



VACCHO ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

We are the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the peak body for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria



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Cover image: The Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) workforce at the SEWB Gathering in May 2021

Image of
Gadubanud Country on
Victoria's South West Coast

Acknowledgement of Country

VACCHO respectfully acknowledges that our office is based on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

We pay our respects to Wurundjeri ancestors, and to Elders, both past and present, and to the future Elders and caretakers of this land.

We extend our respect to all Traditional Owners and Elders across the lands on which we and our Members work, and acknowledge their everlasting connection to Country, Culture and Community.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this publication includes names and photographs of people who have passed away.



Chair Report

SUZIE SQUIRES
CHAIRPERSON 2020 – 2021

In my first year as VACCHO Chair, we've faced big challenges, while also relishing in moments that we've been able to spend together, face to face.

I'm a proud Yuin woman and I live and work on Gunai/Kurnai Country, where I have grown up and now raise a family of my own.

I'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, and its many waterways, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging

This year has proven just how much we need to look after our Community, and I'm proud to work for Community at Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service.

At VACCHO, every person I work with on the Board has responded to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic with compassion and a steadfast commitment to what we do and who we're here for. We

By championing Community control... we move closer to returning our people to the healthy and happy lives lived by our ancestors. Lives rich in Culture and strong in spirit.

know that what's important is looking out for and improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state, now and into the future, no matter the crises that may eventuate, as we've always done.

By championing Community control, for our Members and for our health, we move closer to returning our people to the healthy and happy lives lived by our ancestors. Lives rich in Culture and strong in spirit. Lives lived with family. Lives of yarning. Lives of song. And lives filled with laughter.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the Community health services and organisations out there who have been such a force in the community controlled health sector when it's been put to the test by COVID-19 over and over again. These people give their all for their communities and it's a real honour to work alongside them.

To everyone that has supported VACCHO, our Members and our communities, thank you for your collaboration, dedication and trust.

The more I work in this space, the more I grow and learn from so many great leaders and health professionals around me. We'll grow stronger from this, together.

As we move into the next stages of our journey with COVID-19, I hope we take with us the lessons of community care and remember that health equity and justice is at its strongest when it's our health, in our hands.

I'm excited to see our Members come back together in the coming year, to kick off VACCHO's new Strategic Plan with an invigorated ambition to achieve better for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria.

Suzie



CEO Report

JILL GALLAGHER AO
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ngatta (which means hello in my traditional Gunditjmara language)

As a proud Gunditjmara woman from Western Victoria, I would like to acknowledge the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the power and resilience we share as members of the world's oldest living culture.

Today and every day, we pay our deepest respect and gratitude to Traditional Owners, ancestors, Elders, and leaders – past, present, and emerging. They have and continue to pave the way, with strength and fortitude, for our future generations.

This has been a milestone year for VACCHO as we celebrate 25 years.

On our 25th anniversary, it is important to cast our eyes back through VACCHO's history – a story of our Community's struggle for recognition, respect and equity. It is a story of survival, a chronicle of a people who refused to yield to two centuries of abuse and mistreatment, and who today stand as one to demand equity and justice for our people.

Our staff and Members have continued to demonstrate their passion and commitment to deliver for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community during this time of incredible change.

VACCHO was born at the grassroots, community-driven level. This has ensured our legitimacy and longevity, a legacy that endures to this day.

Our 25th year has thrown up a number of challenges but, as always, I am incredibly proud of the way VACCHO's staff and Members have stood up and responded. Our staff and Members have continued to demonstrate their passion and commitment to deliver for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community during this time of incredible change.

Our Board has also continued to provide excellent governance and expert leadership.

I would like to personally thank our Board Members Suzie Squires, Kelli Bartlett, Felicia Dean, Shellee Strickland, John Gorton, and Michael Graham for their support and commitment to VACCHO.

Throughout the pandemic VACCHO has grown, adapted, and innovated according to the evolving needs of our Members, Community, and stakeholders, to provide culturally safe

services across the state.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our Members who have been a trailblazing force in the community-controlled health sector, and who give their heart and soul for Community each and every day.

This year has been one of incredible change, the impact of which will be felt for years to come. VACCHO's strategic priorities will guide our work and collaboration with Members to enhance the health and wellbeing of Community.

As an organisation, VACCHO owes it to our future generations to break the mould and fight for the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Victoria. We must ensure the health disadvantages that have held back our people for so long do not define the next generation.

Stay safe, strong and connected, and let's continue to look after each other,

Jill



Our Members

VACCHO's membership represents the foundational principles of Community control and holistic care.

Championing self-determination for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community is the best way to meet their needs and improve outcomes in education, justice, employment, health, or any other part of their lives.

When VACCHO was established in 1996, it was because of the need identified by Victoria's Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) for a peak body to advocate with a united voice from the Community-controlled health sector.

There was a need to influence the policy agenda around Aboriginal health and ensure that we had a say in the decisions being made about our Community: it needed to be Aboriginal health in Aboriginal hands.

Twenty-five years later, VACCHO's Members have matured. From humble beginnings as Community organisations with a handful of staff, our Members are now growing into large, high-performing organisations, employing large numbers of staff and providing a complex variety of services.

Our Members are vibrant and diverse organisations that deliver culturally appropriate primary health care, as well as childcare, family services, employment services, housing, justice, and all aspects of health and wellbeing.

They are also organisations that share our vision to deliver quality services to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, according to the Community's definition of health.

To ensure their sustainability, our Members are now positioning themselves as businesses, and VACCHO has responded to this growth by providing our Members with the support that they need to carry on that path.

We have expanded our capacity in the areas of training and development, advocacy, health research and evidence, health promotion, engagement with Community, government and stakeholders, and business support.

Today, VACCHO has 24 full Members and eight Associate Members, who operate across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria, and provide the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community with access to high-quality, culturally safe services.





Our Members



YEAR ESTABLISHED

(VACCHO MEMBER)

1973	Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (1997)	1992	Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation (1997)
1974	Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative (1997)	1993	Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland (1997)
1974	Njernda Aboriginal Corporation (1997)	1994	Dhauwurd Wurrung Elderly and Community Health Service (1997)
1974	Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative (1997)	1994	Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation (1999)
1975	Dandenong & District Aborigines Co-operative (1997)	1997	Lake Tyers Health & Children's Service (2003)
1975	Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative (1997)	1999	Budja Budja Aboriginal Co-operative (2003)
1977	Kirrae Health Service Inc. (1997)	2001	Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative (2002)
1977	Ngwala Willumbong (1997)	2001	Melbourne Aboriginal Youth, Sport & Recreation Co-operative (2011)
1978	Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative (1997)	2005	Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (2011)
1979	Ballarat & District Aboriginal Co-operative (1997)	2005	Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (2020)
1982	Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative (1997)	2006	Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service (2017)
1982	Gunditjmara Aboriginal Co-operative (1998)	2007	Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation (2019)
1983	Cummeragunja Housing & Development Aboriginal Corporation (2013)	2007	Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association (2011)
1984	Mallee District Aboriginal Services (1997)	2009	Oonah Health & Community Services Aboriginal Corporation (2012)
1991	Aboriginal Community Elders Service (2002)	2011	Weethunga Health Network (2016)
1991	Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation (1997)	2012	Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre (2016)

Our Board

2020 – 2021



CHAIR

Suzie Squires

Suzie Squires is a proud Yuin woman and the CEO of Lake Tyers Health & Children's Service. Suzie commenced her journey on the VACCHO Board as an observer and was elected as a Board Member in 2014.

Suzie has been working in Aboriginal health for eight years, and has held roles as the Chairperson of the Gippsland Aboriginal Alliance and vice chair of Yoowinna Wurnalung Healing Service.

DEPUTY CHAIR

Michael Graham

Michael Graham is a proud Dja Dja Wurrung and Wiradjuri man who is passionate about improving the outcomes of his people and for the last 20 years has contributed to the wellbeing of the Community through his work at various Community organisations. He is the current CEO at Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS).

He has been a Board Member at the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative and a former Board Chairperson at VAHS and the Fitzroy Stars Aboriginal Community Youth Club/Gymnasium.

BOARD MEMBER

John Gorton

John Gorton is a proud Wotjobaluk man living in Horsham. He has worked at Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative for 18 years.

John currently holds two roles at Goolum, the first as Community Services Manager, and the second as Chairperson of the Board, a role he has been in for over eight years.

BOARD MEMBER

Kelli Bartlett

Kelli Bartlett is a proud Yorta Yorta woman from Echuca, where she has lived all her life. She has worked at Njernda Aboriginal Corporation for 17 years, and is currently employed as the Health Services Team Leader and is also the Chair of the Board.

Kelli has qualifications in Aboriginal health, an area she's passionate about, and enjoys working for Community.

BOARD MEMBER

Felicia Dean

Felicia Dean is a proud Yorta Yorta woman, who has recently returned as Chief Executive Officer of Rumbalara (previously 10 years) after being away for six years.

Felicia has a strong background in Aboriginal Affairs and the Community-controlled sector, and supports the Empowered Communities model based on self-determination, and flexibility as the way forward for addressing the disparity across Australia for Aboriginal communities.

BOARD MEMBER

Shellee Strickland

Shellee is a strong Aboriginal Woman from Gunai/Kurnai Country where she was born and raised in Culture and a supportive family.

Shellee started her professional career as a Dental Nurse at Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative under the leadership and love of Auntie Marion and Uncle Jumbo Pierce.

In 2018 Shellee started at Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative as the Health Service Manager, and is now serving as the Executive Manager of Family Services.

BOARD MEMBER

Joseph Day

Joseph Day (Joe) is a proud Yorta Yorta and Wemba Wemba man, who is passionate about improving the rights and welfare of Community.

He works as the Community Pastor at Njernda Aboriginal Corporation and serves as Chairperson of Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation. He is also a Board Member of the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, and holds several other leadership positions.

Joe finished up with the VACCHO Board in March 2021.

BOARD OBSERVERS

Tiana Koehler

Angelina Kastamonitis

Our Leadership

2020-2021



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jill Gallagher AO

Jill Gallagher is a proud Gunditjmara woman from Western Victoria. Jill has spent more than 20 years advancing Aboriginal health and wellbeing, through her work with VACCHO.

From 2016 to 2019, Jill was Victoria's first Treaty Advancement Commissioner.

Jill is a respected Aboriginal leader who has dedicated her life to advocating for Community. She was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women in 2009, awarded the Order of Australia in 2013, and inducted into the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll in 2015.



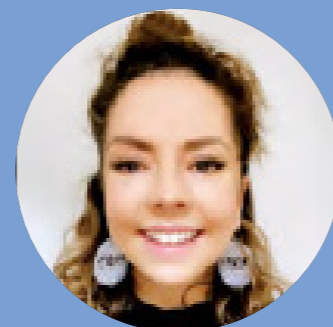
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Corporate Services

Jim O'Shea

Jim O'Shea is a proud Gumbaynggirr man, having moved to Melbourne four years ago from Sydney. Jim is the Executive Director for Corporate Services and VACCHO's Company Secretary.

With over 36 years' experience as a financial and business manager holding several key senior executive positions with private sector companies and not-for-profit organisations both nationally and internationally, Jim brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to his roles at VACCHO.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Policy and Research

Caroline Kell

Caroline Kell is a proud descendant of the Mbarbrum (Bar-brum) peoples. A sovereign nation, west of the Atherton Tableland Regions in Far North Queensland. She was born and raised on Kulin Nations with her mum and five siblings in Preston.

Caroline has a deep passion and commitment to help re-write historical wrongs, to see her family and Community live happy and healthy lives and see improved outcomes for all Aboriginal communities.

Caroline finished in this position in October 2020.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Population Health and Sector Development (Acting)

Rekeesha Fry

Rekeesha Fry is a proud Jawoyn and Yidinji woman from Darwin who's been living in Melbourne since 2014.

She's passionate about project management and improving the health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for Aboriginal people and their communities.

Rekeesha joined VACCHO as a Manager of Strategic Projects, focused on supporting the Social and Emotional Wellbeing team. She was the Acting Executive Director for Population Health and Sector Development until November 2020.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Policy and Research (Acting)

Michelle Chiller

Michelle Chiller is a passionate Community ally who has worked in the Victorian Aboriginal health and wellbeing sector for over 20 years across a range of project, policy and planning roles.

Michelle was in the role of Acting Executive Director for Policy and Research until May 2021.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Population Health and Sector Development

Mikaela Egan

Mikaela Egan is a proud Muthi Muthi/Gunditjmara woman, who grew up in Mildura and has been living in Melbourne for 11 years.

Mikaela puts passion and soul into all areas of her work and loves working with Community to help create healthier lives for our mob.

She has worked in various roles in the health and community sector, and also works as a photographer and artist.

Mikaela finished in this position in June 2021.



EXECUTIVE MANAGER

Registered Training Organisation

Peter Mitchell

Peter Mitchell is a highly agile, innovative and dynamic executive with in excess of 30 years' experience in delivering and improving organisational outcomes, building high-performing teams, developing smart business processes while leveraging the latest technology.

Peter has a record of consistent high performance as a business leader who possesses specialised executive experience in commercial, financial and corporate services.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

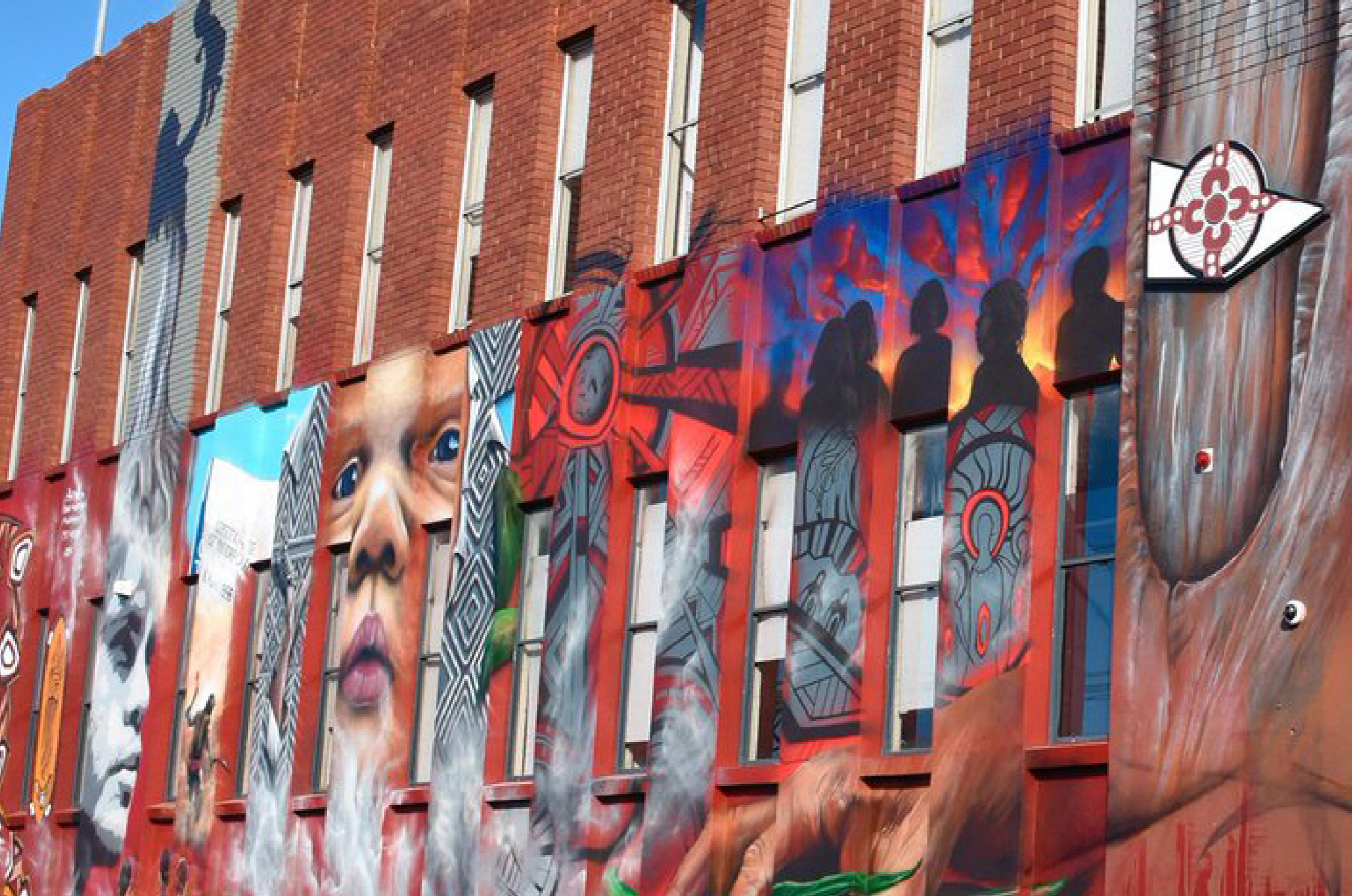
Policy and Research

Masita Maher

Masita Maher is a Noongar/Yamatji woman from Western Australia and has worked extensively across Australia in a number of jurisdictions, and is currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy, post completion of a number of legal studies qualifications.

She has led statewide strategies and developed a range of implementation plans to support increased engagement of programs across the Aboriginal population and has a keen interest in driving research that will enhance the lives of Aboriginal people, through culturally safe pathways that enable increased outcomes.





Committees

From July 2020 to June 2021, the following committees supported VACCHO and the Board, their time and expertise is much appreciated.

Finance Committee

Responsibilities include:

- ◊ Assistance and guidance in monitoring and ensuring the integrity of our financial reporting.
- ◊ Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, internal standards (including code of conduct), policies and expectations of key stakeholders.
- ◊ Assistance with monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of our internal and external audit functions.

Remuneration Committee

Responsibilities include:

- ◊ Review and assess the alignment of the CEO, Executive Group and staff remuneration and benefits to VACCHO's Strategic Plan.
- ◊ Review annually, and more often if required, the key performance areas of the CEO and the Executive Group.
- ◊ Review and make recommendations to the Board on the remuneration and benefit strategies for the CEO and the Executive Group.
- ◊ Review and assess the remuneration and benefit strategies for staff as recommended by the CEO and the Executive Group, to satisfy itself that these are appropriate for the position, are fair, reflect the contribution made to the business by the staff member and enhance a business culture that supports accountability and a zero-tolerance environment for unethical conduct, through appropriate compensation and employment decisions.

Quality, Risk Compliance and Safety Committee (QRCS)

Responsibilities include:

- ◊ Assistance in developing, delivering and monitoring and continually improving the performance of VACCHO's quality managements system.
- ◊ Assistance in ensuring the integrity of our QRCS frameworks, systems along with policies and procedures.
- ◊ Support with monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of our internal control and risk management framework.

These committees met a total of ten times across the financial year.



OUR YEAR

Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Ringo Terrick gives the Welcome to Country at VACCHO's 25th anniversary celebration



Our Year

We've all learned a lot from the events of 2020 and 2021, yet that is a small part of the vast knowledge of so many generations of Elders and communities that came before us.

This year has been about supporting each other and embracing change. As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past 12 months, we are proud of the progress we've made together with our Members and the wider Community-controlled sector.

In the next few pages, we've outlined the major events and achievements that have made this year memorable and special.

2020



NAIDOC Week virtual concert

VACCHO begins working towards Rainbow Tick Accreditation

July

New National Agreement on Closing the Gap includes a new commitment to support the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector

August

Online yarns with Koori Pride Victoria to elevate the voices of First Nations Queer people

VACCHO begins consultation on Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

September

VACCHO starts online training to help manage risk of COVID-19 infections

Establishment of Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnerships Forum to be held in 2021

October

Members' Meeting highlights the exceptional job of VACCHO Members in COVID-19 response

Documentary on The Beautiful Shawl Project released with Breast Screen Victoria

November

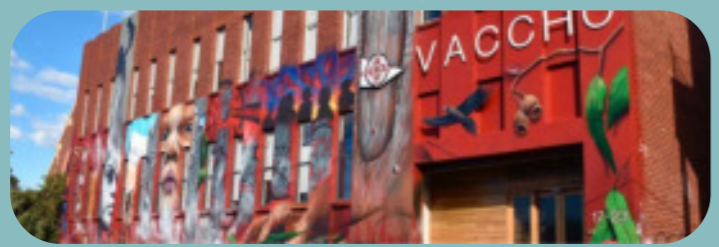
Historic launch of *Balit Durn Durn* in response to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

Celebrating NAIDOC Week in person at flag raising with Vic NAIDOC

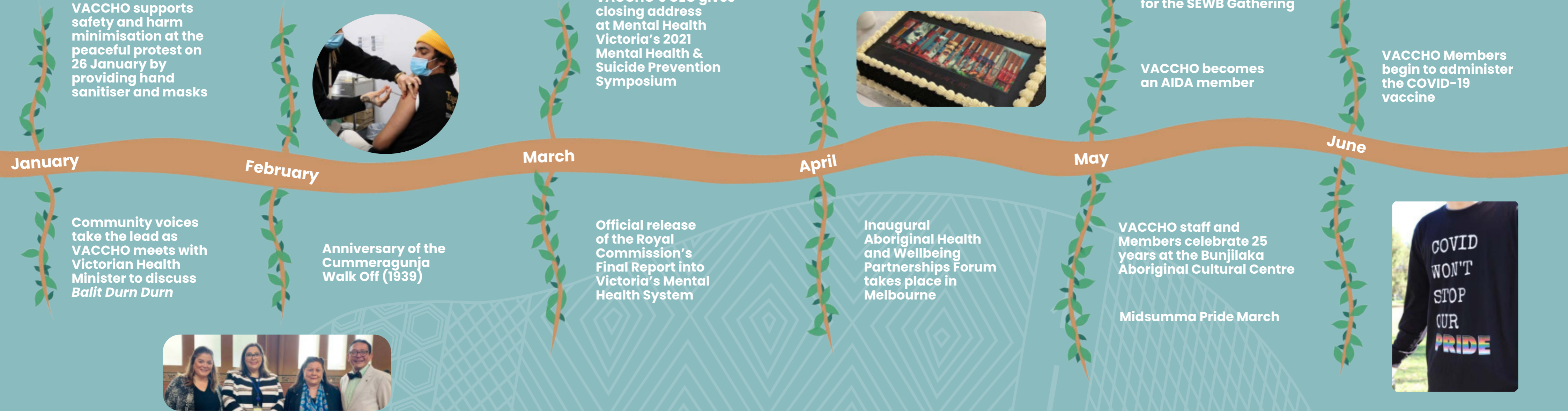
December

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2020 is released

Landmark legislation to decriminalise public drunkenness in Victoria



2021



January

VACCHO supports safety and harm minimisation at the peaceful protest on 26 January by providing hand sanitiser and masks

Community voices take the lead as VACCHO meets with Victorian Health Minister to discuss *Balit Durn Durn*



February

Community begins to get access to the COVID-19 vaccine



Anniversary of the Cummeragunja Walk Off (1939)

March

VACCHO's CEO gives closing address at Mental Health Victoria's 2021 Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Symposium

Official release of the Royal Commission's Final Report into Victoria's Mental Health System

April

VACCHO celebrates our 25th anniversary



Inaugural Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Partnerships Forum takes place in Melbourne

May

Workforce comes together for the SEWB Gathering

VACCHO becomes an AIDA member

VACCHO staff and Members celebrate 25 years at the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Midsumma Pride March

June

VACCHO Members begin to administer the COVID-19 vaccine





Vanessa Morris, Lionel Austin, Tony Armstrong, Jill Gallagher AO and Matthew Lloyd (L-R) stand at the front of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) in Fitzroy



Our COVID response

VACCHO and our Members have been determined to protect and support Community throughout the pandemic. We will continue to dedicate our time and resources to this area to ensure the safety, wellbeing and livelihood of our staff, Members and Community.

We started July 2020 with a major COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria – an unprecedented, once in a generation event. This caused high levels of anxiety in Community, about the virus and the subsequent lockdowns.

VACCHO worked with all levels of government and Members to educate Community about the best ways to stay COVID-safe – with a particular focus on the importance of staying at home, social distancing, wearing a mask, and hand hygiene.

Many months later, we supported the vaccine roll-out through the Commonwealth vaccine program. In June 2021, Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative (GEGAC) was the first ACCO to commence delivering the vaccine.

VACCHO had strong media coverage from Jill Gallagher's appearance at VAHS to

launch the *Community, Unity, Immunity* campaign in June in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Health, along with media personality Tony Armstrong.

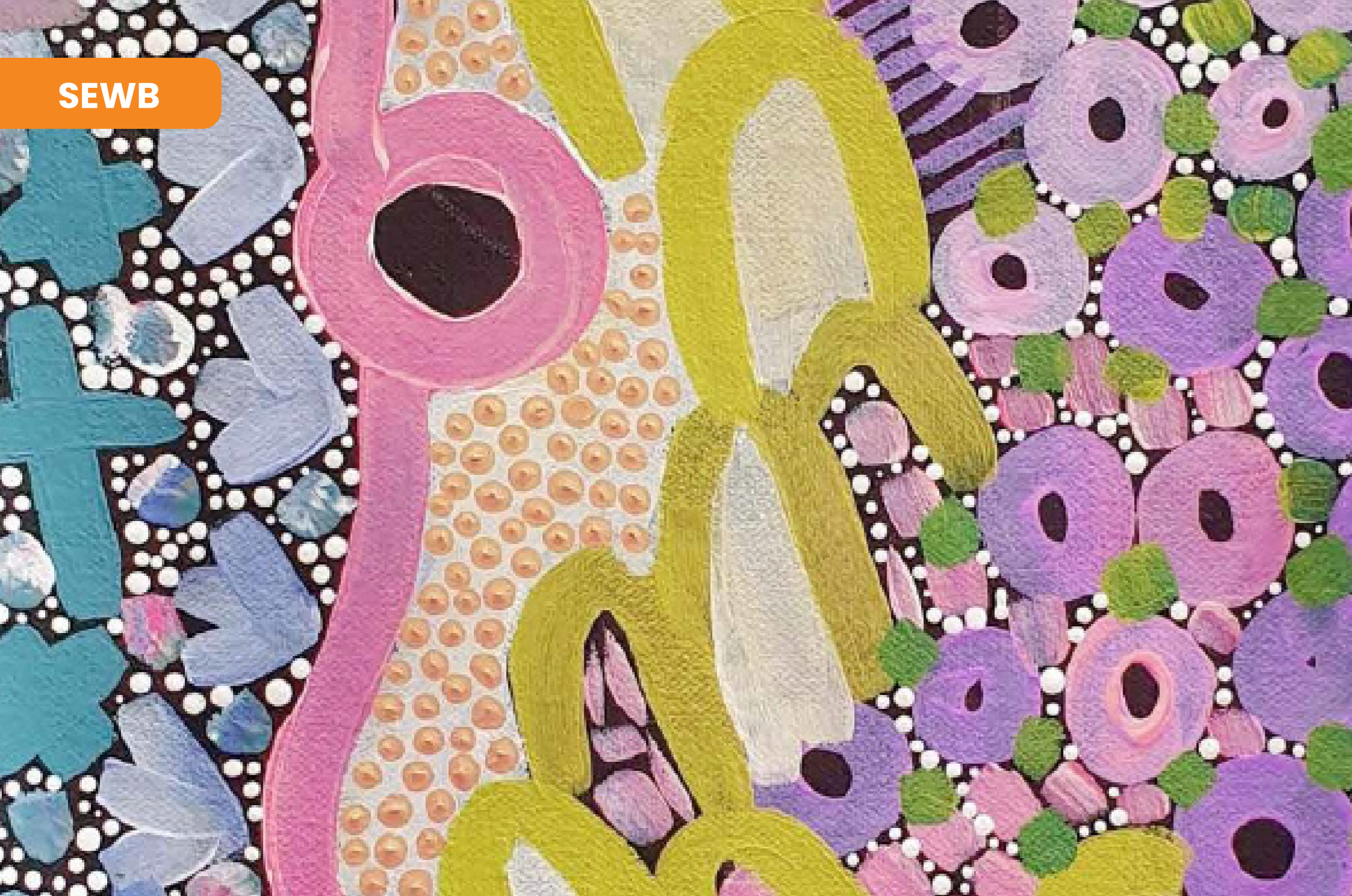
With messaging focused around protecting Elders and loved ones, we saw encouraging uptake of the vaccine. There has also been a great deal of work across the organisation to help with addressing vaccine hesitancy among Community.

A number of VACCHO Members assist the mental health and wellbeing of Community with counselling services. VACCHO has proactively promoted these services, such as Yarning SafeNStrong.

It has been a trying time for everyone. We thank our staff, Members and Community for the unwavering care and commitment they've shown during this period, and hope to see each other safely in person very soon.



HIGHLIGHTS



Publication artwork by
Kenita-Lee McCartney,
titled 'Bright Future'

Mikaela Egan, Craig Holloway
and Jill Gallagher AO with
Victorian Premier The
Hon. Daniel Andrews MP
at the launch of the Royal
Commission into Victoria's
Mental Health System

Balit Durn Durn: Mental health and wellbeing

Balit Durn Durn marks the first time in Victorian history that Aboriginal voices are embedded into Victoria's mental health system, a long overdue piece of work to support the healing of our Community.

For the first time in history, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, organisations, people, families, carers, and communities were given the opportunity to have their voices and experiences included in a re-design of Victoria's mental health system.

We launched *Balit Durn Durn 'Strong brain, mind, intellect & sense of self'* at an online event in November 2020.

The report comes from the learnings of our own peoples, and explores the power of Aboriginal culture to provide five Aboriginal-led solutions that will transform the Victorian Mental Health System.

Balit Durn Durn comes from the Wurundjeri (Woiwurrung) language.

In the report, we outline generation-defining goals that can help pave the way to more effective and well-resourced mental health and wellbeing services for Community.

Recommendation 33 in the Report - which is the establishing of two on-Country healing centres in Victoria to support the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is being supported by the Victorian Government, as well as further investments for VACCHO to lead and establish appropriate family-oriented services for infants and children who require intensive social and emotional supports.

At Mental Health Victoria's 2021 Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Symposium, our CEO Jill Gallagher AO gave the closing address. She spoke about the unique holistic model of Aboriginal health and her hopes for the long-awaited reform of Victoria's mental health system.



The SEWB workforce prepares for a big three days of learning together



Social & Emotional Wellbeing Gathering

We came together for the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Gathering in May 2021, held in Richmond on beautiful Wurundjeri Country.

For the first time since 2019, the SEWB workforce was brought together at our biannual SEWB Gathering. This workforce consists of people working in the areas of Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), mental health and wellbeing, Bringing Them Home and Link-Up.

The SEWB workforce addresses the impacts of current, past and intergenerational trauma, dispossession, separation of families, ongoing social disadvantage, racism and other historical, social, and cultural issues that impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families, and Communities. All very challenging roles – not least with COVID-19 thrown in!

A lovely setting by the banks of the Birrarung (Yarra River), a deeply spiritual and healing space. The ideal place to support our workforce who work tirelessly for Community.

Our Gathering was opened by Aunty Zeta Thomson, who conducted a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony to cleanse the space and set us up for a healing week ahead.

At VACCHO, we recognise the importance and need for a holistic approach to support and improve the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Community, including those that work in this space. We are acutely aware and support teachings predicated on healing and the more effective use of strengths-based, culturally safe, trauma-aware and healing-informed approaches.

Keeping this in mind, the Gathering provided our workforces with opportunities for sharing best practice, collaboration, peer support, networking, and hearing about different programs across the state that support mob,



in a culturally safe environment. A variety of fun and culturally safe healing activities were organised, including wood burning (pictured above), Yidaki healing, and making smudge sticks using native plants.

It was deadly seeing new workers connecting to old workers, sharing of experiences and cultural knowledge. It was lovely to see mob laugh and enjoy being around each other.

We would like to acknowledge the amazing work Uncle Lance James has done over the last 50 (plus) years. His dedication to the sector has been unwavering and immeasurable with many mob benefiting from his work. He will be sadly missed and we wish him all the best for his future endeavours.



Adrian Carson, CEO at the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health; VACCHO CEO Jill Gallagher AO; The Hon. Greg Hunt MP, Federal Minister for Health and Aged Care; Jody Currie, CEO at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane; and Professor Tom Calma AO, Chancellor at the University of Canberra



Better care for our older people

The efforts of the National Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care (NAGATSIAC) culminated in the launch of a five-year plan *Our Care, Our Way, Our Future* in Canberra in May 2021.

It was a busy year for the NAGATSIAC, who draw on decades of experience and knowledge in providing the very best aged care services to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The launch of *Our Care, Our Way, Our Future* was a watershed moment and represented the first time that there has been a national plan developed for serving Elders and older people in Community.

NAGATSIAC was pleased to see government, advocacy groups and key stakeholders come together in Canberra to witness the historic unveiling of the five-year plan.

This crucial plan puts forward a bold and ambitious approach for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care; and calls for a system based on the principle of self-determination.

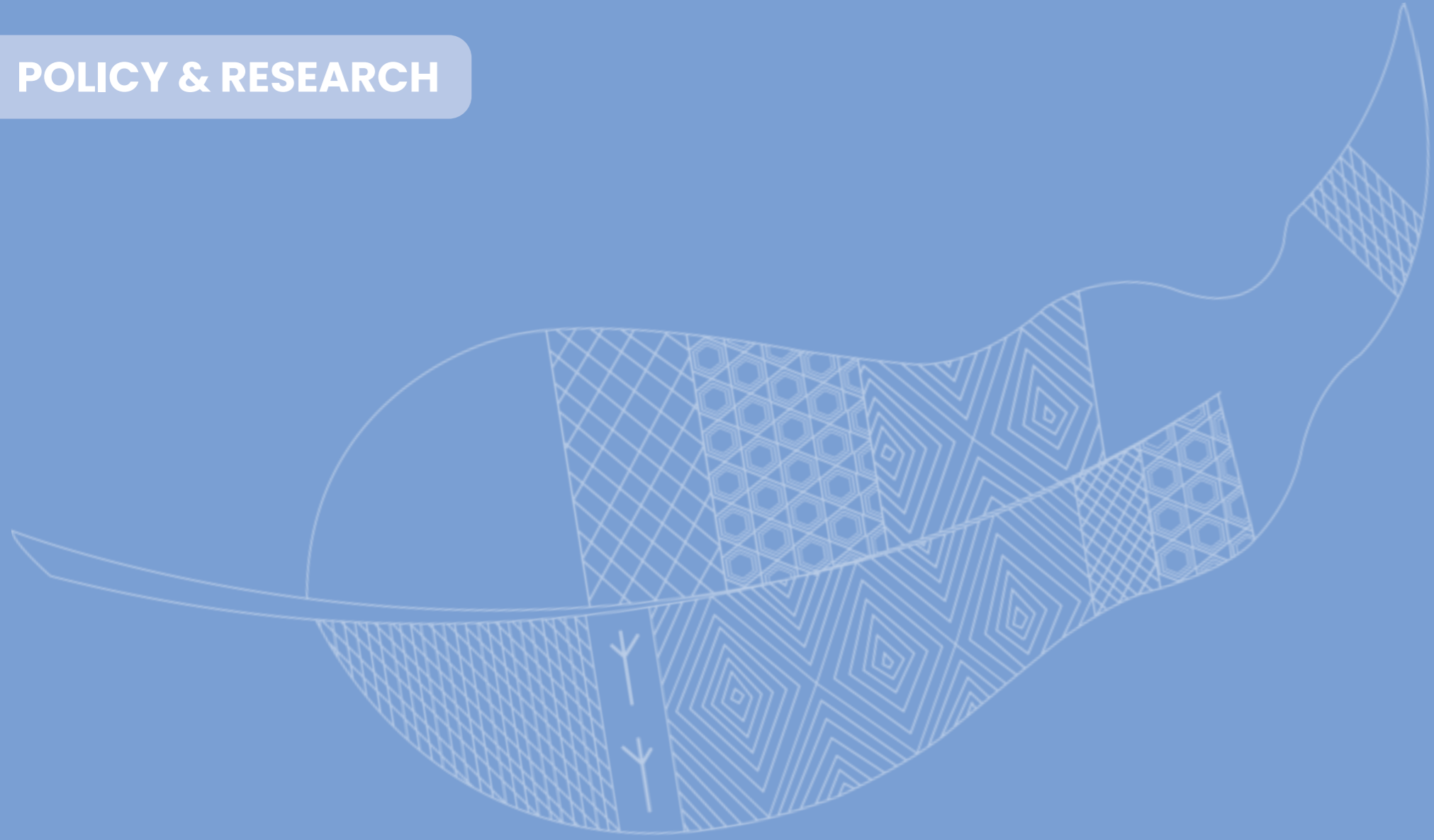
NAGATSIAC is currently auspiced by VACCHO.

Our Care, Our Way, Our Future is a significant step forward in the commitment needed from government to truly deliver care, dignity, and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people and Elders.

It is critical to understand that our future is with our older people and our Elders, they keep our Culture strong, and they protect and pass on the world's oldest living traditions.

We want to ensure there is a future aged care system that cares for and honours them as this nation's First Peoples.

We will walk in partnership with the sector and government to ensure that this nation begins to demonstrate the utmost respect for our older people and Elders, now and into the future. NAGATSIAC intends for this plan to set the policy and program agenda until 2026.



Long-awaited reform to public drunkenness laws

There have been sustained calls for the decriminalisation of public drunkenness in Victoria since the recommendations of the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Finally, we are seeing change.

In late 2020, VACCHO welcomed the independent report, called *Seeing the Clear Light of Day*, viewing public drunkenness as a health issue and not a criminal issue.

The report outlined a public health approach to public drunkenness and prompted legislation to decriminalise public drunkenness in Victoria.

This important reform has long been called for and brings the state in-line with Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, and the Northern Territory in repealing these harmful laws.

Expert Reference Group

An Expert Reference Group (ERG), including representatives from VACCHO and the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), developed the report.

We thank the ERG for their efforts to devise comprehensive, achievable, and culturally safe advice and recommendations on the adoption of a public health approach to public drunkenness.

Advocacy from the Day family

We acknowledge Yorta Yorta woman Auntie Tanya Day and her family, whose advocacy efforts were a major driver in this long overdue change.

The Day family has since created the Dhadjowa Foundation to advocate and support families who have lost their loved ones.

The 2021 Liberty Victoria Voltaire Human Rights Award was awarded to the Children of Tanya Day for their sustained efforts and advocacy at a time of great personal grief.

Where to from here?

The report's recommendations highlight the need for self-determination, Community control, and cultural safety to be embedded in a public health approach to public drunkenness.

This is essential to protect and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

As the peak body for Aboriginal health and wellbeing in Victoria, VACCHO wants to ensure that self-determination and cultural safety are at the heart of any public health approach to public drunkenness.

Under the new legislation, being drunk in a public place will be treated as a medical issue, not a criminal offence. It will come into effect on 7 November 2022.

Group shot of the Forum's participants on Wurundjeri Country just outside of the Melbourne Cricket Ground, an historically significant place for the Kulin Nation



Aboriginal Health & Wellbeing Partnerships Forum



VACCHO's 32 Members called for meaningful, formalised partnerships with government, a clearly defined role in legislation, and a long-term investment strategy to transform Aboriginal health outcomes.

Co-chaired by VACCHO and the Minister for Health, The Hon. Martin Foley MP, the Forum was the first state-led initiative to see mainstream health services, government, and ACCOs meet under the same roof.

The Forum, held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, was attended by more than 50 Aboriginal health delegates and mainstream health organisations.

Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, VACCHO CEO Jill Gallagher AO said the treatment of Aboriginal people in the state's institutions – including health services – remained high on the agenda.

"To this day, Aboriginal people are facing systemic racism, discrimination, and inadequate care when they are accessing health services," said VACCHO's CEO.

VACCHO's 32 Members called for minimum five-year funding contracts and adequate funding to support Aboriginal organisations to collect data, upgrade technology, and have access to relevant government data so they can be genuinely self-determining.

We are also calling for a greater proportion of funding to go towards prevention and early intervention, maintain strong communities, and keep Aboriginal people out of hospital and the welfare system.

"There is irrefutable evidence, in Australia and across the world, that self-determination is the only way to improve Aboriginal health outcomes but without adequate investment and access to data we are behind the eight ball," Jill said.

"Aboriginal health is everyone's responsibility. If we all work together, we can transform Aboriginal health outcomes within a generation."

The Forum will run three times a year, bringing Aboriginal organisations, state government, and mainstream partnerships together to set priorities, track progress, and hold each other to account.

**Aboriginal health is everyone's responsibility.
If we all work together, we can transform
Aboriginal health outcomes within a generation.**



Image of
Gadubanud Country on
Victoria's South West Coast

Community voices inform refreshed Closing the Gap

The refreshed Closing the Gap Framework puts partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community at the centre of driving systematic change.

The 2020 National Agreement on Closing the Gap includes a new commitment to support the Community-controlled health sector and promote shared decision-making in the priority policy areas of social and emotional wellbeing, and early childhood care and development.

For many years, we have asserted that solutions to the challenges that we face as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are found within our own Community.

The Agreement commits governments to change the way they work with our people to reduce structural racism and give our people more control over the way services are delivered.

This is the first time we have been given the opportunity to develop these priority areas.

The Agreement aligns with the principles of self-determination that have been developed through the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework.

Partnerships between government and Communities across the country will strengthen Community controlled organisations to deliver Closing the Gap services; address structural racism within government agencies and organisations; and improve sharing of data and information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to support shared decision-making.

The Agreement commits governments to change the way they work with our people through four priority reforms, which will reduce structural racism and give our people more control over the way services are delivered.





The Victorian Advisory Council on Koori Health GP Workforce Working Group

Adapting to support our sector

The Population Health and Sector Development (PHSD) team adapted with skill and creativity to the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Supporting each other online

We established the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) Practice Managers network to provide peer support and information sharing on topics including workforce, reporting, vaccine hesitancy, and advocacy on Medicare items, among others.

We also set up the GP Expert Advisory Group with eight General Practitioners (GPs) from our ACCOs in Victoria and two Aboriginal GPs working in Aboriginal health services interstate to ensure we had a diverse cultural lens and could gain a broader, national perspective.

The Group provided valued advice on GP workforce, wellbeing and education activities as well as invaluable insight on COVID response and vaccine roll-out.

Growing our workforce

In response to a growing GP workforce shortage experienced by ACCOs in Victoria, we have developed a Statewide GP Workforce Strategy 2021–2031, endorsed by the VACCHO Board in December 2020.

The five priority areas are:

- 1 Growing our own Aboriginal GP workforce
- 2 Strengthening the sector and improving retention
- 3 Promoting the ACCO sector as a career of choice and increasing the candidate pool
- 4 Improving recruitment
- 5 Building an evidence base through data and research

One of the major recommendations in the GP Strategy is the development of the Whole of Workforce Strategy, a foundation piece for our forthcoming Strategic Plan.

Healthy eating and nutrition

Looking after our health and wellbeing during the pandemic is very important. To help Community stay healthy and strong, we produced tips and advice on eating well and staying healthy, these included, *Eating well to stay healthy*, *Food and mood*, *Keeping food safe during COVID-19* and *Planning your visits to the shops and a weekly meal planner*.



The Beautiful Shawl Project

This project aims to improve women’s experiences with breast screening by providing a culturally safe and responsive alternative to traditional screening.

The screening shawls feature artwork developed by more than ten local Aboriginal artists, including Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta artist Lynette Briggs (pictured opposite), who was inspired by the many stories of women and their personal journeys shared in yarning circles.

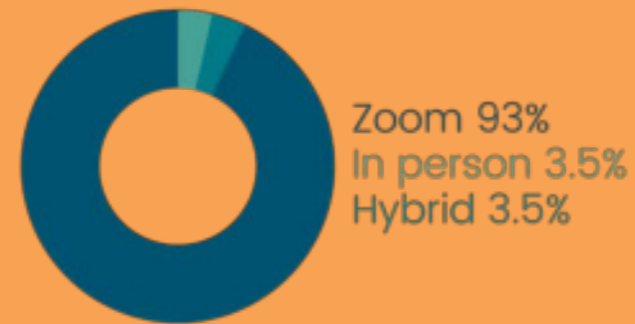
In October 2020, the project was profiled in a heartwarming 12-minute documentary showcasing this innovative Community-led initiative providing, safe and empowering breast screening experiences for Aboriginal women on Country.

The documentary looks at the lives of women across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community as they experience new ways of staying safe, culturally connected and empowered.

VACCHO was proud to work on this project in partnership with BreastScreen Victoria.

141
total sessions delivered

 **2273**
participants



39
organisations

Cultural Safety Team

The Cultural Safety Team (CST) met the challenges posed by COVID-19 and successfully transitioned all training to online delivery.

We began offering cultural safety training in 2012, and the CST has grown significantly since then, broadening our deliverables to include tailored consultation and Cultural Safety Audits.

Our goal continues to be the delivery of quality services to mainstream organisations, members of the public, and VACCHO’s staff and Members, while increasing the self-sustainability of VACCHO and contributing to positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

During the 2020–2021 financial year, CST successfully delivered 141 sessions of the ‘Introduction to Aboriginal Cultural Safety’ to over 2,000 individuals, one Cultural Safety Audit and multiple consultative and review services.

“A lot of hard work has seen us secure ongoing and substantial work with City of Melbourne, the Environmental Protection Authority, Department of Land, Water and Planning, St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne and a number of other organisations,” said Executive Manager, Rebecca Hunt.

VACCHO’s cultural safety deliverables aim to educate mainstream services and individuals on the significance of culturally safe practice and environments; meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and the ongoing impacts of colonisation, including systemic racism, discrimination and intergenerational trauma.

The training also highlights the importance of the healing benefits of Culture, and connection to Community and Country.

A lot of hard work has seen us secure ongoing and substantial work with City of Melbourne, the Environmental Protection Authority, Department of Land, Water and Planning, St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne and a number of other organisations.



“Everyone looked so happy and Uncle Ringo’s story scared me away from Lakes for the rest of my life.”



“The smoking ceremony and welcome was special in the courtyard.”



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF VACCHO



“Loved the immersion in Culture – from the Welcome around the fire, through the slideshow reminiscing the past, to yarning with representative from the organisations we serve.”





Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy came to VACCHO's offices and held a smoking ceremony to provide healing and cleansing for our staff and the building



We celebrated with a special cake made with VACCHO's mural

VACCHO's 25th anniversary

A lot has changed over the 25 years since VACCHO began – we have grown from a team of four to almost 100, and our membership has doubled, not to mention the significant changes we've seen in the social and political landscape.

We commenced our 25th anniversary celebrations on the eve of VACCHO's official 25th birthday in April 2021. We have embarked on a series of projects and events over the 12 months to April 2022.

On 15 April, we enjoyed a birthday celebration at the VACCHO office with cake, a special performance of 'Simply the best' and plenty of laughter and yarning. A very special Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony was held for staff.

"I was touched to have Aunty Joy, Senior Wurundjeri Elder come to our office for a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony," CEO Jill Gallagher AO said.

"Aunty Joy is a long-term friend, and sister. The first Welcome to Country I attended on Wurundjeri Country was by her. Years have past, and still we stand with resilience, friendship and humour as we continue to work for our people.

"Thank you, Aunty Joy, for your wisdom, I acknowledge and pay my respects to you and all Elders of the Wurundjeri people from the land on which we work."

On 21 May, staff, Members and leaders from Community came along to a celebration at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum.

This was a special event for us to commemorate and reflect on the past 25 years and look to the next generation. Uncle Ringo Terrick gave a Welcome to Country in the Milarri Garden and shared touching, and at times very funny, stories from his life.

Performances from Wurundjeri women's dance group, Djirri Djirri and men's group, Koori Youth Will Shake Spears, were highlights of the night, as were the speeches from Jill Gallagher and our Chair, Suzie Squires.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all the deadly staff who have contributed along the way and been part of the VACCHO family.

This anniversary is a moment to recognise the leadership and hardwork of VACCHO and its 32 Member organisations; in the words of VACCHO's Chair, Suzie Squires, CEO at Lake Tyers Health and Children's Service:

We meet, we yarn, we make our communities a better space for our people.



Midsumma Pride March 2021

Midsumma Festival is Australia's leading queer arts and cultural organisation for people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus (LGBTQIA+) and is now one of the largest cultural festivals in Victoria.

In 1996, Melbourne's LGBTQIA+ community took to the streets in a show of solidarity for the very first Pride March.

In 2017, Midsumma took a bold step and positioned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ peoples (Rainbow Mob) at the front of the March to lead the fabulous sashay down the now-iconic Fitzroy Street on Boon Wurrung Country in St Kilda.

Each year, Midsumma Festival engages an Indigenous Pride Coordinator to work with Midsumma Festival to ensure Rainbow Mob proudly leads Pride March.

For the 26th Pride March held on 23 May 2021, VACCHO staff Rebecca Hunt and Craig Holloway (both Yorta Yorta mob) shared the role, and VACCHO supported with a donation to Rainbow Mob.



Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung Elders delivered a joint Welcome to Country to open Midsumma Festival.

VACCHO staff prepared a magnificent float featuring a vintage car lovingly donated by Motafrenz, live music from The Merindas, a mobile smoking ceremony, free VACCHO Pride T-shirts and masks, and a Welcome to Country delivered by Boon Wurrung Elder, N'arweet Carolyn Briggs AM.

Despite COVID restrictions, the pride of more than 5,000 participants transformed Fitzroy Street into a glittering display of sequins, colour, music, fun, pride and togetherness and live-streamed to thousands watching from home.

We sincerely thank everyone for their participation and support, and we're eager to return in even greater numbers in 2022.

LOOKING AHEAD



Stephanie Thow-Tapp, Jill Gallagher and Amy Rossignoli with the *Growing up healthy and deadly* publication and toolkit

Leading the way to ethical research within Aboriginal health

The Victorian Aboriginal Research Accord Project (VARAP) is developing a statewide agreement between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community, State Government, universities, medical research institutes and health services. The Accord is designed to act as a quality assurance mechanism to facilitate ethical health and wellbeing research.

The project team has team submitted an ethics application to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), including a Community Controlled Action Research Methodology. A reference group with 80% Aboriginal membership, which commenced in January and meets monthly, is guiding the Accord and has endorsed the project plan and timeline.

The team will continue to engage with stakeholders across the state, including Community, Aboriginal researchers, national research organisations such as the Lowitja Institute, AIATSIS, National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), interstate Aboriginal Ethics Committees and mainstream institutions.

Health and Information Technology

VACCHO welcomed the establishment of a new Health and Information Technology unit to drive key projects in the data and technology space, including the Victorian Aboriginal Health Information System and work around data sovereignty.

Celebrating 25 years of VACCHO into 2022

We are looking forward to a massive statewide celebration with Members, which will see us and our Members hold a series of smoking ceremonies as a moment to heal, reflect and come together after everything we've been through with COVID.

To close the 25th anniversary year, we're planning an event to be held in early 2022 that can be enjoyed safely by Members and Community.

New website and more to come from VACCHO Communications team

In 2021, VACCHO recruited several new staff to increase our communications capacity. This exciting new part of the organisation has hit the ground running with increased social media and media coverage, continuing to support our COVID-19 response, a new website in development and other projects in the pipeline, to help raise the profile of VACCHO and our Members, and promote the importance of Community control and self-determination in the health and wellbeing space.

Launch of new Strategic Plan: On Solid Ground

We will launch our new Strategic Plan and together with our Members and partners, use the new pillars of the plan; Our Foundations, Strong Voice and Health & Healing; to pursue better health and wellbeing outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community across the state.

The new plan is focused on strength, sustainability and innovation for generational change. At the core of this plan are the principles of self-determination, Community control and an outcomes-based approach.

On Solid Ground marks a new approach to Aboriginal health and wellbeing, one that seeks to establish strong foundations and a strong voice for us and our Members by building capacity, strengthening relationships, and leveraging infrastructure for a self-determining, sustainable and healthier future.

Growing up healthy and deadly

The *Growing up healthy and deadly* project was co-developed with VACCHO's Members, VACCHO's nutrition team, project advisory group, and Dental Health Services Victoria.

The project team conceptualised a set of resources to build the capacity of various workforces supporting the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families in Victoria. This is achieved through evidence-based preventative health information as well as an array of engaging games and activities.

The resources include a health education book, a healthy portion plate, fun and interactive activities for children, and beautiful artwork by Tamara Murray, Barkindji and Shakara Montalto, Gunditjmara. Topics covered include *healthy deadly tucker, drink water u mob, healthy little smiles* and *let's move it you mob!*

Growing up healthy and deadly resources will be piloted with Members for six months across 2021 and 2022 to help with supporting health and wellbeing for Community.

SEWB

The Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Unit is excited about the year ahead, with a range of key projects on the horizon: establishing the Centre of Excellence; supporting the Department of Health in rolling out their Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing scholarship program; assisting our Members with the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Collection; looking at different formats for the statewide gatherings in SEWB; continuation of the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) attraction campaign; development of a range of new support tools in the mental health and AOD space.

We'll also look at hosting more events in the regions, such as regional forums to connect and develop a deeper understanding of the SEWB and mental health needs within our Community, with a particular focus on strengthening links with the mainstream sector.

Whole of Workforce Strategy

To support self-determination and strengthen the ACCO workforce across Victoria, VACCHO is developing the Victorian Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Whole of Workforce Strategy. This strategy will provide a coordinated and consistent framework to work towards for workforce strengthening.

A significant workforce shortage is impacting our Members' ability to deliver care to Community. This has been exacerbated by recent challenges, including bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.



Aboriginal Cancer Journey

VACCHO is developing the Aboriginal Cancer Journey Strategy in 2021 and 2022 with the support of the Victorian Government's Department of Health (DH).

In the first year, VACCHO will develop a strategy spanning prevention, screening, treatment, survivorship, supportive and palliative care model, with a five-year Implementation Plan and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework. This will inform the long-term planning to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer and their families, and will build upon the existing national cancer pathways and evidence to develop place- and strengths-based solutions.

Proposed priorities include Healthy Communities, Personalised Screening, Screening for Men, Improving the Cancer Treatment Journey, Celebrating Survivorship and Journey to Dreamtime.

VACCHO will work with ACCOs and mainstream organisations to facilitate the provision of culturally safe cancer services. An advisory group will oversee the development of the strategy, with representatives from VACCHO, our Members, DH, cancer organisations and cancer research agencies.



Staff photographed at our 25th anniversary celebration in May 2021

ORGANISATION



Our focus is ensuring that our employees are the very best they can be

Our People

We're supporting our staff to be the best they can be.

VACCHO recognises that our employees and their experiences shape us, and we will use the insights from internal and external surveys to measure an overall people health metric as part of a new suite of strategy metrics. These surveys in will give direction to our focus areas as we go from strength to strength.

We seek to nurture a trusting, respectful and inclusive culture, where staff are proud of their work, empowered to succeed and their wellbeing and safety are respected.

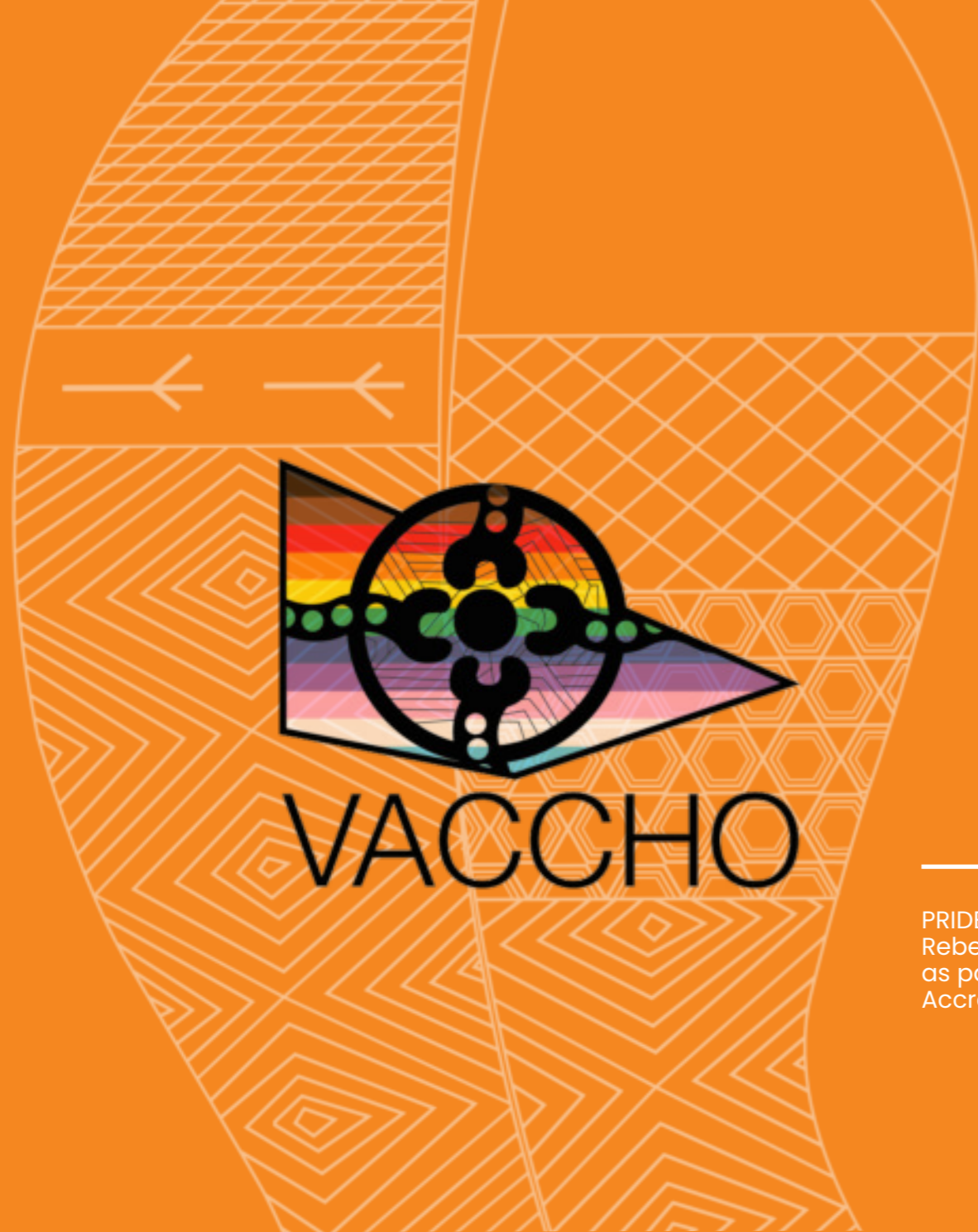
We are now commencing the next iteration of our culture-shaping work to enable our transformation to an impact business. A great employee experience continues to be a catalyst for building a culture of high performance. We are investing in new business practices and embedding new language to bring about significant change in the ways we do things.

Responding to feedback from our employees, we have increased our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion. We created an overall framework to pull together activity streams, proactively increasing awareness, understanding and interest in inclusivity in the workplace. To build the leadership capability within our organisation.

We will realign our 'Leading Others' program to focus on key areas for leaders and establish a quarterly enterprise leadership forum to drive engagement and develop unity in the leadership cohort.

Our employees have told us that they want to work with us because of our purpose and that they want to stay with us because of the life-changing impact we achieve, collectively. Our focus, therefore, is to ensure our employees are the very best they can be.





VACCHO has committed to ensuring all of our staff enjoy a safe and inclusive working environment

PRIDE logos designed by Rebecca Hunt for VACCHO as part of the Rainbow Tick Accreditation

Rainbow Tick Accreditation

This year has seen VACCHO take important steps forward in the journey to Rainbow Tick Accreditation (RTA).

The RTA is a quality framework and national accreditation program, launched in 2012 by Rainbow Health Victoria (RHV) in consultation with Quality Innovation Performance (QIP).

RTA assists organisations to provide safe, inclusive, and affirming workplaces and service delivery for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus (LGBTQIA+) community.

VACCHO is committed to ensuring all our staff enjoy a safe and inclusive working environment, free from discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia; to provide a more positive experience for all LGBTQIA+ people.

VACCHO's achievements under RTA so far include a review and update of VACCHO

policies, staff education regarding gender diversity and the importance of respecting and using pronouns. We've also created our very own PRIDE logo, and unveiled the VACCHO PRIDE staircase as a representation of the diversity of cultures, identities, gender, sex and sexuality diverse identities and expressions, experiences, beliefs, and values of all people.

With VACCHO at the forefront of leadership for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, becoming Rainbow Tick accredited demonstrates commitment to, and provides assurance for, our Community, in relation to the responsiveness and inclusivity of VACCHO to the needs of LGBTQIA+ people and specifically the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ people.





Willie Pepper from Boon Wurrung holding a smoking ceremony

Our Organisation

VACCHO champions Community control and health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our Members have a proud history as community-driven, grassroots organisations that support and strengthen Community capacity for self-determination and are committed to supporting and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to realise their full potential as individuals and as members of Community.

We believe that each Community needs its own locally based, Community-owned, culturally strong – and adequately resourced – holistic health and wellbeing service.

Our Principles

- Empowerment
- Respect
- Confidentiality
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Integrity
- Commitment
- Compassion
- Optimism

Our Purpose

To courageously lead changes to create a representative and holistic understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

By doing so, we will improve the planning, advocacy, consultation, delivery and evaluation of health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Our Vision

Vibrant, healthy, self-determining Communities

Our Cultural Values

VACCHO is at heart, and by constitution, a Community-controlled organisation.

Culture is intrinsic to our identity and essential to our world view.

As a Member-driven peak body representing and supporting Community-controlled organisations, VACCHO's fundamental priorities are to advocate for self-determination and be a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in maintaining strong cultural identity and connection.



65 staff recruited



20 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people joined the organisation

100

total staff at the end of the financial year with 37 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff

HR & Recruitment

This financial year has been an important one for VACCHO's Human Resources department, with VACCHO's staff numbers reaching a milestone 100 total, for the first time in the organisation's 25 year history.

Many much-loved staff have taken the next step in their careers, VACCHO sincerely thanks departing staff members for their contributions, and for the passion and commitment they have shown to VACCHO's Members and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community.

We have also seen an abundance of new faces join the organisation, bringing fresh ideas and diverse experience to all that we do.

Workforce capacity building through education and training

The education of the health workforce is paramount to the role of VACCHO's Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Through the RTO, we provide courses and training to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community and our Members' health services across the state.

Programs focus on providing improved job outcomes and supporting career change, with many participants employed by ACCOs who offer a broad range of business, health and community services.

The VACCHO RTO has restructured to facilitate more effective access and engagement with Community through educational delivery. The RTO learning programs are being gradually re-designed to suit the training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are employed or are seeking employment with partner ACCOs in regional Victoria.



Quality, Risk, Compliance & Safety

At VACCHO, we are committed to establishing strong foundations for safety, risk management and best-practice quality and compliance measures for us and our Members.

As VACCHO grows, we're determined to maintain our commitment to quality, through our Quality Management System and attainment of the ISO 9001:2016 Accreditation Standards, which we hope to complete by February 2022. Quality management is essential to providing the best possible services to our Members and is front of mind for us as we embrace the next chapter for the organisation.

Risk management and risk thinking is also a crucial component of our journey forward, especially for strategic and operational governance structures. Our compliance, contract management and legislative obligations are top of mind as we strengthen our foundations, as is internal auditing, knowledge management, document control and occupational health and safety systems.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a safe workplace for staff has been a priority. We have adapted to provide staff with flexible working arrangements and the supports they need during this complex time. Thanks to VACCHO staff for their assistance and considerate approach as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic together.





Corporate Governance Statement



Our aim with corporate governance is to create long-term, sustainable value for all our stakeholders, including our Members, supporters and especially Community.

At VACCHO, we understand corporate governance to be the framework of systems and processes, rules and relationships, within and by which, authority in an organisation is exercised and the organisation, as a whole, is directed and controlled.

Our Board of Directors recognises its role in overseeing the determination and implementation of policies and processes that reflect good corporate governance and understands that these must, like our core values, inform and guide the attitudes, decisions and actions that make up the fabric of our life and work.

We also recognise that this is another area in which we must continuously make improvements by considering, reviewing, testing and changing processes.

The diagram on the left illustrates our corporate governance environment as one in which the law, industry codes, and the expectations of our stakeholders' interplay.

The Governance Standards under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (Cth) (ACNC Act) are the main requirements applying to VACCHO in relation to corporate governance. The ACNC Governance Standards are:

- Standard 1** – Purposes and not-for-profit nature
- Standard 2** – Accountability to members
- Standard 3** – Compliance with Australian laws
- Standard 4** – Suitability of responsible persons
- Standard 5** – Duties of responsible persons

Under ACNC Governance Standard 3, VACCHO must comply with Australian laws. VACCHO is regulated by the Associations Incorporation Reform 2012, as modified by the ACNC Act.

VACCHO holds tax endorsements and concessions and is also subject to the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (Cth)

(Income Tax Act) and relevant fundraising legislation.

In addition, our Board has adopted the Australian Institute of Company Directors' 'Good Governance Principles and Guidance for Not-for-profit Organisations' (AICD NFP Principles).

We have voluntarily adopted the Australian Securities Exchange's Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations (ASX Principles).

We apply the ASX Principles to the extent that it is sensible and realistic to do so, even though we are not a listed entity.

We do this prudently, taking into account our position as a large not-for-profit organisation and with due regard to the scope of our operations and level of donor and public interest.

The Board considers that the ASX Principles and the ACNC Governance Standards are consistent.



FINANCIALS

Financial Report

SNAPSHOT

The table is a snapshot of our revenue and expenditure over the 2021 financial year compared to the previous four years. You can find more detail in the extracts from our audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 set out on pages 76 to 83.

We are registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) as a large charity and we will be disclosing our financial performance in the 2021 Annual Information Statement, which we will lodge with the ACNC and which will be available via the ACNC's Charity Register.

INCOME	FY21 \$m	FY20 \$m	FY19 \$m	FY18 \$m	FY17 \$m
Grant and funding	14.444	17.952	11.669	11.016	10.587
Other income	2.068	0.993	0.847	0.694	0.698
Total income	16.512	18.944	12.516	11.710	11.285

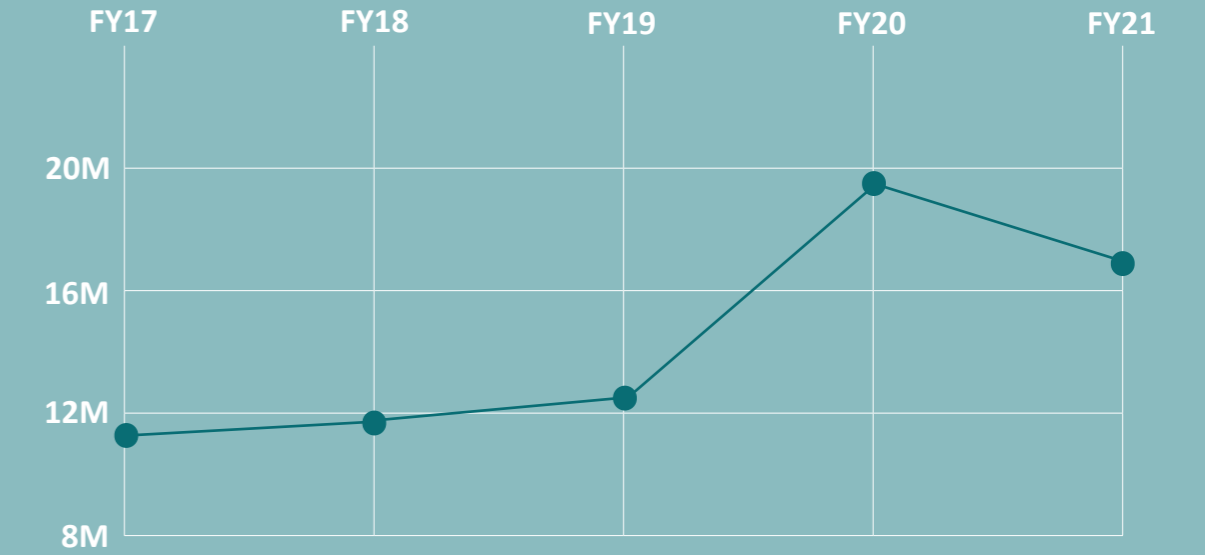
DISBURSEMENTS	FY21 \$m	FY20 \$m	FY19 \$m	FY18 \$m	FY17 \$m
Program operational expenses	5.557	9.423	3.902	3.760	3.670
Employee expenses	9.423	8.078	6.817	6.214	5.832
Depreciation expenses	0.401	0.331	0.225	0.166	0.225
Office Expenses	0.730	0.765	0.733	0.826	0.487
Other expenses	0.348	0.135	0.775	0.706	0.740
Total expenses	16.459	18.732	12.452	11.672	10.954

SURPLUS	FY21 \$m	FY20 \$m	FY19 \$m	FY18 \$m	FY17 \$m
Excess of income over expenditure	0.053	0.213	0.065	0.038	0.331
Surplus	0.053	0.213	0.065	0.038	0.331

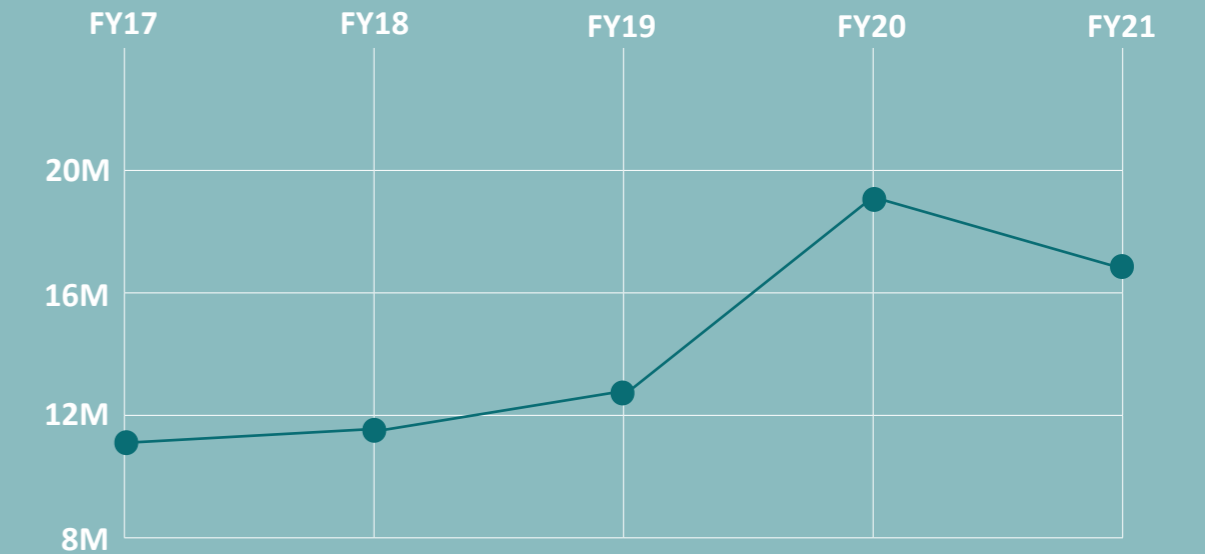
Figures have been rounded. As such there may be minor discrepancies between financial reports.

Financial Report

INCOME



EXPENSES



Financial Report

SUMMARISED FINANCIAL REPORT

Extracts from our audited Annual Financial Statements

Set out on the following pages are the following extracted from our Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Public Officer's Statement	Page 78
Statement by Members of the Committee	Page 79
Auditor's Independence Declaration	Page 80
Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income	Page 81
Statement of Financial Position	Page 82
Statement of Changes in Equity	Page 83

All amounts are presented in Australian dollars. You can find a full version of our audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 on our website. This will also be lodged with the ACNC.

Public Officer's Statement

In the officers' opinion:

The attached financial statements and notes comply with the Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements;

- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the incorporated association's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the incorporated association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

On behalf of the officer



Jill Gallagher AO
Dated this 21st day of September 2021

Financial Report

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

In the opinion of the committee, the financial report as set out on pages 81 to 83:

- 1 Presents fairly the financial position of Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Incorporated as at 30 June 2021 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.
- 2 At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:



Suzie Squires
Dated this 21st day of September 2021



Michael Graham

Financial Report

AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION



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AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

As lead auditor for the audit of the financial report of Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Inc for the year ended 30 June 2021, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

- (i) the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Professional Accounting Bodies in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS



B Y CHAN
Partner

Dated: 21 September 2021
Melbourne, Victoria

THE POWER OF BEING UNDERSTOOD
AUDIT | TAX | CONSULTING

RSM Australia Partners is a member of the RSM network and trades as RSM. RSM is the trading name used by the members of the RSM network. Each member of the RSM network is an independent accounting and consulting firm which practices in its own right. The RSM network is not itself a separate legal entity in any jurisdiction.
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Statement of Profit & Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

This should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes, which can be found on our website in the full version of our audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Figures have been rounded. As such there may be minor discrepancies between financial reports.

Revenue

Grant and funding
Other Income
Total revenue

Expenses

Program operational expenses
Employee expenses
Depreciation expenses
Office expenses
Other expenses
Total expenses

Surplus Before Income Tax for the year attributable to Members of the Entity
Income tax expense
Surplus for the year

Other Comprehensive Income

Total Comprehensive Income for the year attributable to Members of the Entity

2021 \$	2020 \$
14,443,728	17,952,859
2,067,812	992,793
16,511,540	18,944,652
5,557,354	8,868,209
9,423,024	8,077,618
400,595	331,102
730,200	765,560
347,688	689,787
16,458,861	18,732,277
52,679	212,375
-	-
52,679	212,375
-	-
52,679	65,064

Statement of Financial Position

AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

This should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes, which can be found on our website in the full version of our audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Figures have been rounded. As such there may be minor discrepancies between financial reports.

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	26,818,787	14,520,570
Trade and other receivables	407,715	16,896
Financial assets	-	-
Other	86,362	37,253
Total current assets	27,308,864	14,574,719
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	6,574,884	6,747,621
Total non-current assets	6,574,884	6,747,621
Total assets	33,883,748	21,322,340
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	2,561,124	1,973,833
Employee benefits	773,735	764,806
Deferred income	18,560,507	6,630,962
Total current liabilities	21,895,366	9,369,601
Non-current liabilities		
Employee benefits	80,938	97,973
Total non-current liabilities	80,938	97,973
Total liabilities	21,976,304	9,467,574
Net assets	11,907,444	11,854,765
Equity		
Retained surplus	11,907,444	11,854,765
Total equity	11,907,444	11,854,765

Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

This should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes, which can be found on our website in the full version of our audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Figures have been rounded. As such there may be minor discrepancies between financial reports.

Surpluses

2020

Balance at 1 July 2019

Surplus attributable to Members

Balance at 30 June 2020

2021

Balance at 1 July 2020

Surplus attributable to Members

Balance at 30 June 2021

Retained	Total Equity
\$	\$
11,642,390	11,642,390
212,375	212,375
11,854,765	11,854,765
11,854,765	11,854,765
52,679	52,679
11,907,444	11,907,444

Acknowledgements

We would like to sincerely thank everyone involved in helping us to create change for the next generation and all to come.

We would like to thank our Members and staff for their invaluable contribution to our purpose as an organisation, we appreciate all you do.

Thanks to our partners, funders and supporters, who strengthen our work and our organisation on many levels.

Finally, we thank Community and the whole Community-controlled sector, who show strength in the face of adversity, a determined spirit in the face of instability and above all, care for each other.

Rapids along the Merri Creek on Wurundjeri Country,
photo by John Englart, licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

In loving memory

We'd like to remember and pay tribute to those we've lost this past year. They will always remain in our hearts.

Tribute to Cheryl Fitzclarence

In October 2020, our VACCHO family lost precious sister Cheryl (Chez) Fitzclarence, a proud Gunaikurnai Woman and a long-term family member of VACCHO.

Chez was with VACCHO for 17 years and was a much-loved member of our family, her Community and anyone that knew her. During her time at VACCHO, we all watched Cheryl blossom. She really was one of a kind, she was witty, fun and loved a prank.

We had a minute of silence at our October 2020 Members' Meeting to mark the passing of our beautiful sister Chez into her Dreaming. We will continue to remember Chez as a vibrant, cheeky and loving part of the VACCHO family, with a special memorial to be unveiled at our offices in late 2021.

We love and miss you, our beautiful sis.



This is an illustration of Borun the pelican, the first Gunaikurnai who came from the mountains in the north-west.

Borun is a creation spirit from Gunaikurnai Country, along with Tuk the musk duck.



VACCHO

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Controlled Health Organisation**

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