

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: Closing the Gap



Gippsland PHN is located on Gunaikurnai and Bunurong lands and we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and to elders past and present.

## Plans and agreements



The **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-23**

**National Agreement on Closing the Gap (2020)** - includes a commitment to working in partnership between all levels of government and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations (the Coalition of Peaks).

*Meaningful engagement means that your organisation listens to community and actively engages all the time not just when something is needed.*  
- ACCO, Gippsland PHN RAP consultation

There are 17 Closing the Gap targets (to be achieved by 2031 if not otherwise stated):	Data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria (compared to non-Indigenous people in Victoria)
<b>No life expectancy gap</b>	Gap of <b>8.6 years for males and 7.8 years for females*</b>
<b>91% of babies have a healthy birthweight</b>	<b>90.4%</b> (93.8%)
<b>95% of children enrolled in 4-year old kinder by 2025</b>	<b>100%</b> (86.9%)
<b>55% of children developmentally on track (all domains) when starting school</b>	<b>35.6%</b> (57.7%)
<b>96% of 20-24 year olds attaining year 12 (or equivalent) qualification</b>	<b>69.6%</b> (90.0%)
<b>70% of 25-34 year olds have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III or above)</b>	<b>56.5%</b> (74.9%)
<b>67% of 15-24 year olds are in employment, education or training</b>	<b>65.4%</b> (81.5%)
<b>62% of 25-64 year olds are employed</b>	<b>57.3%</b> (75.8%)
<b>88% live in appropriately sized housing</b>	<b>87.6%</b> (92.8%)
<b>Reduce the rate of adults held in incarceration by 15%</b>	<b>1,816 per 100,000</b> (128)
<b>Reduce the rate of young people (10-17 years) in detention by 30%</b>	<b>9.6 per 10,000</b> (1.5)
<b>Reduce the overrepresentation of children (0-17 years) in out of home care by 45%</b>	<b>103 per 1,000</b> (4.7)
<b>Reduce the rate of women and children experiencing family violence by 50%</b>	<b>7.5% of females over 15 years experienced domestic physical harm in previous 12 months</b>
<b>A significant and sustained reduction in suicide towards zero (no timeline)</b>	<b>27.9 per 100,000*</b>
<b>A 15% increase in land and waters subject to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's legal rights or interests by 2030</b>	<b>14,934 km<sup>2</sup> land*</b> <b>265 km<sup>2</sup> sea*</b>
<b>There is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken</b>	<b>123 languages spoken*</b> <b>14 strong languages*</b>
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion by 2026</b>	<b>89.5% of adults accessed the internet in the past 12 months</b>

\* Data for Australia (no Victorian data available)

: On track to meet target (based on national data)

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The **Victorian Government Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023** includes:

- Local government is central to the achievement of equity for Aboriginal communities
- Development of a place-based postvention framework in Gippsland

Bushfire recovery funds to support initiatives for the Aboriginal community affected by the 2019/20 bushfires

**What would improve health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:**

-  Availability of appointments without a long wait locally
-  Bulk billing
-  Trusted doctor who listens to patient issues and concerns
-  Access to specialist care and female doctors when preferred

**Recording of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status** among regular general practice patients in Gippsland, aged 15 years or older:

- 1.3%** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (1.9% across Australia)
- 76.9%** non-Indigenous (75.0%)
- 21.8%** did not have Indigenous status recorded (23.1%)

## Gippsland PHN Indigenous Australian Health Programs

[gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/indigenous-australian-health-programs/](https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/indigenous-australian-health-programs/)






- Integrated Team Care Program (ITC)** - provides support to people/s with chronic conditions through assistance of care coordination, outreach worker support and Supplementary Services support
- Indigenous Dual Diagnosis Service** - provides culturally safe support for people with mental health and drug and alcohol dependencies
- Black Pages** - A directory of Indigenous services and supports in Gippsland
- Education and Training** - Gippsland PHN offers cultural diversity and safety training to all Gippsland health professionals
- Quality Improvement** in general practice, including use of MBS item 715 for assessments
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)**
- Health Pathways**
- Employment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee

## Indigenous health checks

Through Medicare, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can receive Indigenous-specific health checks (item number 715). They are recommended every 9-12 months.

Following the health check, Indigenous-specific follow-up services are available for patients with a chronic disease or at risk of chronic disease.

### In Gippsland

-  14.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a 715 health check in 2020-21, down from 18.4% in 2017-18
-  Lowest rates were in the south west (3.2%) and Baw Baw (8.6%)
-  4,700 people did not have a health check in 2020-21
-  22.5% of people who had a health check in 2019-20 had follow up services within 12 months; this is the third lowest rate of Australian PHNs, but up from 18.6% in 2018-19
-  Lowest follow up rates were in Wellington (9.3%)

## Other services and supports

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)

- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative (GEGAC)
- Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (LEAHA)
- Moogji Aboriginal Council
- Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation (RDAC)
- Lake Tyers Health and Children's Services
- Yoowinna Wurnalung Aboriginal Healing Service

**Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

- 13YARN (13 92 76)** counselling support ([www.13yarn.org.au](http://www.13yarn.org.au)) - for Indigenous Australians
- Yarning Safe'N'Strong (1800 959 563)** - Free and confidential phone support (counselling)

*Work together with local Aboriginal health services and communities to learn more about the way services and practitioners can embed the mindset of 'seeing the person before the business' and identify opportunities to share and apply this learning across other primary care settings.*

- Latrobe Health Advocate