

Victorian Budget 2020/21

Putting People First



The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Tuesday 24 November 2020

A FAIRER FUTURE FOR ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

Building a fairer future for our state means making sure Aboriginal Victorians get the support — and the say — they need and deserve. That's why this year, we're delivering Victoria's biggest investment in Aboriginal communities, ever.

Throughout the pandemic, Aboriginal communities and the Government have worked in close partnership, with the COVID-19 Aboriginal Community Taskforce delivering community-led support for Aboriginal people.

These efforts have helped to keep case numbers low, while making sure community remained strong and connected.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* builds on that partnership, investing \$357 million to strengthen self-determination, enhance access to education, provide better housing and health support, and improve the lives of Aboriginal Victorians across all spheres of life.

As we rebuild our state, we want to build a stronger Victoria. That means it's essential that all Victorians — no matter their background or where they live — have the opportunities in life they deserve. It's why this Budget funds the ongoing journey to Treaty with First Nations people, with \$20.2 million to continue these landmark negotiations.

This funding will support the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria — the state's first and only democratically-elected body for Aboriginal people — to continue their Treaty work and ensure even more community voices are heard.

This work will be supported by the Truth and Justice Process announced earlier this year — a healing process for our state that will recognise historic wrongs and address ongoing injustices.

To help Aboriginal communities continue to rebuild from the pandemic, the Budget provides a \$40 million fund to expand the Aboriginal community, health and family violence workforce. Aboriginal Victorians know what's best for their families, so that's why Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) will continue to drive local responses, directing support wherever they think it's most needed.

The investment builds on support provided by the Andrews Labor Government earlier this year, including mental health and telehealth services, outreach support for people sleeping rough, and emergency relief such as food, clothing and other essentials for Aboriginal Victorians doing it tough as a result of the pandemic.

Expanding on Victoria's nation-leading work in child protection, \$74.1 million will go to reforming out-of-home care services and ensuring Aboriginal family case management control is in the hands of ACCOs.

The Labor Government is also investing \$7.3 million to support businesses, ACCOs and Traditional Owner Groups, with financial training and leadership courses.

The investment also includes \$1 million to establish the Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council to give Aboriginal Victorians a voice in the Government's economic policy and development.

To help Aboriginal students reach their full potential, the Budget provides more than \$10 million to deploy tutors for kids that need extra help to catch-up and to continue rolling out the *Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan*.

Acknowledging the deep connection between Traditional Owners and the land, this Budget invests \$16.1 million for healing Country, improving seed management, planting and restoration works and engagement with the natural resource sector.

The Budget also includes \$21 million to better incorporate Aboriginal values and expertise into water management and to continue to protect sacred sites.

The Labor Government will also invest \$26.7 million to repair buildings owned by Aboriginal organisations, including \$12.7 million for the Framlingham and Lake Tyers communities so they can upgrade their facilities and deliver essential support to local families.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"Our partnership during this pandemic reaffirms what we already knew – outcomes for Aboriginal people are better when they're led by Aboriginal people."

"This Budget supports Aboriginal communities as we begin our state's recovery – but it also acknowledges the deep-seated injustices that continue to shape the lives of Aboriginal Victorians."

"We must do better. We can only achieve a fairer future for Victoria with a fairer future for Aboriginal Victorians."