



Federation of  
Victorian Traditional  
Owner Corporations

# Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations

Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Strategy

*Project 1: Analysis of the state of play of the Victorian Aboriginal economy*

16 February 2024

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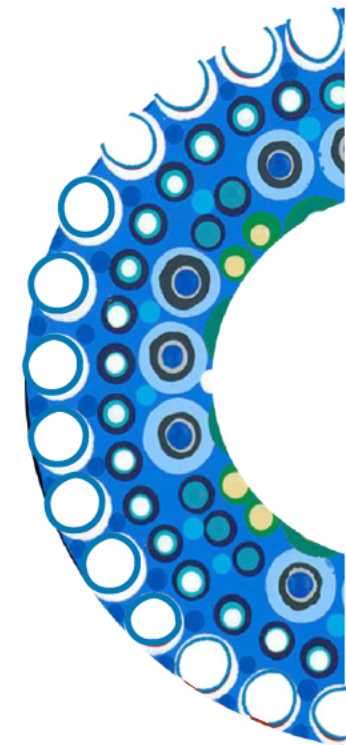
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# Acknowledgement

The importance of cultural responsibility and sensitivity is reflected in our planning and delivery of this project. Our work is underpinned by the principle of supporting and remaining true to the culture, beliefs and worldviews of different communities.

With reverent hearts, we therefore humbly acknowledge the timeless custodianship of the First Nations peoples, who have graced this vast and wondrous land for over 80,000 years. Their unwavering connection to the earth, its glistening waterways, and the sky above is a testament to their profound wisdom and enduring grace.

We pay homage to their respected Elders, the keepers of their sacred knowledge, and to all the generations who have tended to this unceded land with steadfast care. We honour and pay our sincerest respects to all the Traditional Owners who have enriched this ancient and sacred place with their boundless spirit and resilience.

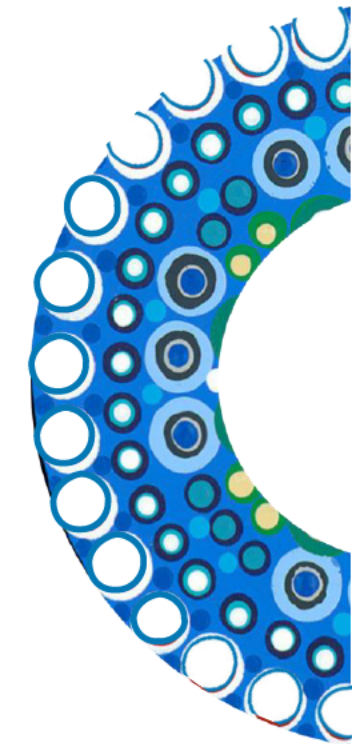
## Terminology

This document primarily uses the designation “Aboriginal” to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Within the context of this document, we may also use interchangeably the designations “First Nations”, “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” and “Indigenous” to discuss these peoples.

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Victoria and all First Nations peoples who have participated in the process of this work.

## Connections to Country

As First Nations practitioners our responsibility to culture and lore is reflected through the artwork excerpts throughout this document. The original artwork titled *Pathways to Country* was created for Deloitte Indigenous Services Group by Bundjulong and Gomerol/ Euahlayi Artist Lee-Anne Hall.



# Glossary

Term	Definition
Aboriginal	This document primarily uses the designation “Aboriginal” to refer to First Nations Australians, including all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.
Aboriginal Employment	Aboriginal persons employed in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal enterprises.
Aboriginal Enterprise	An organisation where more than 50% of the ownership is by Aboriginal people.
ABS Census	The Census in Australia, officially the Census of Population and Housing, is the national census in Australia that occurs every five years. The most recent edition refers to 2021.
Direct Activity	Economic activity for which an Aboriginal person or enterprise is directly responsible.
Employment to population ratio	The share of people who are employed as a share of the overall working age population.
Gross Value Added (GVA)	Dollar value for the amount of goods and services that have been produced in an industry, minus the cost of all inputs and raw materials that are directly attributable to that production.
Indirect Activity	Follow-on economic activity which takes place across the supply chain, and is catalysed by the direct activity.
Industry Capability Network (ICN)	The ICN is a network which partners with government to predominately focus on advocating for fair opportunities for SMEs to compete for work on major projects.
Kinaway Chamber of Commerce	Kinaway Chamber of Commerce works with Victorian Aboriginal businesses to provide business support, help improve visibility and networks, strengthen relationships, and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres.
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)	The registrar is an independent statutory office, which administers the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, and provides supports and advice to Indigenous corporations.
Supply Nation	Supply Nation is a business network which works to increase supplier diversity by connecting verified Indigenous businesses with corporate, government and not-for-profit members.
Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs)	Groups who are legally recognised in Victoria as having the right to manage and operative native title settlements and interests.



# Executive Summary



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# Project context

This project discusses the current state of play of the Victorian Aboriginal economy. Although policy in Victoria is broadly supportive of the Aboriginal economy, Aboriginal people still face significantly poorer socio-economic outcomes. This illustrates the importance of developing a broader understanding of how the Aboriginal economy is constructed, in order to better understand the factors which have limited progress to date, and highlight how continued, targeted focus and investment can drive progress.

This work has been commissioned by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC) to provide an overview of the state of play for the Aboriginal economy in Victoria. FVTOC is a key agent in the realisation of the Victorian Government's Yuma Yirramboi vision. Under the auspices of the Yuma Yirramboi strategy, FVTOC is undertaking research to support accelerated employment and business development, as well as wealth accumulation, within the State's First Nations community.

The project is intended to develop a deep and shared understanding of the size and composition of the Aboriginal economy, while evaluating its contribution to the wider Victorian economy. This contribution is quantified with regard to both the employment supported and revenue generated through the Aboriginal economy, but also in terms the Gross Value Added (GVA) to the wider Victorian economy. Comparisons to other domestic and international jurisdictions are provided to place these numbers in context.

The analysis contained within this report considers two distinct spheres of the Aboriginal economy, covering the contribution of both Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal enterprise separately. The report is structured to first provide an overview of the project background, and the supporting policy context. This is followed by an analysis of the Aboriginal employment sphere, which presents both the gross contribution of Aboriginal employment in Victoria, and summary statistics which illustrate wider Aboriginal labour market outcomes. The analysis of Aboriginal enterprise then covers the revenue generated and employment supported through the direct and indirect activity of Aboriginal-

owned businesses. The Traditional Owner Corporations, which form a key component of both the overarching enterprise and employment spheres, are then also discussed separately to present their discrete impact. Finally, outputs for the Victorian Aboriginal economy are compared across Indigenous populations both domestically and internationally, before next steps are discussed, and a detailed methodology is presented in an appendix.

This analysis is intended to form a base-line for the preparation of economic development strategies, policy, and program development, and it is important to ensure that it allows for the tracking of the pace and direction of growth in Aboriginal employment, Traditional Owner Corporations and Aboriginal businesses over time. As such, the analysis has been constructed to prioritise replicability, clearly stating the data sources used and providing a detailed step-by-step methodology. The 'What's Next?' section of the report provides a discussion of 'tracking progress over time', intended to highlight key topics which should be considered if this analysis is refreshed in future.



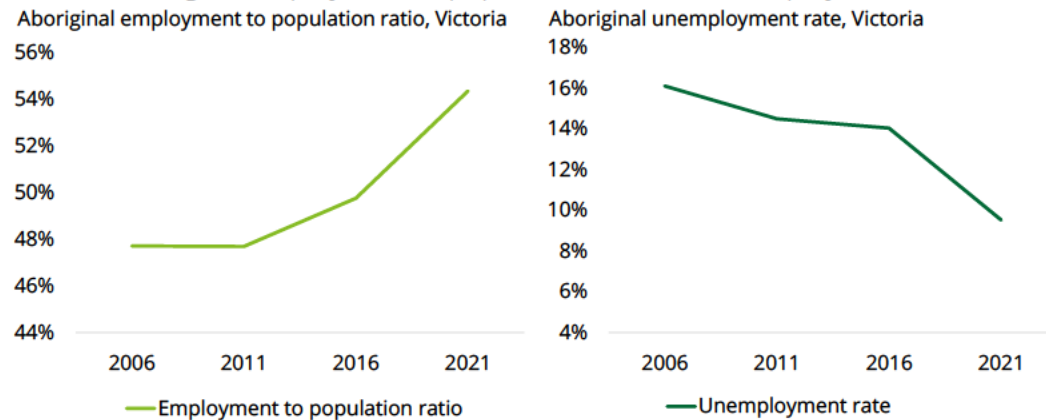
# Aboriginal employment

**Aboriginal employment outcomes in Victoria have strengthened significantly over recent years, in terms of both the employment ratio and unemployment rate. Even so, the Aboriginal workforce in Victoria continues to hold significant further potential for improvement.**

Victorian Aboriginal employment outcomes compare favorably both historically and relative to other jurisdictions. **Victoria has the second-highest Aboriginal employment to population ratio in Australia at 52.9%**, and a lower-than-average unemployment rate of 9.5 per cent. However, labour market outcomes for Aboriginal persons still significantly lag those of non-Aboriginal Australians. This pattern is replicated across all aspects of employment, from qualifications held to the incomes earned.

In 2021, there were 23,590 employed Aboriginal Victorians identified in the Census, working across a variety of industries and occupations.<sup>1</sup>

Chart i: Aboriginal employment to population ratio and unemployment rate



<sup>1</sup> Adjusting for underrepresentation, it is estimated that 27,695 Aboriginal persons were employed in Victoria in 2021, equivalent to 21,465 full-time employees (FTEs).  
Source: Census 2021

Compared to non-Indigenous Victorians, Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to work in the Health, Construction, or Public administration industries. The most common occupations for Aboriginal Victorians are Professionals, Community and Personal Service workers, and Technicians and Trades.

The contribution of this Aboriginal employment to the Victorian economy can be considered in terms of the Gross Value Added (GVA). GVA considers the direct economic activity associated with employment of Aboriginal persons in Victoria, as well as the indirect economic activity generated throughout the supply chain because of that employment.

**Aboriginal employment in Victoria is estimated to have contributed \$3.73 billion in total GVA in 2021**, comprising \$2.43 billion in direct GVA generated, alongside an additional \$1.30 billion of activity catalysed across the supply chain.

In practice, this means that every Aboriginal person employed in the Victorian economy is responsible for generating \$135,000 of GVA. At a state level, the total contribution equates to an annual contribution of 0.8% of the total state product of Victoria (\$490.7 billion, 2021).

Figure i: Components of GVA

Category	Victoria Total (2021)
Employees	27,695
FTEs	21,465
Direct GVA contribution	\$2.43bn
Indirect GVA contribution	\$1.30bn
<b>Total GVA contribution</b>	<b>\$3.73bn</b>

# Aboriginal enterprise

The presence of established, productive Aboriginal enterprises is essential in generating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and supporting the continued development of a dynamic Aboriginal economy in Victoria.

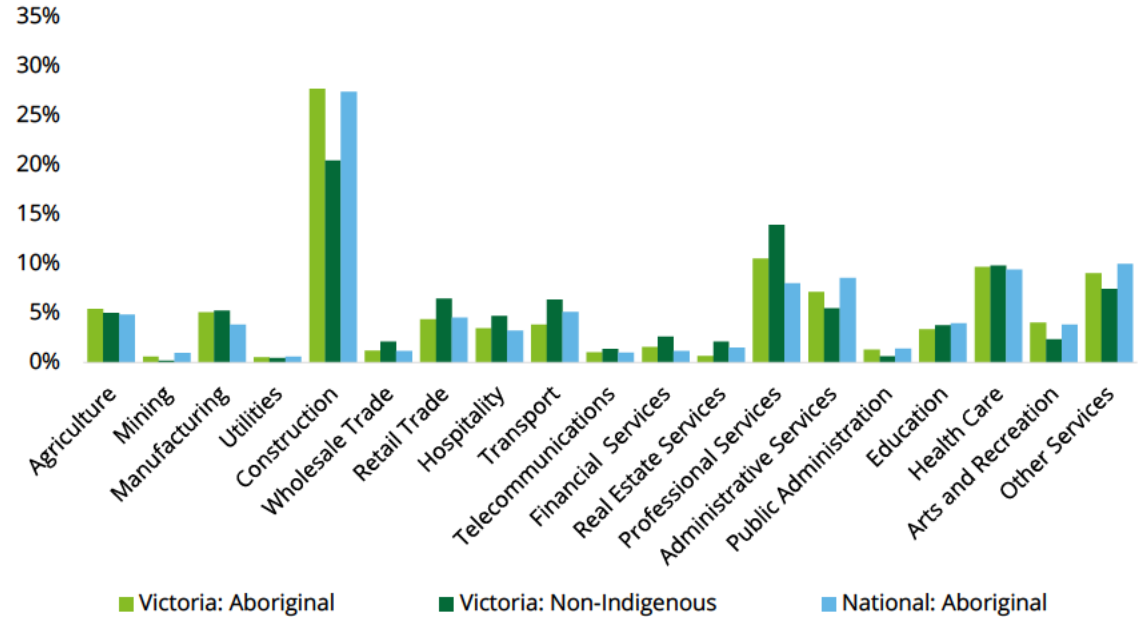
While larger enterprises, including the Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) form the bedrock of the Aboriginal enterprise sphere, self-employed individuals are equally understood to be a key component of the landscape. There are more than 2,000 Aboriginal Victorians who are owner-managers working in their own businesses, and these generate a valuable contribution to the Aboriginal enterprise sphere.

The economic contribution of Aboriginal enterprise can be assessed in terms of the gross value added (GVA) to the wider Victorian economy. This considers the revenue generated by all firms active within the Aboriginal economy, as well as the indirect revenue generated across Victoria-based firms as a result of activity catalysed throughout the supply chains of Aboriginal enterprises.

The total revenue generated by the Victorian Aboriginal economy is estimated to amount to \$1.05 billion in 2022-23. Of this, 66% is direct activity (\$698.0 million), while a further 34% is indirect activity. This means that for every \$1 spent at an Aboriginal enterprise, a further 51 cents will go on to be spent across the supply chain.

The total GVA generated by the Victorian Aboriginal economy is estimated to equate to \$520.6 million in 2022-23. As an annual contribution to the wider Victorian economy, this represents 0.1% of the total state product of Victoria (\$535.5 billion, 2023).

Chart ii: Owner managers by industry in Victoria  
Share of owner managers by industry, 2021



Source: Census, 2021

Figure ii: Components of GVA.

Category	Victoria Total (2023)
Direct Revenue	\$698.0m
Indirect Revenue	\$353.6m
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,051.6m</b>
Direct GVA contribution	\$357.2m
Indirect GVA contribution	\$163.4m
<b>Total GVA contribution</b>	<b>\$520.6m</b>



# Traditional Owner Corporations

The Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) represent a significant aspect of the Victorian Aboriginal economy, contributing 15% of all revenue generated by Aboriginal enterprises

- Currently, Traditional Owner Corporations are estimated to cover approximately 66% of the total land mass in Victoria. With the Victorian Government providing assistance for Traditional Owner groups to progress towards formal recognition in areas where there is no formally recognised Traditional Owner Corporation.
- The collective interests of the TOCs have been represented by The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC) since 2013. FVTOC is the peak body responsible for facilitating a collective voice for Traditional Owners to self-determine their future.
- In terms of revenue generated, the largest TOCs are the *Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Corporation* (\$15.1m), the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation* (\$14.4m), and the *Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Corporation* (\$11.8m). In particular, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation and the Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Corporation are significant contributors to the Aboriginal economy, generating 30.1% of all revenue received by Traditional Owner Corporations, which amounts to 5% of the estimated total revenue received across all Victorian Aboriginal enterprises.
- Measured by persons employed, the largest Traditional Owner Corporations are again the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation* (129 employees), the *Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Corporation* (74 employees), and the *Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Corporation* (61 employees).

Figure iii: Revenue and employment, Traditional Owner Corporations Victoria, 2021-22

Traditional Owner Corporation	Revenue (\$ millions)	Employment (persons)	Revenue per employee (\$ per employee)
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans	15.1	61	246,775
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage	14.4	129	111,926
Gunaikurnai Land & Waters	11.8	74	159,541
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners	9.9	39	254,854
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners	9.6	57	168,848
Taungurung Land and Waters Council	9.3	45	206,265
Bunurong Land Council	8.5	52	163,952
First People of the Millewa-Mallee	6.5	26	253,820
Yorta Yorta Nation	5.4	20	268,421
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	4.5	32	140,885
Eastern Maar	3.0	12	246,480
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>179,347</b>

Source: ORIC, 2024

# Introduction to the Aboriginal economy in Victoria



# Background and context

Policy in Victoria is supportive of the Aboriginal economy, although Aboriginal people still face significantly poorer socio-economic outcomes, illustrating the importance of continued focus and investment

Aboriginal people have historically seen a much lower level of participation in Australia's economy than non-Indigenous people. This has led to a significant gap in socio-economic outcomes between Aboriginal Australians and non-Indigenous Australians. To support improved outcomes, there is a focus on considering how a dynamic Aboriginal economy can effect positive change for Aboriginal persons.

Strategies like the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Strategy 2013-2020: Building Opportunity and Economic Prosperity for all Aboriginal Victorians and Tharama Bugheen: Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy 2017-2021 laid the foundations for Aboriginal businesses to participate in the economy and set the platform for the Yuma Yirramboi Strategy to be developed and implemented. Yuma Yirramboi celebrates the economic and entrepreneurial success of Aboriginal Victorians and is intended to ensure parity is considered in all government activities.

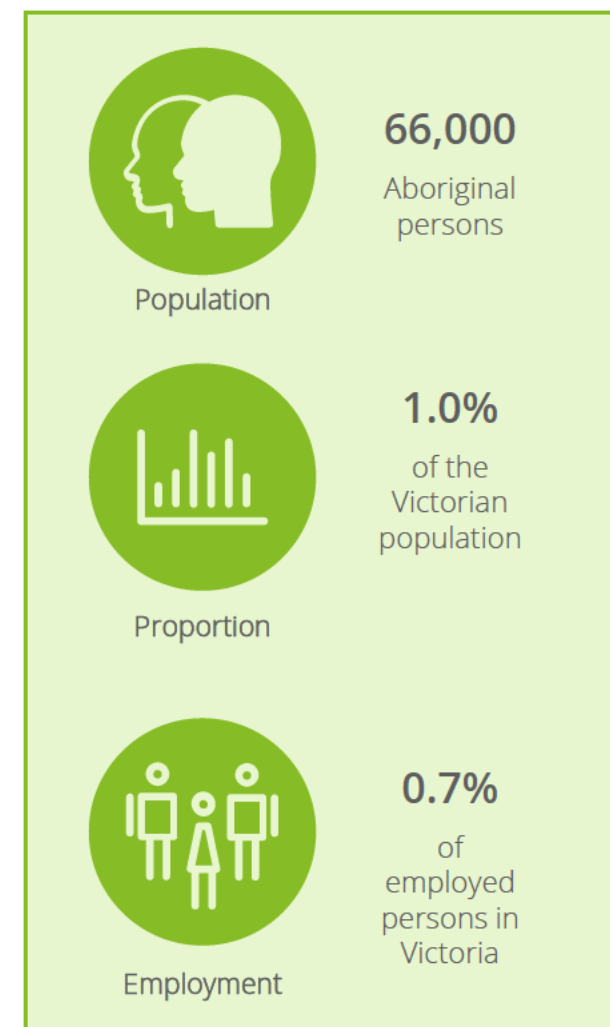
Yuma Yirramboi is underpinned by six strategic pillars: culture, people, business, wealth creation, jobs, and accountability. Each pillar is essential to delivering parity to Aboriginal Victorians. This roadmap for greater economic participation and wealth creation, led by the Koori Caucus of The Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council (VAEEC), embodies the economic aspirations of Aboriginal Victorians.

The Victorian Government has a key role to play in improving Aboriginal outcomes, particularly via the implementation of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, which has 19 national socio-economic targets across 17 socio-economic outcome areas that aim to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal people. Each of these targets seeks to further economic participation and development, irrespective of whether they derive financial or non-financial benefits for First peoples.

The culmination of these initiatives and the leadership that has sat behind them, has played a key role in supporting the Victorian Aboriginal economy to date.

However, there is still significant progress required to reach parity in outcomes. While work to date, including PwC's '*Contribution of the Indigenous business sector to Australia's economy*'<sup>1</sup> and the University of Melbourne's '*Indigenous Business Sector Snapshot*'<sup>2</sup> have focused on the Aboriginal economy for Australia as a whole, a **robust analysis of the state of play in the Victorian Aboriginal economy is of critical importance.** This will provide a strong foundation for the preparation of future economic development strategies, policy and program development, as well as tracking the pace and direction of growth in employment, Traditional Owner Corporations and Aboriginal businesses.

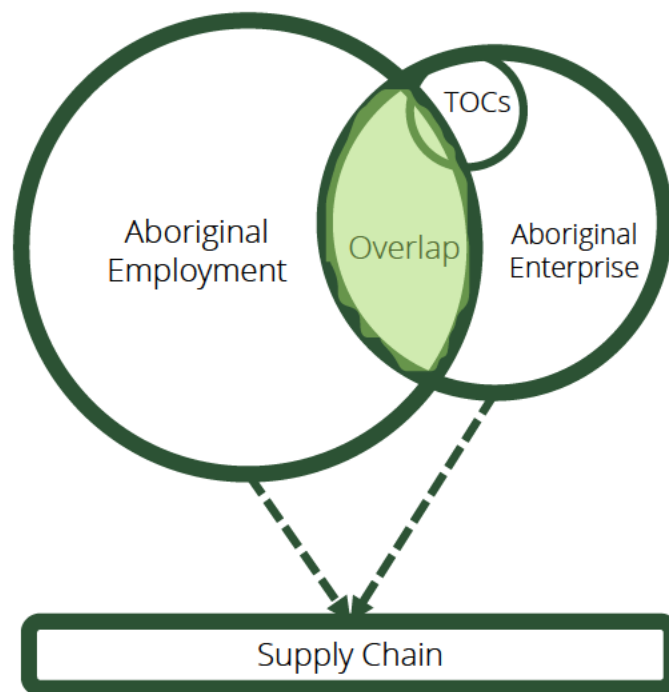
Figure 1: Victorian Aboriginal Community Snapshot



<sup>1</sup>PwC (2018). "Contribution of the Indigenous business sector to Australia's economy" <<https://www.pwc.com.au/indigenous-consulting/assets/the-contribution-of-the-indigenous-business-sector-apr18.pdf>>, <sup>2</sup>University of Melbourne (2021). "Indigenous Business Sector" <<https://fbe.unimelb.edu.au/cibl/assets/snapshot/RFQ03898-M-and-M-Snapshot-Study.pdf>>

# Aboriginal economy overview

Figure 2: Aboriginal Economy Composition



*Note: Circle size does not accurately reflect the size of each factor*

This analysis draws on multiple data sources, with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and ABS Census datasets used as primary resources, and the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Supply Nation, Industry Capability Network (ICN) datasets and used to supplement this. Further information on these datasets is available in Appendix B: References.

## Analysis of the state of play of the Victorian Aboriginal economy

This work provides an overview of the Aboriginal economy in Victoria. It is intended to develop a deep and shared understanding of its size and composition, while evaluating its contribution to the wider Victorian economy.

However, the concept of the 'Aboriginal economy' is not well-defined. It is not something that has been established in any statistical or data collections. Therefore, in evaluating the Aboriginal economy, it is important to first establish a definition of what comprises Aboriginal economic activity. For this analysis, the Aboriginal economy has been defined to encompass:

- **Aboriginal employment** – defined as the employment of all Aboriginal persons at all organisations (both Aboriginal-owned and non-Aboriginal owned).
- **Aboriginal enterprise** – defined as the activity for which Aboriginal-owned firms are responsible. Aboriginal-owned firms are defined as firms with equal to or greater than 51% Aboriginal ownership. Firms with a smaller share of Aboriginal ownership, including certain partnership structures, will still contribute to improved outcomes for Aboriginal persons, but are not included in the scope of this analysis.
- **Supply chain** – both Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal enterprise generate economic activity across their respective supply chains, with such indirect activity also forming a core part of the Aboriginal economy's contribution to the wider Victorian economy.

There is, of course, potential for **overlap** between Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal enterprise, which would occur when an Aboriginal person works for an Aboriginal firm. This is important when considering the economic contribution estimate, to understand if this economic activity might be double-counted. For this report, the contribution of Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal enterprise are evaluated separately, meaning that these estimates are not additive when thinking about the total contribution of the Aboriginal economy.

Within Aboriginal enterprise in Victoria are the **Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs)**. These corporations play a key role in the management of land rights and interests, and individually they account for some of the largest Aboriginal firms. The activity generated by the TOCs is accounted for in the estimates of both the Aboriginal employment and the Aboriginal enterprise contributions, while a separate discussion of TOC specific activity is also provided.

# Aboriginal employment in Victoria



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# Aboriginal employment in Victoria

**The Aboriginal labour market in Victoria currently has the highest employment rate and lowest unemployment rate on record. Even so, the Aboriginal workforce in Victoria continues to hold further potential for growth and prosperity.**

Aboriginal Victorians contend with ongoing employment disadvantage driven by a historic exclusion from economic participation. While economic inequalities still exist, Aboriginal Victorians now play a diverse and invaluable role in Victoria’s labour force, across a wide range of industries and occupations.

The economic participation of Aboriginal Victorians has been strengthening, and the employment to population ratio has increased markedly over recent years (Chart 1). Victoria has relatively strong Aboriginal employment (Chart 2). Economic participation increases opportunities for wealth growth and prosperity for Aboriginal Victorians..

### Capturing Aboriginal Victorian employment in data

It can be difficult for data to accurately capture the Aboriginal Victorians labour force. The most recent and accurate data source available is the 2021 Census, which provides insight into size and characteristics of the Aboriginal labour force. Deloitte Access Economics has referenced Australian 2021 Census results throughout this chapter to understand the employment of Aboriginal Australians.

While the 2021 Census is the best available data source, the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognises that there is an undercount of national Aboriginal Australians in the Census, with an adjustment applied to the GVA analysis to account for this discrepancy.

Chart 1: Aboriginal employment to population ratio and unemployment rate

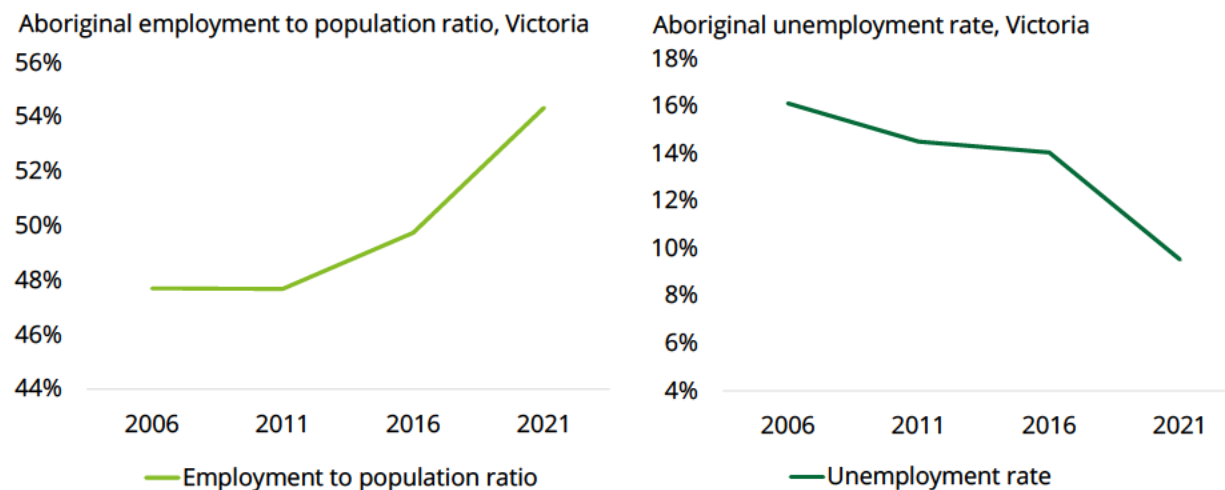
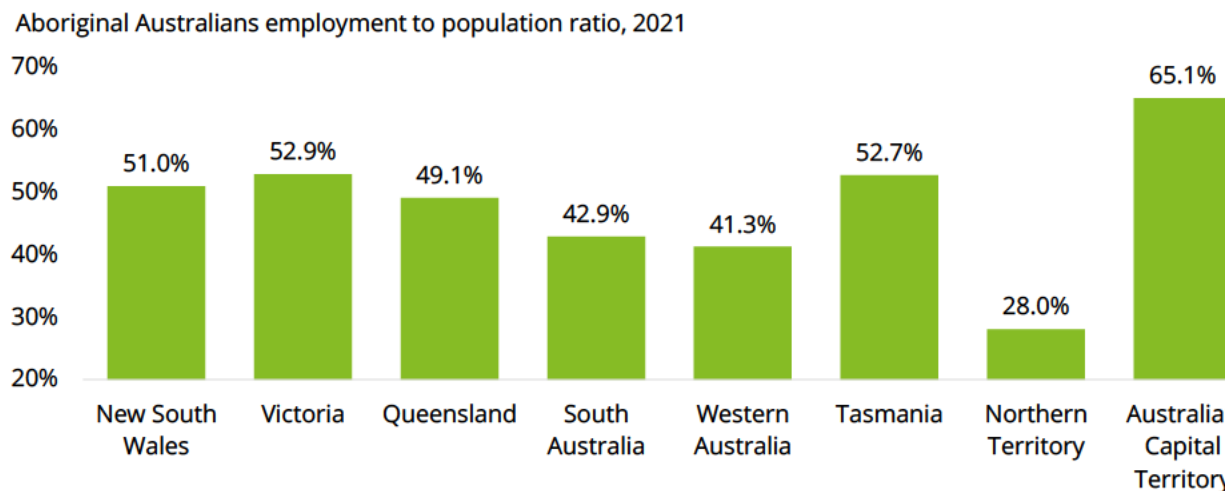


Chart 2: Aboriginal Australians employment to population ratio by states and territories



Source: ABS Census, 2006 - 2021



# Labour force status

**While disparity remains in the labour force between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Victorians, Aboriginal Victorians have higher labour force participation relative to Aboriginal Australians nationally.**

The unemployment rate is a key measure of labour market conditions. The unemployment rate represents the share of persons aged 15-64 who are in the labour force and do not have a job but are actively looking for one.

At the time of the 2021 ABS Census, 2,500 Aboriginal Australians were unemployed in Victoria, representing an unemployment rate of 9.5% (Figure 3). This is 3 percentage points lower than the national Aboriginal Australian unemployment rate, which was 12.3% in 2021.

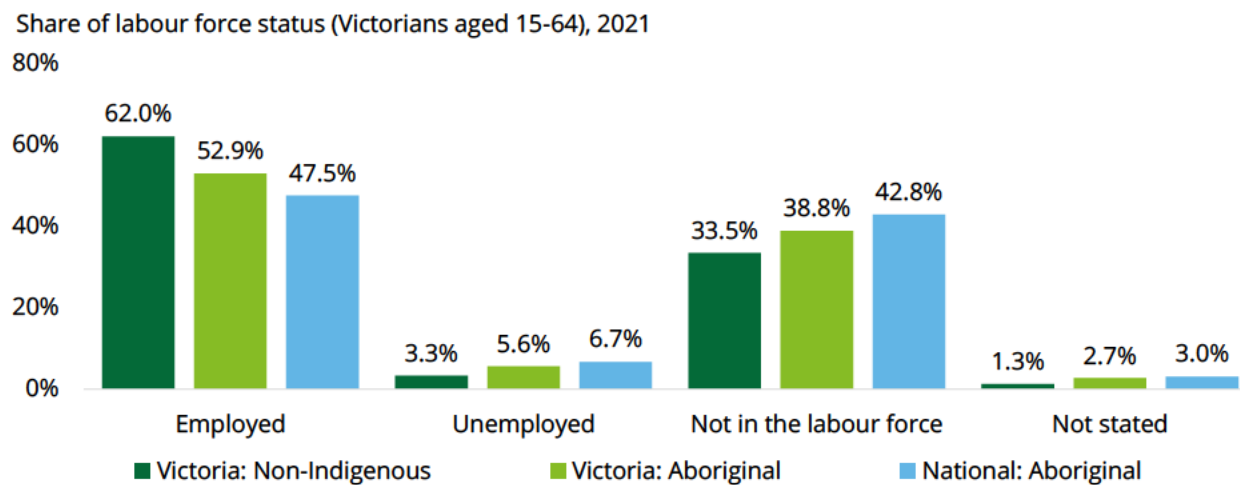
However, the Victorian Aboriginal population benefits from a stronger labour market than the national average for Aboriginal Australians. As shown in Chart 3, Aboriginal Victorians have higher employment and labour force participation than the national level.

This relative strength suggests pre-existing advantages within the labour market for Aboriginal Victorians, relative to other jurisdictions. However, the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Victorians means that further growth is needed to achieve employment equality within Victoria.

Figure 3: Summary of key employment statistics for Aboriginal Victorians, 2021



Chart 3: Labour force status by Indigenous status, 2021



Source: ABS Census, 2021



# Region of employment

## Aboriginal Victorians living in urban areas have a higher rate of employment than those living in regional or rural areas of Victoria.

Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to live in regional and rural areas of Victoria than the state's non-Indigenous population. However, regional and rural areas can have more difficult labour market conditions than urban centres. In Victoria, 45.1% of Aboriginal employed persons are in urban regions of Melbourne (Chart 4).

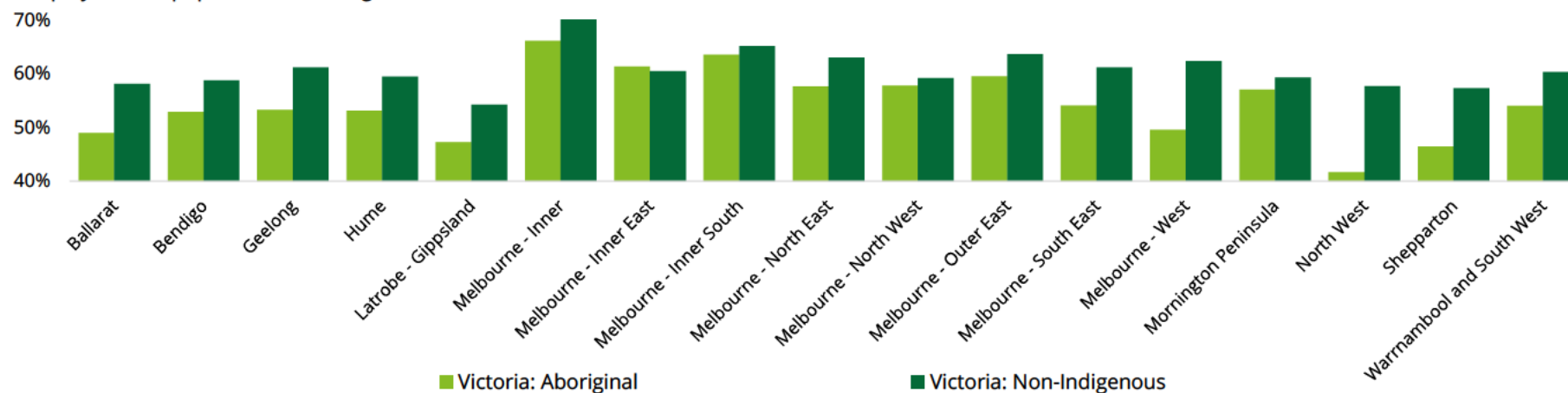
The regions with the highest representation of the total Aboriginal population are Melbourne West, Latrobe Gippsland, and the North West Region. However, these regions have some of the lowest employment to population ratios for Aboriginal Victorians out of all regions in Victoria.

The North West Region, which includes the regional centres of Mildura, Horsham, and Swan Hill, has an employment to population ratio of 41.7% for Aboriginal Victorians and 57.7% for the Non-Indigenous population. This is the Victorian region with the largest difference between the employment ratio for non-Indigenous and Aboriginal Australians. This region has the equivalent highest overall Aboriginal population, with 3.5% of the population being Aboriginal Australians.

Employment outcomes are stronger for Aboriginal Australians living in urban centres. Melbourne has the highest employment to population ratio for Aboriginal Victorians. While Inner East Melbourne only accounts for 1.5% of the total Aboriginal Victorian population, the Inner East has a higher employment to population ratio for Aboriginal Victorians (at 61.4%) than the non-Indigenous population (60.6%).

Chart 4: Employment to population ratio by region

Employment to population ratio (Region of usual residence, Victoria), 2021



Source: ABS Census, 2021



# Industry of employment

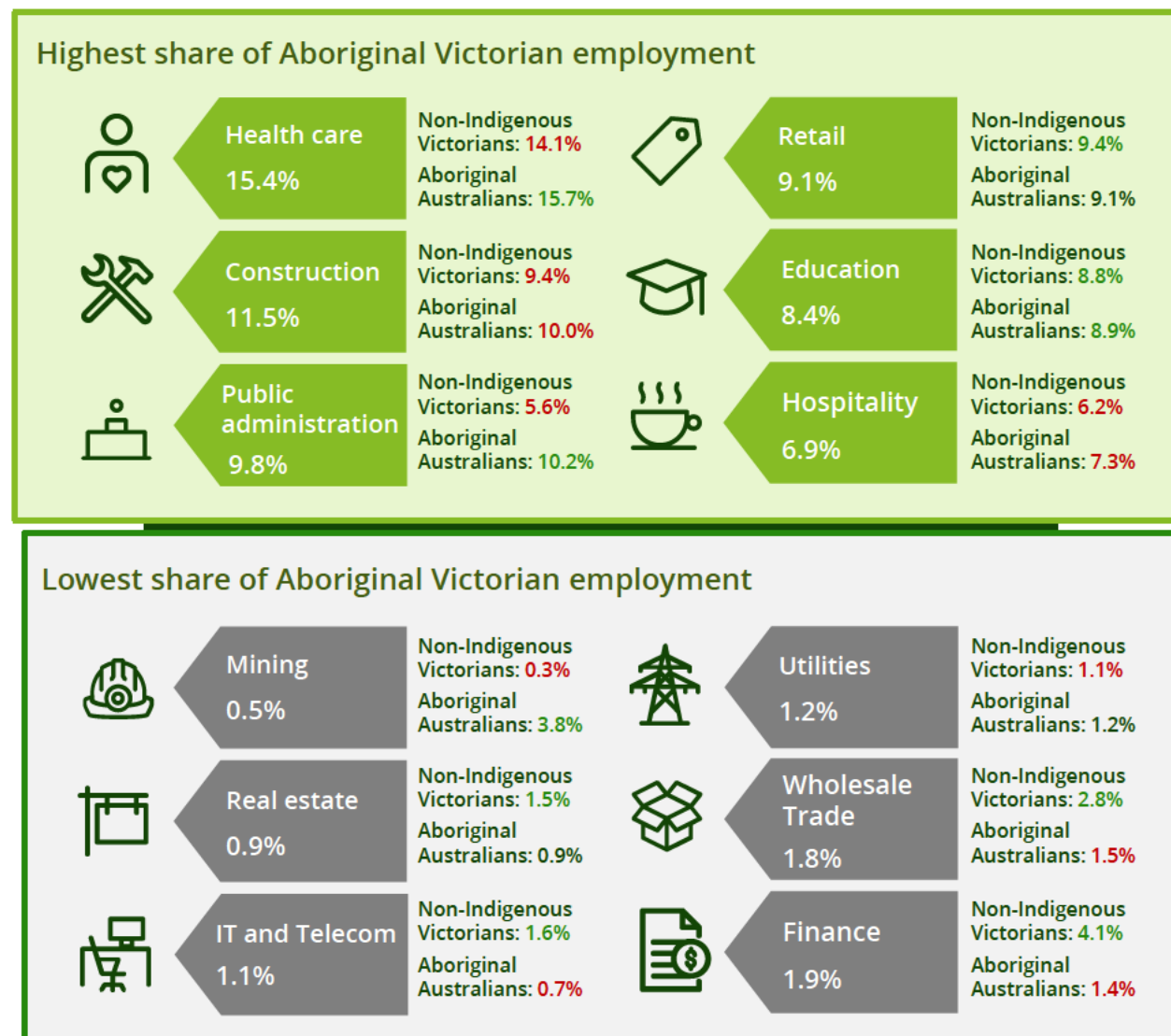
Compared to non-Indigenous Victorians, Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to work in the Health, Construction, or Public administration industries.

The industries that Aboriginal Victorians work across are broadly the same as non-Indigenous Victorians.

However, when considered relative to non-Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal Victorians are highly represented across service industries that are key to the Victorian economy. Specifically, industries such as Health Care, Public Administration, and Education have high Aboriginal representation, with these industries key to critical functions within the Victorian public services such as schools, hospitals and state and local governments.

The Professional Services industry has the largest difference in employment between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Victorians. While 8.5% of employed non-Indigenous Victorians work in the industry, the Professional Services industry accounts for just 4.0% of employed Aboriginal Victorians. This employment disparity is also evident across other white-collar industries, such as Finance, underlining the difficulty which Aboriginal Victorians face in accessing certain career paths. Further growth in Aboriginal employment in these industries is necessary to reach employment equality.

Figure 4: Share of Aboriginal Victorian employment by industry



Source: ABS Census, 2021



# Occupation of employment

**Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to work in Professional and Managerial roles than Aboriginal Australians in other jurisdictions.**

The most common occupations for Aboriginal Victorians are Professionals, Community and Personal Service workers, and Technicians and Trades (Chart 5).

When considered relative to other states, Aboriginal Victorians are more likely to work in either Manager roles or Professional roles than the average for Aboriginal Australians. The greater proportion of Aboriginal employment in skilled roles relative to the national average demonstrates the progress Victoria has made in improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal persons (Chart 6).

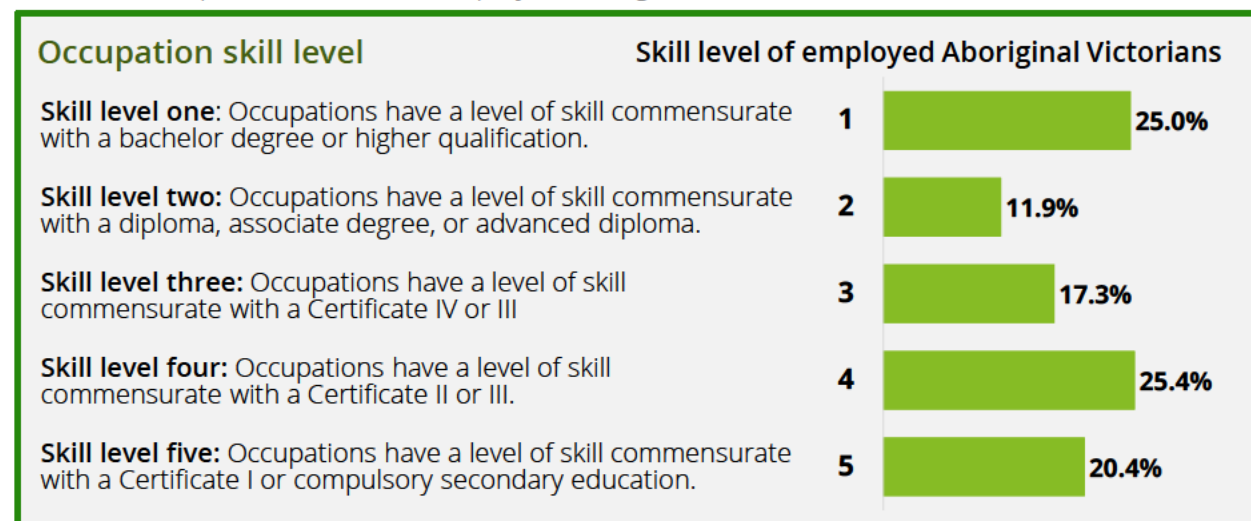
However, relative to non-Aboriginal persons, Aboriginal Victorians are still more likely to work as Technicians or trades workers, in Machinery operation and driving roles, and in either Sales, Community and personal service, or Labourer positions.

These roles could be broadly characterised as semi-skilled occupations, while non-Indigenous Victorians are more likely to be employed in white-collar occupations such as Managers, Professionals, or Clerical and administrative roles. Specifically, non-Indigenous Victorians are 9 percentage points more likely to work in a Professional occupation. This underlines the distance still to cover to close the clear gap in employment outcomes in Victoria.

Chart 5: Occupation share of employed persons by Indigenous status



Chart 6: Occupation skill level of employed Aboriginal Victorians



Source: ABS Census, 2021

# Qualifications within the labour market

**Within Victoria, fewer employed Aboriginal persons have completed a Bachelor degree or higher qualification compared to non-Indigenous Victorians.**

Employed Aboriginal Victorians are most likely to hold secondary education, Years 10-12 as their highest qualification (34.7%), followed by a Certificate III or IV (29.3%). Only 18.3% of employed Aboriginal Victorians hold a Bachelor degree or above (Chart 7). This is a much lower education attainment than employed non-Indigenous Victorians, who are over twice as likely to hold a Bachelor degree or a higher.

However, employed Aboriginal Victorians tend to have higher qualifications than those in other jurisdictions.

Those outside of employment (including both unemployed and not in the labour force) tend to have lower levels of educational attainment across all cohorts (Chart 8). Compared to non-Indigenous Victorians, Aboriginal Victorians outside of employment are almost twice as likely to report their highest level of education to be the completion of Year 9 or below.

The knowledge and skills of workers available in the labor market are a key determinant for both business and economic growth. Aboriginal Australians have historically experienced discrimination and exclusion, which has led to poorer educational outcomes, in turn constraining the potential of the Aboriginal economy.

Chart 7: Highest educational attainment for employed persons by Indigenous status

Employed persons, share of highest educational attainment by qualification level, 2021

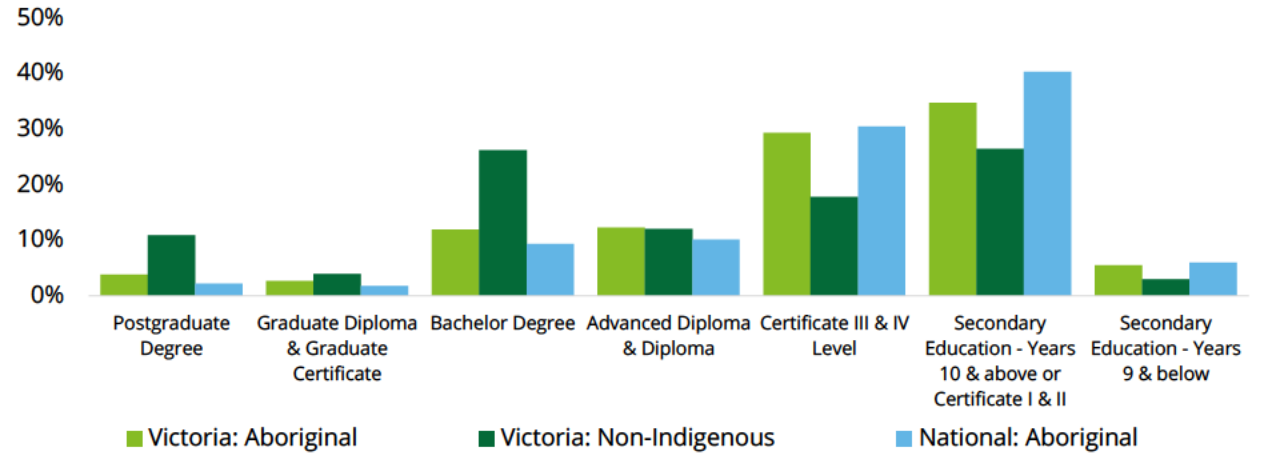
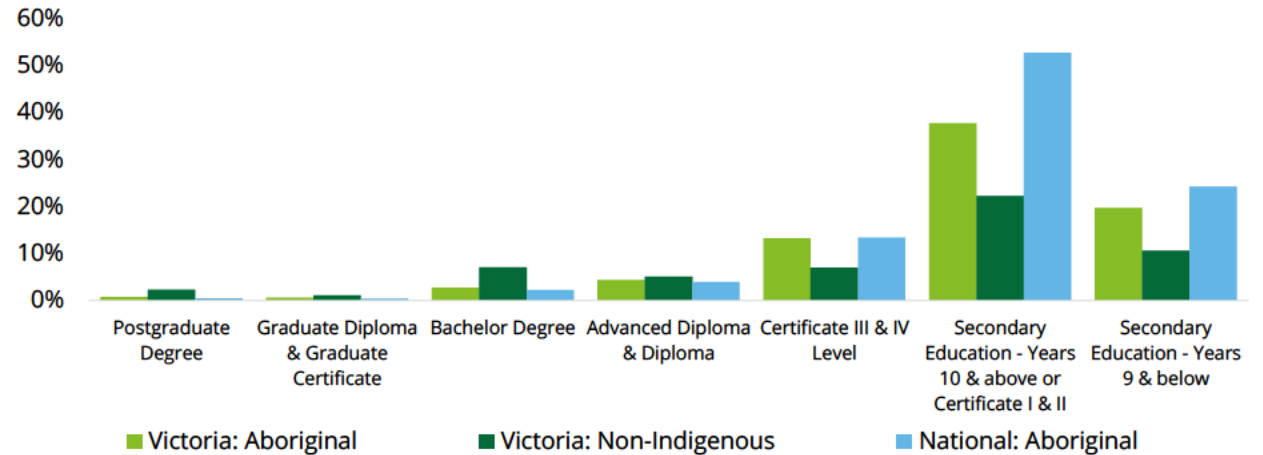


Chart 8: Highest educational attainment for persons outside of employment by Indigenous status

Persons outside of employment\*, share of highest educational attainment by qualification level, 2021



\*Note: Persons outside of employment include those of working age who are not in the labour force or are unemployed. Source: ABS Census, 2021



# Income

## Employed Aboriginal Victorians earn lower incomes than non-Indigenous Victorians.

The capacity to generate income is a key indicator of economic performance and prosperity, allowing individuals greater choice in the selection of goods and services, the opportunity to achieve financial security and benefit from the associated social impacts.

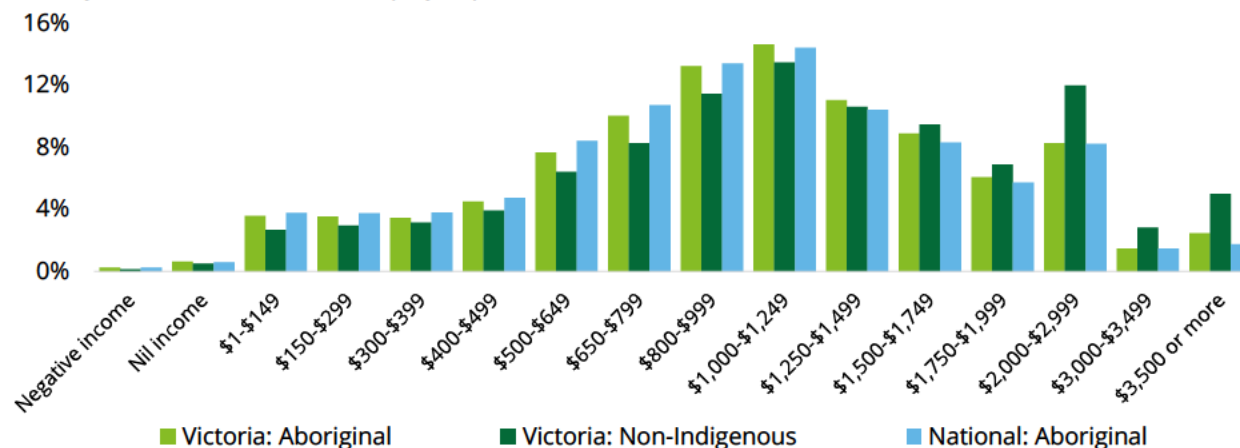
This analysis suggests that, on average, employed Aboriginal Victorians still earn around 16 cents less per dollar than employed non-Indigenous Victorians.

In total, 47.0% of employed Aboriginal Victorians earn less than \$1,000 per week, which compares to 39.6% of employed non-Indigenous Victorians (Chart 9). In terms of the top earners, only 12.2% of employed Aboriginal Victorians earned more than \$2,000 per week, relative to 19.9% of employed non-Indigenous Victorians

When employed Aboriginal Victorian incomes are considered relative to the national average for employed Aboriginal Australians, Victorians fare slightly better. Nationally, 47.5% of employed Aboriginal Australians earned between \$1 and \$500 per week, which compares to 42.9% of employed Aboriginal Victorians.

Chart 9: Weekly income distribution of employed persons by Indigenous status

Weekly income distribution of employed persons, 2021



Source: ABS Census, 2021

Figure 5: Main source of income for Aboriginal Victorians in the labour force<sup>1</sup>

Income support	Top 5 main sources of income, Aboriginal Victorians in the labour force
Most Aboriginal Victorians in the labour force have employee wages and salaries as their main source of income (78.7%).	<b>78.7%</b> Employee wages and salary Non-Indigenous Victorians: 82.8%
However, around 17% of Aboriginal Victorians in the labour force have government benefits and allowances as their main source of income. This is much higher than non-Indigenous Victorians (6.7%), reflecting the ongoing inequality in forms of income for Aboriginal Victorians.	<b>16.5%</b> Government benefits Non-Indigenous Victorians: 6.7%
	<b>3.2%</b> Own business income Non-Indigenous Victorians: 5.9%
	<b>1.4%</b> Investment income Non-Indigenous Victorians: 3.7%
	<b>0.2%</b> Superannuation income Non-Indigenous Victorians: 0.1%

\*Note: Persons in the labour force include those who are of working age (15-64) and are employed or unemployed.



# Aboriginal employment: gross value added

The Aboriginal employment presented in this chapter contributes to the Victorian economy as an input into the production of goods and services. A key metric for assessing the scale of this contribution is gross value added (GVA), which is a measure of the economic value generated. In this context, it considers the employee compensation received and the gross operating surplus generated per employee for all Aboriginal persons employed in Victoria, as well as the revenue generated throughout the supply chain at Victorian-based firms.

- In 2021, there were 23,590 employed Aboriginal Victorians identified in the Census. However, the ABS estimates that Aboriginal persons are underrepresented by around 17.4% in the Census<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, for this analysis it is estimated that **27,695 Aboriginal persons were employed** in Victoria in 2021.
- This total employment (headcount) figure has been adjusted using ABS Census data on hours of work to reach a figure for equivalent full-time employees (FTEs), of 21,465 FTEs (see Appendix A for full calculation methodology and sources).
- The contribution of this employment can be defined in terms of gross value added (GVA). This is an economic metric which measures the value generated by a unit engaged in the production of goods and services (see Glossary). For a detailed discussion of the method, see Appendix A: Methodology.
- **Aboriginal employment in Victoria is estimated to have contributed \$3.73 billion in total GVA in 2021**, comprising \$2.43 billion in direct GVA generated, alongside an additional \$1.30 billion of activity catalysed across the supply chain.
- In practice, this means that every Aboriginal person employed in the Victorian economy is responsible for generating \$135,000 of GVA. At a state level, the total contribution equates to an annual contribution of 0.8% of the total state product of Victoria (\$490.7 billion, 2021).

Figure 6: Components of GVA

Category	Victoria Total (2021)
Employees	27,695
FTEs	21,465
Direct GVA contribution	\$2.43bn
Indirect GVA contribution	\$1.30bn
<b>Total GVA contribution</b>	<b>\$3.73bn</b>

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis

<sup>1</sup>ABS (2023). "Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians methodology" <<https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/estimates-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians-methodology/30-june-2021>>.

# Activity of Aboriginal Enterprises



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# Aboriginal enterprise in Victoria

The presence of established, productive Aboriginal enterprises is essential in generating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and supporting the continued development of a dynamic Aboriginal economy in Victoria.

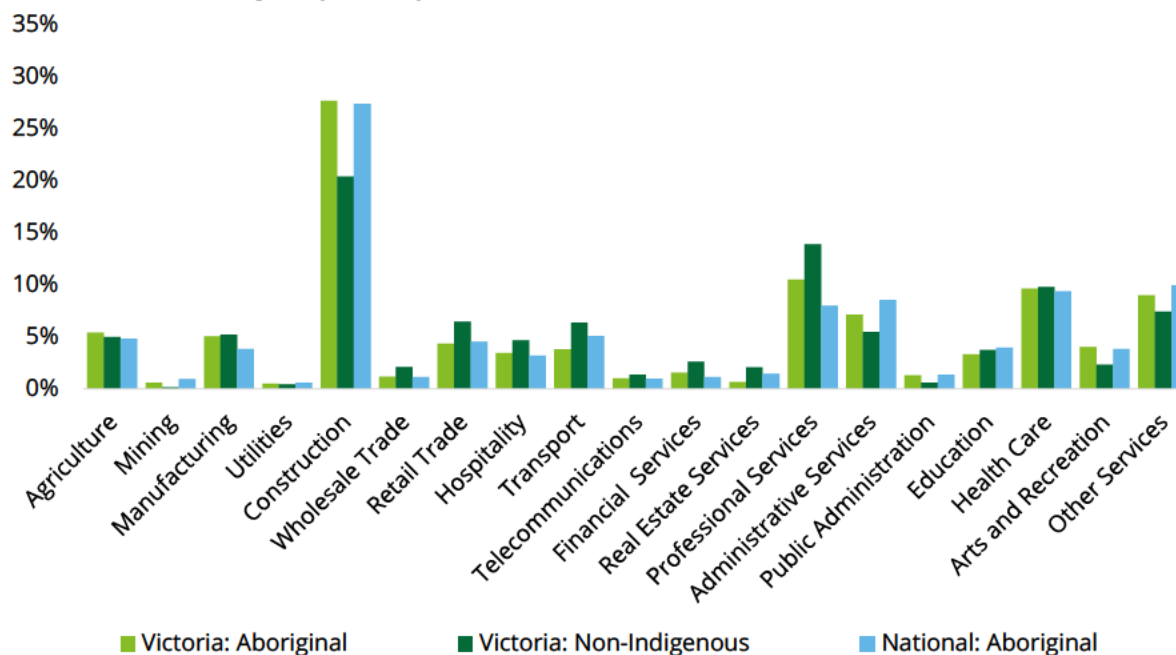
There is no singular source that captures the full extent of Aboriginal enterprise in Victoria (defined as firms with 51% or greater Aboriginal ownership), with activity ranging from the Traditional Owner Corporations, across well-established private enterprises, to charities and self-employed owner-manager firms.

Larger enterprises form the bedrock of the Aboriginal enterprise sphere. These enterprises are commonly registered as Aboriginal-owned firms with one of the established bodies, such as ORIC, the Kinaway Chambers of Commerce, Supply Nation, or the ICN. These networks work to provide commercial opportunities and can assist with access to government procurement platforms among other benefits.

Self-employed individuals are equally understood to be a key component of the Aboriginal enterprise landscape. The 2021 Census found that there are more than 2,000 Aboriginal Victorians who are owner-managers working in their own businesses. The most popular industries for Aboriginal Victorian enterprises are Construction, Professional and Other services. Of the total employed Aboriginal Victorians, 8.4% are owner managers of their own businesses with or without employees (Chart 10).

Chart 10: Owner managers by industry in Victoria

Share of owner managers by industry, 2021



## Data limitations and assumptions

- The number of unique firms is estimated to avoid overlap between datasets.
- Assumptions of revenue per firm for each dataset are based on the established literature.
- Self-employed owner-manager firms are treated separately, with estimates of revenue based on ABS Census data.

Source: ABS Census, 2021

# Revenue of Aboriginal enterprise

The revenue generated by Aboriginal enterprises through the sale of goods or services is an important measure of the scale of the Aboriginal economy in Victoria, and its contribution to the wider Australian economy.

To estimate the total revenue generated by Aboriginal enterprises active in Victoria, firm-level data has been consolidated across five key sources – ORIC, the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Supply Nation, the ICN, and the ABS. For each of these, the total number of unique firms was estimated, while estimates of the mean revenue generated by each unique firm were then used to evaluate gross totals. The method utilised is discussed in full in Appendix A: Methodology.

- In 2022-23, there were **3,121 Aboriginal enterprises** estimated to be active across Victoria.
- Of these, the majority were self-employed individuals operating as owner-managers (sourced from the ABS Census), comprising 88% of the total enterprises included within the analysis (following adjustment to account for ABS Census underrepresentation). Such enterprises typically generate lower revenue than larger firms. However, given the volume of self-employed individuals, they represent a significant proportion of the total revenue generated across the Aboriginal economy in 2022-23 (46%).
- Enterprises present within the ORIC database generate 25% of the total revenue generated by Aboriginal enterprises. These enterprises are larger in terms of their total revenue per firm. This component includes all of the Traditional Owner Corporations.
- The estimated mean revenue per firm is lower for enterprises uniquely registered with the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce or Supply Nation, as the larger firms, which are commonly included in multiple registers, are only accounted for in ORIC estimates of revenue per firm.
- There are fewer unique enterprises registered with the ICN, which is understandable given this is not exclusively an Aboriginal network. However, those that are registered do account for a considerably greater amount of revenue per firm than enterprises registered with Kinaway Chamber of Commerce or Supply Nation.

Figure 7: Estimated total revenue per firm, 2022-23

Database	Estimated total number of unique firms	Estimated average revenue per firm (\$ millions)	Estimated total revenue (\$ millions)
ORIC	66	2.6	171
Kinaway Chamber of Commerce	221	0.6	135
Supply Nation	61	0.8	48
ICN	17	1.4	24
Self-employed (ABS)	2,757	0.1	320
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,121</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>698</b>

Source: ABS Census, 2021, ORIC, Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Supply Nation, ICN.



# Employment within Aboriginal enterprise

The role of Aboriginal enterprise in providing employment is vital, with research suggesting Indigenous businesses are over 100 times more likely to hire Indigenous workers than non-Indigenous businesses in Australia<sup>1</sup>. When people have jobs, they have money to spend on goods and services, which in turn underpins economic productivity and enables people to support themselves, their families and their communities.

Like the estimates of revenue, estimates of total employment across Victorian Aboriginal enterprises use firm-level data gathered from the same five sources. For each of these, the total number of unique firms was estimated. Estimates of the average employment in each unique firm were then used to evaluate gross totals, calculated as the sum of employment per firm and the number of unique firms. The method used in the analysis of employment is discussed in full in Appendix A: Methodology.

Aboriginal enterprises are estimated to have employed a total of **7,507 employees** in 2022-23. Around 35% of these employees are estimated to be Indigenous<sup>2</sup>.

- The enterprises contained within the ORIC database were estimated to employ the greatest number of persons per firm, accounting for 33% of total employment at Aboriginal enterprises despite accounting for only 2% of firms. Here, ORIC estimates again benefit from the use of this database as the primary data resource, with the inclusion of the Traditional Owner Corporations and other large-scale enterprises within ORIC totals pushing employment estimates higher.
- Of the other databases, employment per enterprise for the ICN firms was also strong, reflecting the lack of overlap between the largest firms contained within the ICN registrar and ORIC.
- For enterprises which operate with a self-employed owner/manager, these are understood to not utilise additional employees, and so account for only 37% of employment, despite representing 88% of enterprises.

<sup>1</sup>Eva, C. et al (2023). "The importance of understanding Indigenous employment in the Indigenous business sector". Australian Journal of Social Issues. <sup>2</sup>Supply Nation (2018). "Indigenous Business Growth" <<https://supplynation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Building-Indigenous-Growth-Report.pdf>>

Figure 8: Employees per firm.

Database	Estimated number of unique firms	Estimated employees per firm	Estimated total employees (2022/23)
ORIC	66	38	2,489
Kinaway Chamber of Commerce	221	5	1,088
Supply Nation	61	13	774
ICN	17	24	339
Self-employed (ABS)	2,757	1	2,757
<b>Total / average</b>	<b>3,121</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7,507</b>

Source: ABS Census, 2021, ORIC, Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Supply Nation, ICN.

# Industry profile of Aboriginal enterprise

The allocation of business activity across industries allows for a more developed understanding of the nature of the supply chains underpinning the Aboriginal economy, providing valuable insight into how Aboriginal enterprises purchase their intermediary goods and services, and aiding in the evaluation of the scale of such activity when considered as an indirect economic contribution of the Aboriginal economy.

The databases considered in this analysis do not provide information on the industry allocation of Aboriginal economic activity. However, the literature suggests that Aboriginal enterprises often undertake diverse portfolios of activity.

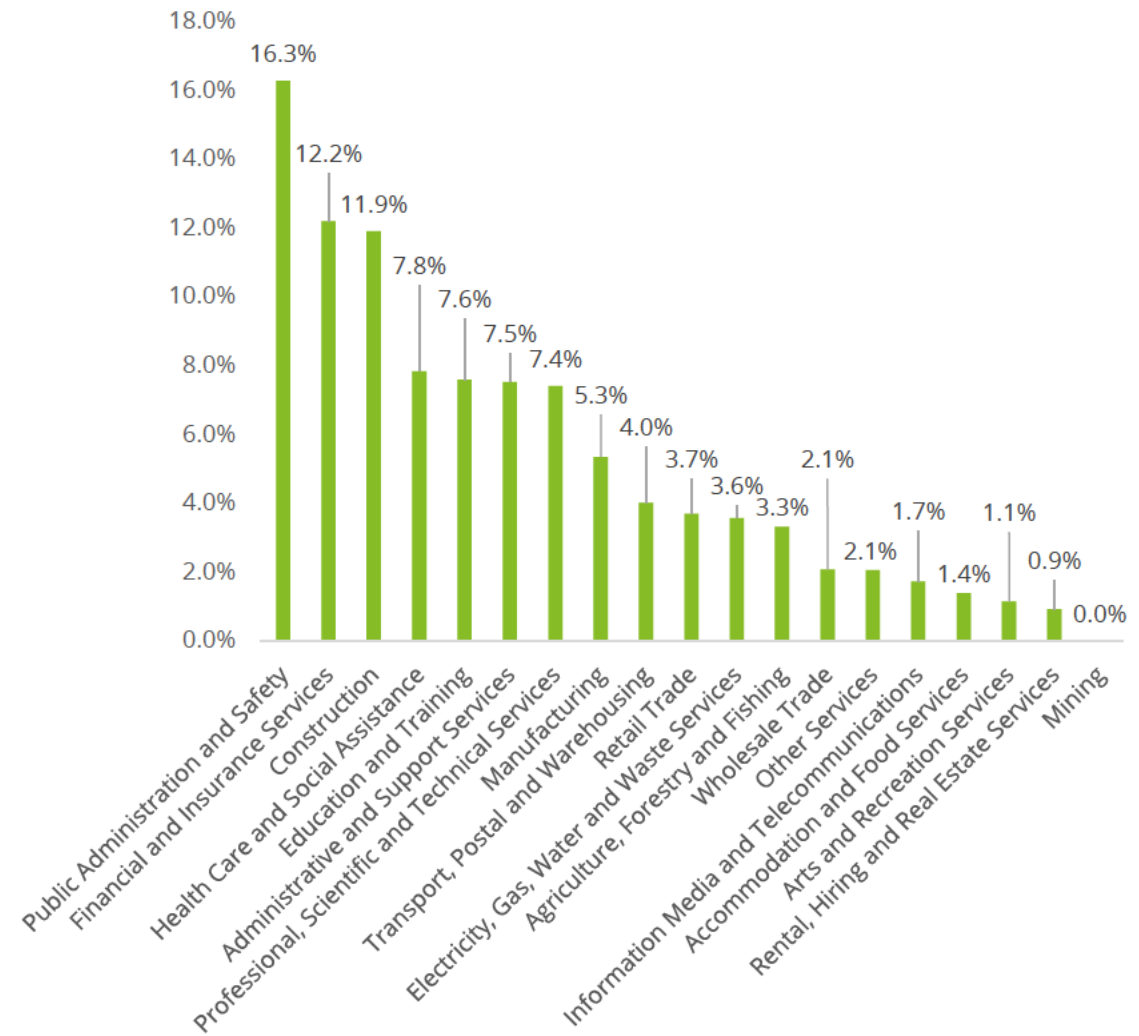
An industry allocation is required to estimate the indirect impacts of Aboriginal economic activity. The best proxy for this is to assume that the allocation of Aboriginal enterprise across industries reflects the industry allocation of the broader Victorian economy (available from the ABS), adjusted for areas of specific strength within Aboriginal enterprises. The specific steps taken are discussed in full in Appendix A: Methodology.

This method identifies Public administration and safety (16.3%), Financial and insurance services (12.2%), and Construction (11.9%) as areas of concentration for the Aboriginal economy (Chart 11). In total, these industries are estimated to account for 40.4% of the Aboriginal economy, relative to 26.4% of the total Victorian economy.

Equally, the data suggests that industries such as Wholesale services (2.1%), Information media and technology (1.7%), and Rental, hiring and real estate services (0.9%) are less associated with the Aboriginal economy. These sectors account for 12.1% of GVA generated across the Victorian economy but are estimated to amount to only 4.7% of the Aboriginal economy.

Enterprises comprising of self-employed owner-managers are subject to a separate industry allocation process, with ABS 2021 Census providing direct information on the industry of operation for such enterprises (see slide 24).

Chart 11: Share of Aboriginal enterprises by sector



Source: ABS Census, 2021

# Key contributors to the Victorian Aboriginal economy

The Victorian Aboriginal economy benefits from large contributions from several firms. Based on a review of the ORIC dataset, the 25 largest firms according to revenue are presented below. Together, these top 25 generated \$170 million of revenue in 2021-22, comprising 24% of total revenue generated by Aboriginal enterprises.

Figure 9: Top 25 firm contributors to the Victorian Aboriginal economy.

No.	Firm	Revenue (\$, 2021/22)	Field of Business	Office Location	Business Type	Governance Structure
1	Njernda Aboriginal Corporation	17,729,783	Health care and social assistance, Education and training, Professional services	Echuca	Community controlled organisation	Board of Directors
2	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	15,053,261	Arts and recreation, Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture	Bendigo	Traditional Owner Corporation	Djaara Board (Board of Directors)
3	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation	14,438,488	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation, Agriculture	Abbotsford	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors
4	Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation	13,355,141	Health care and social assistance, Education and training	Sale	Community controlled organisation	Board, Executive Management Team (with a CEO), and a Community Advisory Committee
5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (Victoria) (Djirra)	13,097,952	Professional services	Abbotsford	Community controlled organisation	Board with Directors and Chairperson, CEO
6	Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC	11,806,003	Arts and recreation, Food and accommodation, Education and training	Kalimna West	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors, Elders Council and Sub-committees
7	Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC	9,939,314	Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture	Heywood	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors
8	Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	9,624,339	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation	Ballarat Central	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors
9	Taungurung Land and Waters Council (Aboriginal Corporation)	9,281,928	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation	Alexandra	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors with CEO
10	Bunurong Land Council (Aboriginal Corporation) (under special administration)	8,525,511	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation	Frankston	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors, Corporate Advisory Group

Source: ORIC, 2024

# Key contributors to the Victorian Aboriginal economy

Figure 9 cont.: Top 25 firm contributors to the Victorian Aboriginal economy.

No.	Firm	Revenue (\$, 2021/22)	Field of Business	Office Location	Business Type	Governance Structure
11	Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation	8,334,412	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation	Heywood	Community controlled organisation	Board of Directors with CEO
12	Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation	7,848,722	Health care and social assistance, Education and training	St Kilda	Community controlled organisation	Board of Directors with CEO
13	First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation	6,599,322	Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture	Mildura	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors with CEO
14	Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation	5,368,424	Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture	Barmah	Traditional Owner Corporation	Currently under administration, no board in situ
15	Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC	4,508,312	Professional services, Food and accommodation, Arts and recreation	Horsham	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors with Chairperson only
16	SNAICC - National Voice for our Children (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)	4,301,300	Education and training	Collingwood	Peak Body	Board of Directors and Aboriginal Council with CEO
17	Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC	2,957,754	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation	Warrnambool	Traditional Owner Corporation	Board of Directors with CEO
18	Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation	2,565,354	Health care and social assistance, Education and training	Healesville	Incorporated under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act	Board of Directors with CEO
19	First Australians Media Enterprises Aboriginal Corporation	2,254,810	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation	Bundoora	Charity	Board of Directors with Chairperson only
20	Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation	542,735	Health care and social assistance, Education and training	Castlemaine	Charity	Board of Directors with CEO

Source: ORIC, 2024



# Key contributors to the Victorian Aboriginal economy

Figure 9 cont.: Top 25 firm contributors to the Victorian Aboriginal economy.

No.	Firm	Revenue (\$, 2021/22)	Field of Business	Office Location	Business Type	Governance Structure
21	Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation	520,369	Education and training, Arts and recreation	Melton South	Community controlled organisation	Board of Directors with CEO
22	Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages	419,361	Education and training, Arts and recreation	Docklands	Peak body	Board of Directors with CEO
23	Baluk Arts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation	378,148	Arts and recreation	Mount Eliza	Private enterprise	CEO
24	National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (Indigenous Corporation)	323,689	Health care and social assistance, Education and training	Mortlake	Alliance, representing over 180 women's organisations	Board of Directors with CEO
25	Sunbury Aboriginal Corporation	207,185	Professional services, Other	Sunbury	Community controlled organisation	Board of Directors with CEO

# Aboriginal enterprise: gross value added

The economic contribution of Aboriginal enterprise can be assessed in terms of the gross value added (GVA) to the wider Victorian economy. This considers the revenue generated by all firms active within the Aboriginal economy, as well as the indirect revenue generated across Victoria-based firms as a result of activity catalysed throughout the supply chains of Aboriginal enterprises.

- In order to estimate the contribution of Aboriginal enterprise, a distinction was made between multi-employee enterprises and single-employee enterprises where one self-employed individual acts as the owner-manager. This allowed for the calculation of the number of unique enterprises, with estimates of per firm revenue then applied to each unique firm to calculate total revenue. For a detailed discussion of the method, see Appendix A: Methodology.
- The total revenue generated by the Victorian Aboriginal economy is estimated to amount to \$1.05 billion in 2022-23. Of this, 66% is direct activity (\$698.0 million), while a further 34% is indirect activity. This means that for every \$1 spent at an Aboriginal enterprise, a further 51 cents will go on to be spent across the supply chain.
- The total GVA generated by the Victorian Aboriginal economy is estimated to equate to \$520.6 million in 2022-23. As an annual contribution to the wider Victorian economy, this represents 0.1% of the total state product of Victoria (\$535.5 billion, 2023).

Figure 10: Components of GVA.

Category	Victoria Total (2023)
Direct Revenue	\$698.0m
Indirect Revenue	\$353.6m
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,051.6m</b>
Direct GVA contribution	\$357.2m
Indirect GVA contribution	\$163.4m
<b>Total GVA contribution</b>	<b>\$520.6m</b>

Source: Deloitte Access Economics analysis



# Activity of the Traditional Owner Corporations



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# Traditional Owner Corporations

**The Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) were established through the *Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. This legislation recognised Aboriginal people as the primary guardians, keepers, and knowledge holders of Aboriginal cultural heritage.**

In practice, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) act as the voice of Aboriginal people at a local level, with the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council responsible for determining which applicants will be appointed as Registered Aboriginal Parties. There are currently 11 RAPs in Victoria, with each of these formally incorporated as Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) for commercial matters (Figure 11).

Currently, Traditional Owner Corporations are estimated to cover approximately 66% of the total land mass in Victoria<sup>1</sup>. Where active, the TOCs contribute to local economies across a broad range of industries. For areas in which there is no formally recognised Traditional Owner Corporation, the Victorian Government provides processes and support for prospective Traditional Owner groups to negotiate agreements and progress towards formal recognition.

The collective interests of the TOCs have been represented by The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC) since 2013. FVTOC is the peak body responsible for facilitating a collective voice for Traditional Owners to self-determine their future. Their engagement with the TOCs focuses on shared interests and strategies for broadening political engagement, informing policy, and increasing economic and caring for Country opportunities.

<sup>1</sup>Victorian Government (2019). "Culture and Country" <<https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-aboriginal-affairs-report-2019/culture-country>>.

Figure 11: Geographic representation of the Traditional Owner Corporations Victoria



Key: Registered Aboriginal Parties

Source: Aboriginal Victoria, 2021.

 Barengi Gadjin Land Council	 Taungurung Land and Waters Council
 Bunurong Land Council	 Wadawurrung Traditional Owners
 Dja Dja Wurrung Clans	 Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage
 Eastern Maar	 Yorta Yorta Nation
 First People of the Millewa-Mallee	<b>Areas where more than one RAP exists</b>
 Gunaikurnai Land and Waters	 Bunurong Land Council and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage
 Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners	 Eastern Maar and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners



# Revenue and Employment

The Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) represent a significant aspect of the Victorian Aboriginal economy, contributing 15% of all revenue generated by Aboriginal enterprises

- In terms of revenue generated, the largest TOCs are the *Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Corporation* (\$15.1m), the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation* (\$14.4m), and the *Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Corporation* (\$11.8m). In particular, the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation* and the *Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Corporation* are significant contributors to the Aboriginal economy, generating 30.1% of all revenue received by Traditional Owner Corporations, which amounts to 5% of the estimated total revenue received across all Victorian Aboriginal enterprises.
- Measured by persons employed, the largest Traditional Owner Corporations are again the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation* (129 employees), the *Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Corporation* (74 employees), and the *Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Corporation* (61 employees).
- The revenue per employee can vary significantly between firms. The *Yorta Yorta Nation Corporation* benefits from the greatest amount of revenue per employee at \$268k per person. However, one of the larger operations, the *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation* earns just \$112k per employee. However, this metric should not be taken as wholly representative of productivity, as a firm's revenue generating capacity may result from other factors of production, such as inherent advantages in their access to land, capital, or entrepreneurship.

Figure 12: Revenue and employment, Traditional Owner Corporations Victoria, 2021-22

Traditional Owner Corporation	Revenue (\$ millions)	Employment (persons)	Revenue per employee (\$ per employee)
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans	15.1	61	246,775
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage	14.4	129	111,926
Gunaikurnai Land & Waters	11.8	74	159,541
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners	9.9	39	254,854
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners	9.6	57	168,848
Taungurung Land and Waters Council	9.3	45	206,265
Bunurong Land Council	8.5	52	163,952
First People of the Millewa-Mallee	6.5	26	253,820
Yorta Yorta Nation	5.4	20	268,421
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	4.5	32	140,885
Eastern Maar	3.0	12	246,480
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>98.1</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>179,347</b>

Source: ORIC, 2024

# Industry and activity profile

Figure 13: Additional characteristics by Traditional Owner Corporation

Traditional Owner Corporation	Total assets (\$ million)	Key corporation activities			Industries of focus
Bunurong Land Council	36.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional ceremony</li> <li>Field assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural awareness training</li> </ul>		Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans	35.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land management</li> <li>Creative arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural tourism</li> <li>Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bush foods</li> <li>Cultural services</li> </ul>	Arts and recreation, Professional services, Education and training
Taungurung Land and Waters Council	34.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural tours</li> <li>Language and naming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural services</li> <li>Resource management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational workshops</li> <li>Educational resources</li> </ul>	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation
Gunaikurnai Land & Waters	33.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art gallery</li> <li>Bush cafe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural consultation</li> <li>Amphitheatre venue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural education</li> </ul>	Arts and recreation, Food and accommodation, Education and training
Barengi Gadjin Land Council	20.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural ceremonies</li> <li>Native nursery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative arts</li> <li>Coffee van</li> </ul>		Professional services, Food and accommodation, Arts and recreation
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage	16.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural heritage</li> <li>Resource management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural practices</li> <li>Cultural consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language and naming</li> <li>Education and tours</li> </ul>	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners	15.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land management</li> <li>Cultural consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural ceremonies</li> <li>Field assessments</li> </ul>		Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners	10.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural heritage</li> <li>Cultural education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate education</li> <li>Cultural consultation</li> </ul>		Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation
Eastern Maar	10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural management</li> <li>Cultural ceremonies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field representation</li> <li>Cultural training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land management</li> </ul>	Professional services, Education and training, Arts and recreation
First People of the Millewa-Mallee	10.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural ceremonies</li> <li>Land management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural training</li> <li>Aboriginal archaeology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native seed collection</li> <li>Native nursery</li> </ul>	Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture
Yorta Yorta Nation	7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land management</li> <li>Training organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural consultation</li> <li>Cultural education</li> </ul>		Professional services, Education and training, Agriculture

Sources: Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Gunaikurnai Land & Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, Bunurong Land Council, Taungurung Land and Waters Council, Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners, Barengi Gadjin Land Council, First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation. 34



# Comparison with other jurisdictions



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# Employment profile comparison

When considering how the Victorian Aboriginal economy performs, it is helpful to consider outcomes in comparison to other domestic and international jurisdictions.

- Domestically, Victoria performs well in terms of employment outcomes, with Victoria having the second highest employment rate (52.9%), and the second lowest unemployment rate (9.5%). While Victoria does have the lowest proportion of Aboriginal persons relative to other states, this suggests that those who do live in the state achieve better labour market outcomes than elsewhere in Australia. However, these figures are still lagging relative to the non-Aboriginal Victorian employment to population ratio of 62.0% and unemployment rate (5.0%), indicating there is still a significant gap between outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons.
- When comparing the Victorian Aboriginal economy Internationally, the progress still required becomes clearer. Both New Zealand and Canada have significantly larger Indigenous populations, and these populations benefit from higher employment rates while generating significantly more GVA through enterprise on both a gross and per capita basis (Canada and New Zealand do not report the GVA generated through Indigenous employment). While it is notable that Canada also has a higher unemployment rate, this may be related to the fact that a greater proportion of the Indigenous community are regarded as economically active and looking for work.

Figure 14: Aboriginal labour force status by state

State	Proportion of total population	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
Victoria	1.0%	52.9%	9.6%
New South Wales	3.4%	51.0%	9.8%
Queensland	4.6%	49.1%	13.3%
South Australia	2.4%	42.9%	15.6%
Western Australia	3.3%	41.3%	15.9%
Tasmania	5.4%	52.7%	10.1%
Northern Territory	26.3%	28.0%	20.8%
Australian Capital Territory	2.0%	65.1%	7.1%
<b>Australia (total)</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>

Source: ABS Census, 2021

Figure 15: International comparison.

Jurisdiction	Indigenous proportion of population	Employment rate	Unemployment rate	GVA of Indigenous Economy	GVA per capita
Victoria	1.0%	52.9%	9.5%	\$3.44bn (employment) \$521m (enterprise)	\$52,100 (employment) \$7,900 (enterprise)
New Zealand	16.5%	62.8%	5.5%	\$17bn (enterprise)	\$22,000pp (enterprise)
Canada	4.9%	61.2%	13.2%	\$52bn (enterprise)	\$28,900pp (enterprise)

Source: ABS Census 2021, Global Victoria 2021. Statistics Canada 2022.

# What's next?



# Tracking progress over time

A key purpose of this analysis is to act as a starting point to measure future progress of the Aboriginal economy in Victoria over time. As such, the majority of the metrics upon which this analysis is dependent are drawn from publicly available sources, ensuring that the analysis is replicable.

A detailed, step-by-step method is provided in Appendix A: Methodology as a guide to this process. Although certain aspects of the analysis will require economic analysis capabilities, others can be repeated with access to ABS statistics among other sources. Some of the key questions to consider when assessing the progress of the Aboriginal economy over time are included below:

---

## Employment:

- Has total Aboriginal employment increased (number of people employed)?
- Has the Aboriginal employment to population ratio increased?
- Is Aboriginal employment becoming more prominent in higher skilled occupations (i.e., is the share of higher skilled employment increasing)?
- Is employment income increasing?
- Is reliance on government payments decreasing?
- Are the number and level of qualifications increasing?

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## Enterprise:

- Has the total number of Aboriginal-owned businesses grown?
- Has the revenue of individual firms grown?
- Has average revenue per firm grown?
- Has the average number of employees at Aboriginal firms grown?
- Has the total number of employees at Aboriginal firms grown?
- Are businesses entering new sectors and competing with the mainstream economy?

### Data Sources:

While this work is reliant on the data collated across the five key sources identified (ABS, ORIC, Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Supply Nation, and the ICN), if it is were to be refreshed at a later date there may be additional information sources available which could strengthen the analysis.

Specifically, the University of Melbourne and the ABS are developing the **I-BLADE** resource, a database of Indigenous enterprises which, when released, could form the basis for a further analysis of the enterprise sphere.

# Appendix: Modelling Methodology



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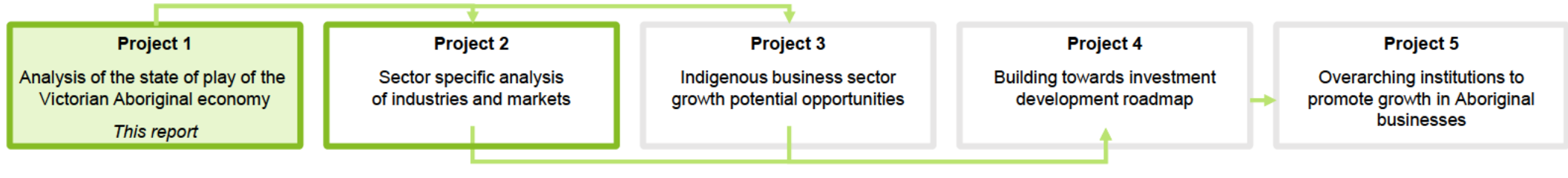
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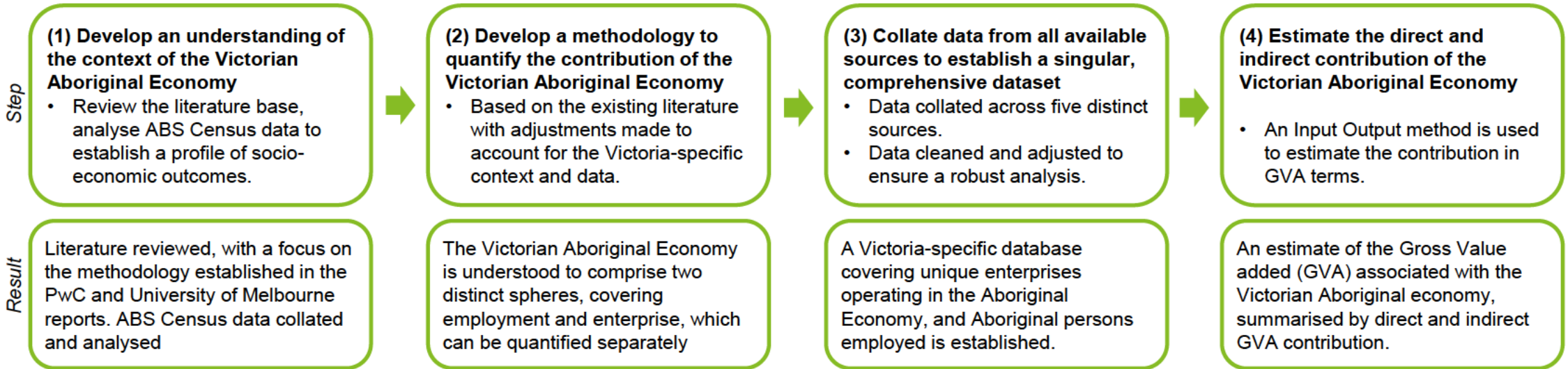


# Purpose and methodology of this report

**Context:** The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC, the Federation) are commissioning five research projects with the overarching goal of increasing Aboriginal economic development and self-determination within the Victorian Aboriginal business sector. Deloitte have been commissioned to undertake Projects 1 and 2, which are intended to provide Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs) and other stakeholders with the data and information necessary to guide strategic investment in Aboriginal economic development.



The **purpose** of Project 1 was to develop a deep and shared understanding amongst all stakeholders of the size and composition of the Victorian Aboriginal economy and its contribution to the Victorian economy. Four key steps were taken as part of the **methodology** of Project 1.



**This report** presents the outputs, underlying analysis, and methodology for Project 1, with a full discussion of the results provided for both the Aboriginal employment sphere, the Aboriginal enterprise sphere, and for the Traditional Owner Corporations as a subset of Aboriginal enterprise.



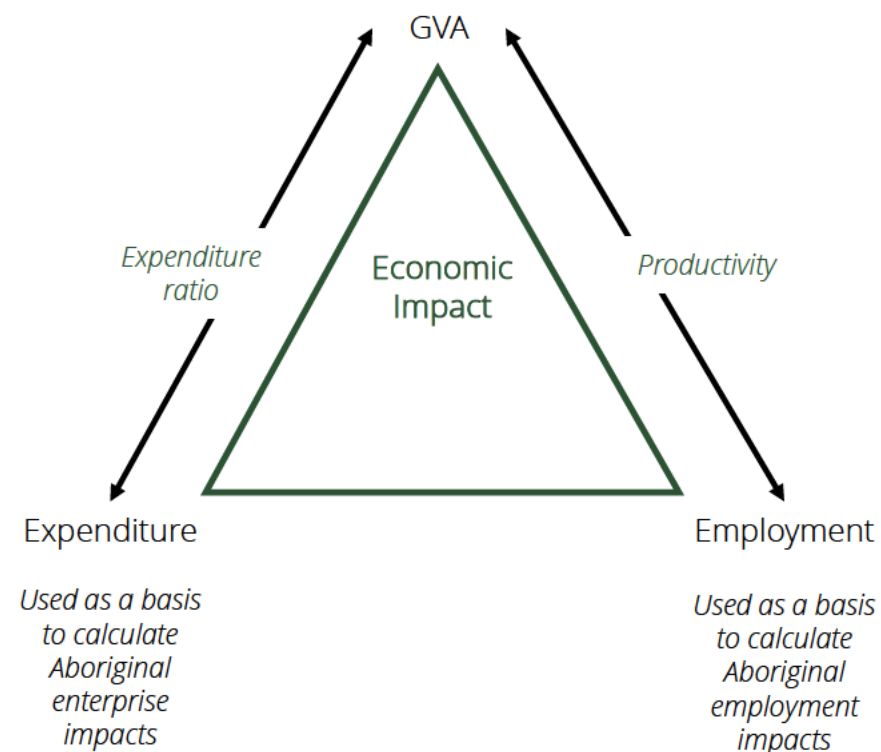


# Method overview

## Quantification Method

- The analysis seeks to quantify the direct and indirect economic impact of the Aboriginal economy in Victoria in gross value added (GVA) terms.
- In order to fully appraise the contribution of the Aboriginal economy, its' impact is considered across two spheres, capturing Aboriginal employment and Aboriginal enterprise. These spheres are evaluated separately using distinct methods
- For the Aboriginal employment sphere, data on total FTEs per industry is collated and considered relative to FTE productivity by industry, expressed as employee compensation alongside gross operating surplus per employee, in the estimation of direct GVA.
- For the Aboriginal enterprise sphere, data on total revenue per industry is collated and considered relative to the expenditure ratios of each industry, allowing for the estimation of direct GVA.
- Following the estimation of direct GVA for both Aboriginal employment and enterprise spheres, indirect supply-chain GVA is also estimated for each, with gross GVA being the sum of the direct and indirect for each sphere. This analysis is conducted using an Input-Output (IO) modelling approach, constructed based on Victorian IO tables.
- The totals across the employment and enterprise spheres will not be additive due to the existence of an overlap between the activity they seek to quantify.

Figure 16: Economic impact metrics



# Method: Aboriginal employment

Step	Aboriginal Employment: calculation of direct and indirect activity
1. Input data collation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The base for the Aboriginal Employment analysis is ABS Census 2021 data.</li> <li>This dataset provides Aboriginal employment (21,738 persons) in Victoria as a subset of total employment (3,142,483 persons), and provides the data stratified according to industry of employment.</li> </ul>
2. Input data adjustment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is evidence of underrepresentation of Aboriginal people in Census<sup>1</sup>. To account for this underrepresentation, an uplift of 17.4% is applied to employment volumes.</li> <li>This gives a total of 25,520 estimated Aboriginal persons employed in Victoria.</li> <li>This total employment is converted into a full-time employee (FTE) figure using ABS Census 2021 data on hours worked by industry for Aboriginal persons. This conversion is based on the assumption that an FTE will work a minimum of 37.5 hours weekly. This gives an estimated 19,780 FTEs.</li> </ul>
3. Direct output calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having calculated FTEs by industry, the IO model can be used to convert these totals into direct revenue (\$5.25bn) and GVA (\$2.43bn) using industry-based estimates of productivity and expenditure ratios.</li> <li>As the data contained within the IO model does not distinguish for Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal persons, an assumption is applied to productivity (defined as employee compensation plus gross operating surplus per employee) to account for the lower levels of compensation received by Aboriginal employees. This uses a downwards adjustment of 19%, based on the relevant literature<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>
4. Indirect output calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IO model then calculates the indirect revenue and GVA generated throughout the supply chain as a result of the direct activity. This gives \$2.88bn indirect revenue, and \$1.30bn indirect GVA. <b>In total, the economic contribution of Aboriginal employment in Victoria equates to \$3.73bn in GVA.</b></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>ABS (2021). "Understanding change in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: Census" <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/2021-census-overcount-and-undercount/latest-release#aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-population>>

# Method: Aboriginal enterprise

Step	Aboriginal Enterprise: calculation of direct and indirect activity
1. Input data collation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A distinction is made between <i>multi-employee</i> enterprises and <i>single-employee</i> enterprises where one self-employed individual acts as the owner-manager.</li> <li>Self-employed Aboriginal persons are accounted for separately, using ABS Census 2021 data as a basis.</li> <li>For multi-employee enterprises, data is collated across the ORIC (c.200 firms), Supply Nation (c.450 firms), Kinaway Chamber of Commerce (c.600 firms), and ICN databases. However, these datasets are incomplete, meaning that a number of assumptions are required at the input stage to conduct a robust analysis.</li> <li>The ORIC data is the most comprehensive, providing both employment and revenue, and so this data is used as the base for the analysis.</li> </ul>
2. Input data adjustment	<p><i>Multi-employee enterprises.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimates of active enterprises have been adjusted to exclude sole trader firms, as these are accounted for separately through the ABS data. Analysis from the University of Melbourne<sup>1</sup> provides estimates of the number of firms which employ more than one person for each of the datasets utilised, with this figures ranging from 39% of firms (Kinaway) to 50% of firms (ORIC).</li> <li>An adjustment is also made to account for potential overlap across the four databases. The parameters for this adjustment are also based on the University of Melbourne research.</li> </ul> <p><i>Single-employee enterprises.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given evidence of the underreporting of Aboriginal persons in ABS Census data, an uplift of 17.4% is applied to the self-employed persons.</li> </ul>
3. Direct output calculation	<p><i>Multi-employee enterprises.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the '<i>Input data adjustment</i>' step of the analysis, a clean dataset of unique enterprises active in the Aboriginal economy is produced. This amounts to 3,121 unique firms, with 66 registered with ORIC, 221 with the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, 61 with Supply Nation, 17 with the ICN, and 2,757 self-employed owner-managers.</li> <li>For enterprises registered with ORIC, revenue data is available. Elsewhere, the University of Melbourne report provides estimates of the mean average firm profit for the data collated from Kinaway Chamber of Commerce (\$0.7m), Supply Nation (\$0.9m), and the ICN (\$1.6m).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>University of Melbourne (2021). "Indigenous Business Sector" <<https://fbe.unimelb.edu.au/cibl/assets/snapshot/RFQ03898-M-and-M-Snapshot-Study.pdf>>

# Method: Aboriginal enterprise

Step

Aboriginal Enterprise: calculation of direct and indirect activity

*Multi-employee enterprises cont.*

- However, the estimates contained within the University of Melbourne research are national averages. As such, an adjustment is applied based on the mean average enterprise profit observed in the University of Melbourne research for ORIC registered enterprises nationally (\$1.5m), and the mean average enterprise profit observed in the ORIC dataset for enterprises registered in Victoria (\$1.3m). Through this process, a 12.8% adjustment is applied to account for differences in mean average profit nationally relative to firms based in Victoria. This difference is understood to largely relate to the presence of mining companies in other regions, who benefit from greater profits relative to other industries.
- To estimate GVA outputs, enterprises must be allocated across industries to accurately reflect the composition of their supply chains. For *multi-employee* enterprises, the allocation process is reliant upon two key data sources : ABS Census 2021 data on the sector allocation of owner/manager self employed individuals (with Aboriginal individuals and non-Aboriginal owner/managers considered separately), and GVA by industry data, covering the Victorian economy for the 2021-22 period.

3. Direct output calculation

- The owner/manager allocation data is used to create an 'adjustment factor', accounting for specific areas of strength in the Aboriginal economy. The Victorian GVA by Industry data is then adjusted in accordance with this to produce an estimate of the sectoral profile of the Aboriginal economy.
- Through this process, the mean average revenue per *multi-employee* enterprise is calculated, allowing gross revenue per industry to be estimated.

(cont.)

*Single-employee enterprises.*

- Self-employed persons, are estimated to generate a profit of c. \$70,500 p.a. This is based on ABS Census estimates of salary for owner-managers, and utilises an assumption that all profits are taken as personal drawings from a single-employee firm in a given year.
- To convert this profit value into a revenue figure, an adjustment is applied based on a national ratio of compensation of employees relative to gross income. This gives a 65% uplift, with self-employed gross incomes equating to \$116,172.
- As with the Aboriginal employment method, the ABS Census data is provided stratified according to industry of employment. Therefore, having calculated the mean average revenue per *single-employee* enterprise, gross revenue per industry can be estimated.

*All enterprises*

- Bringing together estimates of revenue across the *single-employee* and *multi-employee* enterprises give direct revenue per firm across industries. The IO model can then be used to convert these totals into direct GVA (\$357.2m) using industry-based estimates of expenditure ratios.

4. Indirect output calculation

- Having calculated direct GVA, the IO model can then calculate the indirect revenue and GVA generated throughout the supply chain as a result of the direct activity. This gives \$353.6m indirect revenue, and \$163.4m indirect GVA, for a total \$520.6m GVA generated through Aboriginal enterprise.



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