

Aboriginal Services Network of the West

Working Well Together Agreement – 2023

1. Acknowledgement of Country

Members of this Network acknowledge the Wadawurrung, Woiwurrung Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways of western metropolitan Melbourne.

We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders, past, present, and future.

We acknowledge that their sovereignty has never been ceded.



Photo 1: Panorama view of western metropolitan Melbourne from the Werribee River. [Creative Commons license](#).

Contents

1.	Acknowledgement of Country.....	1
2.	Background.....	3
3.	Purpose.....	4
4.	Objectives.....	4
5.	Principles.....	4
6.	Participants.....	5
7.	Roles and relationships.....	6
8.	Meetings.....	7
9.	Key priorities for 2023-2024.....	8
10.	Review.....	8
11.	Appendix 1: Participating organisations.....	9
12.	Appendix 2: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Census data.....	10
13.	Appendix 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework.....	11



Photo 2: Participants in a Deadly Western Connections community workshop at Wunggurwil Dhurrung Centre (24 February 2022)

2. Background

This Network has been established and developed as a response to the growing number of people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in western area of metropolitan Melbourne. Numerical growth has created increased demand for improved access to culturally safe services that support community connections. For more information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics about this growth, see Appendix 2.

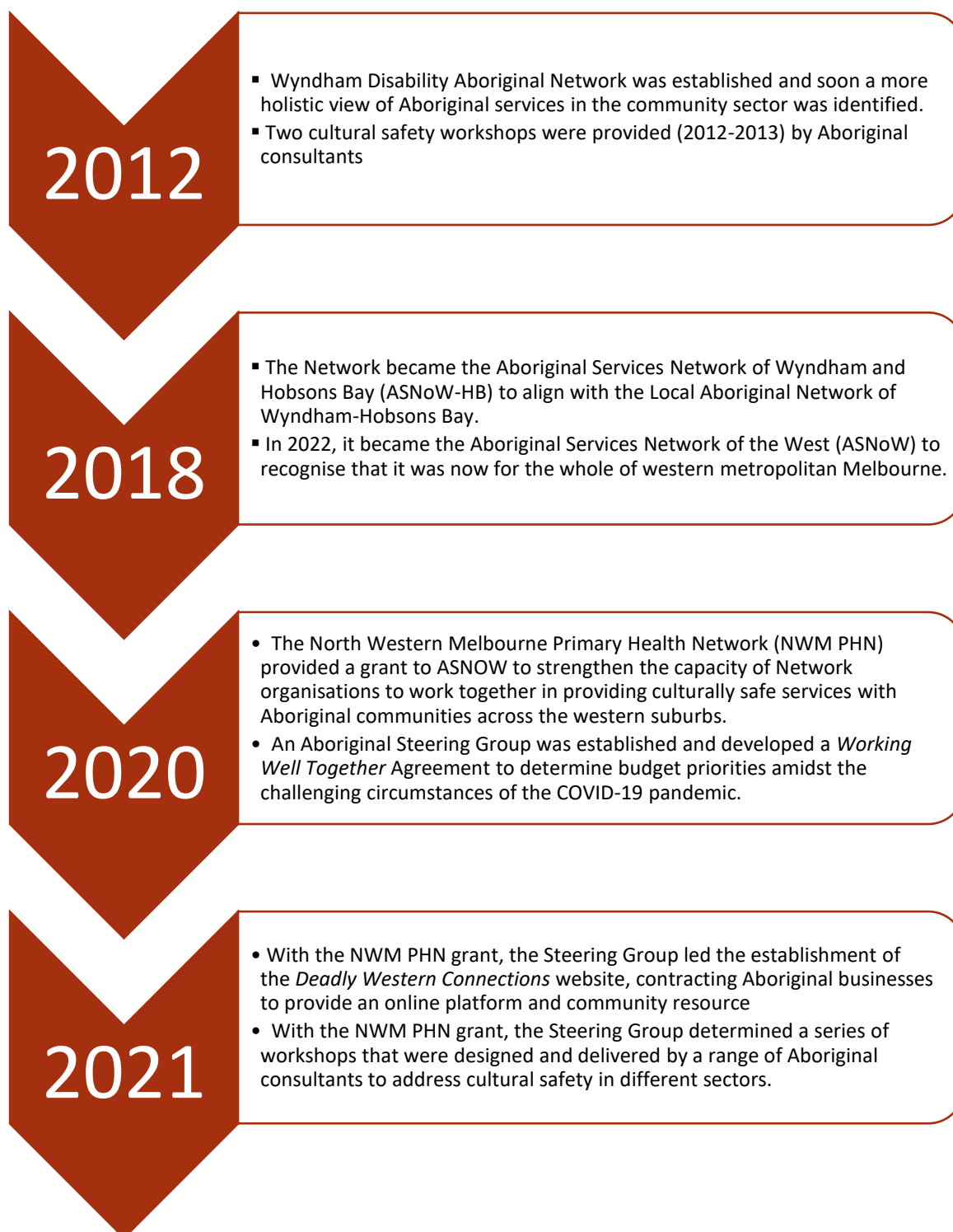


Figure 1: Key milestones in the development of the Aboriginal Services Network of the West

3. Purpose

The Network aims to provide a platform for

- Community service agencies to work, plan and coordinate culturally safe programs and services according to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community priorities.
- Collaborative partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to improve outcomes for Aboriginal community.

4. Objectives

- a) Promote cultural safety and the elevation of Aboriginal Knowledges within the community, in and between organisations, by the sharing of information, resources and training.
- b) Strengthen partnerships that progress self-determination and the delivery of programs and services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations.
- c) Connect the strong and skilled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services workforce.
- d) Advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment across the health and community services sector.
- e) Advocate for more engagement and procurement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to provide goods and services in the community sector.



Photo 3: Participants in Disability Cultural Awareness Training with Jody Barney at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre (13 July 2021)

5. Principles

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing provides a cultural safety framework for:

- every person and every mainstream organisation to take responsibility and work together to create culturally safe services and workplaces
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and clients, who have a right to culturally safe workplaces and services.

The model is designed to guide departments and organisations as they develop strategies, policies, practices, and workplace cultures that address unconscious bias, discrimination, and racism. The framework outlines guiding principles to be applied across its domains of the framework to support individuals and organisations as they reflect and continue their understanding and improving cultural safety in the workplace.



Figure 2: Principles to be applied across the Domains of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework.

6. Participants

Organisations, businesses, and staff who work to provide services and programs with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities in western metropolitan Melbourne can join the Network. (See Appendix 1 for list of participating organisations and businesses).

Participating organisations and businesses agree to

- a) support staff to attend Network meetings and contribute to achieving its objectives.
- b) work together to strengthen cultural safety in a process of continuous learning and practice improvement. Cultural safety is the responsibility of us all – it is everyone’s business.
- c) maintain their current contact details and any changes for key staff and programs.

The following sectors are represented in the Network:

- i. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-controlled organisations and businesses
- ii. Government: Local, State and Commonwealth departments
- iii. Mainstream services and organisations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and staff

To join the Network, go to [Deadly Western Connections](#) and contact the Community Development team, Wyndham City Council (E: community.development@wyndham.vic.gov.au) who will connect you and your organisation with an Aboriginal Steering Group member to discuss your expression of interest.

7. Roles and relationships

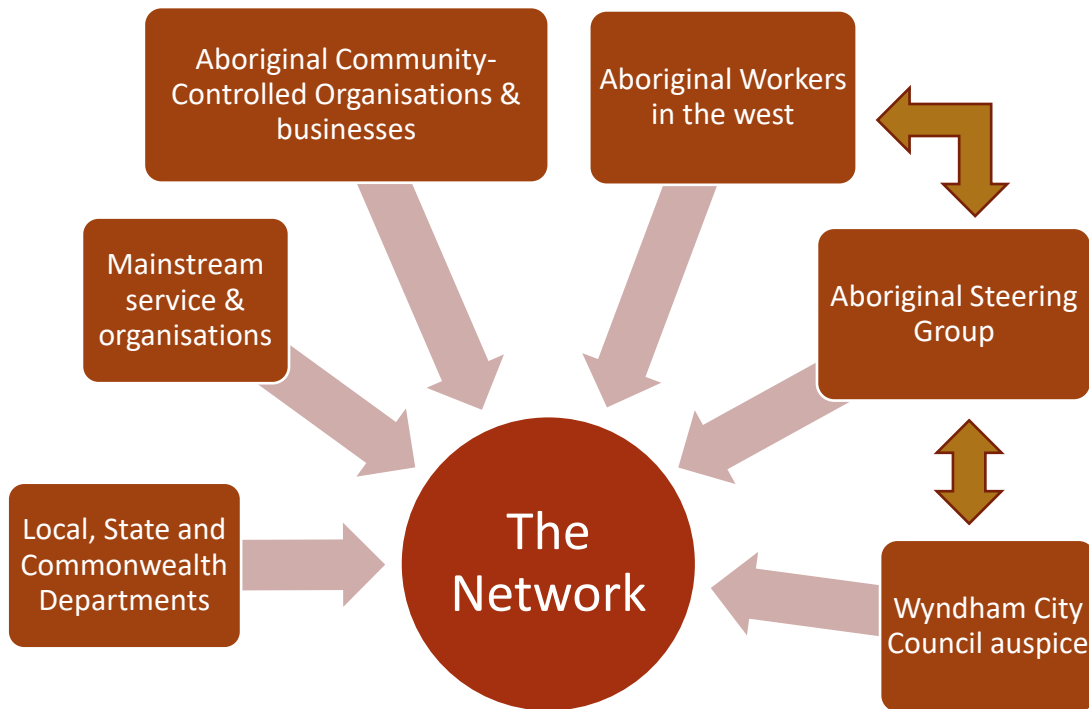


Figure 3: Network stakeholder map

- a. An Aboriginal Steering Group** determines the direction and priorities of the Network. It is open to any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members of the Network.

To find out more, contact the Network Secretariat and they will connect you with a Steering Group member to discuss joining the steering group.

b. Auspice and Administration

Wyndham City Council,

- supports and facilitates the operations and development of the Network under the direction of the Steering Group, through its Community Development team.
- auspices the Network by managing any grant applications, ensuring access to funds, facilitating reporting with the Steering Group and providing acquittal of expenditure.

The Community Development team in Wyndham City Council works with the Steering Group to fulfil a Secretariat role that can involve:

- Promoting the activities of the Network
- Circulating meeting agendas and minutes
- Maintaining the membership list
- Organising training, as identified by the Network
- Providing a contact point for introducing new members to the Network.

- c. Member organisations** agree to maintain representation and participation in Network activities and ensure attendance of a manager to at least one meeting each year.

8. Meetings

a. Frequency

- Whole Network: Bimonthly meetings provide a forum to plan and deliver actions to achieve the network objectives.
- Working groups may form and meet, as required.
- The Steering Group meets, as needed, to review progress, plan and prepare agendas for Network meetings.



Photo 4: Current and former members of the Aboriginal Steering Group who facilitated a Deadly Western Connections community workshop at Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre on 24th February 2022.

b. Facilitation

Meetings are chaired by members of the Aboriginal Steering Group on a rotational basis with administrative assistance from the Community Development team in Wyndham City Council.

c. Venues

Network meetings circulate around the western metropolitan region and provide online option for attendance, wherever possible. Network organisations agree to host meetings to build awareness of their services and culturally safe access and referral pathways.

9. Key priorities for 2023-2024

1. Promote cultural safety learning and development that equips staff and their agencies to support strengths-based and trauma-informed approaches to service delivery.
2. Support the ongoing development and sustainability of the *Deadly Western Connections* website as an integrated communication platform for exchanging information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the western suburbs.
3. Ensure community service organisations are aware of resources and create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to learn about and participate in the
 - Voice to Parliament campaigns for the 2023 Referendum
 - Treaty Assembly elections and negotiations through the *First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria*
 - Truth-telling through *Yoorrook Justice Commission* and promoting access to support services for people living with the impacts of Stolen Generations, including tracing family history.

10. Review

This *Working Well Together* Agreement will be reviewed annually.

This *Working Well Together* Agreement 2023 was accepted at the Network meeting on 4th May, 2023.

11. Appendix 1: Participating organisations

Sector	Organisation
Aboriginal Community-controlled organisations	Aboriginal Wellness Foundation
	Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Services
	Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation
	Koling wada-ngal Aboriginal Corporation
	Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation
	VACCA Western
	Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Mainstream	Anglicare
	Brotherhood of St Lawrence
	Carers Victoria
	Cohealth
	Consumer Action Law Centre
	Gateways Support Services
	GenWest
	IPCHealth
	Mercy Hospital - Werribee
	North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network
	Odyssey House Victoria
	Salvation Army
	Tweddle
	Victoria University
	Western Health
WEstjustice	
Whitelion	
YSAS (Youth Support + Advocacy Service)	
State government	Department of Education and Training
	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
	Department of Justice and Community Safety
	First Peoples - State Relations group (Department of Premier and Cabinet)
Local government	Brimbank City Council
	Hobsons Bay City Council
	Maribyrnong City Council
	Melton City Council
	Moonee Valley City Valley
	Wyndham City Council

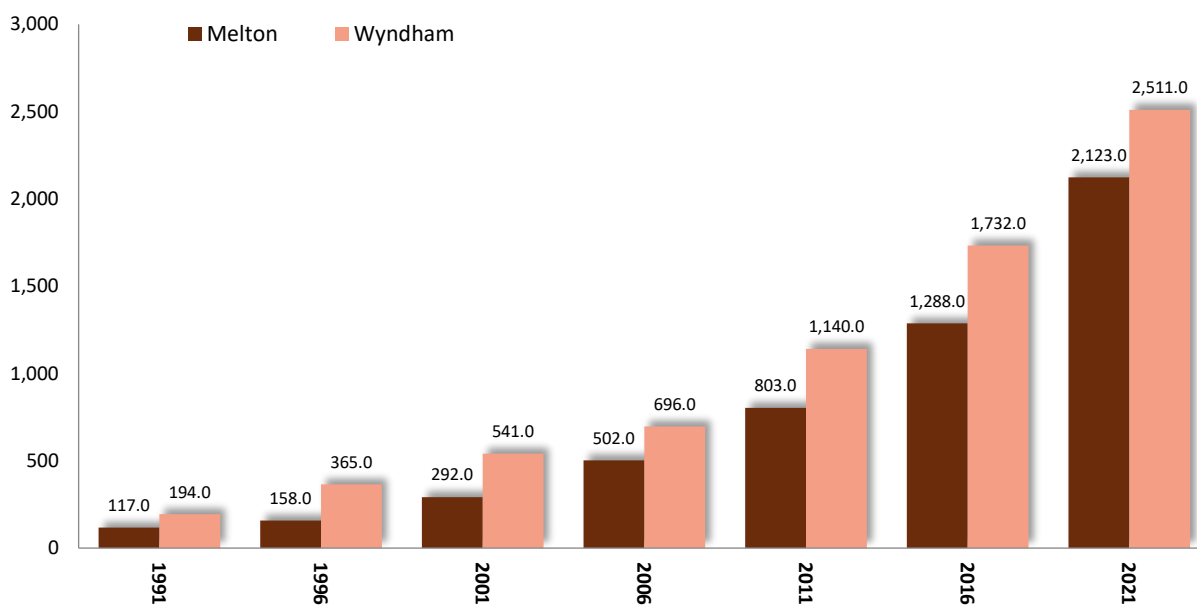
12. Appendix 2: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Census data

For information about feedback from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the 2021 Census for each local government area, follow the links below. Each page provides feedback about topics such as age, employment, and education in comparison to parallel statistics for Victoria and the whole of Australia.

- [Wyndham City](#)
- [Hobsons Bay](#)
- [Maribyrnong](#)
- [Moonee Valley](#)
- [Brimbank](#)
- [Melton](#)

Between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses, the number of people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander across the six local government areas of metropolitan Melbourne from 5185 to 7326, representing an increase of well over 2000 people. Growth was greatest in the Cities of Melton and Wyndham, as it was for the whole population.

The 3 charts below summarise the numerical growth and total percentage increase in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander populations across each of the six local government areas over the last thirty years, as measured in each Census, see the three charts below.

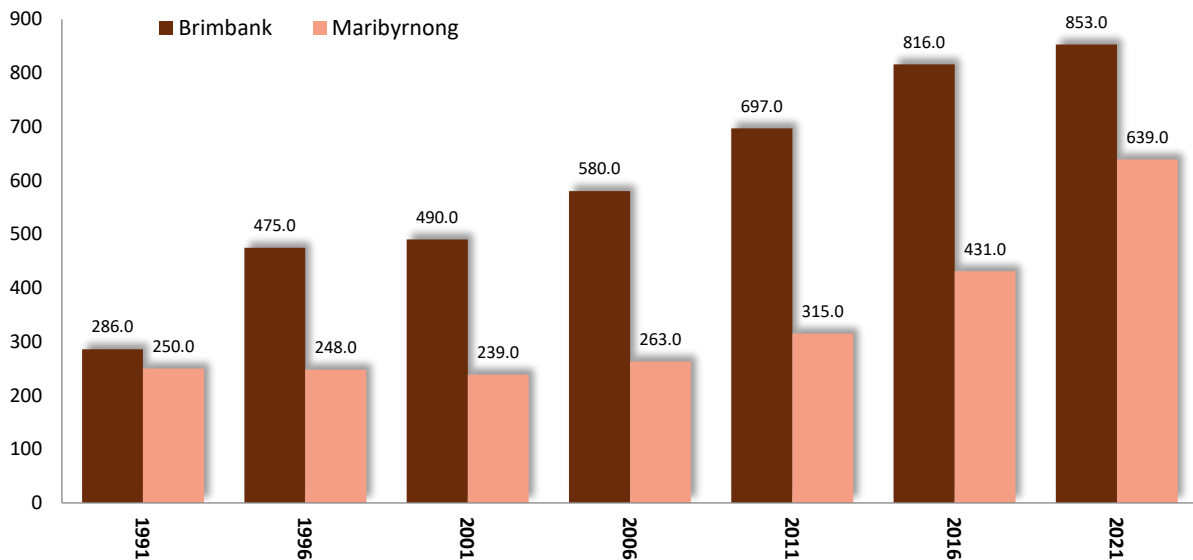


Change in Wyndham in the period 1991 to 2021:

Numerical change:	2,317	Per cent change:	1,194
--------------------------	-------	-------------------------	-------

Change in Melton in the period 1991 to 2021:

Numerical change:	2,006	Per cent change:	1,715
--------------------------	-------	-------------------------	-------



Change in Brimbank in the period 1991 to 2021:

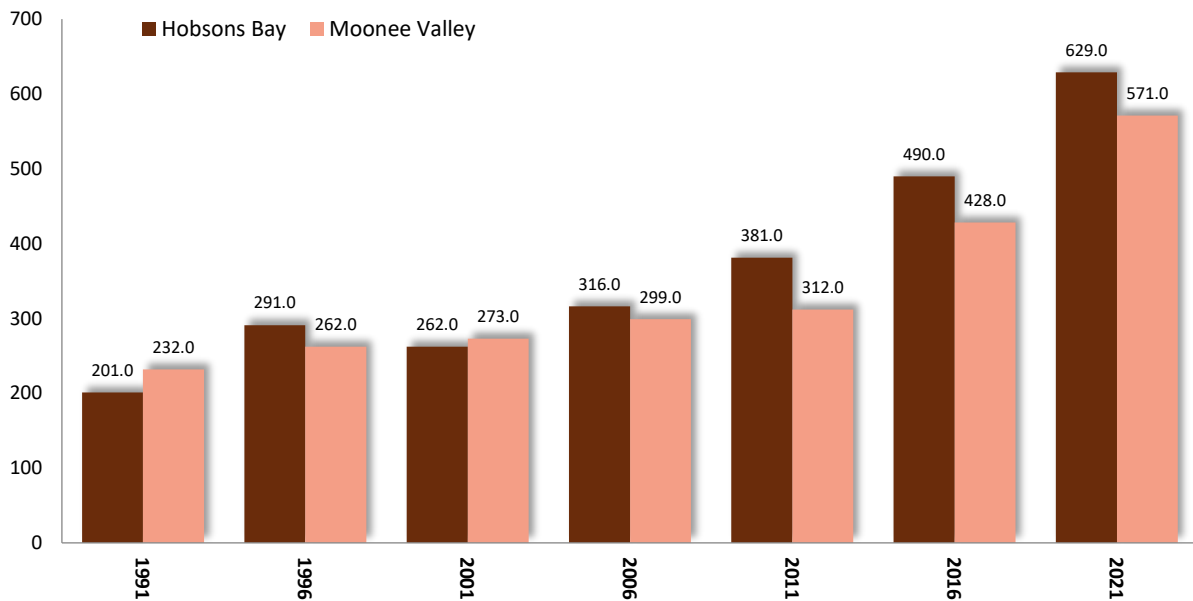
Numerical change 567

Per cent change 198

Change in Maribyrnong in the period 1991 to 2021:

Numerical change 389

Per cent change 156



Change in Hobsons Bay in the period 1991 to 2021:

Numerical change 428

Per cent change 213

Change in Moonee Valley in the period 1991 to 2021:

Numerical change 339

Per cent change 146

13. Appendix 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework.

This framework and reflective tool have been developed by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for the Victorian health, human and community services sector.

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework – part 1 \(PDF, 1.29 MB\)](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework – part 1 accessible \(Word, 73.05 KB\)](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework – cultural safety continuum reflective tool – part 2 \(PDF, 1.49 MB\)](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework – cultural safety continuum reflective tool – part 2 accessible \(Word, 79.38 KB\)](#)