both prevention and response	Y / N
Target cohort	The target cohort/s are clearly defined	Y / N
Setting	The setting is culturally appropriate and safe for the target cohort	Y / N
Partnerships	The initiative has been designed or is delivered in partnership with other organisations, if appropriate (mainstream organisations and/or ACCOs)	Y / N
Foundation elements	<p>The initiative is underpinned by the foundation elements outlined in the IVFPPF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnership, collaboration, leadership ▪ Cultural respect ▪ Capacity and capability ▪ Building on what works 	Y / N
Strategies	<p>The initiative aligns with at least one of the IVFPPF strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising community awareness ▪ Family strengthening ▪ Cultural strengthening ▪ Responding to grief and trauma ▪ Community information and education ▪ Self-esteem and resilience building 	Y / N

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT
Aboriginal-led design and delivery	The initiative has been designed by and/or is being delivered by Aboriginal people	Y / N
Staff with lived experience	The initiative has been designed by and/or is being delivered by people with lived experience of family violence	Y / N
Sustainability	The initiative shows sustainable benefits to community and/or has the potential to be sustainable in community	Y / N
Impact	The initiative has delivered positive impacts to the target cohort	Y / N
Timing	The initiative has been in place for at least six months	Y / N
Monitoring, evaluation and learning	The initiative has clearly defined objectives and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place	Y / N
Efficiency	The initiative has demonstrated cost and resource efficiency (time and staffing)	Y / N
Funding source	The funding source and any funding requirements about the design or delivery of the initiative	Y / N
Reach	The number and type of participants involved in the initiative	Y / N
Scalability and replicability	The initiative has potential to scale up and/or be replicated in other settings or locations	Y / N
Data sovereignty	The initiative has mechanisms in place to share and report back to the community	Y / N
Community feedback	The local community has provided positive feedback and endorsement of the initiative	Y / N

APPENDIX C

STAKEHOLDERS

CONSULTED

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

PHASE 1 CONSULTATIONS

Urbis/Karen Milward completed ten interviews with a total of 20 stakeholders as part of Phase 1. Five stakeholders that we sought to engage with were not available to participate in an interview (n=4 Dhelk Dja Regional Coordinators, n=1 NIAA staff).

ORGANISATION (ROLE)	PARTICIPANTS (n)
DFFH (staff involved in the administration of the Aboriginal Innovation Fund, the Community Initiatives Fund and the Preventing the Cycle of Violence Fund)	8
DFFH (Dhelk Dja Regional Coordinators and Chairpersons)	7
NIAA (staff based in Victoria and staff based in the Family Safety team)	5
Total	20

PHASE 2 CONSULTATIONS

Urbis/Karen completed 14 interviews with a total of 28 stakeholders as part of Phase 2. Twenty-two organisations that we sought to engage with were not responsive to our requests for an interview or were not available to participate.

ORGANISATION	PARTICIPANTS (n)
Aboriginal Wellness Foundation (formerly Wayapa Wuurrk)	1
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service	2
Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC)	1
Bunjilwarra (Victorian Aboriginal Health Service/Youth Support and Advocacy)	3
Djirra	2
Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative	2
Hume Dhelk Dja Regional Action Group	2
Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative	3
Safe and Equal	2
Save the Children	1
Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) Ltd.	1
Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL)	2
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)	2
Yoowinna Wurnalung Healing Service	4
Total	28

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
AIF	Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Innovation Fund (known as the Aboriginal Innovation Fund)
AJA	Aboriginal Justice Agreement
CIF	Community Initiatives Fund
DDFVF	Dhelk Dja Family Violence Fund
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
FSV	Family Safety Victoria
IFVPPF	Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex +
MEAP	Dhelk Dja Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
PCV	Preventing the Cycle of Violence Aboriginal Fund
PMWG	Project Management Working Group
RV	Respect Victoria

