

# Koolin Balit

## Victorian Government's strategic directions for Aboriginal health 2012–2022

# health

*Koolin balit* means healthy people in the Boonwurrung language

### *Koolin Balit* is the Victorian Government's strategic directions for Aboriginal health from 2012 to 2022.

It sets out what the Department of Health, together with Aboriginal communities, other parts of government and service providers, are doing and will do to achieve the government's commitment to improve Aboriginal health.

Broader, whole-of-government strategies are outlined in the *Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013–2018*.

While many Aboriginal people in Victoria enjoy good health, as a group they are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes than non-Aboriginal Victorians. The Victorian Government is committed to improving the health of all Aboriginal people in our state but it will take all of us to help close the gap.

*Koolin Balit* provides a way forward to make a significant and measurable impact on improving the length and quality of the lives of Aboriginal Victorians in this decade.

The objectives of *Koolin Balit* are to:

- close the gap in life expectancy for Aboriginal people living in Victoria
- reduce the differences in infant mortality rates, morbidity and low birthweights between the general population and Aboriginal people
- improve access to services and improve outcomes for Aboriginal people.

We will focus our efforts on six key priorities:

1. a healthy start to life
2. a healthy childhood
3. a healthy transition to adulthood
4. caring for older people
5. addressing risk factors
6. managing illness better with effective health services.

Three enablers provide a foundation for the key priorities, and support their achievement:

1. improving data and evidence
2. strong Aboriginal organisations
3. cultural responsiveness.

*Koolin Balit* builds on the *Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012–2022* and the work of the department, other parts of government, Aboriginal communities and service providers to reduce disadvantage and close the gap in health and other outcomes.

Improving health outcomes takes a long time and change can be slow. This is why we have set clear directions and are committed to a sustained effort for the long term – so that we will be able to see a real improvement in outcomes by 2022.



Copies of *Koolin Balit* can be obtained from the Department of Health by contacting the Aboriginal Health Branch.

Email: [aboriginalhealth@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalhealth@health.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (61 3) 9096 8212

*Koolin Balit* is available as a PDF on the internet at [www.health.vic.gov.au/aboriginalhealth](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aboriginalhealth).

## Vision

Within a decade, the length and quality of life of Aboriginal people in Victoria will have improved significantly and measurably

## Objectives

1. Close the gap in life expectancy for Aboriginal people living in Victoria
2. Reduce differences in health outcomes between the general population and target groups for infant mortality rates, morbidity and low birthweights
3. Improve access to services and outcomes for Aboriginal people

## Priorities

Key stages of life	A healthy start to life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the rate of Aboriginal perinatal mortality</li> <li>• Decrease the percentage of Aboriginal babies with a low birthweight</li> <li>• Reduce smoking in pregnancy by mothers of Aboriginal babies</li> <li>• Increase breastfeeding rates for mothers of Aboriginal babies</li> </ul>
	A healthy childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the proportion of Aboriginal children attending maternal and child health services at key age milestones</li> <li>• Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal children and young people living in households with a current daily smoker</li> <li>• Improve the oral and nutritional health of Aboriginal children and increase their physical activity</li> <li>• Improve ear health to ensure it does not provide a barrier to educational achievement</li> </ul>
	A healthy transition to adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the take-up of high-risk behaviours such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption and use of illicit drugs</li> <li>• Reduce the rate of Aboriginal young people with sexually transmitted diseases</li> <li>• Reduce the rate of presentations of young Aboriginal people to emergency departments for injury and self-harm</li> <li>• Improve access to mental health services earlier for young Aboriginal people</li> </ul>
	Caring for older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable all older Aboriginal people to access the information, support and culturally appropriate service responses that will maximise their health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Continuum of care	Addressing risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal adults who are smokers</li> <li>• Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal adults who are obese</li> <li>• Reduce the rate of emergency department presentations due to alcohol consumption among Aboriginal people</li> <li>• Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians drinking at risky and high-risk levels</li> <li>• Reduce the prevalence of oral diseases, including tooth decay and gum disease, among Aboriginal adults</li> </ul>
	Managing illness better with effective health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Aboriginal people's access to the range of health, mental health and other support services</li> <li>• Reduce preventable hospitalisation rates for chronic conditions for Aboriginal people</li> <li>• Reduce preventable hospital readmissions for Aboriginal people</li> <li>• Reduce the rates of Aboriginal patients leaving hospital against medical advice</li> <li>• Improve the coordination and integration of services for Aboriginal people accessing and moving between health care settings</li> </ul>

## Enablers

Improving data and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the range and quality of research and information to develop evidence-based interventions to improve the health of Aboriginal people in Victoria</li> <li>• Improve health service planning and delivery for Aboriginal people through comprehensive and consistent information monitoring and management for data relating to Aboriginal health and service provision</li> </ul>
Strong Aboriginal organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for community leadership in program design and decision making</li> <li>• Support the strengthening of capacity and skills among ACCHO employees</li> <li>• Support ACCHOs in positioning themselves for the future and in meeting the health needs of Aboriginal people in Victoria through quality governance and management</li> <li>• Strengthen and simplify Aboriginal organisations' accountability to government</li> </ul>
Cultural responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of Aboriginal people in the mainstream health workforce</li> <li>• Increase the cultural responsiveness of mainstream health and mental health providers so that Aboriginal people receive respect and high-quality care as a matter of course</li> <li>• Increase the capacity of mainstream health providers and their workforce to meet the health needs of Aboriginal people in Victoria</li> </ul>

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format please phone 9096 8212 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email <[aboriginalhealth@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:aboriginalhealth@health.vic.gov.au)>.

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