

Latrobe Valley Partnership

Strong Families. Thriving Culture. Lasting Change.



National Priority Reforms

1. Formal partnerships and shared decision-making
2. Building the community-controlled sector
3. Transforming government organisations
4. Shared access to data and information at a regional level

National Agreement Priority Reform One:

Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

Outcome

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are supported to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.

Place-based Partnerships

- Under Priority Reform One, the National Agreement commits jurisdictions to establish 6 place-based partnerships across Australia
- Victoria is the only jurisdiction yet to establish a place-based partnership

Place-based partnerships

A place-based partnership:

- Is focused on one location
- Members make plans for changes to support community, based on what happens in their local region
- Formal relationships are established between services in an area
- Service providers, community and government work collaboratively to improve outcomes for the local community
- Work best when the services and community are supported to build trust and share resources



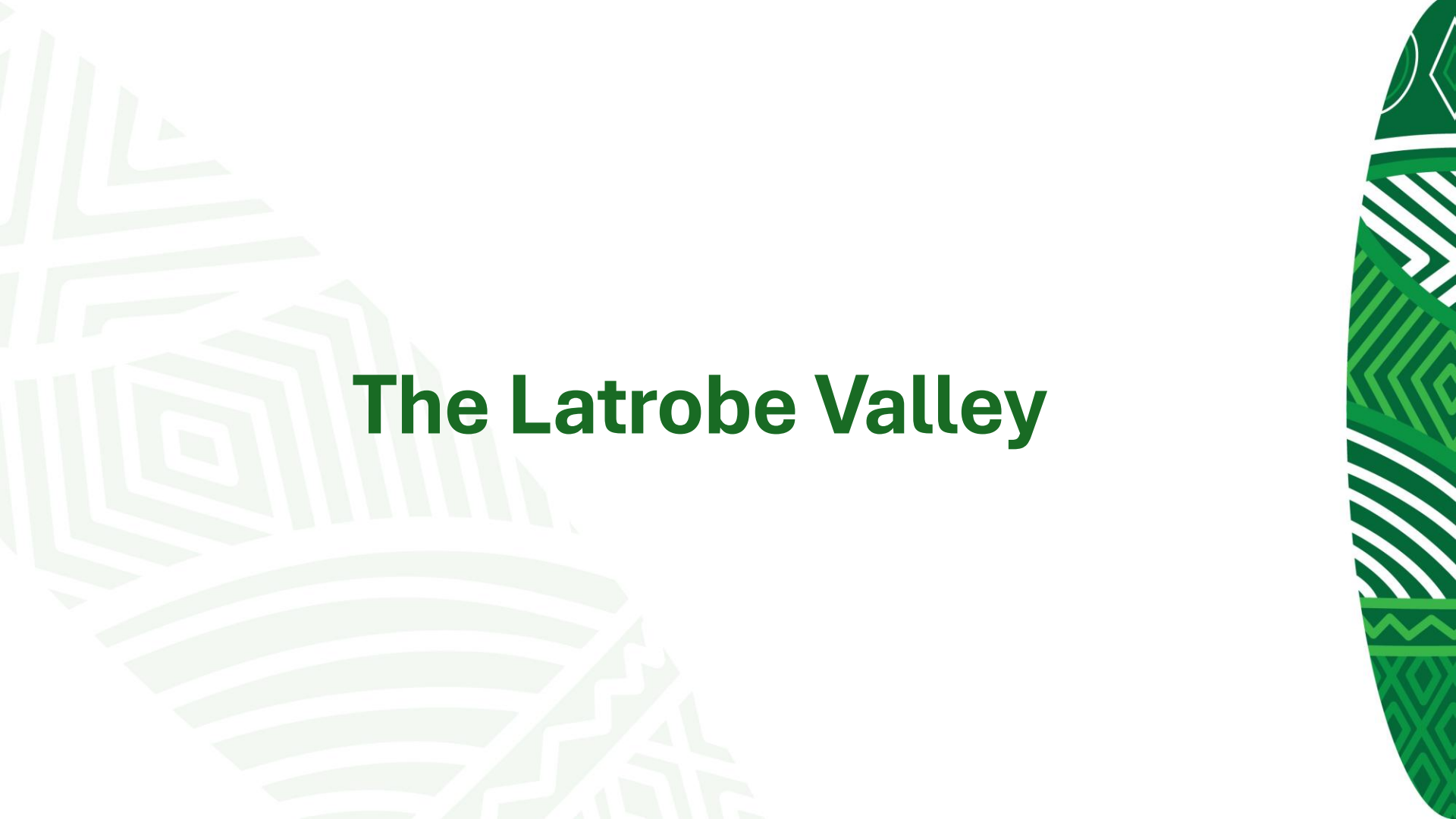
Latrobe Valley Place-based Partnership and Community Data Project

- In 2023 the Latrobe Valley was selected through shared-decision making as the site for Victoria's place-based partnership
- The Latrobe Valley Place-based Partnership will focus on Target 12 of the National Agreement – to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system
- The Department of Premier and Cabinet funded VACCA to undertake scoping, community engagement, and governance establishment, and to develop a business case in 2024/25
- There is no funding to implement the Latrobe Valley Place-based Partnership in 2025/26



Project Timeline





The Latrobe Valley



Our families live in a place with many challenges

On scale of relative advantage and disadvantaged locations in Victoria
Latrobe Valley is 2nd lowest LGA in Victoria

MORE FAMILIES ON WELFARE



Almost three times as many teenage pregnancies compared to Victorian estimate per capita
Third highest LGA in Victoria

Financial

Households are on lower incomes, almost 2 in 10 households live on less than \$40k

\$136,800 spent at pokies per day, across 13 venues.
There is close to twice the per capita rate of pokies machines in Latrobe compared to all of Victoria

Decreasing availability of jobs
Most available jobs are in human care roles (nurses, child-care, carers)

Wellbeing
Across seven dimensions of wellbeing, Latrobe is rated 'average'

Employment

One of the highest rates of Youth Unemployment in Victoria
The gap decreases in older age groups

Health

Higher proportion of avoidable deaths from cancer than overall in Victoria
Almost double the Victorian rate of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease per capita

6 in 10 adults drink much alcohol

2 in 10 adults smoke

3 in 10 are obese

1 in 10 have asthma

Health service access
Longer wait times, limited access to mental health and allied health (often preventative) services
The PHN highest priority for Gippsland is dual diagnosis of AOD misuse and mental health conditions. 2025

Death

Rate of deaths in Latrobe is **3RD HIGHEST** IN VICTORIA

Education

1 in 5 left school before completing year 10

Housing affordability is considered acceptable however there is **TWICE THE RATE PER CAPITA OF HOMELESSNESS** COMPARED TO AUSTRALIA

Child Protection

almost **900** CHILDREN live in out of home care inc Permanent care

In 2023-24 more than **8000** reports to CP, and on the average night more than **1000** children in Inner Gippsland have an open Child Protection case
In the same year just **12%** were reunified to parents

Crime

Criminal incidents increased by 12% between 2023-2024

The rate of **Family violence** in Latrobe for all residents is **almost 2.5 times** compared to Victoria

Our Latrobe Valley Mob

Outcome Data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Latrobe Valley



MOST OF US ARE THRIVING

1.5 out of 10 speak an Aboriginal language

Employment

Less than half of us are employed
Despite improving education outcomes, the rate of unemployment has remained stable for 5 years

Growing population
almost **1 in 3**

We are young and growing
Half of local mob are under 24 years old

Of the Aboriginal people who live in Gippsland, 30% live in the Latrobe Valley

Some of us need more support from our community

We estimate **185** 10-24 year olds

An increasing number of Aboriginal young people are finishing year 12 and going on to higher education, but 4 out of 10 leave school before year 10

Of the most disadvantaged LGAs in Victoria, Latrobe has the largest Aboriginal population

Increasing number of children in out of home care

17% increase in one year (Inner Gippsland)

146 per 1000 Aboriginal children

2.5 out of 10 are case managed by **Nugel**

Inner Gippsland Child Protection

1.6 out of 10 family violence incidents involved an Aboriginal child, compared 1 in 10 across the state

For Family Violence related injuries Aboriginal young people presented to hospital **two times the rate** compared to non-Aboriginal young people

No injury presentations allegedly caused by sexual assault from Aboriginal person under 19

Almost once a day an Aboriginal person is the reported victim of Family Violence in Latrobe.

Health

At Latrobe Regional Hospital between 2022-2024, Aboriginal 0-19 year olds were more than 3 times the rate of admissions compared to non-Aboriginal young people

A growing number of adults are leaving hospital against medical advice

Mental health

2.5 out of 10 Aboriginal people over the age of 15 years old report a mental health condition

In 2024, 7 times the rate of Aboriginal young people were admitted to local hospital for mental health conditions, compared to other local young people
In 2024 for Aboriginal 10-19 year olds, 4 per 1k apprehended under mental health act presentations with police, compared to 0.25 non-Aboriginal young people

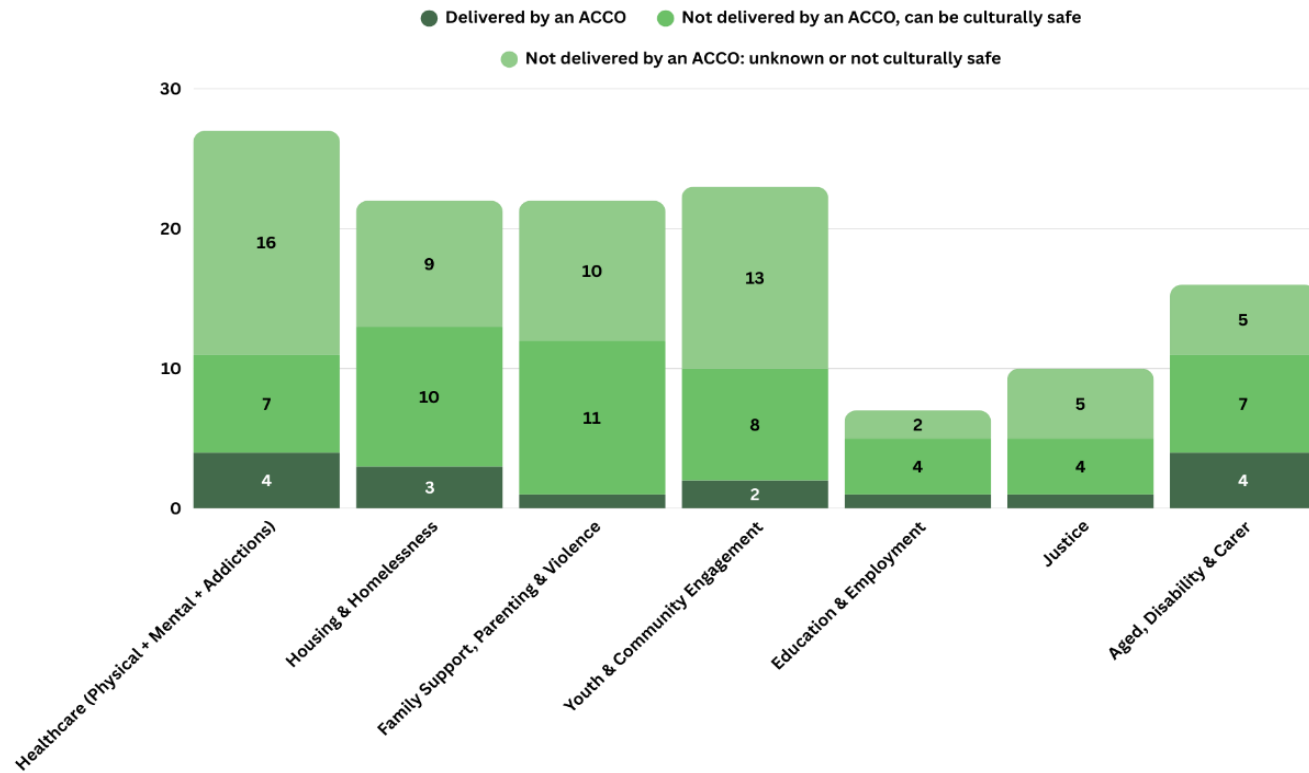
Young people identify high rates of substance use and abuse in the community, but the Latrobe Regional hospital reported close to zero presentations for AOD related issues

averaging **2.94** alleged offences per day so far in 2025

Youth offenders

In the Inner Gippsland, the number of alleged Aboriginal offenders aged 10-17 years is at its highest level since 2016

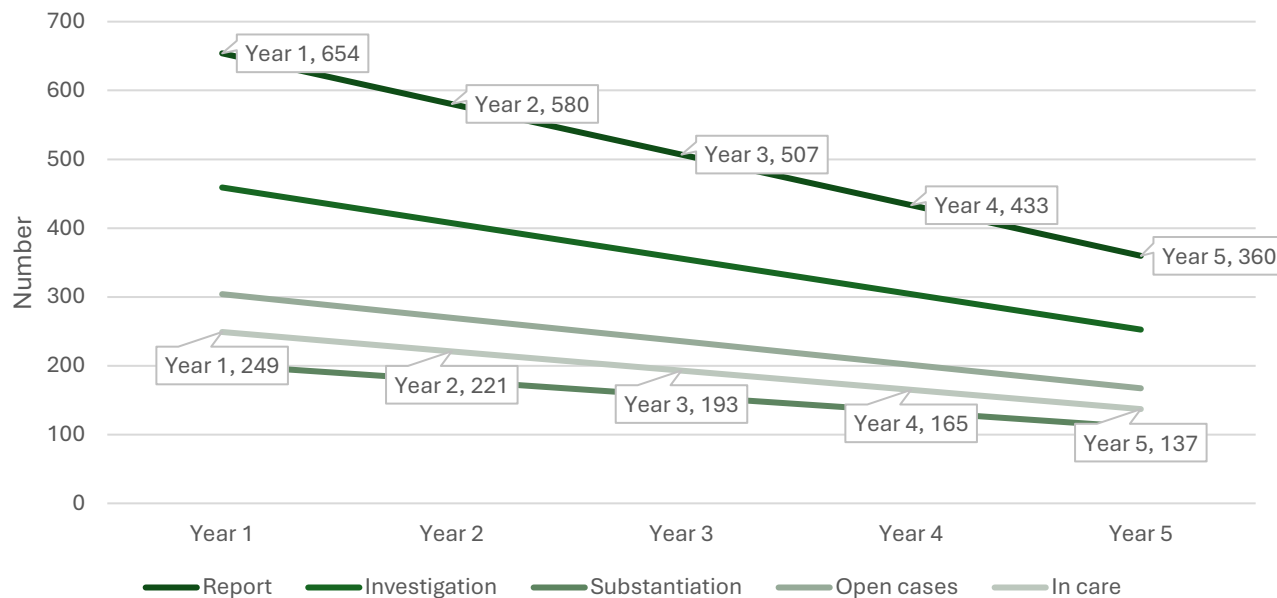
Latrobe Valley service system



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Latrobe Valley Place-based Partnership business case

Target 12: whole of system approach

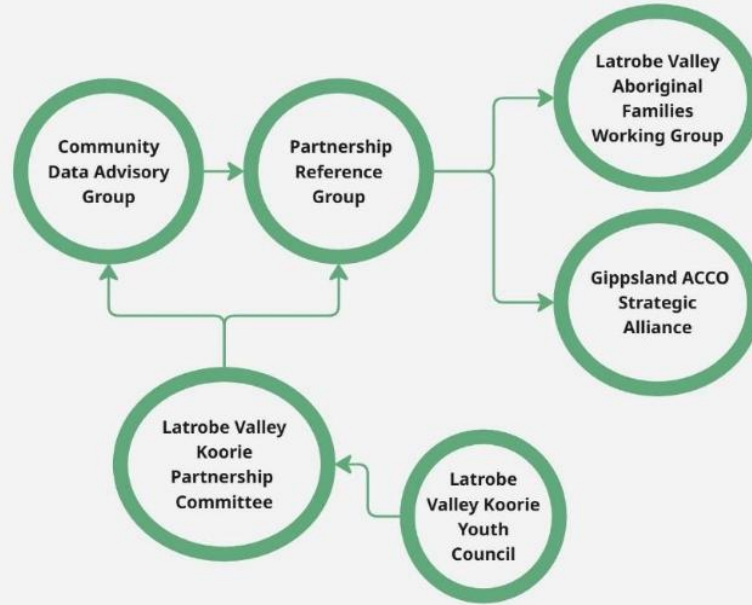


Proposed Partnership elements

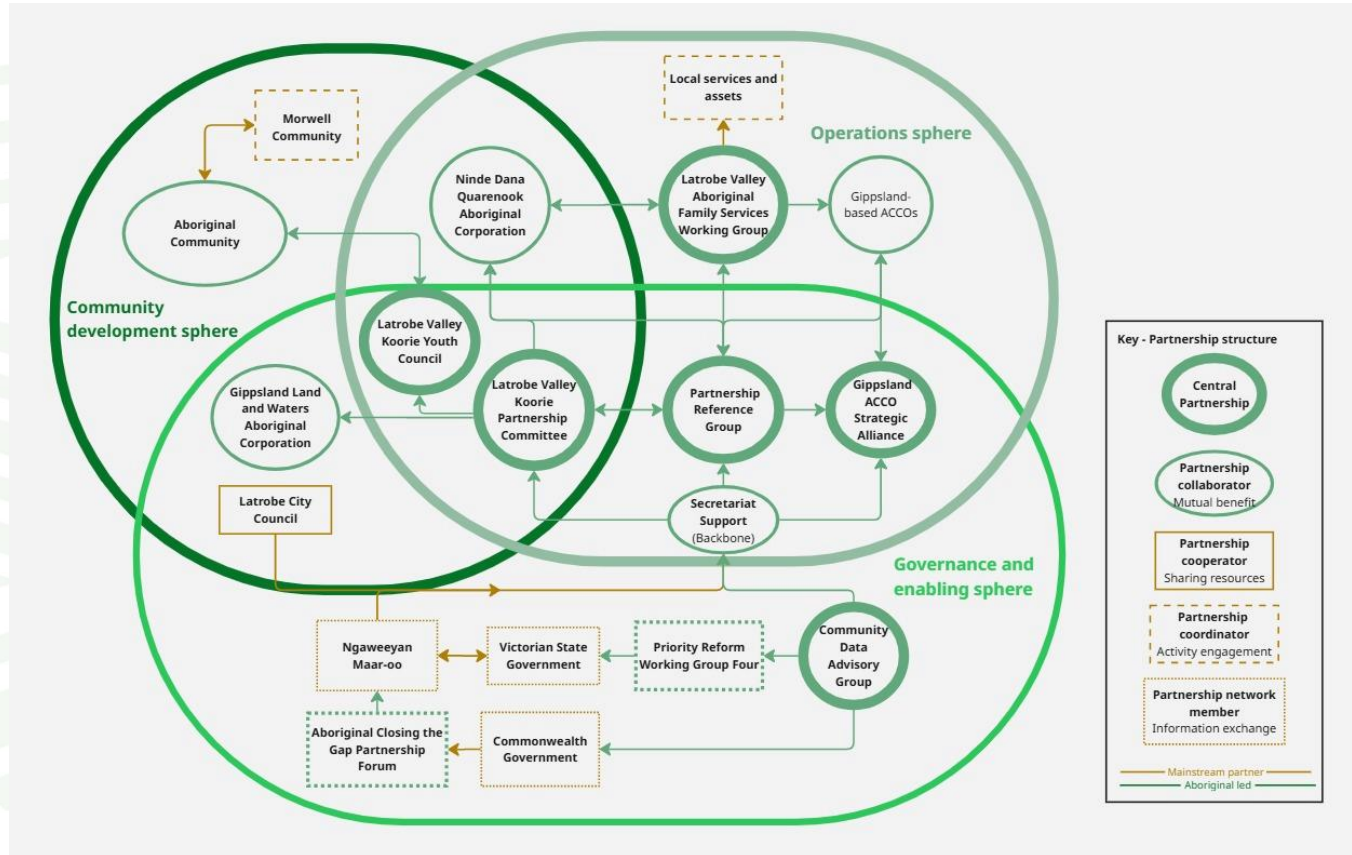
- 1. Latrobe Valley Place-based Partnership
- 2. Youth hub – on Country and urban locations
- 3. Early and targeted intensive family supports



Proposed Partnership governance structure



Proposed Partners



Youth hub

- Establishment of a culturally safe youth hub for Aboriginal young people aged 10–24 years
- Operate across urban and on-Country locations
- Responds directly to community-identified priorities
- Combines accessible, everyday support with deeper opportunities for cultural reconnection and healing.
- Integrated model strengthens protective factors, cultural identity, and youth leadership
- Grounded in local Aboriginal knowledge and priorities.



Early and targeted intensive family supports



- The initiative targets **National Agreement Target 12**: reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031.
- Aboriginal children in the Latrobe Valley are overrepresented in care at **12 times** the rate of non-Aboriginal children.
- Between 2023/24 and 2024/25 **the average number of Aboriginal children in care increased 17.6%** - driven by systemic gaps, lack of culturally safe supports, and poor service coordination.

Community Data Project



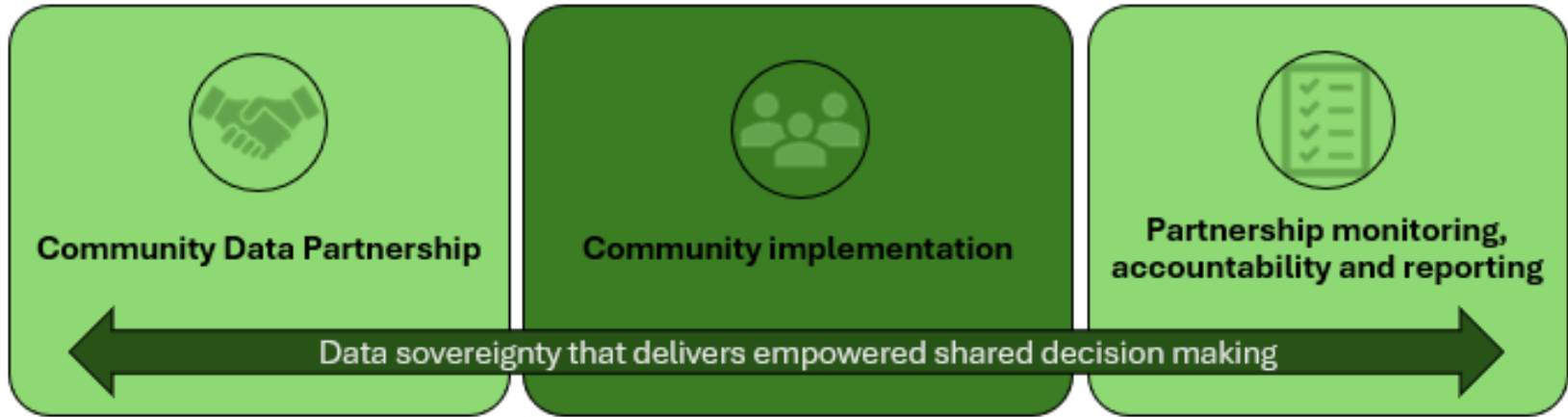
National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Four:

Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level

Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

Target: Increase the number of regional data projects to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to make decisions about Closing the Gap and their development.

Community Data Project: three streams



Proposal highlights

- Community led design for genuine data sovereignty
- Data sharing agreements to enable disaggregate data access for community led analysis
- AIHW collaboration to build a comprehensive data portal
- Data Governance structure

- Reliable, timely insights for decision making and monitoring outcomes
- Dedicated community engagement to ensure findings are understood with context
- Embedded monitoring and evaluation specialist



- Data portal to access data analysis that monitors Target 12 progress.
- Comprehensive data collection that reflects the lived experience, strength, and resilience of Community.
- Community Census, reflecting values and cultural connections.

- AIHW to support portal training
- Facilitated training
- Community engagement and CDP trainee
- Community led monitoring and evaluation
- Celebrating success

Project Milestones

Activity	Key dates
Committee Gippsland road trip	August 4 and 5
Latrobe Valley Place-based Partnership and Community Data Project Business case	Submitted August 29
DTF budget submission negotiations	September – October
Interim community development activities	October 2025 – January 2026
Budget outcome	May 2026

Opportunities to partner for interim support

“
The myth of Blackfellas wandering the streets, they think we're all out there doing something. If I'm out there with police and they don't know who I am, they think there's another Blackfella getting arrested
- local Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer, 2025
”

- NIAA - thank you.
- Community development activities
- Pursue opportunities that focus on Latrobe Valley to establish a strong foundation
- Support for GLAWAC and Ninde Dana Quarenook

“
Kids are having these drugs at 11 years old. That's where we're at. We can catch them early, we all make mistakes, but they need to feel like it's redeemable - local Elder, 2025
”

Opportunities to partner with the Latrobe Valley Aboriginal community

**We have a lot of kids
who do 12-month
apprenticeships, then
there's nothing for
them ongoing - local
Elder, 2025**

Innovate and invest in improved outcomes:

- **Fund the on-Country gathering site for youth and community**

This project will be maximised with embedded program opportunities:

- Workforce development activities
 - Community strengthening
 - Rangers program
 - Multi-generation programs
-
- **Community-controlled NDIS providers for children and youth**
 - **Community Census pilot, for data sovereignty**
 - **Youth skills, arts and sporting programs**

Opportunities for Commonwealth collaboration

- Data sovereignty pathways
- Support programs that aim to address racism against Aboriginal people
- Invest in healing from trauma

The racism is the reason I left school; I left in year 9 and went back in year 11 and then got expelled - local Aboriginal young person, 2025

Every time the kids are walking around and something happens, the cops and the White community point the finger at our kids. I see something on Facebook every day, we're always getting blamed - LVKPC member, 2025

Questions for discussion

- Latrobe Valley has many service gaps - how can Commonwealth departments support?
- To support information sharing, what is known at the Commonwealth level about the barriers and strengths in the Latrobe Valley?
- Has the Latrobe Valley been the focus of other projects and investment relating to the Aboriginal community, how can we integrate and amplify this?
- What has been noted in this forum as priority factors for achieving Target 12 in Victoria, given the statistics?
- In the spirit of integrating delivery of Priority Reforms 1 – 4, is there a Priority Reform 3 project focused on transforming the way government works with Aboriginal communities that can be delivered in the Latrobe Valley prior to Partnership implementation?

