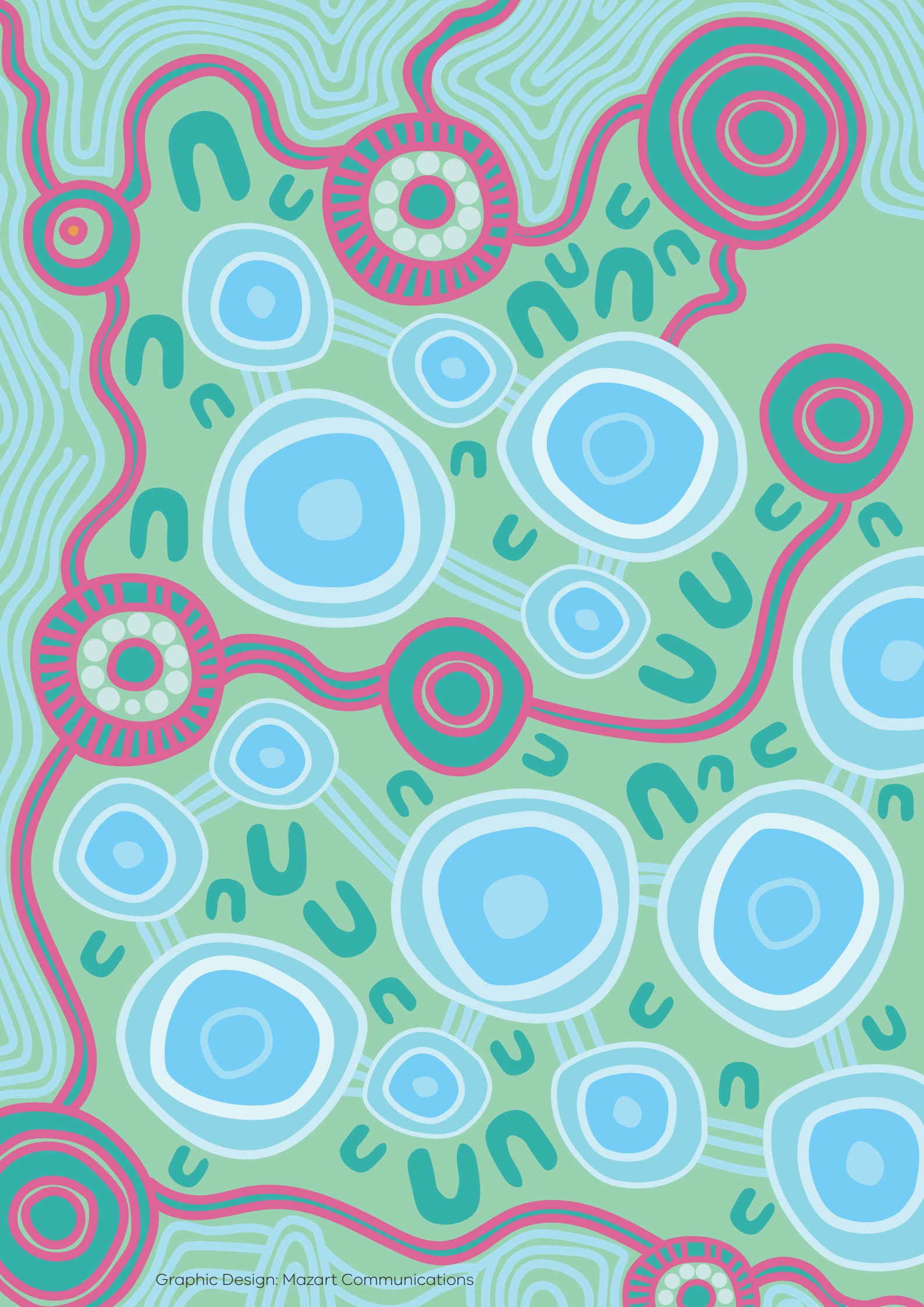


# The Transport and Planning Portfolio First Peoples Cultural Safety Framework







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## ARTWORK



**Artist:** Madison Connors is a strong Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi woman. Madison is an artist and owner of Yarli Creative.

**Title:** Buri-gurtang-djaa, far-be-country 'journey'

**Artist's statement:**

As an Aboriginal person, I have always felt a deep connection to our traditional artwork and the Songlines that they represent.

This artwork represents the preservation of our cultural traditions and the integration of our transport systems which are essential to the continued success and well-being of our communities. I am proud of the progress we have made in preserving our cultural traditions and integrating them into modern society.

The significance of Songlines in our culture goes beyond just our artwork. Songlines are an integral part of our cultural identity and allow us to easily connect our journeys across the nation. The upside 'u' shapes represent people from all over Victoria. And each circle represents the varying communities connections. Our Songlines are the invisible pathways that connect our sacred sites, waterholes, river systems and other important locations, passing down the knowledge and stories of our ancestors through the generations.

Modern transport has allowed us to travel further and faster than ever before, giving us the freedom to explore new places and discover new opportunities. But even as we embrace these new possibilities, it is important that we do not forget the cultural traditions and stories that have guided us for thousands of years.

In many ways, this artwork represents an early form of navigation, with the symbols and colours used to guide travellers along the Songlines. As we follow these paths, we are reminded of the stories and traditions that connect us to the land and to each other.

As modern transport systems continue to develop, there is an opportunity to integrate the significance of Songlines and traditional artwork into these systems, ensuring that our cultural heritage is not lost but rather preserved and celebrated for future generations. By creating transport systems, leadership and strength that reflect the interconnectedness of our culture and heritage, we can create a more meaningful and sustainable future for our communities. We can preserve our traditional knowledge and stories while also embracing modern technologies and innovations.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We proudly acknowledge Victoria's First Peoples. We acknowledge their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners' lands, waters and skies on which we live and work. We also pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

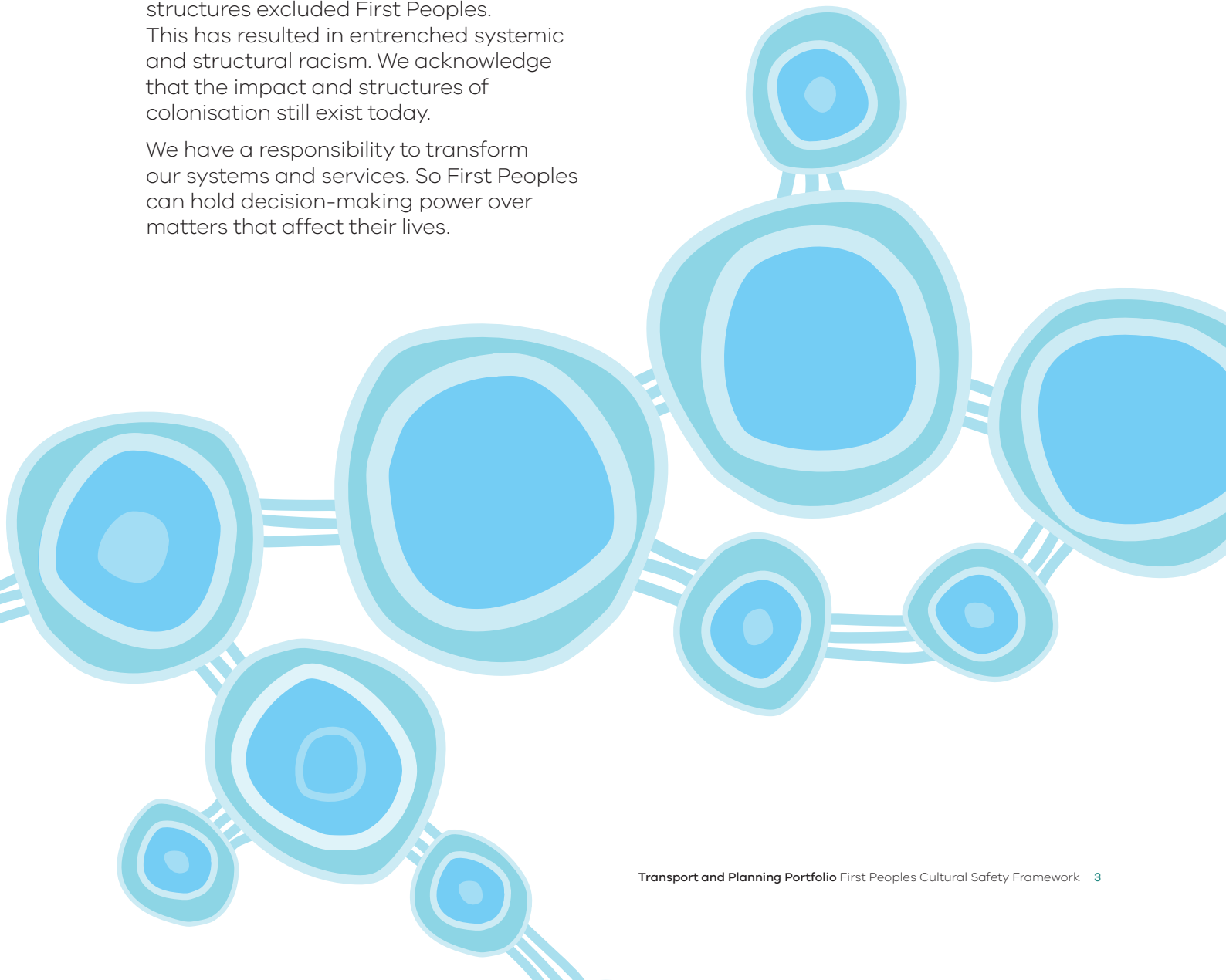
We recognise that there are long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation. Colonisation established Victoria with the intent of excluding First Peoples. This included their laws, cultures, customs and traditions. The development of Victorian laws, policies, systems and structures excluded First Peoples. This has resulted in entrenched systemic and structural racism. We acknowledge that the impact and structures of colonisation still exist today.

We have a responsibility to transform our systems and services. So First Peoples can hold decision-making power over matters that affect their lives.

## LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Language is important and can change over time, and words can have different meanings for different people.

We recognise the diversity of First Peoples living throughout Victoria. The terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are often used by Aboriginal people of southeast Australia. In this plan we have respectfully used the term First Peoples. This term refers to all people of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, living-in or visiting Victoria.









# JOINT FOREWORD

Our Cultural Safety Framework lays the groundwork for our portfolio's vision and commitment to improving cultural safety.

Our framework is holistic and seeks to address institutionalised and systemic structures of inequity. We do this with the goal of improving cultural safety for First Peoples employees and Community.

Our First Peoples understand how transformative culturally safe environments are. It allows everyone to take part as their authentic selves and feel safe.

The journey to becoming a culturally safe portfolio requires everyone to take part. We cannot achieve our vision of thriving places and connected communities, without every portfolio employee taking ownership and positively contributing.

Our Cultural Safety Framework is a portfolio first, making strong commitments to our People and our Communities, reforming our systems, and holding ourselves accountable. In achieving our goal of becoming a culturally capable Transport and Planning Portfolio, we'll focus on the impact of our outcomes and publicly report our progress.

Together we can achieve culturally safe Transport and Planning systems and workplaces for our First Peoples in Victoria.



**Paul Younis**

Secretary, Department of Transport and Planning



**Kevin Devlin**

Director General, Major Transport Infrastructure Authority



**Tim McCartney**

Executive Director, First Peoples Self Determination and Reform, Department of Transport and Planning



# INTRODUCTION

Our vision is to enable thriving places and connected communities. As the Department of Transport and Planning Portfolio, we all own this vision and its outcomes.

Our First Peoples cultural safety framework supports our vision.

We're committed to applying and supporting First Peoples self determination and cultural safety in our work.

The purpose of our First Peoples cultural safety framework is to increase safety for First Peoples who:

- Use the Transport and Planning systems
- Work within the Transport and Planning Portfolio
- Traditional Owners and First Peoples Community who engage with the portfolio.

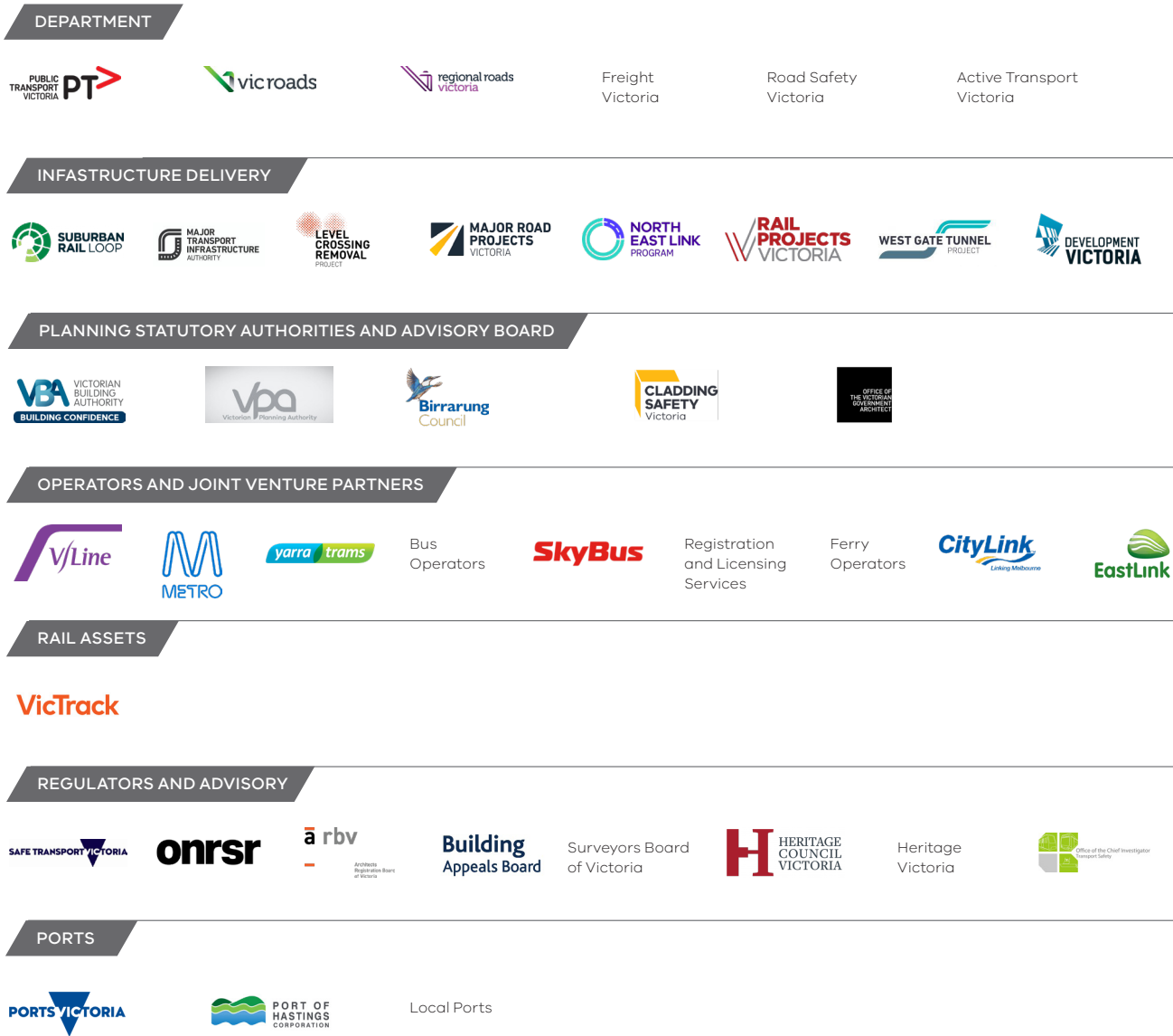
We developed the framework by doing:

1. A research paper focusing on
  - racism
  - unconscious bias
  - best practice in building cultural competence in workforces.
2. An audit of transport portfolio policies, programs, and training relevant to First Peoples
  - A Registered Aboriginal Parties workshop
  - Interviews with First Peoples and senior executive transport portfolio employees
  - A Transport Portfolio First Peoples and non-First Peoples employee survey
  - A Transport Portfolio First Peoples Staff Network survey.

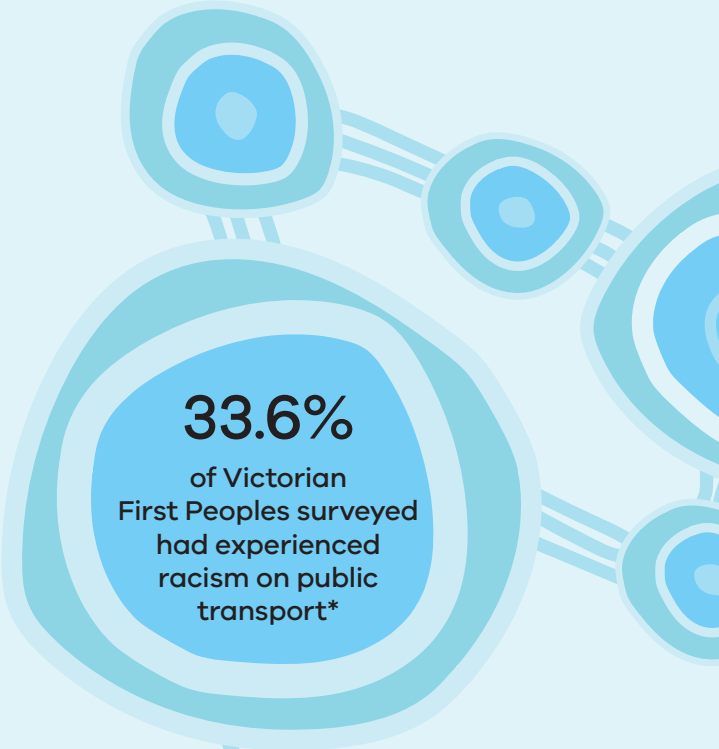
Our Framework applies to everyone in our portfolio and supports the development of cultural safety.

The Portfolio includes:

- The Department of Transport and Planning
- The Major Transport Infrastructure Authority
- Agencies and authorities outlined below:




First Peoples have a right to feel culturally safe when using and working on our Transport and Planning systems. A 2022 Transport and Planning Portfolio Cultural Safety Survey found that:



1 Ferdinand, A., Paradies, Y. & Kelaher, M. 2012, Mental Health Impacts of Racial Discrimination in Victorian Aboriginal Communities: The Localities Embracing and Accepting Diversity (LEAD) Experiences of Racism Survey, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

\* Data from 2011 Public Transport Survey commissioned by The Lowitja Institute.





We know that we're not there yet and that we've got a journey to take to get there.

# WHAT IS CULTURAL SAFETY?

To better understand what cultural safety is, we break it down into smaller sections.

We use this as our portfolio-wide definition of cultural safety.

Cultural safety refers to:

- The environment in which we work
- Relationships we build
- Services that we provide.

Culturally safe environments, relationships and services:

- Allow people to feel safe and valued
- Allow people to take part
- Enable cultural and spiritual beliefs
- Enable people to share their concerns.

Culturally safe environments, relationships and services are free from:

- Racism and discrimination
- Assault, challenge or denial of identity and experiences.

In culturally safe environments, people, organisations and systems:

- Are aware of the impact that their own culture and cultural values have on First Peoples
- Are culturally respectful
- Work together and listen
- Remove barriers that impact health, wellbeing and safety outcomes
- Address racism, unconscious bias and discrimination
- Support and empower outcomes, such as self determination.

Cultural safety has common qualities. But it's personal and varies based on the individual.



# OUR JOURNEY TO CULTURAL SAFETY

We know that we've got some work to do to become a culturally safe environment for First Peoples.

The first step is to understand where we're at in our cultural safety journey. To help us, we're using the Conscious Competence Learning Model<sup>2,3</sup>. The model sets out 'the four stages of learning a new skill'.

We don't know our own inability, but using the model helps us to understand our gaps and what we need to unlearn and learn.

By applying this model, we'll eventually be able to use culturally safe practices without thinking about them. When we're able to do this, we'll reach the 'unconsciously competent' learning stage.

## WHERE WE ARE ON OUR JOURNEY

From the results of our research, our Department of Transport and Planning Portfolio is moving between the 'unaware' learning stage of our journey, towards 'emerging'.

To progress, we need to understand how unaware we are. We'll do this by looking at the potential impact of our workplace and individual culture.

When we can do this, we'll be able to recognise our:

- unconscious biases
- behaviours
- attitudes
- assumptions
- stereotypes
- prejudices.

We'll then be able to see the effect they have on our people and community.

To help us to do this, we'll all need to:

- Be aware of differences
- Consider power relationships
- Use reflective practice
- Question our own biases.

To measure our progress, we'll need to:

- Provide our First Peoples transport users with a way to tell us if they feel culturally unsafe on the transport network
- Ask our First Peoples employees if they feel culturally safe at work.

We'll also use employee surveys, like the People Matter Survey, to measure our progress.

Our journey won't be linear either. Sometimes we'll jump back and forth on the Conscious Competence Learning Model. As we become more competent, we'll likely uncover more things that show us our incompetence.

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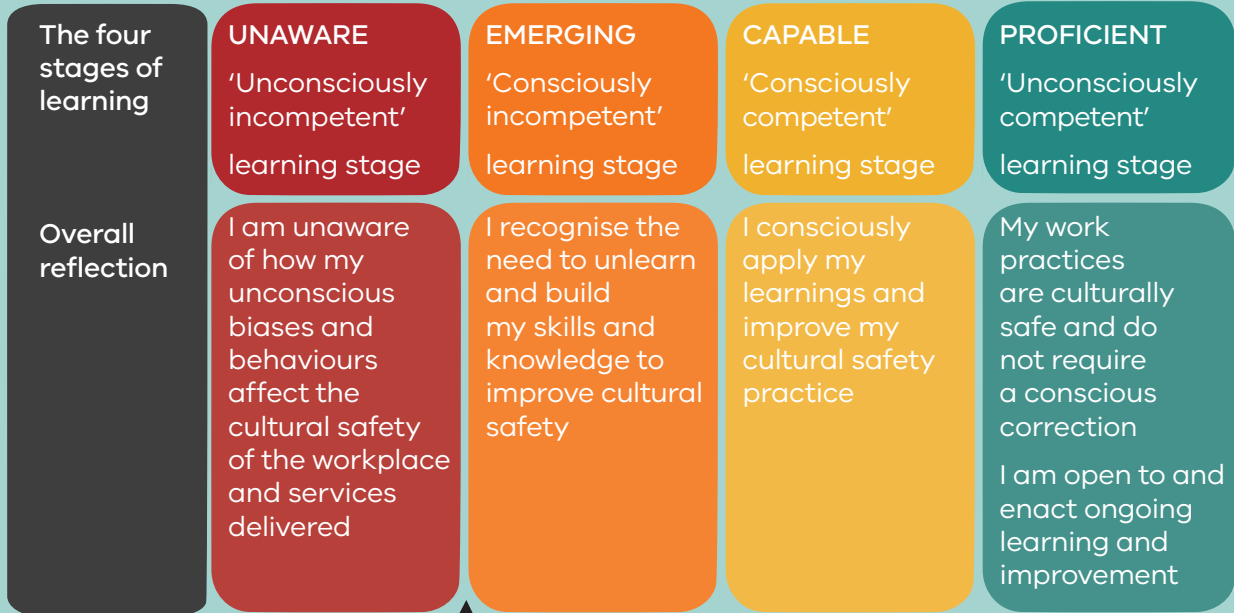
2 Broadwell, M. M. (1969). Teaching for learning (XVI). [wordsfittlyspoken.org](http://wordsfittlyspoken.org). The Gospel Guardian. Retrieved 8 February 2022.

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3 Victorian Government, 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework, Cultural safety continuum reflective tool for the Victorian health, human and community services sector, Department of Health and Human Services, Melbourne.



**CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE LEARNING MODEL:**



Our Department of Transport and Planning Portfolio lies between Unaware and Emerging



Our aim is to become 'proficient' in our cultural safety practices and behaviours. But first we need to journey through our 'emerging' learning stage, towards 'capable'.

#### KEY ELEMENTS OF CULTURALLY SAFE WORKPLACES AND SERVICES

##### KNOWLEDGE AND RESPECT FOR SELF

Awareness of own cultural values, knowledge, skills and attitudes. How these form and affect others.

This includes a responsibility to address:

- unconscious bias
- racism
- discrimination

##### KNOWLEDGE OF AND RESPECT FOR FIRST PEOPLES

Knowledge of the diversity of First Peoples, communities and cultures. Skills and attitudes to work effectively with them.

##### A COMMITMENT TO REDESIGNING ORGANISATIONS AND SYSTEMS TO REDUCE RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Strategic and institutional reforms that remove barriers to optimal:

- health
- wellbeing
- and safety outcomes for First Peoples

#### CULTURAL SAFETY IS AN ONGOING LEARNING JOURNEY

An ongoing and responsive learning framework. Including unlearning unconscious bias and racism and relearning First Peoples cultural values.

4 Phillips G 2015, Dancing with power: Aboriginal health, cultural safety and medical education, PhD thesis, School of Psychological Sciences, Monash University, Clayton.





# OUR VISION

**As a Portfolio, we work to enable thriving places and connected communities.**

**Our vision is for our First Peoples employees and Transport and Planning users to thrive and feel culturally safe in the environments we manage.**

## How do we get there?

To support us on our journey, we'll use the four domains:

- People
- Systems reform
- Measuring the impact of our outcomes
- Holding ourselves accountable.

These domains are consistent with:

- Our Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self Determination Plan 2020-2023
- The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023.

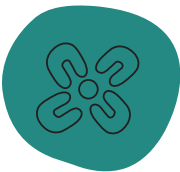


# Our Commitments

We're making the following commitments across the four domains. These commitments will help support us on our cultural safety journey.

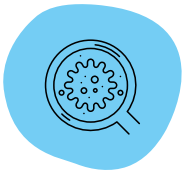
**We commit to:**

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## People

- Improving and maintaining cultural safety for First Peoples using our Transport and Planning systems and for our employees
- Our Portfolio First Peoples Staff Network informing our journey toward cultural safety and the steps we take to get there
- Enhancing support for First Peoples employees
- Taking responsibility for our own learning and moving the burden off our First Peoples colleagues
- Increasing the number of First Peoples in our workplaces and on our boards.



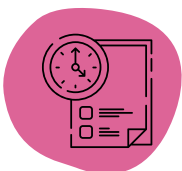
## Systems Reform

- Working in partnership with Traditional Owners
- Reviewing our systems, practices, policies, procedures, governance structures and systemic behaviours, to improve cultural safety
- Continuing to develop and co-design Place-based Implementation Plans
- Embedding self determination into every aspect of our work.



## Measuring the impact of our outcomes

- Evaluating our progress, focusing on the impact of our outcomes
- Designing our evaluation approach in partnership with our First Peoples employees
- Taking an intersectional approach.



## Holding ourselves accountable

- Making cultural safety everyone's responsibility
  - Having executive cultural safety champions in every agency and authority in our portfolio
  - Publicly reporting on our progress
  - Having strong governance, central oversight and accountability.
-

These quotes are from First Peoples staff responding to:

- Transport and Planning Portfolio First Peoples Staff Conference 2023 feedback survey (green)
- Transport and Planning Portfolio Cultural Safety Survey 2022 (blue)

*"I feel like I am usually culturally safe at work, with my team being highly supportive."*

*"When I'm surrounded by mob and or I feel supported by my manager to practise my culture freely, even if that means attending community events and sorry business [I feel culturally safe]."*

*"All the time [I feel culturally safe at work]. I don't feel like I have to jump in and do all things Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. If anything comes up, they let me have full self determination over what work I want to be a part of and that is empowering."*

*"[I] always [feel culturally safe], my local management are great supporters of me and my culture."*

*"I don't feel that my workplace is culturally aware, let alone safe."*

*"My manger doesn't understand the ways Aboriginal people can be impacted by genocide and the Stolen Generations."*

*"Aboriginal employees cannot bring their whole selves to work in fear of discrimination."*

*"I feel like the issue of cultural safety is very much a tick a box and move on."*

*"It is acceptable to make unacceptable comments regarding Aboriginal people."*



# Our framework is informed by

- Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023
- Self Determination Reform Framework
- United Nations Declaration Rights for Indigenous Peoples
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- Transport Portfolio Aboriginal Self Determination Plan 2020-2023
- Yani Bangal Transport and Planning Portfolio First Peoples Careers Strategy 2023-2028
- Treaty in Victoria.

In developing this framework, we thank

- Our First Peoples employees who contributed their lived experience
- Karabena Consulting.





## The 2023 Transport and Planning Portfolio First Peoples Staff Network

We hosted the 2023 conference in-person on Peek Whurrong of the Maar Nation in Warrnambool. The conference featured a day trip to Budj Bim National Park on Gunditjmara Country.

We co-designed the conference with the First Peoples Staff Network. Bringing together First Peoples employees from across the Transport and Planning portfolio.

The Conference focused on connection through cultural activities.

Key topics included:

- growth mindset
- workplace cultural safety
- cultural load
- First Peoples burnout.

Attendees told us they valued culturally connecting with their peers. A highlight was going to Budj Bim on Gunditjmara Country. This trip increased attendee's cultural connection and wellbeing.

This annual conference demonstrates how culturally safe environments can increase wellbeing and connection and help improve cultural safety for First Peoples employees.





WHAT ATTENDEES SAID

*"Seeing advancement at each of these workshops is great. Look forward to the next one and discussing further successes."*

*"I think these conferences are invaluable and a great initiative."*

*"Really great event. Loved all of it and I cannot wait for next year already."*

*"Overall, it was a great conference and it was great connecting with mob again."*

Conference feedback survey found 95% of surveyed attendees reported feeling more culturally connected to other attendees.

Conference feedback survey found attendees shared that being with mob increased their cultural safety and wellbeing.











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