

MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT:

EVERY ABORIGINAL PERSON HAS A HOME

Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework

2023

ANNUAL REPORT CARD



Throughout this document the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Unless noted otherwise, the term should be considered inclusive of both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The authors would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands throughout Victoria. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

We acknowledge the special relationship of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples to the lands of Victoria and their continuing spiritual and sacred relationships with country.

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Message from the Chairs

This report is a product of the shared commitment between the Victorian Government and the Aboriginal community, through the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF), to implement *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*: the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (the 'Framework'). *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* is a roadmap to ensure every Aboriginal person has a home and to overcome the housing and homelessness crisis experienced by the Aboriginal community in Victoria.

As the Co-Chairs of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework – Implementation Working Group (VAHHF-IWG), the governance group overseeing the implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*, we present this report to you. Prepared in the spirit of openness, transparency and accountability, it throws light on our joint actions and their impact as represented by the presentation of detailed data and analysis.

The report demonstrates a continuing concerning gap in housing vulnerability and need in the Aboriginal community compared to non-Aboriginal Victorians. For example, rates of homelessness among Aboriginal Victorians remain alarmingly high, with 11,168 people accessing Specialist Homelessness Services in 2021-22. This is an increase of 7.4% since 2019-20, contrasting with a 12.6% decrease among non-Aboriginal Victorians. Additionally, 20% of Aboriginal Victorians live in social housing, compared to just 2% of non-Aboriginal Victorians. Homeownership rates also reveal a disparity, with 42% of Aboriginal Victorians owning their homes compared to 67% of non-Aboriginal Victorians.

We acknowledge the escalating rates of Aboriginal Victorians accessing specialist homelessness services, the overreliance on social housing and at times, overt discrimination in the private rental sector.

That is why the work of the AHHF is so important, whether that is to enhance the supply of social housing for the growing Aboriginal population, increase homeownership and participation in private rental, or in developing an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system.

Notable action has been taken since the release of the last report card in early 2022:

- A commissioning approach to new housing supply has been developed by the AHHF. This advances self-determination, enhances ACCO participation and meets probity requirements. This method provides guidance to the Victorian Government in delivering on the target that 10% of new social housing built under the Big Housing Build will be housing for Aboriginal Victorians. This welcome commitment will directly contribute to achieving objective two of the Framework, "Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population."
- The AHHF also supported the development of the Closing the Gap Sector Strengthening Plan. The sector strengthening plan aims to achieve increased service delivery, coverage, capacity, quality and resourcing for Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) in alignment with Priority Reform 2: Building the Community Controlled Sector of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

- The “Excluded from the Start” report, currently in development, aims to foster cultural safety and address discrimination within the real estate sector. This report will contribute to the objective three of the Framework, to “open doors to home ownership and private rental.”
- Consistent with the objective 3.4 of the Framework, to make home ownership available to more Aboriginal people, the Victorian Government has provided support to Aboriginal people to access the Government’s shared equity scheme and commence preliminary work on the feasibility of Aboriginal rent to buy initiatives.
- Towards objective four of the Framework, the AHHF have commissioned the development of the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system in Victoria (the ‘Blueprint’). The Blueprint provides a roadmap to develop an integrated specialist homelessness system that is culturally safe and capable of meeting the unique and specific needs of Aboriginal Victorians experiencing homelessness.

As we continue to work collaboratively towards the vision of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* that Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home, it is essential that we remain committed to addressing the challenges ahead and dedicated to enhancing housing outcomes for Aboriginal communities across Victoria. AHV and the AHHF remain committed to engaging all levels of government to further the implementation of the Framework and ensure that we achieve significant reform across the housing and homelessness sectors.

As Co-Chairs of the VAHHF-IWG, we commend this report to you.



Darren Smith

Co-chair, Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework – Implementation Working Group (VAHHF-IWG)
Chair, Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF)
CEO, Aboriginal Housing Victoria



Simon Newport

Co-chair, Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework – Implementation Working Group (VAHHF-IWG)
CEO, Homes Victoria (2023 – present)

Section 1

Implementing Third Year Actions

Following on from the establishment of the governance framework to guide the implementation of the Framework in year one and its strengthening in year two, this third year has focused on the development and prioritisation of high-risk community members. This can be seen in the work through the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homelessness System in Victoria (the Blueprint). Leading into the fourth year there will be an emphasis on supporting Aboriginal community controlled organisations (ACCOs) and Traditional Owner groups (TOs) to develop independence through self-determination.

In year three, there were achievements related to the goals and aspirations set through *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* and these were primarily surrounding homelessness policy as outlined in the Blueprint. The workplan achievement table that can be found in this section will show the outcomes of the goals set under this section of the framework.

The projects that were commenced in year three work towards achieving the Strategic Goals identified in the *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*. These strategic goals are listed below:

- 1. Secure housing improves life outcomes**
- 2. Build supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population**
- 3. Open doors to home ownership and private rental**
- 4. An Aboriginal focused homelessness system**
- 5. A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs**

1.1 VAHMF IWG 2022-2023 Work Plan

The VAHMF Implementation Working Group (IWG) identified five priority pillars for progressing the second year of implementation. The VAHMF IWG 2022-2023 Work Plan identified 41 activities under these five goals:

- 1. Develop a 5-year implementation strategy** – A drilling down of the 20-year road map (VAHMF) into a meaningful and strategic agenda of work.
- 2. Build supply of Aboriginal housing** – Enable Aboriginal communities to participate in the Big Housing Build and build supply.
- 3. Housing Outcomes** – Focusing on improving outcomes and support for Aboriginal renters and homeowners.
- 4. Strengthen Governance** – Strengthen VAHMF governance to progress implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* objectives and to provide accountability and transparency.
- 5. Embed Self-determination in homelessness policy and sector** – Reforming the homelessness service environment to improve access and outcomes for Aboriginal People.

The deliverables outlined in the next table are the major activities in the VAHMF IWG 2022-2023 Work Plan undertaken in Year 3. Items marked as 'in progress' have progressed and will continue to progress throughout year four of delivering the Framework. Items marked as 'ongoing' are rolling goals with no end date.

Item ¹	Activity	Achieved	In progress	Ongoing
Goal 1: Develop a 5-year implementation strategy				
1.1	Develop 5-year strategic plan			
1.2	Develop a Theory of Change			
1.3	Develop a Yearly Work Plan (2022-23)			
1.4	Develop investment strategy to secure long term resources to implement <i>Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort</i>			
1.5	Develop a Data Sovereignty Plan			
1.6	Convene second bi-annual Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit			
Goal 2: Build supply of Aboriginal housing				
2.1	Implement <i>Advancing Aboriginal housing objectives</i> through the Big Housing Build			
2.2	Develop a 10 – 15 year Aboriginal Community Housing Sector Vision			
2.3	Identify priority locations for housing growth based on demand and need analysis			
2.4	Develop advice to assist ACCO decision-making on financial viability and capability requirements based on housing provider responsibilities			
2.5	Develop Closing the Gap sector strengthening plan from the transformation plan			

¹ Actions have been summarised for the purpose of the Annual Report Card, a full list of actions can be found in the VAHHF 2022-2023 Work Plan

Item	Activity	Achieved	In progress	Ongoing
2.6	Supporting pathways to ACCO registration – develop resources and tools to assist ACCOs to become registered housing providers			
2.7	Develop resources and tools to assist ACCOs to become registered housing providers			
2.8	Develop template for culturally safe housing provider policies and procedures and guidance material for ACCOs			
2.9	Maximise ACCO participation in the Big Housing Build to meet the target that at least ten percent of the 4,200 new homes built will be delivered by Aboriginal organisations for Aboriginal residents			
2.10	Partnership brokers to work with mainstream registered housing and ACCOs to develop partnerships			
2.11	Work with ACCOs to develop a commissioning approach to new housing supply that advances self-determination, enhances ACCO participation and meets probity requirements			
Goal 3: Housing Outcomes				
3.1	Improve support for Aboriginal social and community housing renters to sustain their tenancies and to progress on the pathway to housing independence and meet their potential			
3.2	Reviewing and evaluating tenant case management and support programs such as More Than a Landlord and Aboriginal Home Connect			
3.3	Complete investigation into discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market and develop recommendations			

Item	Activity	Achieved	In progress	Ongoing
3.4	Respond to recommendations of the investigation into discrimination against Aboriginal People in the private rental market			
3.5	Support for at risk households to enter the private rental market by supporting implementation and coordination of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program			
3.6	Creating a voice for Aboriginal renters in social housing through the Victorian Public Tenants Association			
3.8	Improve Aboriginal cultural safety in the homelessness and housing system			
3.9	Support Aboriginal people to access home ownership opportunities			
3.10	Commence investigation of affordable housing and rent to buy models suitable for the Aboriginal community, funded through the Victorian Homebuyer Fund			
Goal 4: Housing Outcomes				
4.1	Strengthen governance and ensure it is fit for purpose to oversee delivery of the 5 year implementation strategy			
4.3	Engage Government-community structures in discussion of how to implement sector specific housing and homelessness strategies			
4.4	Develop, resource, and implement a communication and engagement strategy for <i>Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort</i>			
4.5	Monitor and report on progress in implementing for <i>Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort</i>			

Item	Activity	Achieved	In progress	Ongoing
4.6	Monitor the roll out of initiatives funded under <i>Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort</i> through the IWG			
4.7	Deliver the third Annual Report Card			
4.8	Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness data dashboard			
4.9	Support the Aboriginal community and ACCOs participation in the social housing regulatory review			
Goal 5: Embed Self-determination in homelessness policy and sector				
5.1	Deliver project for options on a redesigned homelessness system that better supports Aboriginal Victorians			
5.2	Monitor Aboriginal clients through from homelessness to a home and ensure the evaluation identifies issues and impacts for Aboriginal clients			
5.3	Agree on approach to funding and design of Aboriginal access points			
5.4	Establish governance arrangements overseeing work to progress the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homelessness System in Victoria			
5.5	Establish lead system steward to progress the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homelessness System in Victoria			
5.6	Develop specific and actionable Implementation Plan to progress the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homelessness System in Victoria			



1.2 Summary of Year 3 Reform

Several system reform activities have commenced through year three implementation that will guide systematic responses across the housing and homelessness system to increase positive outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. The activities undertaken and their progress are illustrated within this section.

Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit: November 2022

The Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit took place in November of 2022 and there were 30 key recommendations that came from this summit. All the key recommendations tied in closely with supporting members of community and creating a culturally safe approach to combating Aboriginal homelessness and housing crisis. A thematic overview is provided below:

Home Ownership

Advocate for the development of an Aboriginal Home Ownership Hub that can be a resource for individuals and ACCOs to:

- Increase understanding of how to get into the housing market.
- Build skills to manage and maintain people's homes and finances.
- Develop new home ownership models.
- Develop a panel of culturally safe experts on Aboriginal home ownership.

Justice

- Advocate for more of Corrections Victoria's asset budget to be redirected to provide post-release housing options (stock to be managed by ACCOs and the wider community housing sector).
- Advocate that every person exiting prison has a housing plan in place that provides a minimum of 3 months of accommodation post release date.
- Advocate for an urgent review of the Victoria's current bail laws which are having an unintended and disproportionate impact on people facing homelessness.

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Victorian Government's Big Housing Build

The Big Housing Build (BHB) announcement in November 2020, was the largest investment in social housing in Victoria's history. The aim of the project is to build hundreds of new homes in Victoria and within this commitment there was a pledge that 10% of the \$5.3 billion would be allocated towards improving housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Since its announcement three years ago, the Victorian Government has supported ACCO participation through initiatives such as:

Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) – Homes for Aboriginal Victorians Round

The fund seeks to deliver 420 new social housing units for Aboriginal Victorians in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to:

- Increase and boost the quality and supply of housing for Aboriginal Victorians.
- Foster the growth and long-term sustainability of the Victorian Aboriginal housing sector for longer term and stable housing.

While the 10% target in the BHB supports Goal 2 of the Framework: *Build Supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population*, the Framework identified that an additional 5,085 Aboriginal social housing units will be required by 2036. Therefore, continued investment like the BHB will be required to achieve this goal.

Partnership Advisory Committee

The Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) continues to provide advice on how to promote, assist, and support the development of partnerships between mainstream Community Housing Organisations (CHO) and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and has been successful in bringing together executive members of ACCOs, TOs and mainstream CHOs. The work of the PAC has included a dedicated workshop on partnership formation and the inclusion of members within the Municipal Association of Victoria's Social and Affordable Housing Project.

Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system in Victoria

In the 2022-2023 Victorian State Budget, \$75 million was provided for a range of homelessness initiatives. This included approximately \$7.3 million dollars over two years (2023-2024 and 2024-2025) allocated for culturally appropriate responses to the homelessness needs of Aboriginal Victorians. This has resulted in the development of the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homelessness System in Victoria (The 'Blueprint'). A key outcome of the Blueprint is the opening of two Aboriginal-specific Entry Points located at Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative. The Blueprint provides a design of an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system and a plan to practically implement each of the system building blocks for a future focused, connected and culturally safe, Aboriginal homelessness system.

20-year vision of the Aboriginal Community Housing Sector

Achieving the vision of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* will require long term dedicated effort and focus from government and community. Work has commenced to clearly articulate a 20-year vision for the Aboriginal Community housing sector focussing on the sector's contribution to achieving the broader vision.

This was set out under seven headings:

- Supporting Aboriginal community housing owners' self-determination.
- Pathways to registration – Supporting Aboriginal housing providers to register.
- Building organisational capacity.
- Growing the supply of Aboriginal community housing.
- Strengthening the Aboriginal housing workforce.
- Strengthening partnerships.
- Shaping the Aboriginal community housing sector.

Strategy and Advocacy

There has been many differing and varied strategy and advocacy steps that have taken place over the last 12 months with a number of these being within this report card:

- **National Housing Supply and Affordability Council:** The passing of the enabling legislation for the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) led to the creation of the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council that acts as an independent advisory body to ensure the best use of the resources available to the HAFF. The AHHF has called for Aboriginal representation on the council and continue to work towards this aim.
- **National Housing and Homelessness Plan:** A new National Housing and Homelessness Plan will be released mid-to-late 2024 following agreement with each State and Territory Government. The AHHF Secretariat has made direct representations to government to outline an Aboriginal specific schedule within the update plan that is modelled on *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* and the work already taking place in Victoria.
- **Coalition of Peaks – Housing Policy Partnership:** AHV and a Victorian State Government representative are members of the Housing Policy Partnership. The Partnership aims to develop a joined-up approach to drive First Nations led outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association (NATSIHA) co-chairs the partnership and supports the engagement and delivery of the current workplan in consultation with the Coalition of Peaks. AHV was elected the Victorian representative by the AHHF on the NATSIHA Board.
- **Joint Council on Closing the Gap:** The Joint Council supports national leadership, coordination, and cooperation on Closing the Gap and provides advice to the Australian government. The Joint Council has an ongoing role in monitoring performance and implementation of all parties' actions under the jointly agreed National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- **5-year Implementation Plan:** The 2022 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit provided the opportunity for the Victorian Aboriginal community to discuss the development of a *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*: 5-Year Implementation Plan and determine immediate priorities to ensure that every Aboriginal person has a home. The 5-Year Implementation Plan that has been developed by the AHHF Secretariat is also inclusive of the housing and homelessness actions that are part of Victoria's commitment to Closing the Gap.

Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP)

Under Goal 3 of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*: Open doors to home ownership and private rental, the work towards Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP) has been launched as a response. APRAP is intended to prevent or end the homelessness and housing crisis experienced by many Aboriginal households by rapidly rehousing people capable of sustaining private rental after some initial support. In doing so, the program has been supporting at risk households to sustain affordable and appropriate housing in the private rental market. It also assists people who currently live in crisis, transitional, or social housing to become independent in the private rental market if appropriate and sustainable. APRAP was initially implemented in five areas including Northeast Metro Melbourne, Mallee, Western metro, Loddon and Inner Gippsland.



Local Governments Partnerships Project

The Local Governments Partnerships Project focuses on supporting the implementation of *Mana woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* and the work of the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) by engaging with local councils to promote the needs of housing for the Aboriginal community and by formalising partnership arrangements where required between AHHF members and Local Government Agencies (LGAs). One focus has been replicating the Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) memorandum of understanding with Darebin Council, which includes a rate exemption agreement on all AHV properties in the Darebin area. Another action includes actively engaging with LGAs and creating a list of key contacts to aid in commencing negotiations and partnerships. This will all allow regular meeting schedules between Local Government, council, ACCOs, and partners to ensure the housing needs of the Victorian Aboriginal community are being met.

Aboriginal Public Housing Transfer Management Pilot

Aboriginal Public Housing Transfer Management Pilot (the Pilot) is a State Government approved pilot that gives Aboriginal tenants living in public housing the option to transfer their tenancy from Homes Victoria to a registered Aboriginal community housing organisation. This is a priority for government to progress the Pilot to ensure more culturally appropriate, safe, and secure housing access for Aboriginal Victorians by allowing culturally safe service provision, greater choice, flexibility, and control over who manages their tenancy. Homes Victoria will continue to work with Aboriginal communities to progress the Pilot.

Support for People Leaving Prison

There is an identified need for more specialist and culturally appropriate programs to support individuals who are transitioning out of a custodial arrangement into long-term safe and secure housing. Acknowledging this need, Homes Victoria is seeking advice from AHHF members on the procurement of two new Aboriginal specific positions, that will provide housing focused support and would sit within two recommended ACCOs. A working group that has so far met three times, has been set up to develop advice on design and implementation on this program. The working group has recommended that the mainstream operating model is not culturally appropriate, instead suggesting a program that mimics the Victoria Aboriginal Community Services Association (VACSAL) Justice Program model, which is an intensive and holistic outreach model. The working group also believes the program should work across the prison system, including supporting those on remand. Based on data, the two areas identified to have the greatest demand for such a program include North Metro and the Mallee.

Helping Aboriginal Victorians to buy a home through the Victorian Homebuyer Fund

Increasing access to homeownership for the Victorian Aboriginal Community through the Victorian Homebuyer Fund supports Goal 3 of the Framework: Open doors to home ownership and private rental. In recognition of this goal and the ongoing affordability challenges in the housing sector, the Victorian Government is investing in supports and taxation relief. The Victorian Homebuyer Fund is one such initiative, supporting eligible Aboriginal Victorians to own their own home sooner by reducing the barriers to entering the property market. Once in the home, benefits of the Homebuyer fund for homebuyers include lower ongoing mortgage costs and a more affordable loan (as their mortgage is smaller) and a contribution from the Victorian Government of up to 35 per cent of the value of the property in exchange for an equivalent share in the property.

Participants will need to contribute at least 3.5 per cent of the acquisition price and cover any acquisition costs, such as stamp duty and conveyancing costs. The remaining amount is to be secured through a home loan from a Homebuyer Fund partner lender.

To access the Homebuyer fund, Aboriginal Victorians are also being assisted with accessing a Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA). Multiple workshops, run with government entities have demonstrated that there is a direct need for assistance to Aboriginal Victorians to be able to access the program.

Improving Aboriginal Cultural Safety in the housing and homelessness system

To support the housing and homelessness system's response in delivering culturally safe service response, core initiatives are underway across public and community housing and the homelessness sector.

Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic) are implementing a sector wide Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework. This enables community housing organisations to improve community housing outcomes for Aboriginal people. The CHIA Vic Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework embeds Aboriginal cultural safety, accountability, and monitoring into all aspects of their organisations. The work has been directly incorporated into core requirements of the BHB delivery programs for the community housing sector to demonstrate their commitment towards cultural safety.

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) has outlined its own Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for the specialist homelessness sector. It is specifically designed to assist specialist homelessness service providers to reflect on their practices and adopt strategies and actions that will improve the way they engage with and address needs of Aboriginal Victorians who experience homelessness.

Homes Victoria have commenced implementing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework. This framework builds on the existing Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework that will deliver a wide range of activities to increase staff's ability to work in a culturally safe manner with colleagues, community organisations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Cultural safety for the Victorian Aboriginal Community within the mainstream housing and homelessness sector is also required. This may be achieved through increasing the cultural safety requirements and assuring the commitment from organisations who provide housing and homelessness services to Aboriginal Victorian communities.

Closing the Gap

The Victorian Closing the Gap (CtG) implementation plan (2021-2023) that was successfully delivered in partnership with Aboriginal communities, included the specific CtG outcome measure (Outcome 9): **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.**² Through the delivery of the implementation plan activities, key priorities identified within the existing VAHMF IWG work plan were incorporated to ensure alignment of resourcing and effort.

The CtG National Housing Sector Strengthening Plan (HSSP) is a joint National plan between the Commonwealth, States, Territories, and the Aboriginal housing sector. It provides a national framework for parties to deliver on a joint approach to sector specific actions.

The National CtG HSSP allows jurisdictions and its agencies the flexibility to utilise the plan in a way that aligns with their own jurisdictional housing policy. Furthermore, it does not prescribe jurisdictions to certain actions that do not fit within their own housing policy context.



Victoria's approach will continue to deliver further resourcing to strengthen the Aboriginal sector by:

- New social housing being built through the BHB with a contribution of 10 percent being allocated to Aboriginal Housing.
- Aiming to reduce the rates of homelessness by 10 per cent per annum by conducting a Homelessness System Service Review and providing recommendations to implement an Aboriginal focused homelessness service system.
- Increased rates of home ownership through providing Aboriginal Victorians with additional supports in the Victorian Homebuyer Fund.
- Better tenancy supports – enabling choice and control by identifying and addressing service system barriers in accessing private rentals and the expansion of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program to make it available across Victoria.
- Strengthening existing governance approaches by developing policy that supports increased outcomes for Aboriginal housing and home ownership.
- Building cultural capability of the mainstream housing and homelessness system. This will increase the capacity of the Community Housing Sector to deliver culturally safe services and improve delivery to Aboriginal Victorians.

Section 2

Report against Outcome Measures

This section reports on data outcomes from the 2021– 2022 financial year for 20 measures from homelessness to home ownership. Where the data is available, the measures compare:

- Victoria's Indigenous outcomes relative to the national Indigenous rates.³
- Victoria's performance relative to the previous year / time period.
- Indigenous experience in Victoria relative to mainstream experience.

Outcomes for all measures are derived from data provided by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services (RoGs), ABS Census data, and Victorian State Government agencies (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of Treasury and Finance).

The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted some of the measures (particularly those related to Victoria) outlined in this report due to the economic, mental, and housing stress it has placed on the community.

Aboriginal Victorians are seeking homelessness support ten times the rate they were ten years ago. In the past few years this data has somewhat stabilised reflecting an increase in infrastructure across the past three years. However, continued investment is required for a noticeable change in the rates of homelessness for Aboriginal Victorians.

The data in this year's Annual Report Card has identified two main areas that require further investment:

1. Enhancing the capacity of service systems to offer personalised assistance to Aboriginal Victorians facing the risk of homelessness

Over the last decade, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of individuals experiencing unmet mental health and substance abuse support requirements. This trend is particularly pronounced among those re-entering society from the justice system, which remains a significant contributor to homelessness. The statistics listed within this Annual Report Card demonstrate more people are requiring support with evidence showing that the current housing and homelessness system requires further investment to support the predicted increase. Prioritisation of safe and culturally appropriate short-, medium-, and long-term accommodation with integrated support is crucial to reducing the rate of homelessness for Aboriginal Victorians.

2. Countering the high cost of housing within a rental crisis with further investment in social housing

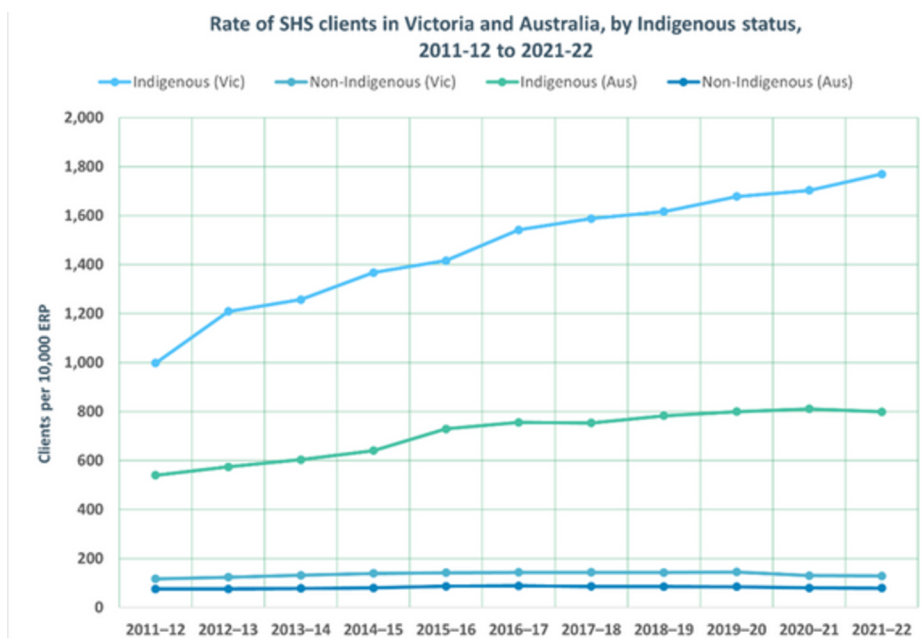
The private rental and ownership market has experienced a surge in recent years, rendering it largely unattainable for the majority, especially for the Aboriginal community. It is important to acknowledge barriers and challenges that accompany this growth and recognise that those who have been shut out of the private rental and ownership market require other tenure options.

³ The term Indigenous within the report refers to language used within the data sets captured by AIHW. This term refers to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

M1: Receiving services from Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) per capita (clients per 10,000 population)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	1,703.2	1,769.0	810.6	798.7
Non-Indigenous	130.4	128.6	80.2	79.0

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

In 2021-22, 17.7% of Aboriginal Victorians sought homelessness support in Victoria, compared to only 1.3% of non-Aboriginal Victorians. If the rates of homelessness for the Aboriginal community were reflected in the general population, approximately 1.2 million Victorians would be seeking support from the Specialist Homelessness System every year.

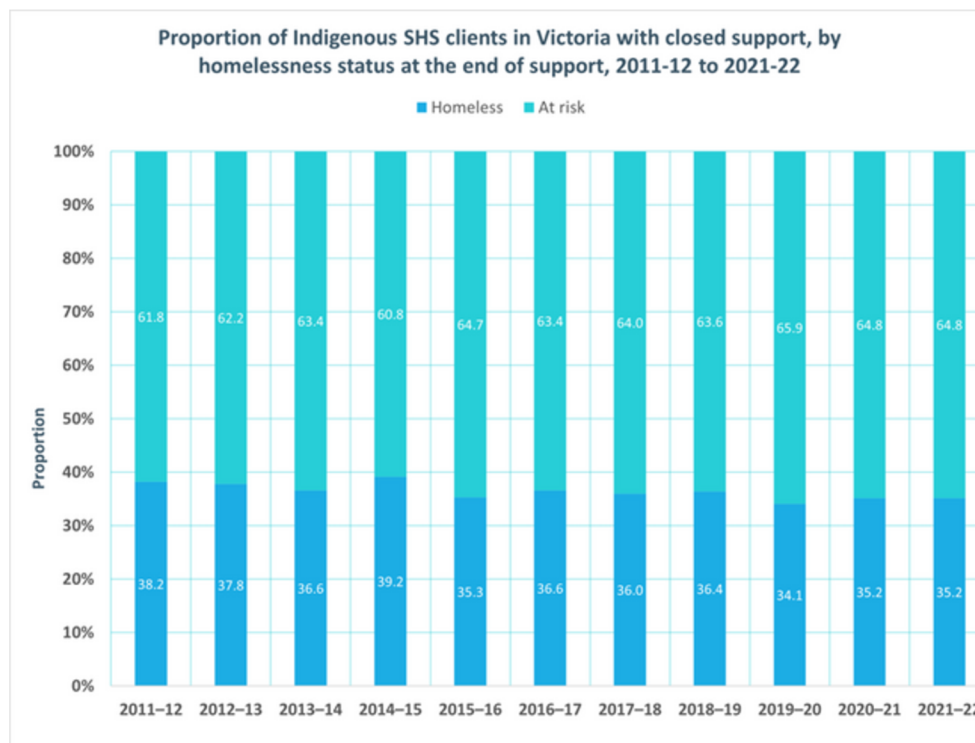
The rate of homelessness sector support for the Aboriginal community grew by approximately 3.8% over the last twelve months, whereas the rate presentations to homelessness services for non-Aboriginal Victorians decreased by around 1.4% during the same period. While the data suggests that the policy and funding environment has helped to reduce homelessness sector presentations for non-Aboriginal Victorians, presentations to homelessness services continues to rise in the Aboriginal community.

Further and sustained investment and work is required to achieve *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*: the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework's ('Framework') goal of reducing the rates of homelessness among Aboriginal Victorians by 10% per annum.

M2: Proportion of Specialist Homelessness Services clients with closed support who are homeless at end of support (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	35.2%	35.2%	35.7%	36.8%
Non-Indigenous	30.6%	30.5%	31.6%	32.9%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



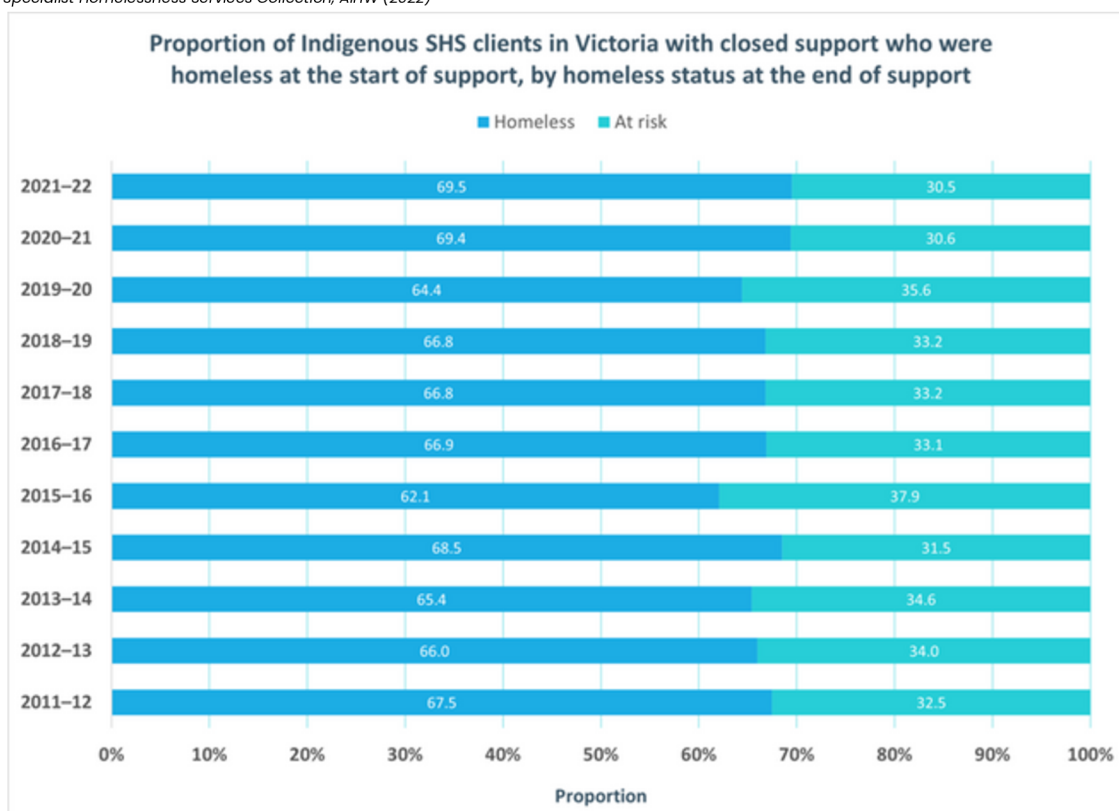
Commentary

Over a third of Aboriginal Victorians who engaged with Specialist Homelessness Services in 2021-2022 were homeless at the end of their support period. Specialist Homelessness Services have been chronically under resourced and underfunded for a significant period of time. Whilst the numbers of Aboriginal Victorians presenting to homelessness service continues to increase, with no commensurate increase in funding and resourcing, services are left to spread their limited housing and support resources across an ever-growing number of people entering homelessness. The above reflects the consequence of this funding and policy environment as the capacity of the system to end people's homelessness is limited.

M3: Proportion of clients at the end of support who were homeless at the start of support (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	69.4%	69.5%	64.5%	67.5%
Non-Indigenous	68.5%	69.0%	62.1%	65.2%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



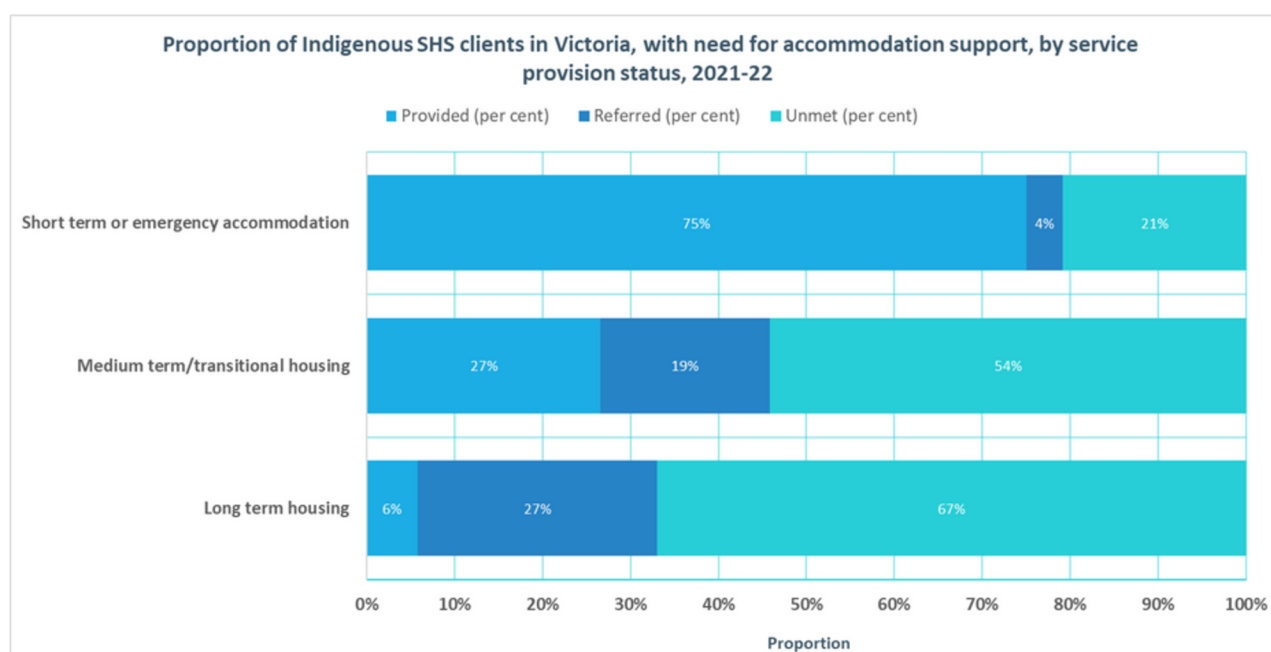
Commentary

Almost 70% of Aboriginal Victorians that were homeless when they engaged with the Specialist Homelessness Services, remained homeless at the end of their support. The fact that the rates have remained largely unchanged over the last 10 years again reflects the chronic underinvestment in the homelessness service system and lack of pathways towards long-term, safe, secure, and affordable housing. We know that the longer an individual experiences homelessness the more likely they are to experience chronic and prolonged homelessness. The challenge and opportunity for government is to provide needs-based investment of housing and support interventions that are developed, owned, and implemented by the Aboriginal community-controlled sector.

M4a: Proportion of Indigenous Specialist Homelessness Services Victorians with short-, medium- and long-term housing provided, referred to, or with an unmet need⁴ (excluding referral) (%) in 2021-22

Services and assistance	Provided (%)	Referred (%)	Unmet (%)
Short term or emergency	75.0%	4.2%	20.8%
Medium term/transition	26.6%	19.2%	54.2%
Long term housing	5.8%	27.3%	66.9%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

Among Aboriginal Victorians, 21% of short-term or emergency accommodation needs were unmet, 54% of medium term and transitional housing needs were unmet, and 67% of long-term housing needs were unmet. Of particular concern is that only 6% of Aboriginal Victorians seeking long-term housing were provided support (this does not include those who were provided a referral). These rates are similar to those reported in 2020-21 as seen in M4b-M4d. The percent of Aboriginal Victorians who did not have their short-term and long-term housing needs met both increased from 2020-21 to 2021-22. While the data suggests that 75% of short-term or emergency accommodation needs were met, this is likely an inflated figure due to Victoria's landscape during the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent hotel/motel rooms that become available during this time.

⁴ Neither provided nor referred

M4b: Proportion of Specialist Homelessness Services clients with unmet need (excluding referral) for short term/emergency accommodation in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	17.3%	20.8%	26.5%	28.6%
Non-Indigenous	20.2%	21.7%	31.4%	33.6%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)

M4c: Proportion of Indigenous Specialist Homelessness Services clients with unmet need (excluding referral) for medium term/transitional housing in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	55.0%	54.2%	55.1%	56.0%
Non-Indigenous	57.4%	54.4%	56.9%	56.2%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)

M4d: Proportion of Indigenous Specialist Homelessness Services clients with unmet need (excluding referral) for long term accommodation in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	64.0%	66.9%	69.3%	71.7%
Non-Indigenous	70.3%	71.5%	69.8%	71.3%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)

Commentary

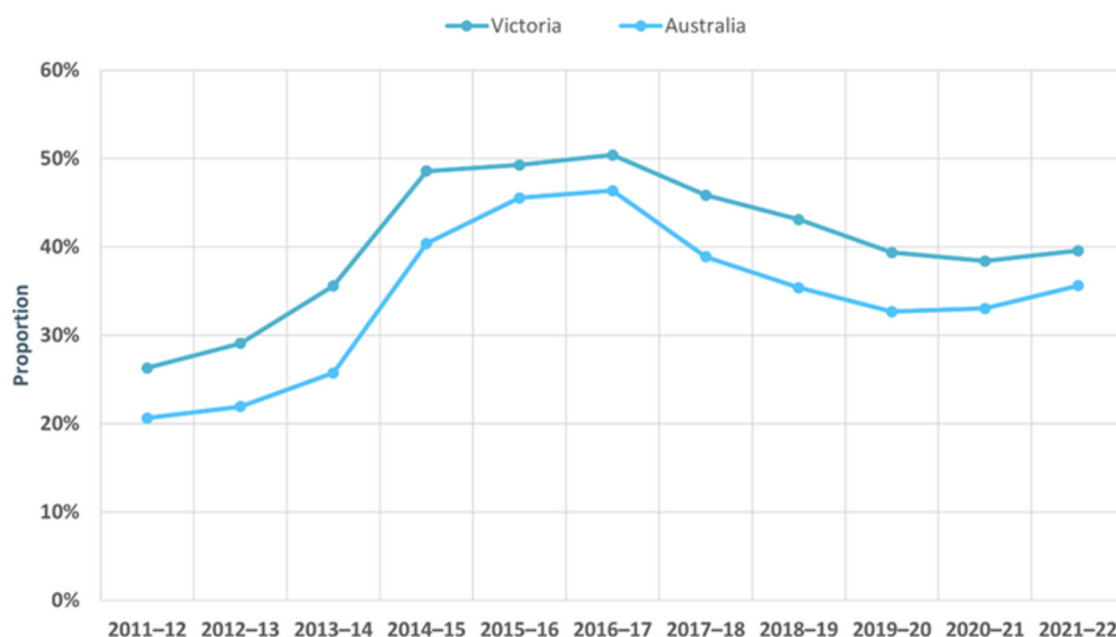
Around one in five Aboriginal clients requiring short-term/crisis accommodation in 2021-22 did not have their accommodation needs met, over 50% of Aboriginal clients requiring medium-term/transitional housing in 2021-22 did not have their housing needs met, and finally well over two thirds of Aboriginal clients requiring long-term housing in 2021-22 did not have their accommodation needs met. These rates are similar to non-Indigenous clients. This data highlights that overall, there is a lack of availability of short, medium, or long-term housing throughout Victoria and Australia to support the needs of both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Australians.

M5: Specialist Homelessness Services clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	38.4%	39.6%	33.0%	35.6%
Non-Indigenous	33.5%	34.3%	35.8%	37.9%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)

Indigenous SHS clients seeking assistance due to housing crisis in Victoria and Australia, 2011-12 to 2021-22



Commentary

Victorian Aboriginal clients continue to seek assistance due to housing crisis⁵ at a higher rate than non-Aboriginal Victorians. There was a slight down trend going into 2018, which was consolidated by the moratorium on evictions in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the last 12 months, numbers have begun to increase. Given the deteriorating conditions in the housing market, and fundamental barriers to accessing housing for Aboriginal Victorians including racial discrimination, it is urgent as ever to sustain tenancies to keep Aboriginal Victorians housed.⁶

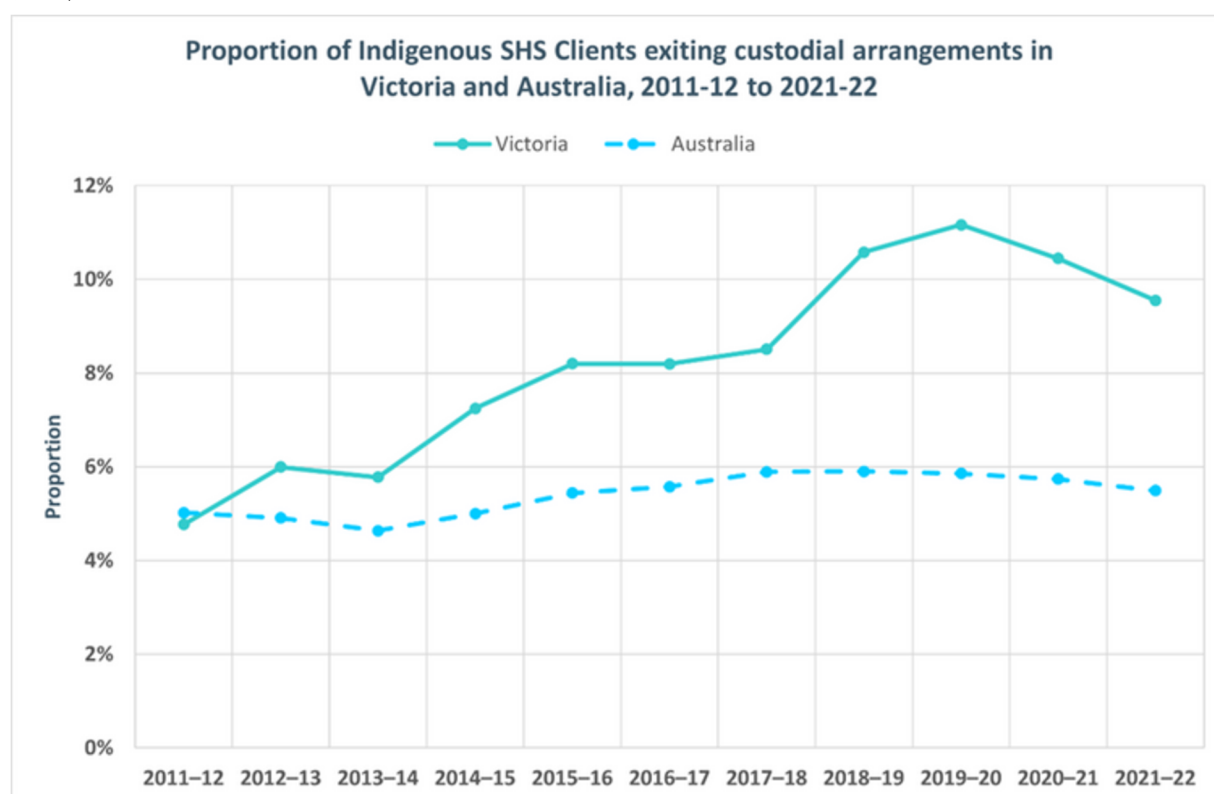
⁵ Housing crisis means client was formally evicted from their accommodation or the client was asked to leave their accommodation (SHSC definition)

⁶ Stone et al. (2021) Aboriginal Private Rental Access in Victoria: "Excluded from the Start"

M6: Indigenous Specialist Homelessness Services clients presenting for assistance following exit from custody (number)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	935	915	3,333	3,191
Non-Indigenous	4667	4,709	7,808	7,505

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



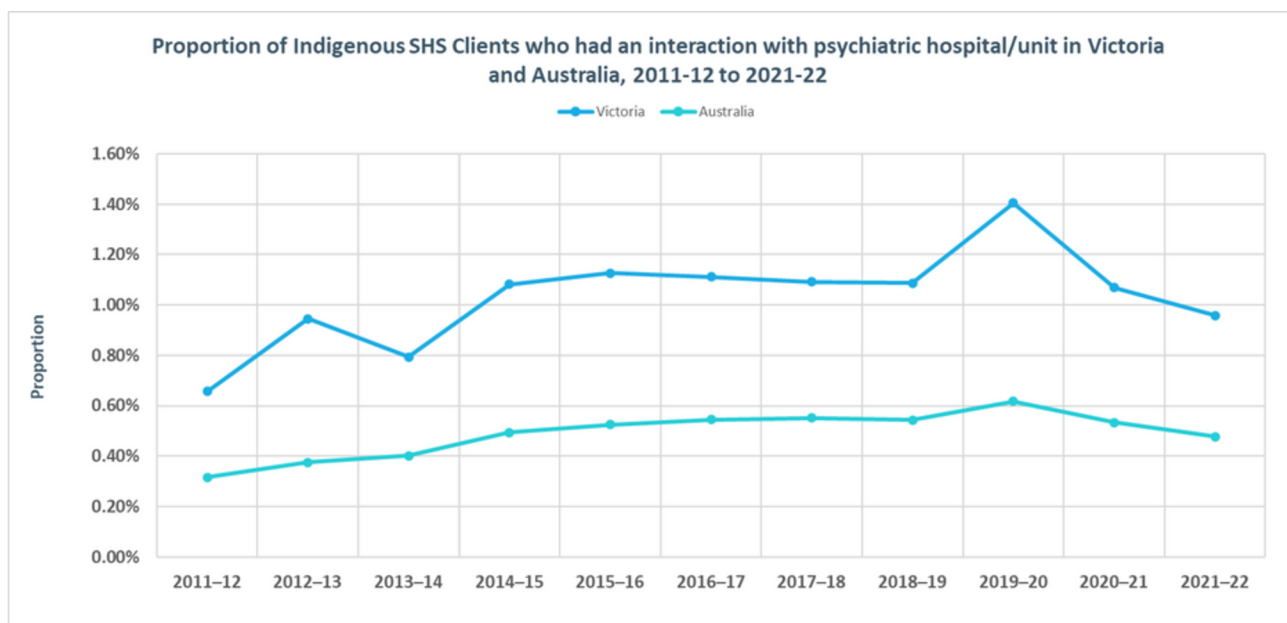
Commentary

In Victoria, rates of Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) clients exiting custodial arrangements steadily increased between 2011-12 to 2019-20. However, from 2019-20 to 2021-21 rates have decreased. Despite this decrease, the Victorian Aboriginal community continues to face an incarceration crisis. For example, despite representing less than 1% of Victoria's population, Aboriginal People make up approximately 9% of Victoria's prison population. Further investment in programs such as the Housing First model in Victoria will help the process of recovery and therefore reduce recidivism and ultimately rates of Aboriginal People exiting custodial arrangements.

M7: Specialist Homelessness Services clients' interaction with psychiatric hospitals/units (number)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	115	107	392	348
Non-Indigenous	983	862	2,033	1,787

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

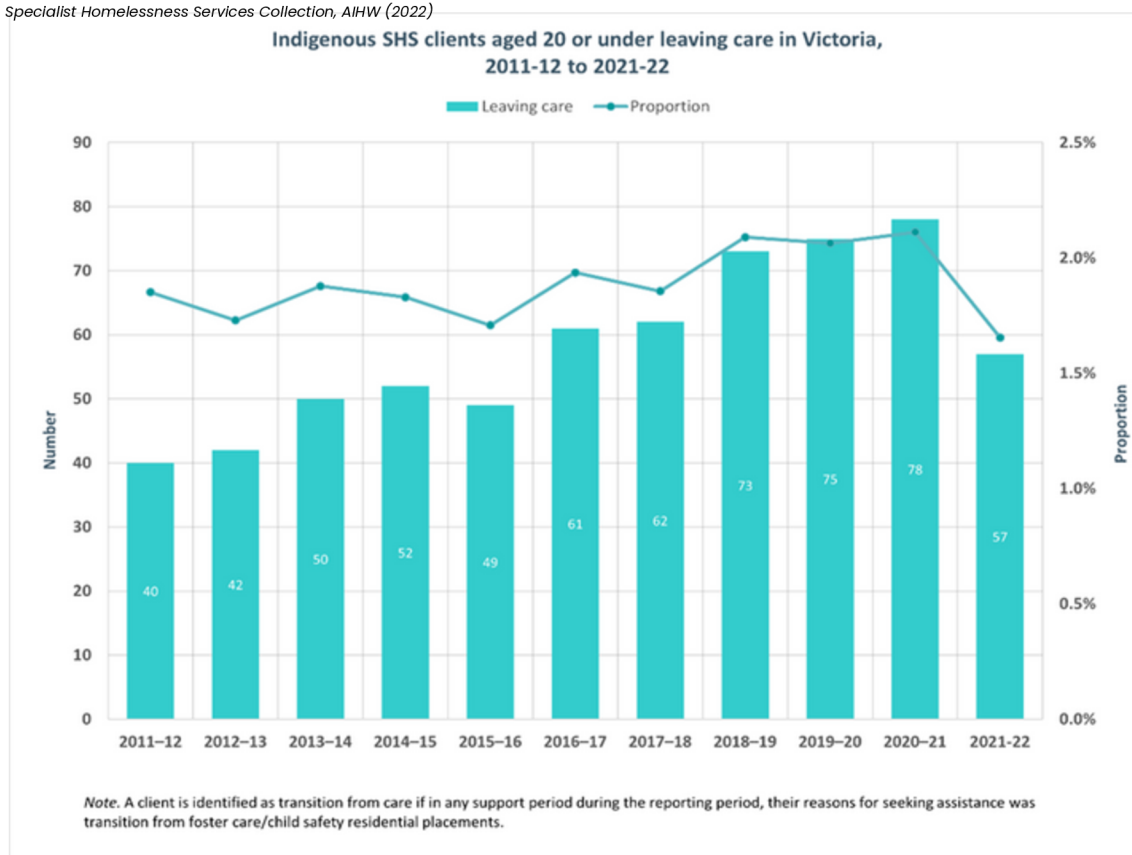
Compared to National Aboriginal rates of Specialist Homelessness Services clients leaving psychiatric hospital/unit,⁷ Victorian Aboriginal People remain overrepresented with rates in Victoria almost 1% compared to less than 0.5% across the country. From 2020-21 to 2021-22 rates of Specialist Homelessness Services clients leaving psychiatric hospital/unit have decreased among Aboriginal People in Victoria and Australia. However, this group remain a priority cohort for transitional to long-term housing to ensure that these numbers continue to decline. They also remain a priority cohort for preventative and other mental health support services.

⁷ The client reported residing in a Psychiatric hospital/unit during any support period in the financial year.

M8: Specialist Homelessness Services clients aged 20 or under in Victoria and Australia leaving care

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	2.1%	1.7%	0.9%	1.1%
Non-Indigenous	1.1%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

Rates of Specialist Homelessness Services clients leaving care are higher among Aboriginal People in both Victoria and across Australia. While rates have generally decreased from 2020-21 to 2021-22, Aboriginal young people remain overrepresented in care. The over-representation of Aboriginal young people in out of home care coincides with the over-representation of this cohort in the homeless population^{8,9} and in institutionalised settings such as juvenile justice centres and other justice systems. The correlation between leaving care and of entering homelessness and justice systems indicates the need to better support Aboriginal young people leaving care. A key component of this support is the provision of safe, secure, and affordable housing.

⁸ Youth Justice in Australia 2021-22, AIHW (2023)

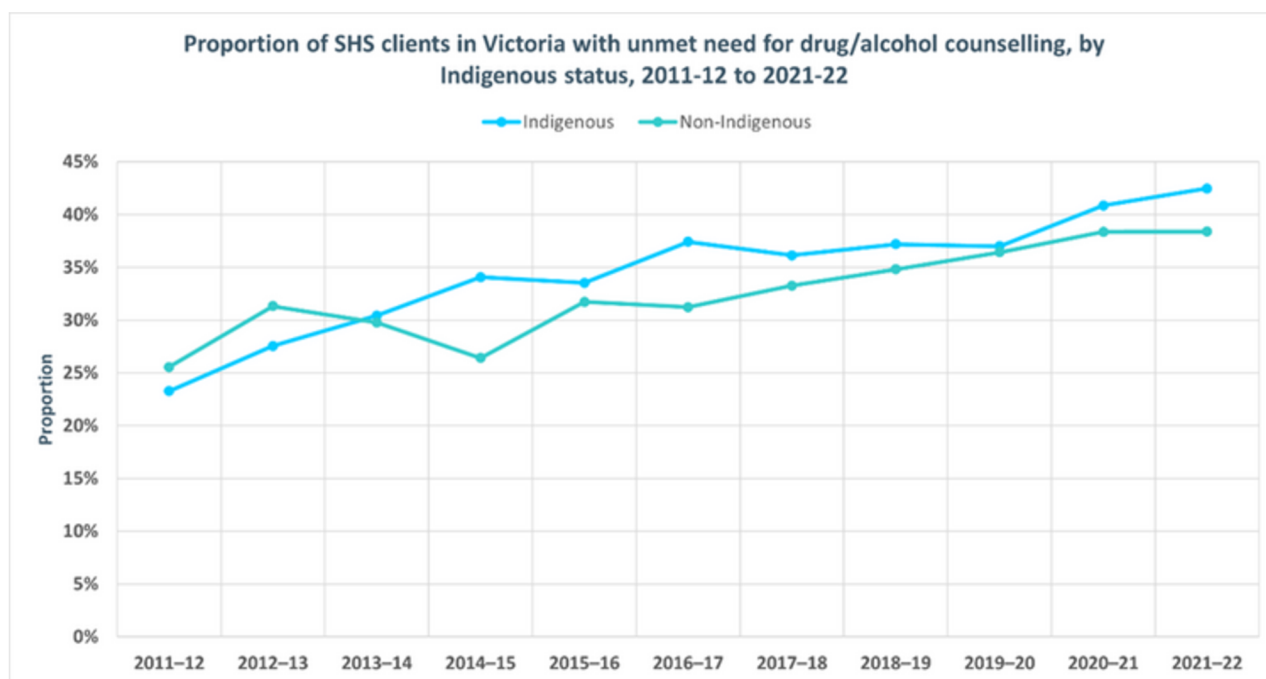
⁹ Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report, AIHW (2022)

¹⁰ Data for 2011-12 to 2016-17 have been adjusted for non-response. Due to improvements in the rates of agency participation and SLK validity, 2017-18 data are not weighted.

M9: Proportion of Specialist Homelessness Services clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling¹¹

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	40.8%	42.5%	38.8%	37.6%
Non-Indigenous	38.4%	38.4%	36.7%	37.1%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

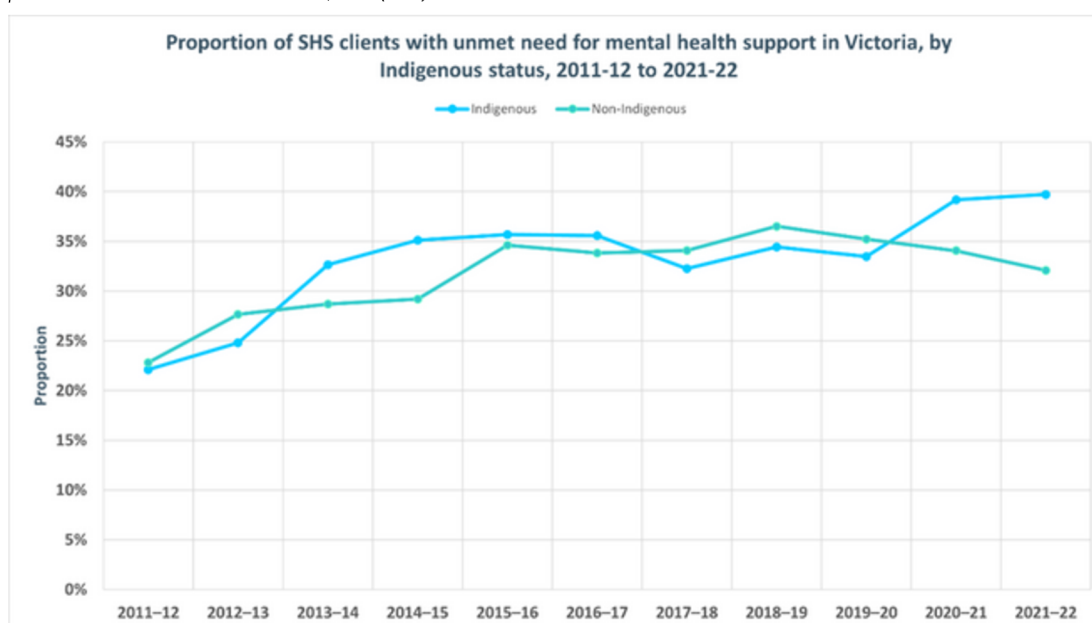
While both Australia wide and within Victoria, the trajectory for Aboriginal and non-Indigenous Victorian Specialist Homelessness Services clients with an unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling has continued to rise from 2011-12 to 2021-22 it has remained relatively stable from 2020-21 to 2021-22. With rates of Specialist Homelessness Services clients with unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling well over one third throughout Australia and Victoria, there is a clear requirement to better support Specialist Homelessness Services clients' need for drug/alcohol counselling. Goal four of the Framework calls for tailored support for those at high risk and an increase in supply of crisis and transitional housing. As the challenge of decreasing the number of clients experiencing homelessness with an unmet need for drug/alcohol counselling continues, it remains a clear priority to provide both counselling and homelessness support.

⁴ Neither provided nor referred

M10: Proportion of Specialist Homelessness Services Clients with unmet need for mental health support

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	39.2%	39.7%	38.5%	37.9%
Non-Indigenous	34.1%	32.1%	34.2%	33.6%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

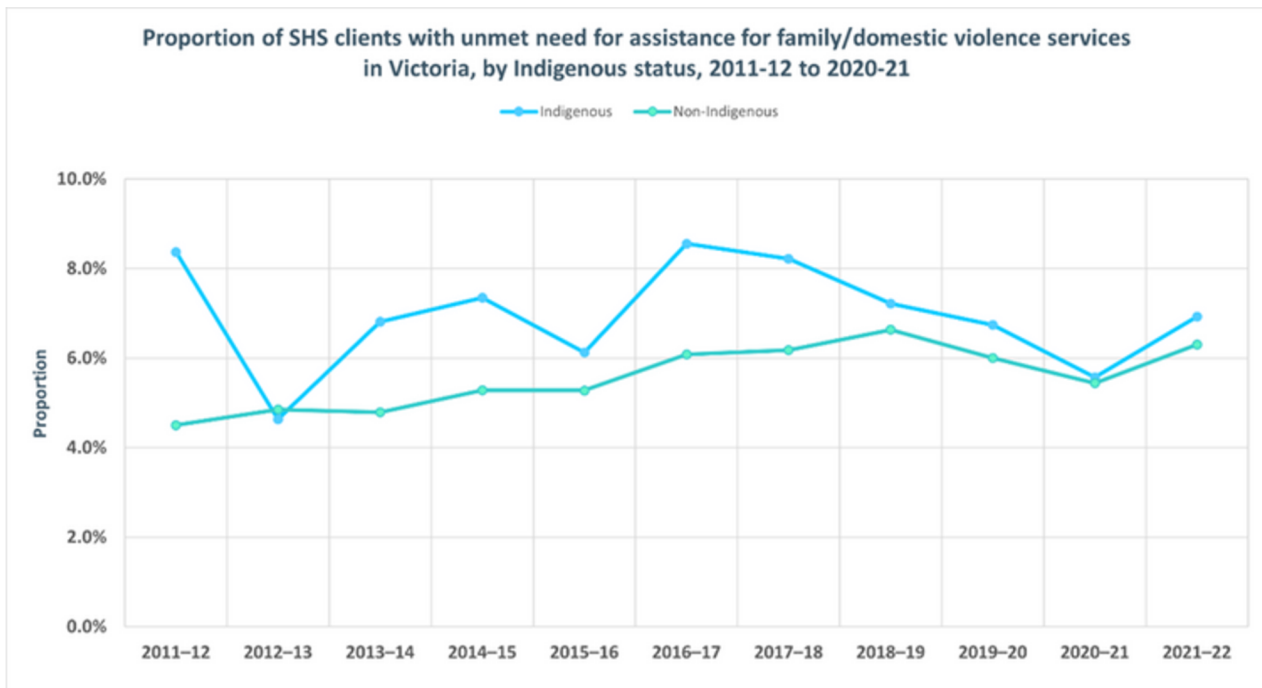
The above graph demonstrates that while there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of non-Indigenous Specialist Homelessness Services clients in Victoria with an unmet need for mental health support from 2020-21 to 2021-22, there has been a small increase among Victorian Aboriginal Specialist Homelessness Services clients during the same period.

People accessing SHS requiring mental health support continues to grow. Therefore, we need to ensure that all clients are receiving the culturally safe mental health support that they require. A key component of this support is preventative programs. For example, More Than A Landlord (MTAL) is a community-led program that provides life coaching and support to AHV tenants to achieve their aspirations and enhance overall wellbeing. Given the success of the MTAL program in facilitating positive outcomes for tenants and their families, the program should be expanded beyond AHV to include every Aboriginal person across public housing and other social housing providers. Further investment in program such as MTAL would deliver strong returns for the Victorian community and take pressure off mental health services including psychiatric hospitals/units.

M11: Proportion of Specialist Homelessness Services Clients with unmet need for assistance for family/domestic violence¹²

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	5.6%	6.9%	7.9%	7.7%
Non-Indigenous	5.4%	6.3%	7.9%	8.1%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

Despite a decrease in Specialist Homelessness Services clients with an unmet need for family violence support between 2018-19 and 2020-21, rates slightly increased between 2020-21 and 2021-22 for both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous clients in Victoria. This demonstrates the need to further consider the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016. It also demonstrates the need for improving links between homelessness agencies and family violence case management services, as well as the need for more culturally appropriate short and long-term housing options available for women and children impacted by family violence. A greater supply of housing options for women and children impacted by family violence could reduce other challenges including the chances of child removal.

¹² Clients may access services in more than one state or territory

M12a: New Specialist Homelessness Services clients ¹³

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous ¹⁴	25.5%	21.8%	32.8%	30.1%
Non-Indigenous	35.6%	33.4%	40.4%	38.7%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)

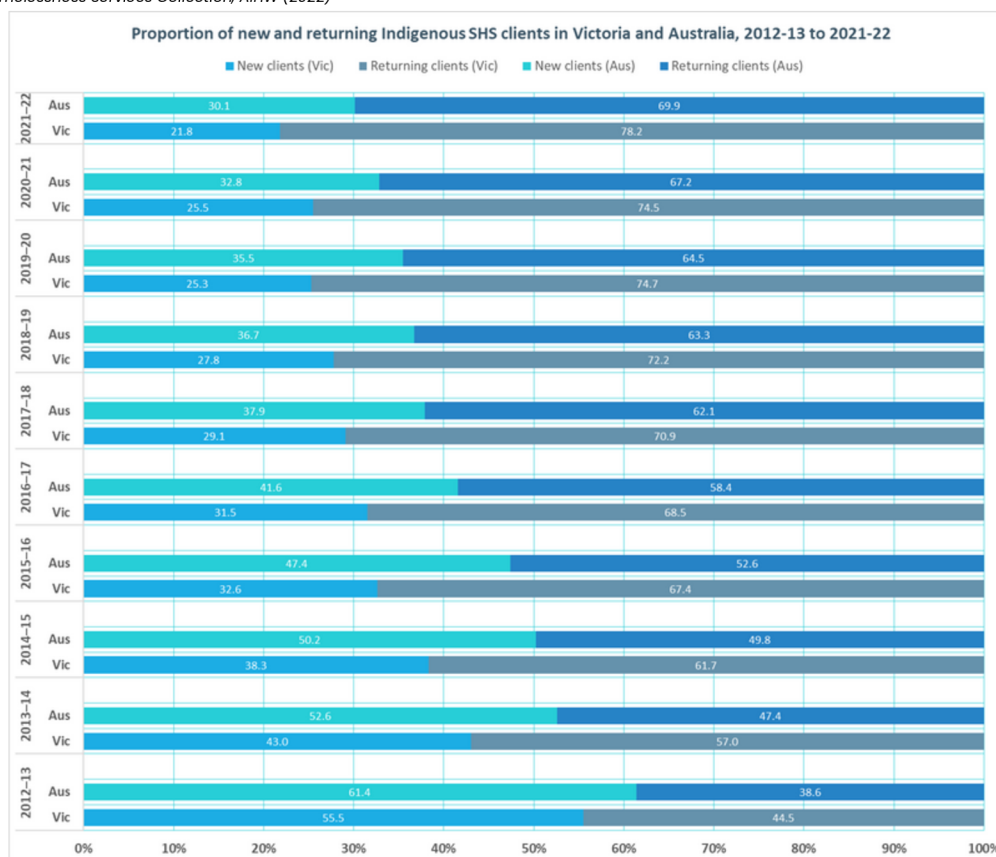
¹³ New clients are defined as clients who only have an open support period in the reference year.

¹⁴ All clients are defined as new clients in 2011-12.

M12b: Returning Specialist Homelessness Services clients¹⁵

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	74.5%	78.2%	67.2%	69.9%
Non-Indigenous	64.4%	66.6%	59.6%	61.3%

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)



Commentary

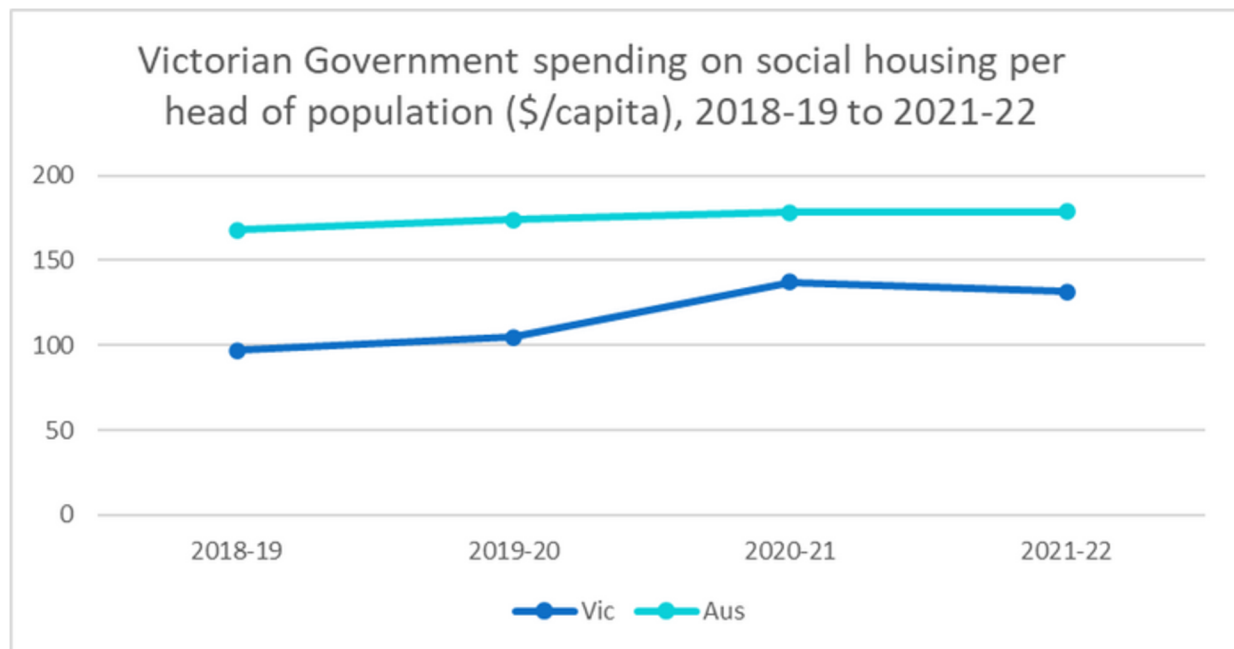
Despite a decrease in Specialist Homelessness Services clients with an unmet need for family violence support between 2018-19 and 2020-21, rates slightly increased between 2020-21 and 2021-22 for both Aboriginal and non-Indigenous clients in Victoria. This demonstrates the need to further consider the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016. It also demonstrates the need for improving links between homelessness agencies and family violence case management services, as well as the need for more culturally appropriate short and long-term housing options available for women and children impacted by family violence. A greater supply of housing options for women and children impacted by family violence could reduce other challenges including the chances of child removal.

¹⁵ Returning clients are defined as clients who have an open support period in the reference year and a support period in at least one other year. (This includes clients with only 1 support period. Support periods can cross reference years.)

M13: Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population (\$/capita)¹⁶

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
All	\$134.1	\$131.5 ¹⁷	\$174.7	\$178.7 ¹⁸

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs



Commentary

The above data is based on Victoria's recurrent expenditure on social housing and only includes operating expenditure (ie tenancy management, maintenance, property costs) and does not capture capital expenditure. This figure does not include Victoria's significant investment through the Big Housing Build announced in November 2020, which committed \$5.3 billion to increase Victoria's social housing stock and does not reflect investment in early intervention through the homelessness and family violence systems.

¹⁶ The measure on Victorian Government spending on social housing per head of population is sourced from the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services

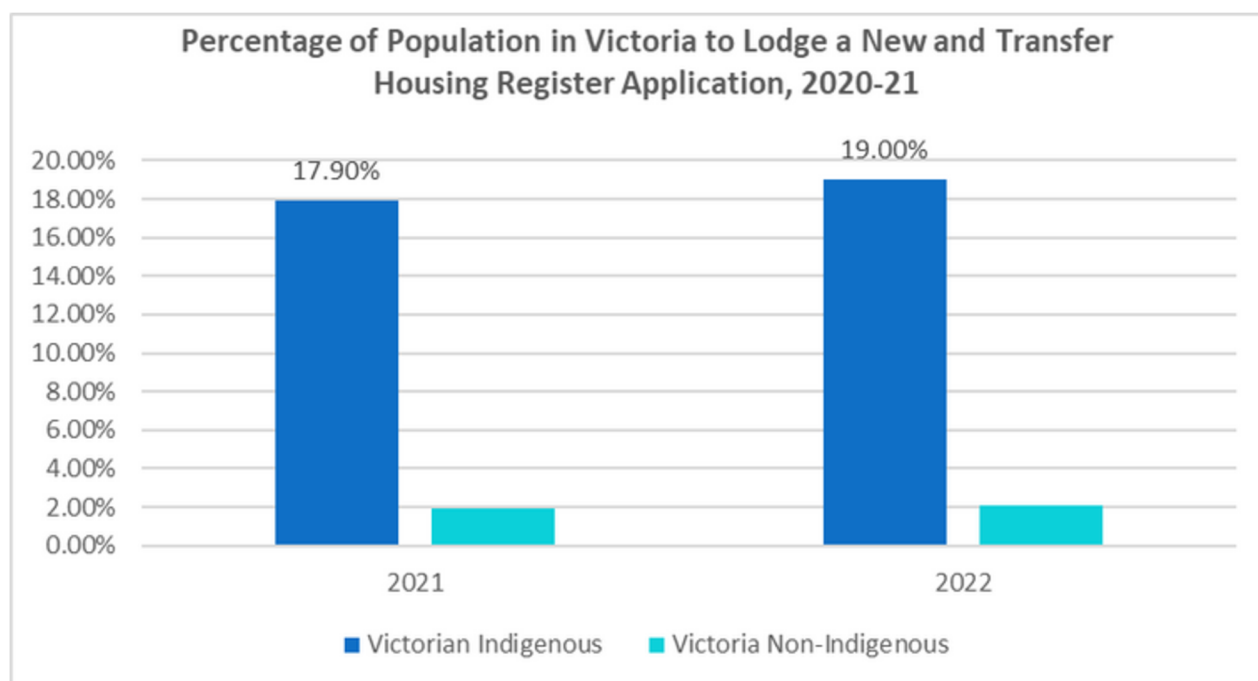
¹⁷ Productivity Commission, Table 18A.1 RoGS, 2021-22

¹⁸ Productivity Commission, Table 18A.1 RoGS, 2021-22

M14: Proportion of Population on the Housing Register Waiting List – New and Transfer Applications % (Number)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	17.1 (5,795)	19.0 (6,440)	N/A	N/A
Non-Indigenous	1.94 (54,525)	2.06 (57,728) ¹⁹	N/A	N/A

Source: Victorian Housing Register ²⁰



Commentary

The number of Aboriginal Victorian households on the waiting list for the Victorian Housing Registrar has increased in one year by 1.1% if we review the percentages against the 2021 census. While the number of other Victorians on the list has also increased quite dramatically, there is clearly an unacceptable overrepresentation of Aboriginal Victorian households waiting for social housing in comparison.

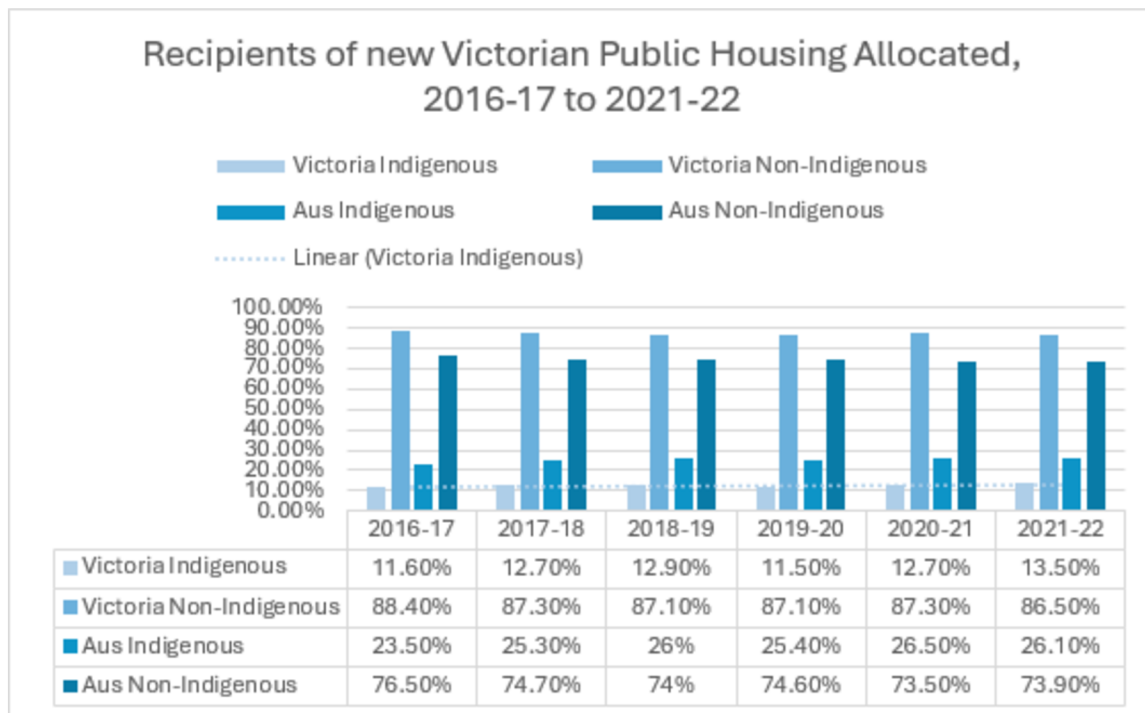
¹⁹ To ascertain the proportion, we have used the household numbers provided by the 2021 census for Victoria (2,805,661) and for Aboriginal Victorians (33,893).

²⁰ VHR data provided by Homes Victoria

M15: Recipients of New Victorian Public Housing Allocated (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	12.7%	13.5% ²¹	26.5%	26.1%
Non-Indigenous	87.3%	86.5%	73.5%	73.9%

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs



Commentary

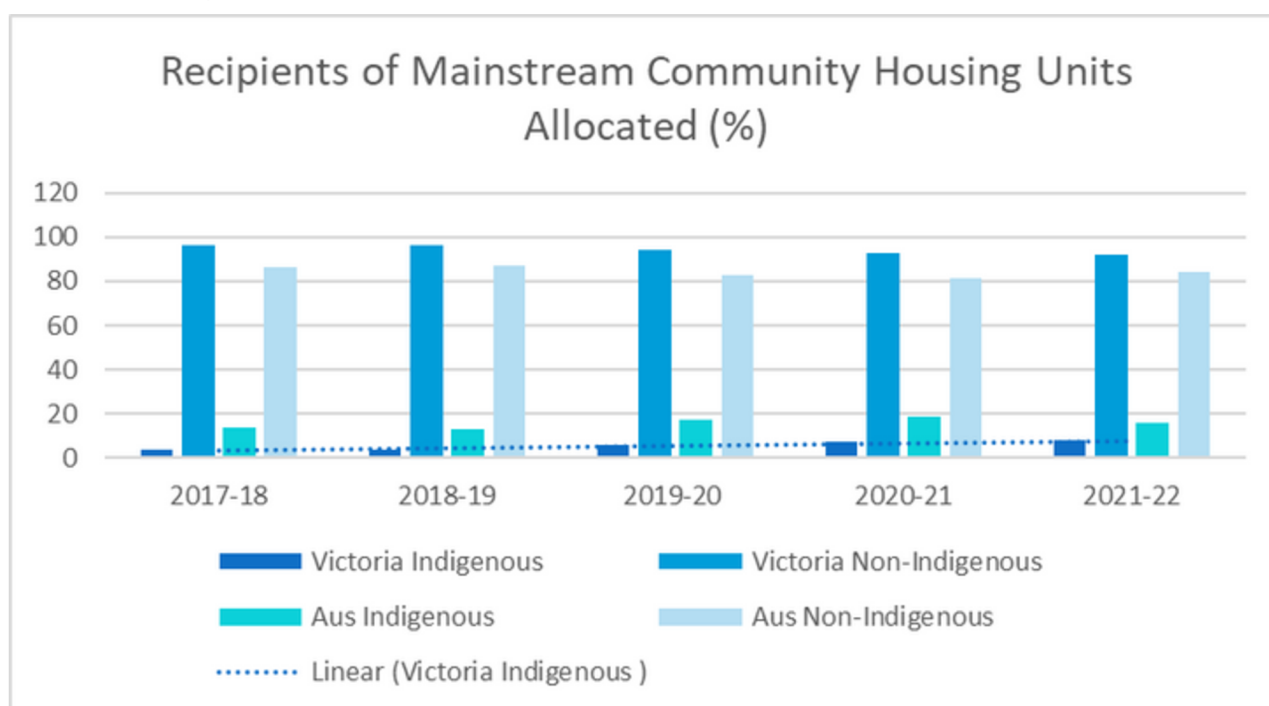
There is now over thirteen percent of new public housing stock being allocated to Aboriginal Victorians, which is the largest increase we have seen since 2016. Public Housing in Victoria continues to demonstrate leadership in their approach to allocations of new dwellings for Aboriginal Victorians.

²¹ Source: Productivity Commission Tables: 18A.4 and 18A.5 ROGS 2023

M16: Recipients of Mainstream Community Housing Units Allocated (%)

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	7.2%	7.8%	18.8%	16.1%
Non-Indigenous	92.8%	92.2%	81.2%	83.9%

Source: Productivity Commission RoGs



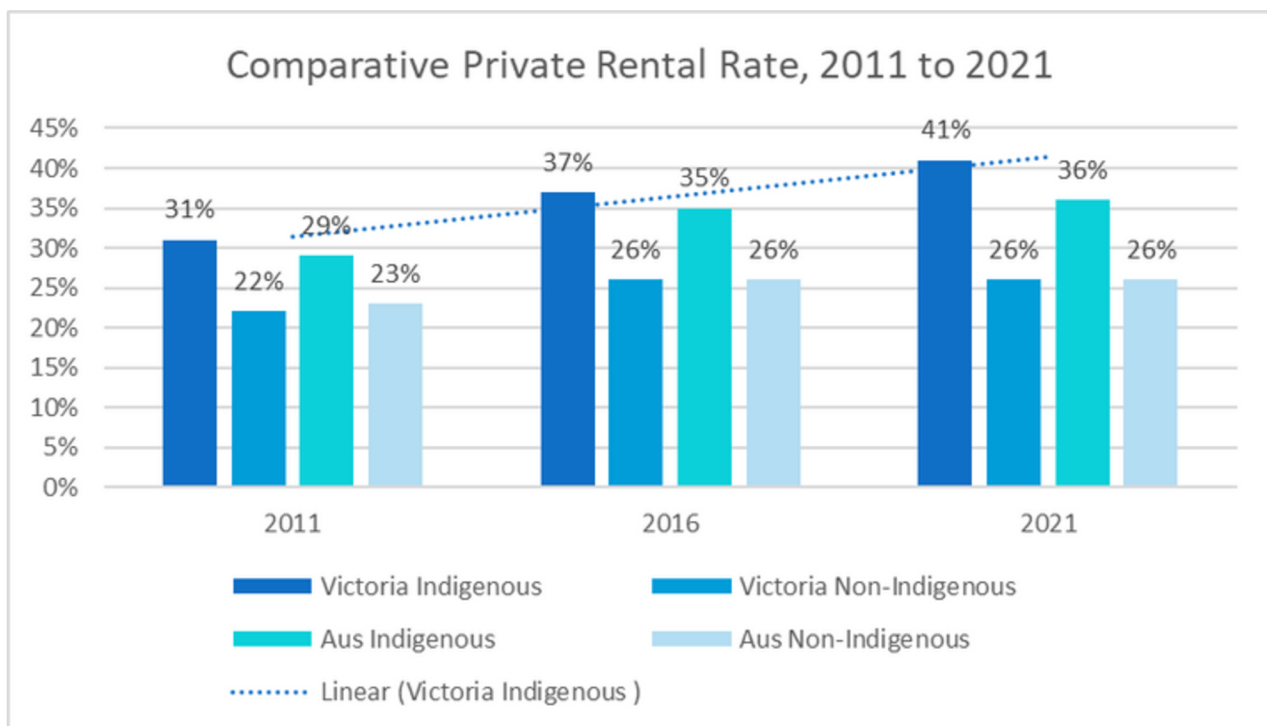
Commentary

Community Housing providers have almost doubled the allocation of community housing stock to Aboriginal Victorians since 2018-19. This increase can be attributed to the release of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* and the launch of the CHIAVic Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework in 2020. This data indicates that community housing providers are becoming more confident in supporting Aboriginal clients. The reform of the regulatory system should further embed cultural safety as a registration requirement. This will promote more culturally safe community housing options for Aboriginal Victorians and support greater allocations of community housing stock for community. In addition, the registration of more Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations will ensure Aboriginal self-determination across the housing system in Victoria.

M17: Comparative Private Rental Rate, 2011 to 2021²²

	Victoria		Australia	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	37%	41%	35%	36%
Non-Indigenous	26%	26%	26%	26%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 Census of Population and Housing



Commentary

The rate of Aboriginal Victorians engaged in private rental in the last ten years has increased by 10 percentage points. This may be driven in part by support from the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program. However, the fact that Aboriginal Victorians continue to be more reliant on the private rental market than the mainstream population may also indicate barriers to home ownership that limit further transition through the housing continuum.

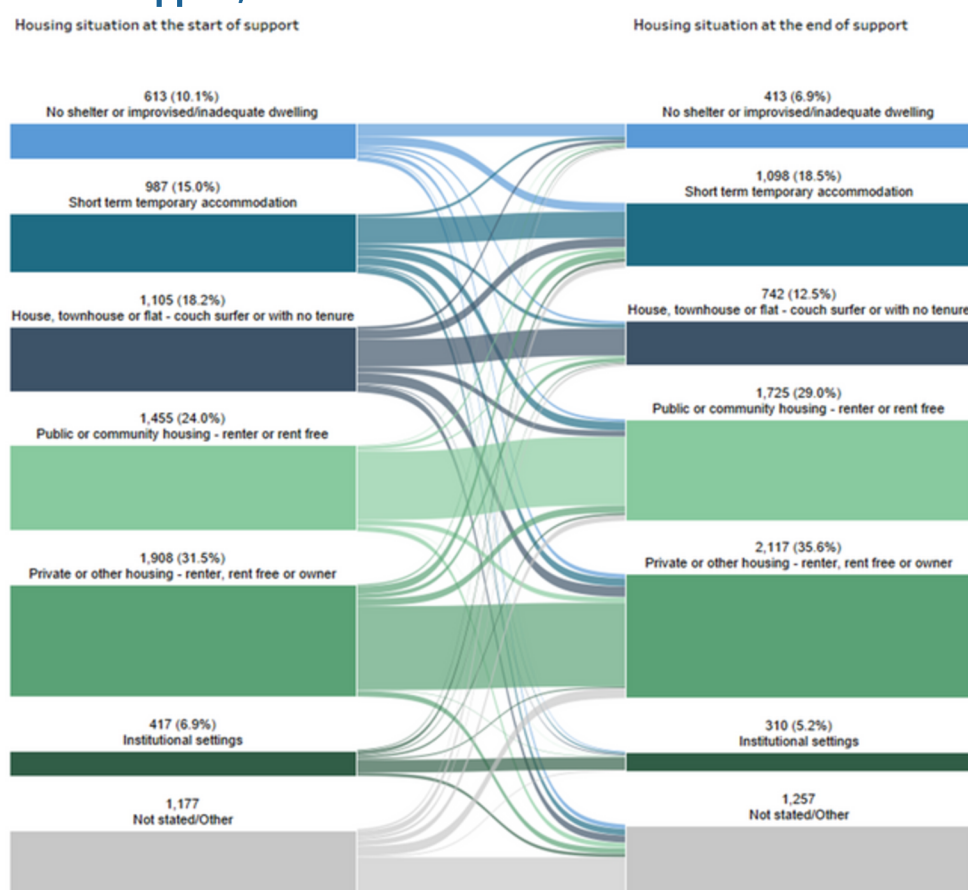
²² Data includes private rental of separate house, semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse and flat house or apartment from real estate agents and person not in the same household. This does not include 'other dwellings' or 'dwelling not stated'. It also includes 'person not in the same household'.

M18: Transition from Specialist Homelessness Services into Private Market (% at Exit)

	Victoria	
	2020-21	2021-22
Indigenous	31.2	23.4
Non-Indigenous	54.0	42.0

Source: Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, AIHW (2022)

Indigenous SHS clients in Victoria with closed support, by housing situation at the start and end of support, 2021-22:



Commentary

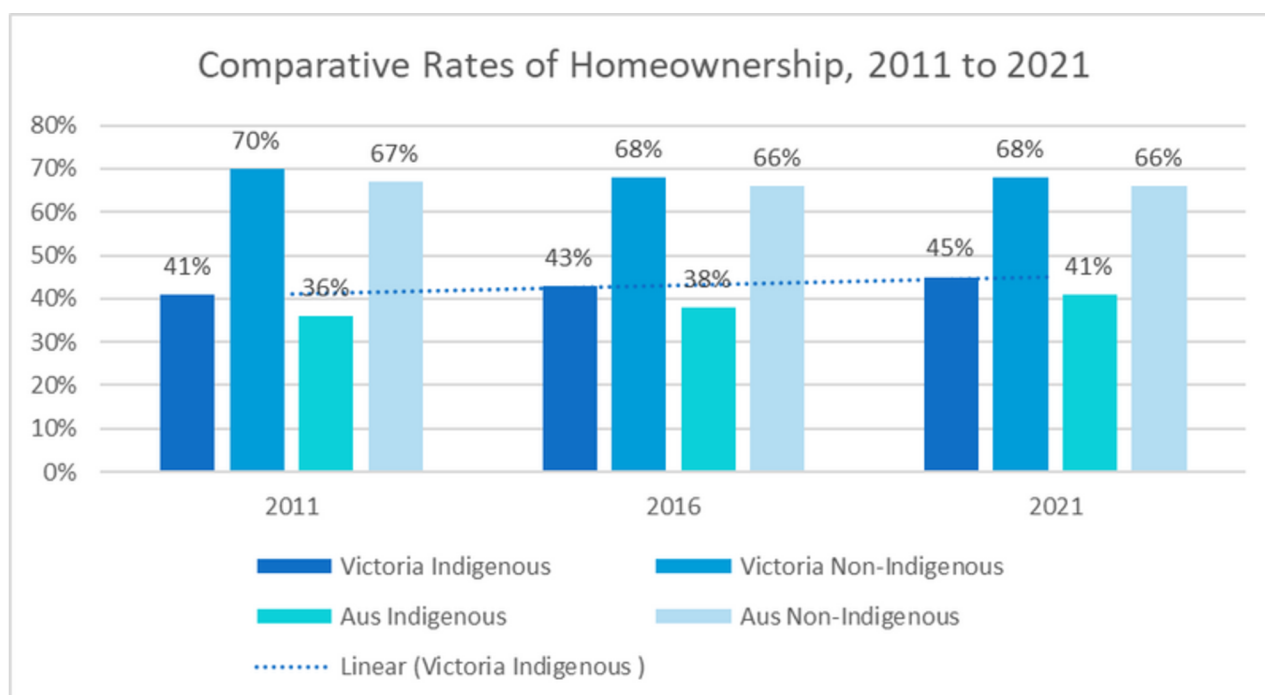
This diagram shows the various combinations of possible outcomes for Aboriginal Victorian SHS clients. These outcomes describe the change in clients' housing situation between the start and end of support.

The increase of those within private or other housing by the end of support has largely been driven through the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program as it provides additional support to those at risk of homelessness, supporting more Aboriginal Victorians into the private rental market.

M19: Comparative Rates of homeownership, 2011 to 2021²³

	Victoria		Australia	
	2016	2021	2016	2021
Indigenous	43%	45%	38%	41%
Non-Indigenous	68%	68%	66%	66%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022 Census of Population and Housing



Commentary

The two percentage point increase in the rate of home ownership for Aboriginal Victorians over the five years since the 2016 Census represents a closing of the gap with mainstream home ownership rates, which have remained steady. However, the 23 percentage points difference still represents a significant gap and highlights the need for a targeted approach to support Aboriginal Victorians into home ownership.

²³ Data includes both homes owned outright and owned with a mortgage. This does not include 'other dwellings' i.e. Caravan, Cabin/Houseboat, improvised home (including tents) or House or flat attached to a shop/office.

M20: Number Assisted by Government Shared Equity Program to Purchase a Home

	Victoria		Australia	
	2019-20	2020-21	2019-20 ²⁴	
Indigenous	1	0 ²⁵	N/A	N/A
Non-Indigenous	85	53 ²⁶	N/A	N/A

Source: DTF/AHV

Commentary

The AHHF Secretariat has sought to secure this data for the 2021-22 period. Historically this data has been provided by the Department of Treasury and Finance. The Department have advised that these data points cannot be made available for this reporting period. Therefore, the data included above, is the same that was included in 2022 VAHMF Annual Report Card.

²⁴ No comparable program at a national level

²⁵ Source: Homes Victoria Program – AHV records

²⁶ Victorian Government Department of Treasury and Finance

Section 3

Summary of Outcomes

Getting Better

For the third year in a row, the data has remained stable. There was a slight increase in the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians that were on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR), awaiting allocation of social housing. However, this was balanced out by an increase in allocations of both Public Housing and Community Housing towards Aboriginal Victorians.

The increase in the proportion of Aboriginal Victorians living in private rental increased by approximately 4%. This of course can read two ways. In line with strategic objective 3 of *Mana-na woorrn-tyeen maar-takoort*, the implementation of the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP) has been providing culturally safe and responsive support to ensure Aboriginal Victorians can access safe and secure housing through the private rental system. However, feedback from APRAP providers have noted that with more Aboriginal Victorians entering private rental tenancies, they are increasingly exposed to the housing crisis in the private market.

The slight increase in home ownership for Aboriginal Victorians is undoubtedly good news. However, without the relevant data from the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) on the numbers of Aboriginal Victorians accessing the Government Shared Equity Scheme, it is difficult to assess the efficacy of programs implementation in pursuit of *Mana-na woorrn-tyeen maar-takoort*

Getting Worse

Whilst there have been some positive indicators, the data indicates the crisis of housing insecurity and homelessness in the Aboriginal community persists. The number of Aboriginal Victorian's accessing the specialist homelessness system continued to grow (3.8% increase), whilst the number of non-Aboriginal Victorian's decreased over the same period.

The increase is concerning when considering the specialist homelessness service system is already chronically under resourced and limited in its capacity to achieve sustainable outcomes. The number of Aboriginal Victorians in need of short term and crisis accommodation who were not able to receive this support increased. At the same time, the proportion of Aboriginal Victorian's engaged with the specialist homelessness system who were able to successfully transfer into private rental sharply decreased from 31.2% to 23.4%.



The tide turns slowly.

The fact that for most of the measures in this Report Card the data has remained relatively stable over the reporting periods, and in some cases worsened should not be seen as cause for concern. Many of the strategic reforms underpinning *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* represent significant structural and systemic shifts in the housing and homelessness systems. Attempting to rebuild from the destruction caused by 250 years of colonisation will take time.

The challenge remains as urgent today as it was when *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* was launched in February 2020. As each year passes, new initiatives in line with the strategic objectives *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* are implemented. We learn more about the complex and multi-faceted causes of housing insecurity and homelessness in the Aboriginal community. The data becomes clearer and our view towards the solutions sharpen.

This is the time to double down on the implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*. We have to keep the momentum created through the Big Housing Build, which has seen a commitment of 10% of the program for Aboriginal Victorians. The case for expanding the Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP) is greater than ever, with the most challenging private rental conditions seen in decades. Sustained support for the Victorian Homebuyer Program will ensure Aboriginal Victorians can own their own homes and unlock opportunities for wealth creation. Aboriginal Victorians experiencing, or at risk of homelessness will be able to receive culturally safe support that meets their unique and specific needs with significant investment into an Aboriginal homelessness system. The VAHHF Implementation Working group will continue to work alongside government counterparts to strongly encourage the Victoria Government to continue to support the implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*.

