



THREE RIVERS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

2024-2029

Regional Strategic Plan





Regional Strategic Plan

2024 – 2029

For the Three Rivers Regional Assembly Region

The Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA) is a regional Aboriginal governance body that represents the interests of Aboriginal peoples within the north-west of the Wiradjuri nation, extending into the Weilwan and Wongaibon nations.

Three Rivers Regional Assembly recognises and pays respect to the elders of our past and present who are the knowledge holders of community, continuing thousands of years of tradition, connection to land, sky and water, and our history.

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ACRONYMS

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

ACCO Aboriginal community controlled organisation

ACWP Aboriginal community working party

AECG Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

LALC Local Aboriginal Land Council

LGA Local Government Area

NCARA NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances

TRRA Three Rivers Regional Assembly

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FOREWORD

It is important that TRRA, as the regional governance body, which is the voice of our communities for change in service delivery, is heard. Decision makers need an understanding of the value of our local voice being heard as the real indicator for the changes required. The process we went through compiling this document was substantial, with several community visits and input from people in each community. Service providers continually feel they know what's best in servicing community. This document reinforces the real priorities of our communities, and the significance of communities' voices in the way services are delivered and assessed on their performance.

It is important now that those decision makers hear and honour communities' voice when commissioning services for our communities and engage as an equal partner with TRRA to implement our regional plan.

Paul Carr

Chair TRRA



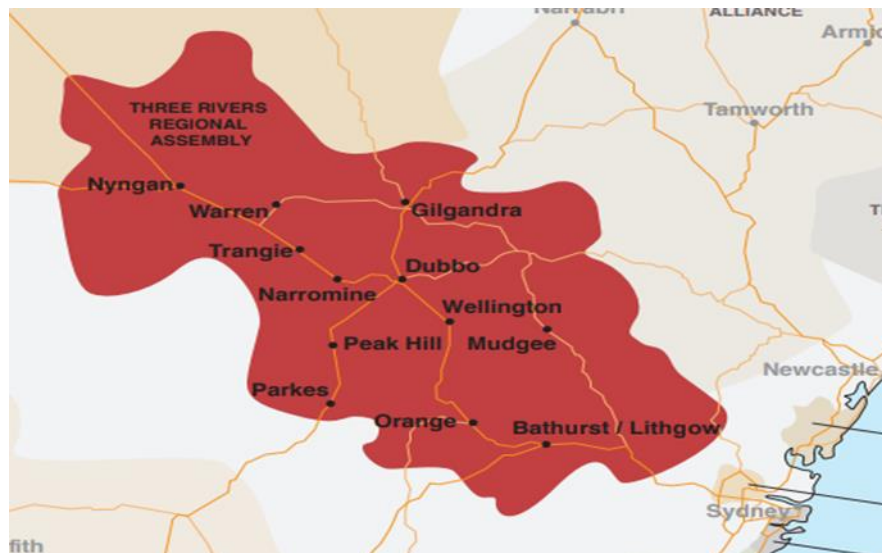
1. INTRODUCTION

The Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA) is a regional Aboriginal governance body that represents the interests of Aboriginal peoples within the north-west of the Wiradjuri nation, extending into the Weilwan and Wongaibon nations. TRRA is not a service provider or funding provider, instead we work collectively and collaboratively on priorities across our communities to improve service coordination, outcomes and accountability. We're also focussed on bringing economic opportunities into our region.

We have a profound connection to Country, culture, language and our identities. Our communities continue to suffer from the effects of historical dispossession, and the harmful policies and controlling practices of past governments. Yet, we are strong and resilient, and only seek to strengthen our cultural sustainability.

Our Assembly membership is made up of two representatives from each community from Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Aboriginal Community Working Parties: Bathurst, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Mudgee, Narromine, Nyngan, Orange, Parkes, Peak Hill, Trangie, Warren, and Wellington. Each of the communities across our footprint are unique in their own ways. Our delegates work and live in our communities and are members of various cultural and community groups and Aboriginal controlled organisations operating in our region. We volunteer our time and share our knowledge to improve the lives of Aboriginal people living in our footprint.

Fig 1 Map of TRRA footprint



Alongside our unincorporated Regional Assembly, in May 2023 we registered an incorporated organisation called TRRA Aboriginal Corporation, with three directors elected by the members, who must be delegates of TRRA's Assembly; its role is to support the Three Rivers Regional Assembly in all its objectives, and hold and manage the finances for the Assembly. It meets quarterly at the time of TRRA delegates meetings. This indicates a growth in our administrative capacity since 2018, when financial management

for our first NSW Government Accord was auspiced by the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service on TRRA's behalf.

1.1 Our Vision

The vision of the Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA) is :

- To foster and nurture leadership.
- Be acknowledged, accepted, and known as the voice of the Aboriginal peoples with member communities and in the TRRA footprint.
- Enhance Governance and Management to strengthen cultural integrity within local and regional communities.
- Encourage transparency, consistency and accountability in all decision making within local and regional communities.

1.2 Our Aims

The Aims of the Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA) are:

- 1.1 To work together to progress positive change for Aboriginal peoples across the Three Rivers Regional Assembly footprint;
- 1.2 Work towards ensuring Aboriginal communities have a real and genuine voice in negotiations/consultations in determining what services are being developed and implemented through mutual respect and understanding;
- 1.3 Improve and ensure accountability between Aboriginal peoples, Three Rivers Regional Assembly and the many organisations that deliver services to Aboriginal communities across the Three Rivers Regional Assembly footprint.
- 1.4 Report on outcomes to member communities.

1.3 Our values, Our principles

The values of the TRRA are:

- **Mutual respect and understanding** – we respect ourselves, we respect others and, in all negotiations, we will seek to understand and be understood.
- **Cultural sustainability** – honouring our past, preserving our artifacts and places; and ensuring intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- **Cultural participation** – we will encourage the Communities within footprint to participate at a local level knowing that the more people we have participating the stronger we will be.

1.4 Our Code of Conduct

Delegates are required to sign a Code of Conduct on appointment with undertakings to ensure they behave ethically and with honesty and integrity at all times and that the responsibilities listed below are fully understood.

As members, our conduct is guided by the following principles and values:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Accountability to our communities
- Transparency
- Selflessness
- Professionalism
- Commitment

- Leadership
- Confidentiality

2 THE THREE RIVERS REGION

The TRRA region extends from the west side of Lithgow in the east of NSW through to Nyngan in the west, covering some 72,326.3 square kilometres. It extends across the Central Tablelands/Central West regions and part of what is known as the Orana region (Binaal Billa).

The boundaries incorporate the local government areas (LGAs) of its 12 communities which include: Lithgow, Bathurst, Orange, Cabonne, Parkes, Wellington, Midwestern Region (Mudgee), Dubbo, Gilgandra, Narromine, Warren and Bogan Shires.

TRRA asserts the rights of its member Aboriginal communities to seek improved and more efficient service delivery in accordance with cultural protocols of Aboriginal peoples across the region. TRRA also recognises and respects the cultural authority of Traditional Owner groups within the region and does not make decisions that would impinge on the cultural authority and autonomy of these groups.

TRRA also acknowledges and respects the cultural diversity represented by the varying Aboriginal languages, clans and nations that reside within the TRRA footprint.

Aboriginal peoples and communities have a spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with Country and/or place. Aboriginal peoples understand their own community needs and have the drive and ability to develop their own solutions in partnership with other stakeholders.

The NSW Government is represented in the region with District offices of Aboriginal Affairs and Regional NSW based in Dubbo¹. Different departments have different regional boundaries, and various sub-agencies, making for complexity for those in the region engaging with them. TRRA's footprint spans two of the Department of Education's regions; the Department has an office in Dubbo; Training NSW, one of its sub-agencies, has offices in Orange and Dubbo, and all towns other than Trangie have a TAFE facility; the whole of TRRA's footprint falls within the Western NSW Local Health District, which spans a vast area across Western NSW. Each town in TRRA's footprint has a small hospital, with referral hospitals in Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange. The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), which is responsible for housing, has offices in Bathurst, Orange, Parkes and Dubbo but none in the smaller towns. Services NSW has a presence in most TRRA locations, but not Peak Hill; Trangie and Narromine each have just a mobile service centre one half day per week.

¹ Regional NSW also has a Primary Industries Centre in Bathurst, Agriculture offices in Forbes and Nyngan, and Orange and Trangie have an Agriculture Institute and Orange has a Rural Assistance Authority.

The Commonwealth government's National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) has an office in Dubbo.

University education is available through the Charles Sturt University which has campuses in Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange.

2.1 Population of the TRRA footprint

The TRRA region is home to some 248,931 people of whom 32,434 identify as Aboriginal people, which is 13% of the total population. The table below shows the distribution of the population across the TRRA region.

Table 1: The population of the TRRA region by Indigenous status.

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%
TRRA	32,434	13.0%	216,497	87.0%
Orange	5,210	8.4%	57,071	91.6%
Bathurst	5,977	8.9%	60,996	91.1%
Dubbo	9,238	18.9%	39,641	81.1%
Gilgandra	1,043	17.3%	4,977	82.7%
Mudgee	1,906	8.4%	20,841	91.6%
Narromine	1,329	27.9%	3,435	72.1%
Nyngan	537	21.9%	1,917	78.1%
Parkes	3,333	16.3%	17,167	83.7%
Peak Hill	554	23.5%	1,803	76.5%
Trangie	334	29.5%	797	70.5%
Warren	494	21.9%	1,766	78.1%
Wellington	2,479	28.9%	6,086	71.1%

Source: ABS Census 2021.

It is interesting to note that the communities with the highest densities of Aboriginal people (as a proportion of the total population) include Trangie (29.5%), Wellington (28.9%); Narromine (27.9%); Peak Hill (23.5%) Nyngan (21.9%), Warren (21.9%), Dubbo

(18.9%) and Gilgandra (17.3%) which are located on the north western side of the TRRA region.

In terms of absolute numbers, Dubbo is home to the largest Aboriginal population cluster (9, 238), followed by Bathurst (5,977), Orange (5,210), Parkes (3,333) and Wellington (2,479). Dubbo itself has 28% of the total Aboriginal population within the TRRA region.

The Aboriginal population in the region has increased by 25.8% in the five years between 2016 and 2021 (Table 2) and is expected to continue to grow rapidly (for more detail see Appendix Tables A1 & A2)

Table 2: Population change by Indigenous status from 2016 to 2021 (percentages are of total population).

	2016		2021		% change (2021-2031)
	No	%	No	%	
Total	236,709	100.0%	248,931	100.0%	5.2%
Indigenous	25,788	10.9%	32,434	13.0%	25.8%
Non-Indigenous	210,921	89.1%	216,497	87.0%	2.6%

Source: ABS. Census 2016, 2021

The growth rates have been particularly high in Bathurst (38.5%), Orange (37.3%) and Mudgee (36.0%). This is in stark contrast to the very low growth rate (2.6%) of the non-Indigenous population over the same 5-year period (Table 2). By 2031 the Aboriginal population of the region is projected to be 45,463, amounting to 16.8% of the total regional population (Table 3).

By then, a number of the smaller towns are projected to have a significantly larger proportion of Aboriginal residents, for example, Trangie (37%), Peak Hill (35%), Warren and Nyngan (25%). (See Appendix Table A1).

Table 3: Population projection by Indigenous status from 2021 to 2031 (percentages are of total population).

	2021		2026		2031		% change (2021-2031)
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Total	248,93	100.0	260,72	100.0	271,15	100.0	8.9%
Indigenous	32,434	13.0 %	39,030	15.0%	45,463	16.8%	40.2%
Non-Indigenous	216,49	87.0 %	221,69	85.0%	225,68	83.2%	4.2%
	7		9		8		

Source: ABS Census 2021.

Compared to the non-Indigenous population, the Aboriginal population is young (Appendix Table A2) and will continue to be so, although there is an ageing trend, with a growth in the population aged over 50 years projected, as well as continuing growth in the population aged under 30 years (Figs 2 & 3, see also Appendix Tables A3 and A4).

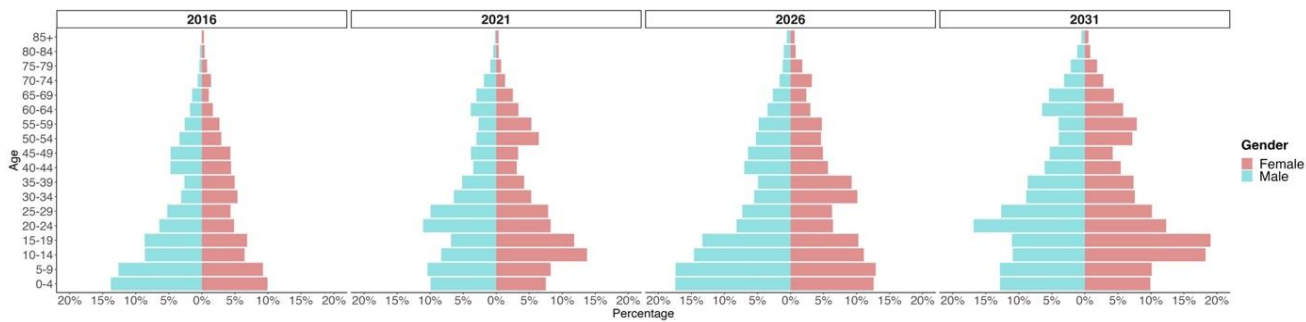


Figure 2: Indigenous actual and projected population pyramids, by age and sex in TRRA region for the years 2016, 2021, 2026 and 2031. Source: ABS Census 2021.

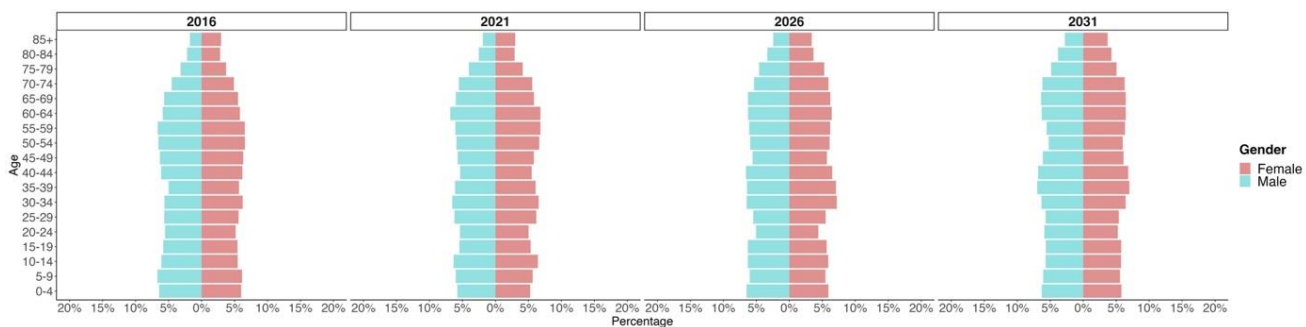


Figure 3: Non-Indigenous actual and projected population pyramids, by age and sex in TRRA region for the years 2016, 2021, 2026 and 2031. Source: ABS Census 2021.

These population projections have significant implications for the provision of housing, health and other services, culturally relevant education and training and Aboriginal representation in the various governmental decision-making bodies within the region, including local government.

The population projections also show that this decade is an important period in a demographic transition of the Aboriginal population, with the potential for a demographic dividend. That is, the working age population (15-65) is larger than their dependants (children and aged), providing an opportunity for growth in prosperity.

Population data and projections for the Region indicate that in 2021, 55.4% of the Aboriginal population was between 15 and 60 years of age, and this will rise to 57.7% by 2031 (see Appendix Table A4). Ensuring the employment and earning capacity of Aboriginal working-age people in the next five years will have longer term benefits by building Aboriginal prosperity while these positive demographic conditions last.

2.2 Economy

The TRRA region is a relatively rich one, founded on agriculture, mining and retail trade. However, Aboriginal people are not participating equally in the economy and benefitting from this wealth as they should.

Across the TRRA towns, the main industries providing employment (Table 4) are Health Care and Social Assistance (19.1%), Education and Training (11.2%), Retail Trade (9.8%),

Construction (9.6%), and Public Administration and Safety (9.3%). For Indigenous people, the major sectors of employment are Health Care and Social Assistance (20.5%), Education and Training (11.0%), Retail Trade (10.8%), Construction (10.4%), and Public Administration and Safety (10.8%) (Table 4).

Table 4: Information on Industry by total population and Indigenous status in TRRA region, 2021.

	Total population		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Total	88,782	100.0%	7,052	100.0%	81,730	100.0%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5,514	6.2%	259	3.7%	5,255	6.4%
Mining	5,751	6.5%	382	5.4%	5,369	6.6%
Manufacturing	5,355	6.0%	319	4.5%	5,036	6.2%
Construction	8,516	9.6%	736	10.4%	7,780	9.5%
Retail Trade	8,660	9.8%	760	10.8%	7,900	9.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	5,789	6.5%	520	7.4%	5,269	6.4%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	3,544	4.0%	315	4.5%	3,229	4.0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3,728	4.2%	143	2.0%	3,585	4.4%
Administrative and Support Services	2,862	3.2%	309	4.4%	2,553	3.1%
Public Administration and Safety	8,254	9.3%	763	10.8%	7,491	9.2%
Education and Training	9,961	11.2%	775	11.0%	9,186	11.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	16,933	19.1%	1,448	20.5%	15,485	18.9%
Other Services	3,915	4.4%	323	4.6%	3,592	4.4%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021.

As Table 4 above shows, the TRRA region has a strong public sector with Health Care and Social Assistance providing a significant percentage of employment. Almost 20% of Aboriginal workers are employed in this sector, and efforts to encourage Aboriginal workforce development, particularly in health, was a feature of the last TRRA Accord. Other contributors to employment in this region include each Local Government, and various NSW government agencies.

Mudgee, Orange, Parkes and Nyngan regions are all home to well-established mines that provide significant local employment and stimulus for investment, though few *local* Aboriginal people benefit from this (5.4% of all Aboriginal employment is in mining² compared to 6.5% of the total population), and high housing costs as a result of mine employees pushing up private rental prices worsens their housing disadvantage.

Agriculture has traditionally been a dominant industry in the region. Agricultural production is very diversified and includes viticulture, wool, cattle, cotton, wheat, beef, lamb and grains. Yet Aboriginal people are barely involved in this sector (3.7% compared to 6.2% of the total population).

2.2.1 Income levels

Table 5 below shows income per week by Indigenous status. As might be expected, it shows greater proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people aged 18-64 were in higher income

² It is believed that Aboriginal people move from elsewhere to the TRRA region to take up FIFO mining jobs.

brackets in 2021 compared to a decade earlier, but note that cost of living has also increased. However, more non-Indigenous people are in higher income brackets than Indigenous people.

- Over 42% of Indigenous people had a weekly income between \$400 and \$999 per week in 2021;
- 34.3% had an income of \$1,000 or more per week, (compared to 53.6% of non-Indigenous people).
- But 23.4% of Indigenous people aged 18-64 had a weekly income below \$400 per week, compared to 15.5% of non-Indigenous people; included within this group, 4.4% of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people reported having no income in 2021.

So, while income levels have improved over the last decade, there is a significant minority of people who are struggling to live on very low incomes and a greater proportion of these are non-Indigenous people.

Table 5: Personal income (per week) by Indigenous status from age 18-64 for the years 2011, 2016 and 2021.

	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Indigenous							
Total	7,432	100.0%	9,593	100.0%	12,406	100.0%	66.9%
No income	318	4.3%	524	5.5%	543	4.4%	70.8%
\$1-\$399 (\$1-\$20,799)	3,178	42.8%	2,897	30.2%	2,360	19.0%	-25.7%
\$400-\$999 (\$20,800-\$51,999)	2,869	38.6%	4,233	44.1%	5,254	42.4%	83.1%
\$1,000-\$1,999 (\$52,000-\$103,999)	928	12.5%	1,666	17.4%	3,419	27.6%	268.4%
\$2,000 or more (\$104,000 or more)	139	1.9%	273	2.8%	830	6.7%	497.1%
Non-Indigenous							
Total	107,903	100.0%	105,610	100.0%	112,833	100.0%	4.6%
No income	5,171	4.8%	5,778	5.5%	5,396	4.8%	4.4%
\$1-\$399 (\$1-\$20,799)	27,217	25.2%	18,737	17.7%	12,098	10.7%	-55.5%
\$400-\$999 (\$20,800-\$51,999)	42,454	39.3%	40,858	38.7%	37,196	33.0%	-12.4%
\$1,000-\$1,999 (\$52,000-\$103,999)	26,734	24.8%	30,900	29.3%	41,025	36.4%	53.5%
\$2,000 or more (\$104,000 or more)	6,327	5.9%	9,337	8.8%	17,118	15.2%	170.6%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016 and 2021.

Note: Table A6 in Appendix C provides details of household incomes.

3 BACKGROUND TO REGIONAL PLANNING AND ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION

In March 2015 TRRA completed its first Regional Priorities Plan and used this as the basis for Accord Negotiation with the NSW Government under the Local Decision Making program. The Accord negotiation took over three years and was signed in December 2018. The Three Rivers Regional Assembly Accord set out the roles and responsibilities of each party to implement the Accord priorities over the following three years to December 2021. It also detailed the governance of the Accord through an Implementation Task Group co-chaired by TRRA and the NSW Government (initially by Regional NSW, later by Aboriginal Affairs NSW), and intended to meet quarterly in Dubbo. In signing the Accord each party agreed to work in partnership on key priority areas and objectives, which both believed had the potential to improve outcomes for Aboriginal peoples in the Three Rivers footprint. These areas were Housing, Education, Health, Economic Development and Governance and Capacity.

The implementation of the Accord was evaluated by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research as part of its overall evaluation of the LDM Program³. A summary of Key findings from the evaluation of the implementation of the TRRA Local Decision Making Accord is in Appendix A. Importantly the evaluation found that:

- **Shared decision making** between TRRA and government is not yet significant, but TRRA has been able to influence government decision making around health and housing, and to a lesser extent economic development and education. But this has not yet translated into many outcomes that ordinary community members can see, and many feel that the relationship remains very unequal.
- The most important outcome is that **relationships** have been developed enabling TRRA to engage with government in an effective way on behalf of its constituency.
- TRRA is a **suitable vehicle** to advance the aspirational agendas of the regional Aboriginal community. TRRA's capacity to know how and where to influence particular decisions has grown significantly in the last two years.

TRRA has a strong record of working collaboratively with governments to improve service delivery in our region. Even when faced with the challenges presented by Covid-19, and changes in government that affected the way agencies work with Aboriginal community governance bodies at the regional and local level, we continued to make a difference across our communities. Most notably TRRA underpinned important work with NSW

³ The TRRA evaluation fieldwork was conducted from February to June 2022, and the Report was completed in August 2023.

Health to support effective on the ground responses to Covid-19. In collaboration with the Aboriginal Housing Office and Department of Communities and Justice we've worked to develop a much-needed regional Aboriginal Housing Strategy. We've also worked tirelessly with senior regional government officials to embed Aboriginal voice in the way government works across the region.

TRRA is proud of the efforts, largely voluntary, of our delegates, community organisations and community members for our collective efforts in seeking positive changes in our communities.

TRRA is now ready for our next tranche of work with governments and industry. We are committed to ongoing partnerships and collaborations and joint commissioning of services. With the right support we are uniquely positioned to bring an inclusive whole of community lens to support efforts to achieve:

- Increased community participation and strengthened capacity in local organisations
- Strong, sustainable, authentic leadership underpinned by our cultural values and knowledge
- Fair and equitable outcomes and conditions for our communities and people.

This Regional Plan explains what we seek to achieve in the next five years and how we plan to achieve it in partnership with governments and others.

4 THE POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PARTNERSHIPS

For the past five years TRRA has operated within the NSW Government's Local Decision Making policy . This policy is:

‘an initiative of [OCHRE](#), the NSW Government's community focused plan for Aboriginal affairs, which represents a fundamental and positive change in the relationship between government and Aboriginal communities in NSW. Local Decision Making is underpinned by the principle of self-determination and aims to ensure that Aboriginal communities have a genuine voice in determining what and how services are delivered to their communities.

Local Decision Making places Aboriginal people at the centre of service design, planning and delivery, enabling the staged devolution of decision making and accountability to the local level.⁴

LDM, which has operated for 10 years, was reviewed in 2022. The finding validated LDM as a sound approach to government engagement with Aboriginal communities. It also noted that ‘LDM complements other work being done by the NSW Government under the CtG priority reforms and socio-economic targets, continuing to transform and strengthen the relationship between the NSW Government and Aboriginal people in NSW.’⁵ TRRAs previous Accord aligned with 8 Closing the Gap Reforms and 10 Closing the Gap Targets⁶. It is also important to note that TRRA is a member of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances (NCARA) which,

‘comprises nominated representatives from each of the NSW Aboriginal Regional Alliances. It is designed to provide its member organisations with an increased say in government service delivery, exchange ideas and consider common issues, as well as providing leadership and advocacy where and when necessary’⁷.

TRRA is able to elevate matters from its region to the State level for discussion and action through regular NCARA meetings with senior NSW government executives.

4.1 Closing the Gap in NSW

The Closing the Gap National Agreement was co-signed by the Coalition of Peaks and all Australian governments, including Local Government, in 2018 ‘as a commitment to working differently to realise the aspirations of Aboriginal people across Australia. In

⁴ <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/working-differently/local-decision-making/>

⁵ <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/working-differently/local-decision-making/review-of-local-decision-making/>

⁶ [https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/media/website_pages/working-differently/local-decision-making/review-of-local-decision-making-/20230727-Tagged_accessible-AANSW-presentation-Strategic-Intelligence-Mapping-\[accessible\].pdf](https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/media/website_pages/working-differently/local-decision-making/review-of-local-decision-making-/20230727-Tagged_accessible-AANSW-presentation-Strategic-Intelligence-Mapping-[accessible].pdf)

⁷ <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/working-differently/local-decision-making/ncara/>

NSW, the partners to the National Agreement are the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (NSW CAPO), the NSW Government and Local Government NSW (LGNSW). NSW. Many of TRRA's member organisations are represented within NSW CAPO at the State level. Government has indicated that NCARA will become a member of the Joint Council between CAPO and the NSW Government during 2024.

The CtG Agreement sets out four priority reforms that all signatories are committed to:

Priority Reform 1: Formal partnerships and shared decision-making

Priority Reform 2: Building the community-controlled sector

Priority Reform 3: Transforming government organisations

Priority Reform 4: Shared access to data and information at a regional level

In NSW, an additional priority has been added:

Priority Reform 5: Employment, business growth and economic prosperity.

The plan also outlines 17 socio-economic targets to be achieved, among them targets relating to education, health, employment, reducing incarceration and children in out of home care, land rights, culture and languages, all of which are important issues for Aboriginal people in TRRA's footprint.

Currently the NSW Government has a CtG Implementation Plan 2022-24 which notes that,

'In 2016, 54% of the NSW Aboriginal population lived outside major cities. We know that regional and remote communities have distinct circumstances and needs. We are committed to taking a place-based approach that works with the different situation and aspirations of each community. In doing so we acknowledge regional and remote communities are unique and therefore initiatives and solutions need to be bespoke, tailored and designed in partnership with the local community.

Aboriginal Affairs NSW and NSW CAPO will work in partnership with the Department of Regional NSW to ensure Aboriginal people, communities and businesses in regional, remote and very remote areas are included as part of the Closing the Gap initiatives and these initiatives are adapted to suit their needs.'
(NSW Implementation Plan 2022-24)

Many of the commitments in relation to the specific socio-economic outcomes also align well with the aspirations of TRRA for their communities.

However, in the 2022 Report on implementation of this Plan, there is scant mention of LDM, and it seems that the relationship between LDM and the CtG policy remains unclear. TRRA will need to work with both NCARA and CAPO to actualise the commitment to involve regional areas and ACCOs (of which TRRA is itself an example) in CtG initiatives. It will also be valuable to have input into the 2024-2026 NSW CtG

Implementation Plan and take its commitments into consideration when implementing this Regional Plan.

Although the Local Government Association of Australia (and of NSW) is a partner in the CtG agreement, relationships between the various Local Governments and Aboriginal communities in the TRRA Region vary considerably. While relationships are stronger in larger centres such as Dubbo and Orange, in many other locations consultation is poor and relationships weak or difficult. Dubbo Regional Council seems to be alone in having a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group tasked with developing a RAP. A search of all the relevant Council websites reveals little or no reference to Aboriginal people in their LGAs, Closing the Gap, or Reconciliation. Yet local government could make a difference to Aboriginal lives in a number of ways, and TRRA aims to build closer relationships with local government over the next five years.

4.2 Non-governmental organisations

Within TRRA's region there are a number of non-government organisations contracted by government to deliver services to the Aboriginal community. These include but are not limited to Barnardos, Mission Australia, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Education Out West, Marathon Health and Clontarf. The cultural capacity of these organisations to work with Aboriginal people varies and information about which services many non-government organisations are contracted to provide to the Aboriginal population of the region is not available from the NSW or Commonwealth governments. Many government and non-government services are fly-in-fly-out or drive-in drive-out (outreach).

In terms of Aboriginal community controlled organisations in the TRRA footprint there are a number of Aboriginal Medical Services (eg in Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst and some smaller towns, but not all), there are various elders' groups and native title organizations and a variety of other Aboriginal organisations and these make up Aboriginal Community Working Parties (ACWPs) where they exist. However there is only recent development of any ACCO capacity (in Orange) to care for children in out of home care.

In terms of other Aboriginal controlled organisations, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) is active in some, but not all, centres in the TRRA footprint. The Aboriginal Employment Service provides services but does not have an office in the region. NASCA⁸ is also working with young people to improve school attendance and develop life skills in Dubbo, Wellington and Narromine.

⁸ nasca.org.au

5 THE PROCESS OF PLANNING

To develop this Regional Plan, TRRA hosted meetings in each town with its member organisations to identify the key priorities in each location and, where possible, to obtain information about their own local plans, such as LALC Community Land and Business Plans, Health Plans, Education plans, community controlled organisation strategic plans and any other social development plans relevant to their communities. The purpose of this process was to align TRRA's priorities with locally-determined priorities and to explore how TRRA, in its regional governance role, could support and add value to local efforts and initiatives.

This process commenced in Orange on 21 August 2023, and concluded in Nyngan on 8 February 2024. Aboriginal Affairs NSW staff from Dubbo Office also attended these meetings. Appendix B details the issues raised in every consultation.

The Table below summarises these consultations and identifies three areas which were high priority for every single community - housing, health and economic development, with eight also prioritising education. Culture and heritage, child protection and, in the two locations with jails, incarceration issues were also commonly raised, and in two locations, holistic family services were mentioned, as well as development of young leadership and gatherings for men, women and youth. Other issues which were identified as important included access to data and issues of accountability, truth telling and transparency, and access to and better collaboration, rather than duplication, of various services. Issues of relationships with Local Government were also raised in at least three consultations.

It is very evident from the consultations that many of these issues are highly inter-related, for example, overcrowded housing contributes to stress and poor health, it affects whether children have space and facilities (such as internet) to do homework; poor housing can even trigger child protection matters. Difficulty in accessing health services and lack of transport can lead people to delay obtaining medical attention until illness has become severe, and treatment may be less successful. More holistic family services could reduce child removals and ultimately reduce incarceration rates; access to programs such as NDIS and Aged Care packages could also provide support that families need and are entitled to. Education and economic development are also closely related, as without adequate education, young people will find gaining employment difficult, and can drift into anti-social behaviours which can lead them into trouble. Education also helps with maintaining good health and engaging with services where needed.

TRRA is unable to obtain much of the government data it needs to assess progress in its region. Issues of data availability, transparency and accountability cut across all areas of TRRA's concerns and will need to be pursued throughout the implementation of this plan.

Table 7. Priorities identified during community consultations

Priority Issues	Housing	Health	Economic Development/employment	Education	Culture and Heritage (incl Water)	Child Protection	Incarceration/Justice system	Other
Orange	x	x	x		x	x		Data access Regionalisation of services
Warren	x	x	x	x	x	x		Local Govt engagement
Mudgee	x	x	x	x				
Bathurst	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Holistic family services; foster young leadership
Wellington	x	x	x				x	Quarterly men's, women's youth gatherings
Dubbo	x	x	x	x	x	x		Truth Telling, Accountability, Transparency, duplication of services

Trangie	x	x	x	x	x	x		NDIS, Aged Care
Narromine	x	x	x	x				Access to Govt services and advocacy; family strengthening
Gilgandra	x	x	x	x				Collaboration and Shire problem.
Nyngan	x	x	x	x	x			Shire issues re land use
Total	11	11	11	8	6	5	2	

5.1 Key themes in Community Land and Business Plans of the region's LALCs.

At the time of the consultations, many LALCs were updating their Community Land and Business Plans, so did not have current plans to share. Three have shared their plans: Bathurst LALC, Orange LALC and Trangie LALC. LALCs have a range of statutory responsibilities which all must comply with, particularly in relation to governance and land.

The priorities of the three LALC plans are shown below.

Fig 5 LALC Priorities

Priority Issue	Bathurst LALC	Orange LALC	Trangie LALC
Land	Land activation, to boost social housing, new LALC Office, Men's Shed	Securing and managing our land	Acquisition, management and development of land and other assets
Economic development	Economic prosperity, microbusiness opportunities, employment, training	Driving our economic development	Business/ education/training and employment opportunities
Social development	Social responsibility – drive community outcomes re CtG; community wellness and education programs eg social housing and R&M program	Supporting our people	Provision of community benefit schemes eg social housing, hampers, youth activities
Culture and Heritage	Social Responsibility Promote and enhance culture and heritage. Promote connection to country pathways	Protecting, preserving and promoting our cultural heritage and environment	Ongoing maintenance of Aboriginal culture and heritage
Governance and sustainability	Capability and Capacity: governance, operational efficiency and economic development	Improving our governance and sustainability	Maintain effective financial viability of Trangie LALC

These LALCs all expressed the desire to maintain or increase their role in housing, both as housing managers and in achieving more land suitable for housing or assisting Aboriginal

people with home ownership; for example Bathurst LALC noted that a far higher proportion of Aboriginal households needed an extra bedroom than was the case for non-Indigenous households in their area. All also saw the need for Aboriginal economic development both through business development and employment, and education and training to support that. For all, maintaining their culture, country and heritage were also among their priorities. These priorities all accord with the priorities TRRA has identified.

6 PRIORITY ISSUES

The following four issues will continue be the priorities for TRRA over the life of this Plan – Housing, Health, Economic Development and Education. TRRA will advocate strongly and proactively in these four areas which are critical to improving Aboriginal outcomes.

Apart from the existing four priority areas, there are a number of other issues that are of concern to Aboriginal people in the TRRA footprint and are emerging priorities. These are: the rate of child removals; culture and heritage; issues to do with incarceration and youth at risk; issues of transparency and accountability of government departments to the Aboriginal community; and the need for greater engagement with Local Government.

TRRA stresses that these issues are all interrelated. So TRRA wants these issues dealt with holistically, and simultaneously, in order to make significant progress. People's lives are not compartmentalised. It is the combination of circumstances that affects outcomes, so progress in all these areas is needed. Aboriginal people believe that they have to maintain very high levels of accountability to governments, yet governments do not see themselves as accountable to Aboriginal people for the quality of the services and programs provided. Local Government is the closest level of government to Aboriginal people in the TRRA footprint, yet their experience of it is poor. These features of government relations with Aboriginal people reflect a lack of respect for the first peoples of the land, whose lives have been severely affected by colonisation. All governments should now be recognising this and making strong efforts to rectify the situation.

6.1 Housing

TRRA's goal is that all Aboriginal people in its footprint should be able to rent or buy a house that is affordable, not overcrowded and safe to live in.

To achieve this, TRRA (and NCARA at the state level) needs to be at the table for all housing policy and commissioning decisions, whether these are made in Sydney or within the TRRA region.

Far more housing decisions should be localised, so that local knowledge can inform them.

6.1.1 Issues raised in Consultations:

- Access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing is a major issue for every community. Homelessness is a significant problem (both visible and hidden) and for others rental affordability has been exacerbated since Covid-19. Aboriginal people are now competing in a housing market with greater demand from more affluent city dwellers or workers moving into regional towns like Orange, Bathurst, Parkes and Mudgee, pushing rents up. Demand for social housing is high, wait times for such housing are very long, and in a number of towns people TRRA consulted observed that there is significant public housing stock boarded up, apparently awaiting

renovation, and not available to the community. Several LALCs indicated that they had land available for housing development but did not have the capital to develop it themselves.

- One of the issues identified by TRRA is that there is no single wait list for social housing. People may be on a LALC waitlist but not on an AHO waitlist. Or, they may be on an AHO or DCJ waitlist but if houses are transferred from DCJ/AHO management to management by non-government housing providers, these have separate waitlists and waitlists are not transferred. People may think they are on a waitlist but their names have never been transferred to the relevant housing provider who has their own list. Furthermore, people on waitlists are required to update their housing needs every three to six months, which some Aboriginal people, who have waited years, are unaware of or fail to do. Additionally, many new housing providers have no cultural policies.
- Accountability of property managers, whether government or non-government, for adequate housing maintenance is also a major issue. Poor repairs and maintenance, and the boarding up of public housing, in TRRA's view, represents an opportunity for local Aboriginal people to undertake repairs, maintenance and renovation of public housing. This would have a dual benefit, making more homes safe and accessible, and providing employment for Aboriginal tradespeople and labourers. Reforming contracting to enable local contractors to take responsibility for repairs and maintenance is highly recommended.
- Climate change is a further factor, leading to more extreme weather, making homes uncomfortable and unsafe when temperatures rise; this particularly affects the aged, and people who are sick or have a disability. There is an urgent need to better insulate public housing, and install air conditioning to enable tenants to keep houses cool on very hot days (exceeding 35 degrees Celsius), which are increasing in number, in parts of the region to perhaps 40 or 60 plus days per year by 2030.⁹ Other measures such as tree plantings, awnings, and wall cladding could further improve housing comfort and safety. Rooftop solar could make energy bills more affordable for these low income tenants. Such improvements to public housing could also provide jobs for Aboriginal people.
- Design of new builds also needs to consider that Aboriginal households are often large, and need space for visitors (especially in towns with services that relatives from more remote locations may need to access). Water systems need to be large enough for such large families, and doorways need to be wide enough (920cm) to

⁹ "The region, on average, is projected to experience an additional nine hot days (exceeding 35 degrees Celsius) in the near future (ranging from 4–15 days across the 12 models) and 27 more hot days by 2070 (17–34 days across the 12 models)." (p10). This is on top of hot days in 2014 which ranged from 20-30 hot days per year in Forbes, Parkes and Dubbo to 50 days per year NW of Nyngan (p.6). *Overview of Central West and Orana Region Climate Change*, NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage, 2014, https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/Central%20West%20and%20Orana%20climate%20change%20snapshot_1.pdf

accommodate wheelchairs for those who use them,¹⁰ bathrooms need handrails, and entrances need ramps.

6.1.2 What the Census Data tells us

There is a clear difference between housing tenures for most Aboriginal people compared with non-Indigenous people in TRRA's footprint.

Table 6: Indigenous and non-Indigenous households by housing tenure types for the years 2011 and 2021.

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2011		2021		% change	2011		2021		% change
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Total	6,335	100.0%	10,622	100.0%	67.7%	70,731	100.0%	76,521	100.0%	8.2%
Owned outright	895	14.1%	1,743	16.4%	94.7%	28,451	40.2%	30,474	39.8%	7.1%
Owned with mortgage	1,752	27.7%	3,424	32.2%	95.4%	23,700	33.5%	26,090	34.1%	10.1%
Private rental	1,469	23.2%	2,807	26.4%	91.1%	9,959	14.1%	12,842	16.8%	28.9%
Social housing rental	2,219	35.0%	2,648	24.9%	19.3%	8,621	12.2%	7,115	9.3%	-17.5%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2021.

As Table 6 shows, more than half of all Aboriginal people (51.3%) are renting their housing, whether in social housing (24.9%), or in private rental accommodation (26.4%). In comparison, only around a quarter of non-Indigenous people are renting (26.1%) and most (73.9%) own or are purchasing their own home. Home ownership in the Aboriginal community has increased significantly between 2016 and 2021 to 48.6%, including those purchasing homes with a mortgage, and the proportion in social housing has decreased (from 35% in 2011 to 24.9% in 2021). Nevertheless, social housing arrangements disproportionately affect Aboriginal people in the footprint.

A higher proportion of Indigenous households are also larger than non-Indigenous households, with more than five persons in 18.9% of them (compared to 8.8% of non-Indigenous households) (See Appendix Table A7). However, the majority of Indigenous households (65.5%) have 2-4 people in them and only 15.6% are single person households.

Most Indigenous households (71.3%) were paying between \$250 and \$449 in weekly private rents in 2021. For social housing rental most households (66.4%) were paying between \$150 and \$349 per week in 2021. (See Appendix Table A8).

6.1.3 NSW Government policy: Housing arrangements in NSW

According to the NSW Government, 'Social housing is secure and affordable rental housing for people on low incomes with housing needs. It includes public, community and Aboriginal housing (through the Aboriginal Housing Office). Public housing is owned and managed by DCJ, while community housing is owned by DCJ but managed by non-government organisations. Aboriginal housing is specifically for Aboriginal people and these properties

¹⁰ Rates of disability are much higher in the Aboriginal community than in the non-Indigenous community, with 24% of Indigenous people living with a disability in 2018. <https://www.indigenoushpf.gov.au/measures/1-14-disability>

are managed by DCJ (through the Aboriginal Housing Office) or community housing providers (such as Compass Housing, Housing Plus), including Aboriginal community housing providers, like LALCs, who also have their own housing.¹¹

For a family of just 2 adults and 3 children under 18 years, the current income eligibility limit for social housing is \$1690 per week, including all government payments. NSW Government-advertised wait times for a 3-bedroom house in many of the towns within TRRA's footprint are 5-10 years.¹²

6.1.4 Closing the Gap Housing Target

The CtG Housing target is focussed on reducing overcrowding and, for discrete Aboriginal communities, having access to equivalent services to those in towns. By 2031, the main target is to 'increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88%.' This is a very limited target, which says nothing about affordability or quality of housing.

In the NSW Implementation Plan, the outcome desired is that 'Aboriginal people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need'. To achieve that, the NSW Government has committed:

1. The supply of regionally informed housing is increased, as is the capacity of the community-controlled sector to deliver housing to Aboriginal communities
2. There is an improved understanding of suitable housing for Aboriginal people, and crowding is addressed from a culturally safe perspective
3. Housing options are flexible to support Aboriginal mobility
4. The Aboriginal Community Housing Provider (ACHP) sector is strengthened
5. There are strong asset management and maintenance responses applied to improve the quality of housing for Aboriginal communities.

6.1.5 Developments to date in TRRA footprint

During the last Accord, housing consultations were undertaken by DCJ and the Department of Housing. The strategy to be developed following those consultations has not yet been finalised but the major issues raised were:

- Cultural considerations to be embedded in Housing policies (e.g. return to Country, family succession etc)
- Reduce waitlist times and improve waitlist processes (e.g. re adequacy of information, liaison with LALCs and others)
- Ensure housing is liveable and safe in relation to climate – address heating and cooling needs
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal businesses and employment in housing construction, repairs and maintenance
- Increase access to emergency housing, and increase housing for aged, people with disabilities, youth and large families.
- Increase home ownership

¹¹ <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/ways/social-housing>

¹² <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/expected-waiting-times>. If families have been waiting since 2005, their income limits are much lower than this.

- Ensure easier access to DCJ and AHO staff and services, particularly for Aboriginal people in smaller communities
- LALCs to have access to capital to develop their own land for housing.

TRRA believes it is important that this Housing Strategy is quickly finalised and acted upon to alleviate significant current housing problems in the Aboriginal community. These problems will surely worsen considerably as the Aboriginal population of the region increases as projected (see above) over the next five years and beyond. These projections need to be factored into any housing strategy, or the Aboriginal housing situation will only worsen over the life of this Regional Plan.

6.1.6 Assisting LALCs to develop their land for housing

In order for LALCs to develop their land they need services, such as sewerage and other utilities provided. This is where relationships with Local Government and inclusion of Aboriginal Land into Shire or Council planning of such land development is required, but rarely occurs.

Many LALCs have assets that they could borrow against for housing development, but smaller LALCs may lack the capacity to negotiate successfully with lenders and to manage land and housing development along with their existing responsibilities.

6.1.7 What TRRA wants

- The NSW Government's Housing Strategy to be finalised and implemented, to address the issues raised in the consultations
- More social housing be made available for the growing population of Aboriginal people
- Local Government to engage with LALCs re residential planning and servicing of LALC land blocks suitable for housing
- Procurement of facilities maintenance/building contracts should have a percentage requirement for Aboriginal businesses and tradespeople to be engaged
- Uninhabited public housing should be prioritised for renovation
- ? Program to support LALC builds.

6.2 Health

TRRA's goal is that the health of Aboriginal people in its footprint improves. This requires easier access to culturally safe local health services, and culturally safe mainstream services, such as hospitals, including more Aboriginal health staff.

6.2.1 Issues raised in consultations

- There are strong community controlled AMSs in Orange and Coonabarabran that provide culturally safe primary health care services into TRRA's region, but not all towns in TRRA's footprint are served by an AMS and this is TRRA's goal. One possibility is to regionalise the services that already exist; another is to develop more stand-alone Aboriginal Medical Services, (such as the proposal of the Bathurst community). Both options may ensure that Aboriginal people all have access to culturally safe primary health services, including gender-appropriate staffing (Aboriginal women do not like having to discuss women's business with male doctors).
- Transport to health services is a major issue, especially for people living in smaller towns who need to attend referral hospitals or services in larger centres, such as Dubbo. Such transport needs to be culturally safe, readily available and wheelchair accessible.
- Given the youth of the Aboriginal population (see Section 2), more local paediatric services are badly needed. There are long waits to see paediatricians, which is not desirable when early intervention is often necessary for childhood issues. Similarly, there is a strong desire of Aboriginal women to give birth on country, not have to travel to a referral hospital to give birth. Additionally, people want to age and die on country, but the shortage of aged care and palliative care places in the regional towns may keep them in the referral hospitals in the larger centres.
- More doctors and dentists are needed in the region where wait times can be long, discouraging people from obtaining health services. In particular, better access to mental health (especially men's) and drug and alcohol services are also needed across the region, and discharge policies for mental health patients need to ensure that people are discharged into safety. Domestic Violence services in the region also need to be expanded.
- The transition to tele-health and AI-generated diagnoses, while extending some health services to more regional areas, is not always suitable for Aboriginal people, particularly older Aboriginal people, who have little or no access to computers and wifi services and/or cannot afford data for their phones. Communication with some health professionals is also sometimes difficult, especially health workers from migrant backgrounds who are not familiar with Aboriginal issues.
- More Aboriginal Health workers are needed as well as Chronic and Complex care nurses to help Aboriginal patients manage chronic diseases. More outreach services to homes would be valuable. Longer term there would be enormous value in encouraging more Aboriginal people to train for and enter all aspects of the health

workforce, so that local Aboriginal people are caring for their own people. Thus strengthening the health workforce development strategy begun in the First Accord (with Health Expos and scholarships) would be valuable.

6.2.2 NSW Government Policy

The Western NSW Local Health District is responsible for health services in TRRA's footprint. Its second priority is 'Meaningful gains in Aboriginal health'. Its board includes one Wiradjuri woman who is engaged in health service provision, but no representatives of Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations or Aboriginal service users. It does have a number of policy and strategy documents relating to Aboriginal health, but most run to the end of 2023, so updated plans and strategies are now needed. It also works with a number of state-wide Aboriginal Health Policies.

6.2.3 Closing the Gap health target

The CtG health targets relate to life expectancy, and babies with healthy birthweight.

Within the TRRA footprint there has been an increase in the median age of death from 2011-2015 to 2016-2020, from 61.8 years to 64.8 years which indicates that life expectancy is increasing; however, men die younger, at 62.6 years, while females' median age of death is 67.3 years (see Appendix Table A9). In 2020–2022 the national gap in life expectancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females was 8.8 years and 8.1 years, respectively, so this is the gap to be closed.

Across the TRRA footprint in 2017-19, 90.1% of babies were born within a healthy birthweight, and 8.9% of Aboriginal babies (159 babies) were born with low birthweights. The CtG goal is for 91% of newborns to have a healthy birthweight (Appendix Table A9).

In the NSW CtG Implementation Plan the commitments (2021-24) to achieve these two targets are:

- A NSW Aboriginal Cancer Primary Care pathway is provided for people to access prevention, cancer screening and referral to cancer services
- There is an increase in the uptake of Aboriginal Health Assessments
- The Aboriginal health workforce in NSW Health and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) sector are enhanced by building pathways and training opportunities
- Areas that impact Aboriginal health and outcomes are reformed
- Culturally safe maternity care services are expanded and supported
- Birthing on Country models of maternity care are supported
- There is embedding of programs that aim to reduce incidences of Fetal Alcohol and Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

6.2.4 What the Health data tells us

Health data was obtained from the Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) at Torrens University (see Appendix Tables A9 and A10).¹³ The percentage of Aboriginal people

¹³ <https://phidu.torrens.edu.au/social-health-atlases>

who report no long-term health conditions (47.6%) is slightly lower than that for the non-Indigenous population of the region (48.6%). Noticeable is that a greater proportion of Aboriginal people suffer from asthma (12.9%) and mental health issues (12.1%), so these areas need more focus. Appendix Fig A1 shows that mental health conditions are particularly high for women aged 20-39 and men and women aged 20-59; asthma is particularly high for 5-14 year olds, especially boys, and 20-59 year old Indigenous people, especially women (Appendix Fig A2).

The data reveals an overall decline in the percentage of Aboriginal women smoking during pregnancy from 50.8% in 2012-14 to 45.9% in 2017-19, although there were variations across the towns in TRRA's footprint. However, nearly half of all Aboriginal women who are pregnant do not attend ante-natal care within the first 10 weeks. This may be because they rely on advice and support from their aunties and family rather than the western health system. Aboriginal children in the region are well immunised, with 94.7% fully immunised at 12 months and 98.2% fully immunised at 5 years in 2021. Rates of immunisation at 2 years were lower (77.2%) which may reflect a covid impact. Data on hospital admissions per 100,000 people has risen for Aboriginal men and women. Similarly, there have been increases in emergency department presentations. These findings may reflect increased use of hospitals, which would be positive, and/or increased need.

6.2.5 Developments to date in TRRA footprint

During the last Accord, TRRA's objectives were to develop a partnership agreement between itself, the ACCHOs in the region and the Western NSW Local Health District. No such agreement exists yet it would be a valuable step. Health consultations were held across the TRRA footprint, and local health action plans have been developed. These however have not yet been implemented. All plans involved developing a Community Profile, and various other actions sometimes relating to better information availability for the Aboriginal community, as well as approaches to collaboration among local services; but each is unique. During Covid, TRRA played a very significant role and partnered very effectively with the Department of Health and other agencies to achieve very positive outcomes during the height of the pandemic. This demonstrates the value of such a partnership approach.

6.2.6 What TRRA wants:

- Support the development of AMSs in the region and /or expansion of Aboriginal community controlled health services to towns where no such facility exists to provide culturally safe health services and encourage Aboriginal men as well as women to seek early health care
- Expansion of Aboriginal services to address mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and dental needs
- Improved access to general practitioners and paediatricians
- Ability of Aboriginal women to birth on country (not go to referral hospitals as a matter of course)
- Culturally safe mainstream health services, which requires better cultural training for all health staff engaging with Aboriginal patients, and avoiding use of

telehealth/AI services for Aboriginal patients uncomfortable with or unable to access such approaches

- An expanded, trained, Aboriginal health workforce
- An Aboriginal Chronic Disease strategy to treat and reduce such diseases in the community.

To achieve this, TRRA seeks an ongoing three way partnership with the ACCHOs in the footprint and the Western NSW Local Health District.

6.3 Economic Development

TRRA's goal is to increase the proportion of Aboriginal people in employment, including more professional employment (e.g. health and education workers), and increase the number and scope of local Aboriginal businesses in its footprint, and opportunities for them to be engaged in government contracts.

6.3.1 Issues raised in consultations

- Renewable energy – wind and solar farms are not providing economic development or employment opportunities in the region; the companies come and consult community but that is the last they hear of them
- There is a very poor record of Aboriginal employment in the region's mines and by Local Government
- Communities want to develop cultural tourism opportunities, e.g. Cultural centres, but while there are opportunities, there are also constraints to overcome
- There are opportunities to gain employment in infrastructure developments, including Inland Rail, but local Aboriginal employment is not happening
- Local Governments have no Indigenous Procurement Policies; Aboriginal organisations/businesses need contracts with Shires, but shire relationships are not good in some towns
- There are missed opportunities to build, repair and maintain houses locally until Government moves on these issues
- Water – cultural licences do not enable economic development; some people want water licences to provide opportunities for fish farming
- The region needs more Aboriginal health, education and other professional workers.

6.3.2 What the Census data tells us

In 2021, 57.2% of the Aboriginal population of working age (18-64) were in the labour force. 38.2% were employed full-time, and 19% part-time. This is a significant increase since 2011, when only 44.3% of this group was in the labour force. However, it is well below the non-Indigenous labour force participation rate of 78.6%. Quite a large proportion of Aboriginal people of working age are not in the labour force (42.8%) (See Appendix Table A11). This means they are not actively looking for a job. This may reflect a higher number of people who have given up searching for work because they perceive that none is available, and a higher proportion of people with health and disability constraints. The labour force

participation rates of men and women are similar, so it is not a reflection of women specifically staying home to care for young children.

There is a difference between male and female employment, with around 60% of men employed full time, but over 70% of women employed part-time (Fig 7 below).

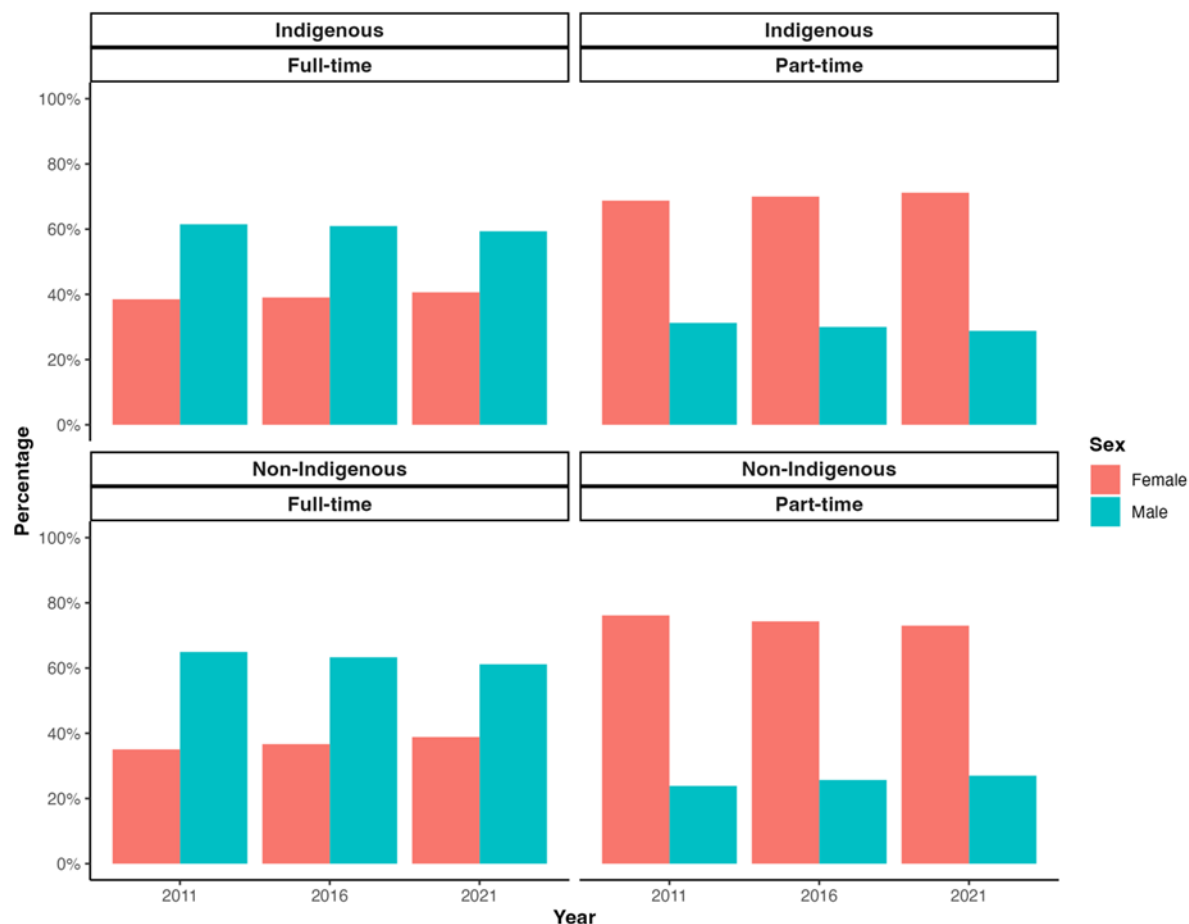


Figure 7 : Labour force status by Indigenous status and sex in TRRA, 2011-2021. Source: ABS.

Compared to the non-Indigenous population, more young people (20.1% compared to 10.6% non-Indigenous) and fewer older people aged 55-64 (11.7% compared to 19.1% non-Indigenous) are full time employed. This may reflect the fact that fewer Aboriginal young people go on to further study after school, and the poor health of older Aboriginal people (Appendix Fig A3 and Table A12).

11.8% of the Aboriginal working age population are in professional roles, a small increase since 2011 (11.2% then). This is somewhat lower than the proportion of the non-Indigenous population in professional roles, which is 19.2%. (Appendix Table A13).

6.8% of Aboriginal people are owner-managers, a small increase in the last decade (in 2011, 5.9% were owner managers). Of the 538 Aboriginal owner managers, 63.2% are male, and 36.8% female. (Appendix Table A14).

6.3.3 NSW Government Policy

The NSW Government has Aboriginal Economic Prosperity as a priority within its *OCHRE* Aboriginal Affairs Policy¹⁴. Its main strategies are the development of Industry Based Agreements and the Aboriginal Procurement Policy (2021). The Aboriginal Procurement Policy requires annual targets of 3% of goods and services contracts and 1% of all addressable spend to go to First Nations businesses. In 2023 the policy was reviewed and a number of recommendations to improve it have been made arising from that review which could strengthen the policy if adopted.

Under the NSW CtG Implementation Plan, Socio-economic outcome 8 is ‘Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal people and their communities.’ To achieve this, the Government is committed to ensure:

- Aboriginal business owners and staff, and Aboriginal people looking to start a business, make high-quality business decisions
- Aboriginal businesses access consumers and supply chains more effectively
- Aboriginal people have sustainable employment and are skilled in the industries of the future
- Aboriginal businesses have access to finance and insurance services to support business growth

It is not clear in the plan how these commitments will be achieved.

6.3.4 Developments to date

In the last Accord there was agreement to ‘substantially strengthen the economic opportunity and participation for Aboriginal peoples within the TRRA footprint’. The most successful strategies towards this goal were Health and Career Expos for high school students; scholarships to support studies in the Health workforce area; and a Regional Industry Based Agreement focussing on health workforce development.

The Accord also committed to trialling the development of a compliance and enforcement plan regarding contracts under the APP including trialling regular compliance reporting mechanisms to the Three Rivers Regional Assembly. This did not occur, but the TRRA members believed that government was placing too much reliance on its APP which may have achieved targets at State level, but which did not appear to have much effect within the TRRA footprint. Feedback from TRRA delegates indicates that Aboriginal people are not actively engaged at an early stage in government-funded infrastructure projects, and they are missing out on many economic development opportunities as a result. Nor is there training made available to Aboriginal people for skills required in the pipeline of infrastructure projects coming to the region. There may be many local opportunities for Aboriginal people to provide services to a whole range of government departments but these are not occurring.

Notably TRRA observes that Local Government offers many smaller contracts in their localities which could be very suitable for Aboriginal businesses, but without a requirement

¹⁴ <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/policy-reform/economic-prosperity/>

for Aboriginal procurement (APP) it is difficult for Aboriginal businesses to break into these opportunities.

6.3.5 What TRRA wants

TRRA wants to engage with Commonwealth, State and Local Government on economic development opportunities in the TRRA footprint. It wants to strengthen employment opportunities for Aboriginal men and women, and increase the number and scope of local Aboriginal businesses in its footprint. To achieve this it wants:

- Local Government to be required to comply with the State Aboriginal Procurement Policy, and this policy to prioritise 100% Aboriginal owned businesses
- A TRRA seat at the table where economic decisions are being made, a closer relationship with the Contractors who gain the major government contracts in the Central West region, and greater support for Aboriginal businesses to strengthen and grow (e.g. a local Aboriginal business directory, endorsed by community)
- a higher proportion of Aboriginal people in employment, including a greater proportion in professional roles, especially in health, education and other professions in demand, such as electrical engineering for renewable energy.
- new Regional Industry Based agreements to continue the work of Health workforce development and add Education workforce development.
- Aboriginal people to have real opportunities for ongoing employment and contracting in the renewable energy sector (e.g the Central West - Orana Renewable energy zone)
- all ALRA 1983 land claims in the TRRA footprint resolved to provide Aboriginal people with greater economic development opportunities.
- Aboriginal people to have rights to water to use for commercial purposes, not just cultural purposes.

6.4 Education

Goal: all Aboriginal children to achieve to their full potential, strong in their culture, and able to move confidently through clear pathways to tertiary education and their desired jobs and careers.

6.4.1 Issues raised in consultations:

- A need for Aboriginal Liaison Officers in all schools, and an Aboriginal counsellor in schools
- Need for cultural learning goals in PLPs and more cultural education and cultural support in schools – the education system does not have a full cultural understanding
- Need accelerated Aboriginal language programs in schools
- Some Aboriginal children start school already at a disadvantage and need early support to enable them to have a good start in life, including in pre-schools

- Need transparency on use of funding provided to schools in response to Aboriginal enrolments
- Focus needs to be not just on school attendance but the outcomes Aboriginal children are achieving – they need to be able to operate in the mainstream world
- Need for literacy teaching in high schools for those who have not developed adequate literacy through primary school
- Parents need to know how their children are performing compared to State averages
- Need teachers who know how to teach Aboriginal children successfully – many are inexperienced, there is high turnover, and more local teachers are needed
- Schools need better engagement with their Aboriginal communities beyond NAIDOC week
- Need implementation of the in-school suspension policy and transparent data about suspensions.
- In some schools, absence of face to face parent-teacher interviews
- Lack of information to parents when schools have lockdowns due to fighting
- Some schools are providing breakfast programs then reporting families whose children come to them, for neglect, which is entirely wrong.
- Schools need to care properly for children on excursions
- There is a need for intervention programs for a small group of disruptive children on weekends (Gilgandra)

6.4.2 What the Census data tells us

The ABS Census data reveals that of young Aboriginal people aged 18-24 years in the TRRA footprint, the proportion who have completed Year 12 has increased considerably in the last decade from 31.6% in 2011 to 47.2% in 2021. Compared to non-Indigenous young people of the same age, there remains a way to go, as 66.7% of those had completed Year 12 in 2021 (Table 8).

Table 8 Completion of Year 12 by people aged between 18 and 24

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2011		2021		% change	2011		2021		% change
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Population aged between 18 and 24										
Population aged 18-24	2,066	100.0%	3,116	100.0%	50.8%	15,867	100.0%	14,814	100.0%	-6.6%
Completion of Year 12										
People aged 18-24 who completed Year 12	652	31.6%	1,470	47.2%	125.5%	9,127	57.5%	9,886	66.7%	8.3%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2021

Looking beyond school, the majority of Aboriginal people with a post school qualification have an advanced diploma or certificate level qualification (31.5% of all adults 18-64). Some 5.5% (746 Aboriginal people) have a Graduate Diploma or Bachelor's degree, while just 0.7% (93 Aboriginal people) have a postgraduate degree (Table 9). These reflect increases over the last decade e.g. from 3.5% of Indigenous people in 2011 to 5.5% in 2021 with a

graduate Diploma or Bachelor's Degree) , indicating that better outcomes are possible (see Table 9).

Table 9 Higher education attainment by people aged between 18 and 64 (percentages are of total population)

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2011		2021		% change	2011		2021		% change
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Population aged between 18 and 64										
Population aged 18-64	8,571	100.0%	13,601	100.0%	58.7%	113,239	100.0%	118,021	100.0%	4.2%
Post-secondary Educational Attainment										
Postgraduate Degree	26	0.3%	93	0.7%	257.7%	2,149	1.9%	5,274	4.5%	145.4%
Diploma and Bachelor	298	3.5%	746	5.5%	150.3%	14,547	12.8%	21,525	18.2%	48.0%
Advanced diploma and certificate level	1,998	23.3%	4,281	31.5%	114.3%	40,167	35.5%	42,851	36.3%	6.7%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2021

The non-Indigenous picture has 36.3% with an advanced diploma or certificate level qualification, 18.2% with a diploma or bachelor's degree and 4.5% with a postgraduate qualification (Table 9).

To some extent this pattern reflects job provider requirements to complete a range of Certificate courses and Aboriginal people working in trades; but it also means that few Aboriginal people are getting the professional qualifications they need to work in the health, education and other professions where they are sorely needed. This is an area to focus on.

In terms of the proportion of young people aged 15-24 in education, employment or training, the data shows (Table 10) that 68.6% of all young Aboriginal people in this age group are engaged in employment, education and/or training. The largest proportion are in employment (27.8%), with another 16.6% engaged in employment and education. 24.2% are engaged in education or training only. This reflects an increase in young Aboriginal people in employment since 2011 but a slight decrease in those in education or training alone. However, the proportion employed and also studying has almost doubled. However, to achieve parity with non-Indigenous young people, almost 20% more Aboriginal young people (currently around 940 individuals) need to be engaged in employment, education or training.

Table 10 Employment, education, and training engagement for people aged between 15 and 24 (percentages are of total population 15-24 years)

	Indigenous							Non-Indigenous						
	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)
	No	%	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	No	%	
People aged 15-24	3,318	100.0%	4,085	100.0%	4,699	100.0%	41.6%	23,645	100.0%	21,752	100.0%	22,199	100.0%	-6.1%
Total	1,940	58.5%	2,531	62.0%	3,222	68.6%	66.1%	19,799	83.7%	18,072	83.1%	19,239	86.7%	-2.8%
Employment	697	21.0%	918	22.5%	1,304	27.8%	87.1%	7,867	33.3%	6,930	31.9%	7,386	33.3%	-6.1%
Education and training	942	28.4%	1,151	28.2%	1,138	24.2%	20.8%	6,967	29.5%	6,598	30.3%	5,917	26.7%	-15.1%
Both employment, and education and training	301	9.1%	462	11.3%	780	16.6%	159.1%	4,965	21.0%	4,544	20.9%	5,936	26.7%	19.6%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016, and 2021.

Of non-Indigenous young people 15-24 years, some 86.7% are engaged in employment education or training. One third (33.3%) are employed, and another 26.7% are both employed and studying. Just 27.7% are engaged in education or training alone.

6.4.3 NSW Government Policy

The NSW Government has an extensive Aboriginal Education policy, which among other things commits it to ‘improving the educational outcomes and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students so that they excel and achieve in every aspect of their education.’ This policy continues:

‘It is the goal of the department that, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.

The department is committed to increasing knowledge and understanding of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia.’

The Department of Education has a partnership with the NSW AECG and recognises that organisation as the ‘peak community advisory body to the department on Aboriginal education at all levels and in all stages of planning and decision making.’¹⁵ Unfortunately the AECG is not active across all areas in TRRA’s footprint, and as a result of this partnership, the Department prefers not to partner with TRRA at a regional level (although some informal collaboration arrangements are in place in Dubbo).

The Education Department is working strongly within a CtG framework, where the outcome targets are:

- By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Full time Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95%. This target is on track to be met.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70%.
- By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67%.

None of the CtG target outcomes address directly the concerns expressed for more cultural focus in the school curriculum and ethos which TRRA delegates want to see.

However, to achieve these targets, the NSW CtG implementation plan is committed to the following:

¹⁵¹⁵ <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec/policy-strategy-and-business-systems#Aboriginal0>

- The NSW Department of Education is culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, including through the services it funds and regulates, and the staff it employs
- Aboriginal children are engaged at key transition points between early childhood education and school
- Aboriginal children are adequately supported in their early years
- The NSW Department of Education is transformed to embed Aboriginal culture, community and heritage
- The NSW Department of Education is culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, including through the services it funds and regulates, and the staff it employs
- Education providers work with community to improve engagement of Aboriginal children and young people
- Support is provided at key transition points throughout the learning continuum

These commitments suggest that many of the TRRA concerns about education in the footprint should be addressed in the near future, but significant efforts will be required to achieve them. Feedback from delegates on the ground indicates that much more work is needed.

6.4.4 Developments to date in TRRA footprint

During the first TRRA Accord period progress in the Education area was limited, both because the Department did not inform school principals in the Region of the Accord agreements and because some commitments made in the Accord were not consistent with Education Department policies. The Department's emphasis on working with AECG on CtG targets was also a factor. Nevertheless, in Dubbo and Orange some good progress was made on alternative education programs (e.g. Learning Hub), but more needs to be done in the more remote schools to engage some children; TRRA has also established relationships with school principals with a focus on cultural safety. The focus of TRRA was very much on student suspensions, and the need for schools to make provision for in-school suspensions. There was also an expressed wish for more cultural education in schools. Across NSW, on average, Indigenous students, by Year 3 are already behind their non-Indigenous peers on all aspects of NAPLAN testing¹⁶ (reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy) indicating that early support is required to enable Aboriginal children to achieve as well as their non-Indigenous classmates.

6.4.5 What TRRA wants:

- More cultural and language programs in schools, and PLPs to all have cultural learning goals
- School staff to be culturally competent so that students are culturally safe in schools; and training of teachers about successful approaches to teaching Aboriginal students

¹⁶ <https://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia/naplan-national-results>; Comparison of average NAPLAN score for Year 3 Indigenous students compared to non-Indigenous students by State.

- More focus on, and accountability for, achievement of educational outcomes for Aboriginal students in order to open opportunities to them as they transition from school
- Closer ongoing relationships between schools and their Aboriginal communities, especially parents (beyond NAIDOC week), including Aboriginal Education Committees in all schools
- Use of funding provided in response to Aboriginal disadvantage to be transparent, and used to give extra support to Aboriginal children who need it, with early years support particularly important
- More Aboriginal students completing Year 12 and going on to do degrees and diploma level courses with professional qualifications, particularly in health and education
- More Aboriginal staff in schools, including an Aboriginal Liaison Officer and Aboriginal Counsellor available in every school
- Greater resourcing to the Manager of the Aboriginal Education Unit to enable her to move around the region more frequently/ fulfil her responsibilities in the region more effectively
- In-school suspension policy to be implemented across the region.

6.5 Child Protection

Goal: Child removals cease and earlier, holistic supports are put in place for families that need it, so that children can stay in their care and maintain their cultural connections.

6.5.1 Issues raised in consultations

- The removal of children from Aboriginal families is of great concern to TRRA. In particular TRRA is aware that children removed are often held in motels, which is considered highly traumatising for these children. TRRA has been seeking data on child removals from the NSW government but has not been given this data.
- Rather than remove children from families, TRRA wants to see families supported to keep their children, with holistic support for any problems they are facing. TRRA urges earlier intervention to support families who might otherwise become at risk of having children removed.
- Child removal is seen as another form of stolen generation, with all the cultural loss implications, and trauma for the removed child or children as well as the families. The threat of removal of children from women reporting or fleeing family violence is particularly galling, and can lead to women remaining quietly in violent relationships at great harm to themselves and their children.

6.5.2 What the data tells us

Table 11 reveals that since 2016 the rate of Aboriginal children in Out of Home Care in the Western region of NSW as a whole has reduced from 17 per 1000 population in 2016 to 7 per 1000 population in 2022. However the rate for non-Indigenous people is only 1 per 1,000. Thus, Aboriginal children in the Western region of NSW are being removed at 7 times the rate of non-Indigenous children.

Table 11 Children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) among Indigenous and Non-Indigenous in TRRA region from 2015 to 2022.

Years	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous			
	Number of children and young people in OOHC	Rate of children and young people (per 1000 population) entering OOHC	% of children and young people entering OOHC	% of children and young people entering OOHC for the first time from people entering OOHC in year	Number of children and young people in OOHC	Rate of children and young people (per 1000 population) entering OOHC	% of children and young people entering OOHC	% of children and young people entering OOHC for the first time from people entering OOHC in year
2015	992	17	19.7%	75.9%	597	2	21.9%	90.8%
2016	1,015	15	16.7%	88.8%	648	2	19.3%	92.0%
2017	970	12	14.2%	73.2%	646	2	16.6%	89.7%
2018	900	7	9.1%	61.0%	575	1	10.8%	74.2%
2019	856	7	12.5%	60.7%	506	1	14.6%	77.0%
2020	807	8	14.1%	64.9%	487	1	14.4%	58.6%
2021	842	13	23.0%	73.7%	425	1	13.2%	75.0%
2022	787	7	11.9%	62.8%	369	1	14.9%	67.3%

Source: Aboriginal-led data sharing, Child Protection and Out of Home Care Dashboard by DCJ Statistics.

However, a greater proportion of Aboriginal children than other children are in Relative and kinship care (357) rather than foster care (109) and none are in other residential settings (Appendix Table A15). It is not clear how many of those relatives and kin are Aboriginal, as some may be with non-Indigenous kin.

6.5.3 NSW Government Policy

NSW government policy is that children can trigger child protection intervention for a number of reasons, which include where they are neglected. Neglect is defined as when ‘a parent or caregiver cannot regularly give a child the basic things needed for his or her growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care.’ Poverty can thus be grounds for neglect. Sexual, physical and emotional abuse are also grounds for child protection to intervene and potentially remove children.

In a recent development, the Department of Communities and Justice has announced that,

‘In line with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles, the NSW government is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) and their carers are case managed and supported by Aboriginal community-controlled OOHC agencies.

To fulfil this commitment, NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) is transferring the case management of Aboriginal young people and their carers to Aboriginal community controlled OOHC agencies. These agencies are best placed to facilitate cultural connection and provide carers with cultural capability training.’

Unfortunately at the present time in the TRRA footprint, there are no Aboriginal community-controlled organisations dealing with out of home care to which services can be transferred.

6.5.4 Developments to date

The issue of child protection was not one of the four priority areas in the last TRRA Accord, although it has been a concern of Aboriginal people in the TRRA footprint for a long time.

6.5.5 What TRRA wants

- Early identification of families at risk of having a child or children removed so that TRRA can identify and advocate for the necessary supports to be put in place to prevent the situation deteriorating to the point of child removal, and to assist the family
- In particular where poverty may be contributing to child removal, TRRA asserts that the poverty should be addressed, rather than the child or children removed
- Capacity building of ACCOs to take on the work of OOHC management in TRRA’s footprint.
- Data on the number of Aboriginal children being removed in its region
- Notification as soon as any child is at risk of or has been removed, so that it can assist with supporting the family or placing that child with another Aboriginal family member.

6.6 Culture and Heritage

Goal: Aboriginal culture and heritage is protected, sustained and celebrated.

6.6.1 Issues raised in consultations:

- Need for better protection of cultural heritage, including freshwater
- Weirs in the river are stopping the river flow and access to Murray Cod and other fish - a major source of nutritious food
- Access to the rivers is difficult and rivers are mismanaged. Rivers are blocked which means cultural tours are not possible; cultural flows of water are badly needed
- A lot of warrior's graves and other significant sites need protection
- There is a lack of Aboriginal presence in the Dubbo Cultural Centre
- Need Aboriginal cultural centres, with secure keeping places for cultural artefacts and records

6.6.2 NSW Government policy:

The NSW Department of Environment and Heritage is responsible for the protection and preservation of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. It does this by various activities (e.g. declaration of Aboriginal Places, the AHIP system).

The Department of Primary Industries is responsible for Cultural water licences. It states:

‘The NSW Government has committed to increasing Aboriginal ownership of and access to water for cultural and economic purposes. Aboriginal people can access water for cultural purposes through an [Aboriginal Cultural Specific Purpose Access Licence](#). At the end of 2022, uptake of this licence was very low, with only 7 licences ever issued, and 2 remaining in place. Aboriginal LALCs can apply for these 10ML cultural water licences for a range of cultural purposes (e.g. to rehabilitate degraded wetlands, to develop aquaculture for traditional use). Aboriginal cultural water licences are free of charge to eligible applicants until mid-2025.¹⁷

The Aboriginal Water Program is looking to understand the barriers and challenges experienced by people looking to access water for cultural purposes.’

In 2023 6 pilot locations were selected for Aboriginal people to develop Cultural Watering Plans for their communities.¹⁸

6.6.3 What TRRA wants:

- Support for LALC members and native title holders to manage all significant cultural sites, including grave sites, in their areas on public and private land
- Greater opportunities for special purpose cultural water licences in the TRRA footprint

¹⁷ <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/projects-and-programs/aboriginal-water-program/cultural-water-access-for-aboriginal-people>

¹⁸ <https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/projects-and-programs/aboriginal-water-program/cultural-watering-plans>

- Negotiation with the NSW Government about removal of blockages in the river which are preventing culturally important flows
- Greater representation of Aboriginal culture in arts and cultural centres in regional towns
- Support for the development of Aboriginal Cultural Centres in the region.

6.7 Incarceration and youth at risk

Goal: The rate of Aboriginal incarceration and recidivism (return to jail) is reduced; and young people who are at risk of interaction with the justice system are supported with alternative activities and pathways.

6.7.1 Issues raised in consultations:

- In the towns close to jails in particular, issues to do with incarceration of Aboriginal people were raised in the consultations. For example, at Bathurst people expressed the need for better systems for transition from jail, such as housing and support services, including drug and alcohol and mental health services.
- At the Wellington consultation, the need for activities to involve youth and divert them from crime was raised, as was the need for transition housing and better processes for release of inmates, to avoid them returning to jail very quickly. For example, alerting the LALC of impending release of Aboriginal prisoners so that arrangements can be made to transport them to their home towns.

6.7.2 What the data tells us

Across the TRRA footprint between 2018 and 2022, 55.4% of all offenders and 32% of all victims were Indigenous. In both cases this is a much higher rate of offending and victimisation than their proportion of the population (Appendix Table A16).

The major types of offences were: Regulatory offences (e.g. breaches of orders) 39.1%; theft (19.2%) and break and enter of non-dwellings (7.6%), intimidation, stalking and harassment (12.5%), and domestic violence related assault (8.9%). (Appendix Table A17)

The Indigenous victims experienced: intimidation, stalking and harassment (29.1%), Domestic violence related assault (28.8%), AVO breached (23.3%), and non-DV related assault (12.1%)(Appendix Table A18). Typically, the majority of victims of domestic violence are female.

This suggests that domestic violence is a major source of victimisation, with stalking and harassment and AVO orders breached highly related. Much of the offending clearly relates to this domestic violence, along with thefts, some involving break and enter to commercial premises. Some offending may also relate to driving unlicensed.

6.7.3 NSW Government policy

Domestic violence is treated as a health issue in NSW, and 24 hour crisis support is available at the emergency departments of Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange hospitals. Local hospitals can provide referrals to support.

The NSW Department of Health has an Aboriginal Family Health Strategy which provides:

‘a framework for responding to family violence in Aboriginal communities within a culturally competent, family based context with a focus on healing....The strategy describes a model of care and presents positive action based solutions which aim to:

- reduce the incidence and impact of family violence in Aboriginal communities
- build the capacity and strength of individuals and communities to prevent, respond to and recover from family violence
- nurture the spirit, resilience and cultural identity that builds Aboriginal families.’¹⁹

It is unclear whether the strategy is current, or what programs flow from it in TRRA’s footprint.

There are insufficient programs to engage young people at risk of offending, and these may be the people likely to engage in opportunistic theft and break and enter crimes. Solutions to these problems involve schools as well as youth services, engaging young people and guiding them into alternate pathways. Poverty may also drive some thefts.

The NSW Correctional Centres policy on ‘Release from correctional centres’²⁰ focusses almost entirely on within prison procedures. But it does say, ‘Where there is a demonstrated need (e.g. the inmate does not have the finances or any other means of transport to their residence) inmates are entitled to financial assistance to meet the cost of travelling to their residence within NSW’²¹ It refers to scheduled and unscheduled releases but says midnight releases are ‘not generally recommended to be an acceptable practice; however the governor/MOS/FM has the final discretion.’ It would be valuable for TRRA to raise some of the release procedure problems raised during the consultations with the relevant prison authorities.

6.7.4 Developments to date

TRRA has not engaged in advocacy on these issues to date.

6.7.5 What TRRA wants

- Adequate programs within the TRRA footprint to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and related problems of intimidation, stalking and harassment and breaches of AVOs
- Programs to provide meaningful pathways to young people to avoid the criminal justice system
- Jail release procedures to engage with LALCs and ensure prisoners are released during business hours and with adequate warning to arrange transportation to the prisoners’ home town. This should help reduce recidivism.

6.8 Overarching issues

¹⁹ <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/aboriginal/Pages/default.aspx>

²⁰ <https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/copp/releases-from-correctional-centres.pdf>

²¹ <https://correctiveservices.dcj.nsw.gov.au/documents/copp/releases-from-correctional-centres.pdf>

6.8.1 Accountability and transparency

Goal: TRRA wants the NSW government to provide it with accurate information on programs and services in its region, which organisation is responsible for delivering them, and what funding is supposed to be provided; it also wants access to any administrative or other data the NSW government holds about the Aboriginal people of the TRRA region.

Issues raised in consultations:

- More accountability and transparency is needed from governments and CAPO for implementing programs to achieve the CtG targets in TRRA's footprint
- More accountability for truth-telling about the history of the TRRA region
- The failure of government to provide Aboriginal data that it holds. e.g. how many Aboriginal children are being removed from families in the TRRA footprint and why?
- What funding is being provided to which organisations to provide services to Aboriginal people in the TRRA footprint? We want to know how well they are being delivered on the ground, and we need to end duplication of services.
- Which organisations are benefitting from the Aboriginal Procurement Policy to deliver contracts in our region? How many are only 51% Aboriginal owned, rather than fully Aboriginal owned?
- Accountability to local communities is required, so consultations are needed at grassroots level.

6.8.2 What the data tells us

See below, for information available from the NSW government.

6.8.3 NSW Government policy

- The NSW Government has a policy on Indigenous data sovereignty: 'We acknowledge and respect Indigenous Data Sovereignty – the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their data....
- We work with the Aboriginal Community of NSW on all aspects of the Data Strategy to embed principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance.
- We recognise Aboriginal community members for their expertise as part of the Data Strategy and we involve them in its governance.'²²

Data sovereignty is one of the four priority reforms under the CtG agreement.

There is information available about the NSW CtG implementation Plan , but no further detail about how CtG spending is being directed to the TRRA region, and no public information about evaluation of the programs designed to achieve the targets.

²² <https://data.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government-data-strategy/themes-principles-and-actions/strengthening-transparency-and-trust>

The NSW Aboriginal Procurement policy website²³ provides information on the total value and number of contracts under the APP by Department, but no further detail is provided about the successful contractors or the type and location of services to be provided.

6.8.4 Developments to date

TRRA has tried before to get information on children being removed from Aboriginal families but has only been shown data for the whole of NSW.

6.8.5 What TRRA wants

- the Indigenous data sovereignty policy implemented with respect to the TRRA footprint
- Information on how the CtG policy is being implemented within its footprint, including programs and services being funded
- Information on organisations in the region who are funded to provide programs and services to Aboriginal people in the footprint
- Information on APP beneficiaries and the contracts they are meant to deliver in its region.
- NSW Government consultation processes to reach to the grassroots level, including the smaller towns in the north-west of the TRRA footprint
- NSW government to educate all its staff through truth telling about the past

6.9 Better engagement with Local Government

Goal: For Aboriginal people in the region to have a stronger voice in and better engagement with Local Government, including APP applying to Local Government procurement

6.9.1 Issues raised in consultations:

- Need genuine engagement with local government
- need for good engagement protocols with local government
- Local governments have no Aboriginal procurement policies and Aboriginal people miss out on contracting opportunities as community are not engaged by local governments (or where there are MOUs these are not honoured)
- Local governments have poor consultation practices
- Local government is a barrier to a lot of developments that would help the Aboriginal community
- Local government needs to engage with native title holders

²³ <https://www.info.buy.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/aboriginal-procurement-policy>

6.9.2 What the data tells us

There is no relevant data available, although the relevant local government websites give little to no prominence to the traditional owners of their lands, and no information about reconciliation plans or their involvement in CtG.

6.9.3 NSW Government policy

The NSW Government Aboriginal Procurement policy does not apply to Local Government.

Local Governments are parties to the national Closing the Gap Agreement through the Australian Local Government Association and in NSW, through the NSW Local Government Association.

6.9.4 Developments to date

This is a new area for TRRA

6.9.5 What TRRA wants

- Genuine engagement with Local Governments in the TRRA footprint, including in relation to land and land use planning
- Local government to develop consultation protocols which factor in native title holders and Land Councils as well as other Aboriginal organisations in their jurisdiction
- The NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy to apply to local governments
- Local Governments to proactively reach out to Aboriginal organisations and businesses to advise them in a timely way about contracting opportunities.
- Local governments to consider the size of their growing Aboriginal populations in developing services, to ensure inclusion
- Encourage Aboriginal people to stand for election to Local Government
- Local governments to develop Reconciliation Action Plans with the support of Reconciliation Australia.

7 HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN

TRRA will implement this plan building on relationships we have developed since 2015. We will maintain our own good governance and communication with our member organisations, and be responsive to them.

In particular TRRA will promote and advocate for the agenda set out in this plan through:

- continuing to strengthen our relationships with the NSW State Government, particularly the Departments concerned with Housing, Health, Economic Development and Education as well as those concerned with Child Protection, Corrections, and Culture and Heritage.
- developing closer relationships with Local Governments in the Region and inviting them to actively support these regional priorities
- Maintaining and strengthening relationships with the Commonwealth Government, particularly through the National Indigenous Australians Agency.
- Participation in NCARA and, in future, the CtG Joint Council to influence policy, program and funding decisions made at the NSW State level which will have implications for the TRRA footprint.

8 HOW WE WILL EVALUATE THIS PLAN

TRRA will carry out ongoing monitoring of its achievements in relation to this plan through a 6-monthly participatory review at its regular TRRA meetings. It will seek to obtain and maintain data relating to the plan to track progress throughout the life of the plan.

It will hold an annual participatory assessment of progress against the plan with TRRA delegates and Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

It will invite an independent evaluation of its progress in 2028, including through access to data from the 2026 Census.

APPENDIX A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM EVALUATION OF LOCAL DECISION MAKING IN TRRA REGION.

- **Shared decision making** between TRRA and government is not yet significant, but TRRA has been able to influence government decision making around health and housing, and to a lesser extent economic development and education. But this has not yet translated into many outcomes that ordinary community members can see, and many feel that the relationship remains very unequal.
- The most important outcome is that **relationships** have been developed enabling TRRA to engage with government in an effective way on behalf of its constituency.
- TRRA is a **suitable vehicle** to advance the aspirational agendas of the regional Aboriginal community. TRRA's capacity to know how and where to influence particular decisions has grown significantly in the last two years.
- **Funding** for TRRA was not sufficient from the outset, and though it grew, only since March 2022 was it sufficient to partner adequately with government across all areas of the Accord.
- There was a slow start to Accord implementation because of **structural and staff changes** within government, and TRRA initially having only a voluntary Chair. The partnership has matured over the past two years, and is particularly good where there are senior Aboriginal staff in government.
- Aboriginal people's **lived experience** is beginning to be understood in some areas of government, but government still needs to trust Aboriginal voices when they identify needs and opportunities, and to respond rather than push-back.
- The TRRA Accord did not prioritise shifting ownership of service delivery to the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, but where government decisions to shift services to **community** control are made, and these are relevant to priorities in the Accord, TRRA should have input into shared decision making regarding services in TRRA localities.
- TRRA is pushing government departments to deliver on all the Accord agreements as far as possible, though progress has been slow, in part due to COVID-19, but also due to other factors. There is evidence of **responsiveness** in some areas, but there remains inertia or push-back from some areas of government.
- **Contractors and sub-contractors** need to be seen as stakeholders in co-design and accountability to Regional Alliances/Assemblies, together with government organisations. Regional Alliances/Assemblies could also play a valuable role in verifying whether local companies are in fact Aboriginal, in relation to the Aboriginal Procurement Policy.
- **Communication** and feedback by government and TRRA to Aboriginal community members has been weak.

- **Cultural competency** training only began in NSW Government departments in 2022 so it is too early to assess its impact.
- It was difficult for TRRA to obtain information on resource allocation by mainstream organisations in relation to dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service delivery. The Aboriginal community can hold services accountable for delivery if they know what services are supposed to be provided.
- The TRRA Accord is only in the first phase of what was originally designed as a three-phase process, TRRA has developed capacity and could move to a greater level of decision making if sustained. **Ongoing and increased funding** is required to sustain TRRA's regional governance role with greater effect.
- Local Decision Making needs to **work in tandem** with state-wide CTG policies to ensure **truth testing** occurs on the ground about whether and how well services are delivered. A focus must remain on achieving the priority outcomes that the Aboriginal communities in the TRRA footprint want to see.
- Any future Accord should include **local government** and the NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy should also be adopted by local government.

APPENDIX B ISSUES RAISED IN COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Orange 21 August

- Need to align with many existing plans that are currently being updated, so need to wait for them to be finalised late this year.
- Development of more accredited community-controlled human services, especially in child protection/out of home care, and
- Regionalisation of some existing services to support smaller towns, eg health, family services, safety, housing and support for planning in smaller towns that don't have their own plans, including help in building small social enterprises.
- Economic development
- Cultural heritage, and especially freshwater
- Renewable energy
- Housing/homelessness
- Access to data eg on the number of children being removed in Orange.

Warren 24 August

- Health – need culturally safe health services, more drug and alcohol & mental health services, & transport to Dubbo
- Housing – considerable overcrowding, need more social housing and case work support to families trashing houses
- Freshwater (weir stopping river flow and access to Murray Cod – major source of food) and environmental outcomes needed
- cultural heritage and economic development e.g. opportunities for employment when construction projects come into the area, or river repair projects, fisheries opportunities, etc.
- Local Government employment & procurement opportunities.
- Child protection – need to stop child removals. Need access to data eg re child protection and support for families.
- Education – need outcomes, skills, not just enrolment. Need literacy at high school level. Transparency re school's use of funding re Aboriginal disadvantage and more educational support for students.
- Renewable Energy – outcomes needed.
- Genuine engagement with Local Government (Warren Shire). Needs engagement protocols.

Mudgee 5 September

- Housing – No social housing available, rents extremely high. Overcrowding common. Social housing is highest priority.
- Health – there is no AMS in Mudgee – nearest is Wellington or Dubbo, and no Aboriginal staffing in any health institution in town; also need transport for medical appointments. Long wait times to see a Dr. and no dental.
- Education – no Aboriginal liaison officer at the schools – need ALOs
- Economic Development – very few Aboriginal people employed, including only 3 (not all local) in mines and none in Local Government.
- LALC developing a Cultural Centre with tourism opportunities; will need a bus. Can't do River tours as River is blocked.
- Renewable energy possibility on land under claim.

Bathurst 14 September

- LALC needs a new building with room for an AMS as well and a person to write submissions.
- Housing is a major issue – There are government houses boarded up and empty in Bathurst and Kelso – these need to be renovated and made available for rent; LALC could manage them. Housing needed for people with disability; need larger men's refuge ; men are sleeping at the River. Rents are going up, and people who are illiterate can't read rent rise letters they are sent so get behind in rent; and once tenants get a job, rents go up to unaffordable; this is a disincentive to employment; tenant liaison needs to be better. LALC has 25 blocks suitable for new builds but it is 35kms from town, so not suitable for Aboriginal housing; homeowners' rates are rising fast – perhaps 70%.
- Transition from Jail – need for housing and services (eg AOD, mental health) to support people on release
- Overall there is a huge need for holistic housing services for families, not just housing.
- Cultural heritage protection – a lot of warriors' graves and other significant sites need protection; And cultural water flows are badly needed.
- Economic Development – while there are a lot of infrastructure opportunities in Bathurst Aboriginal people miss out, the community is never engaged. Bathurst Shire Council does not enforce any Aboriginal procurement policy.
- Health - There is no AMS in Bathurst and one is needed. Hospital is good; but no engagement with the Primary Health Network. Need more mental health workers; NDIS applications made and nothing happens. Orange hospital mental health – discharge them to nothing – need mental health support for problems of stolen generation, ice, DV etc
- Child Protection – needs an ACCO resourced to bring this under community control; kinship carers should be paid.
- Education – need in school suspension policy implemented. West Bathurst PS has 3 Aboriginal workers and its doing well; St Gregory's (private school) takes 75 kids/month

home for the weekend to NW NSW, so they don't get too homesick; other schools need to put more in place to support kids. CSU University pretty good with scholarships etc.

- Need to foster young emerging leaders in the town/region.

Wellington 19 September

- Ongoing employment is a high priority; opportunities include tourism development and cultural centre at the Town Common/Nanima Mission (needs manager and nursery development) ; renewable energy on LALC land and jobs in renewable energy – but companies aren't engaging other than some consultations.
- Need an economic development officer working with the LALC; 4 Renewable energy projects around Wellington but Aboriginal community not getting any benefit at this stage; got a water licence but no outcomes from that. Need a training centre.
- Housing – Many AHO Houses are boarded up – need to be renovated and made available.- employment for Aboriginal people; There is a former Aged Care Centre which construction workers are using, why not hand it over to Aboriginal community when construction workers leave?
- Aboriginal people could be engaged in Aged Care packages
- Need quarterly men's , women's and youth gatherings
- Need something to involve youth as a lot of crime,
- Health – need a full time Dr at the hospital; more drug/alcohol and mental health services; DV service & emergency accommodation – as have to go to Dubbo.
- Incarceration – transition housing and better processes for release of inmates; can inmates build houses as in Cobar?

Dubbo 16 October 2023

- Support current four priorities – Health, Housing Economic Development and Education, plus add Child protection and cultural heritage
- Child protection is a high priority in Dubbo, but concerns about how funds for that are being spent; Government needs to engage with communities about kinship care, and neglect and poverty should not be confused. The community could place a lot more children with kin. There is no Aboriginal community controlled organisation for this in Dubbo.
- Truth Telling about the atrocities, recognition as the First Peoples, accountability and transparency are key issues.
- Accountability and transparency is needed for where Aboriginal funding is spent in Dubbo – its not reaching the local level, and we have no information about what is meant to be provided
- Accountability and transparency is also needed from Government and CAPO for achieving the Closing the Gap Targets. Data of all sorts is needed at local level, e.g. re how many children being removed in Dubbo? We need to collect our own data regularly as government

wont share data they have. Need to hold CAPO and Government to account, and we need reporting back on decisions. We need consistent access to local data.

- Accountability is needed re economic development – organisations that are only 51% Aboriginal owned, not fully Aboriginal owned, are getting large procurement funds.
- Accountability to local communities – grassroots consultations have to happen.
- Aboriginal people within Government need to be listened to – they need to have influence within.
- Education – we need to know how well our Year 12 children are doing compared to the state. Many teachers are inexperienced , don't know how to teach Aboriginal children; children may not understand them, so they don't want to go to school. Some Departmental policies are not being implemented. We don't have suspension rates data – 'Knowledge is power' and our own knowledge is being kept from us. Organisations do not share information though working with the same people.
- Need to end duplication of service delivery in Dubbo.

Trangie 24 October 2023

- Major concerns regarding health and education provision especially for children.
- Clinic needs an Aboriginal Health worker; and there's a need for services that come to Trangie (and Warren). There are long waits for paediatric appointments and then people have to travel to them (eg issues for autistic and non-verbal children).
- NDIS is difficult to understand and a lot of the NDIS funding is spent on travel time (eg speech therapists) . Some FASD children being assessed
- Children starting school are already at a disadvantage – need extra support. Need to focus on children to give them a good start in life. There needs to be better local engagement with the communities. Impact of covid years on education – some catch up work needed with children affected.
- Mothers who lost babies during covid need a support group.(May happen through Nat Assn for Grief and Loss).
- Men's mental health also needs attention and men need support,
- Residential Aged Care needs more beds and the staff to manage them. Trangie has an aged population but there are only 17 Aged Care beds and 2 Palliative care beds. There are a lot of people with cancer, who are in hospital in Dubbo and can't get home. Need more aged care and palliative care beds in Trangie, as if people die off country families can't afford to bring them home.
- Drug issues – kids and drivers on drugs is another problem.
- Housing is a major issue – there is no available housing in Trangie – need housing for DV survivors, emergency accommodation. Housing for staff to work in health/education/aged care etc. Trangie LALC has land on which houses could be built but does not have the capital. An opportunity to partner with AHO?

- DOCS – children removed to Dubbo.
- Culture and Heritage – at the Cultural Centre in Dubbo there is nothing Aboriginal to speak of.
- Significant trees have been cut down (eg a carved tree); one canoe tree needs to be saved before it falls. National Parks & Local Land Services are difficult to deal with.
- Economic Development – Water issues such as need for allocations of cultural water, and would like a fish farm. Trangie irrigation scheme got \$360m for infrastructure – Aboriginal people got nothing.

Narromine – 4 December 2023

- Health and Housing are priorities – concern about a proposed chemical waste dump in Narromine (Narwonah Renewable Energy and Circular Chemicals Project²⁴) and impacts on water table and health, and failure to be consulted by Shire Council.
- Health – Long waits (e.g 4 weeks) to see GPs – elders and men then don't go and issues aren't dealt with early (e.g. cancer). Outside of 9-4pm, for any emergencies, the options are go to Dubbo or telehealth – neither of which may be possible for Aboriginal people. The way people are treated at Hospital puts some off going too. Need a regular visiting paediatrician. Mental health team needed (eg re suicide attempt).
- Housing - high priority issue. Repairs and maintenance on LALC properties managed by a private real estate agent. Dept of Housing is building some new units, but only 1-2 bedrooms, not suitable for large Aboriginal families. LALC has various land blocks suitable for housing development; would like to develop duplexes, and would be good for Elders to downsize and free up 4 BR Homes for families. But need a joint venture partner to develop the housing. Unsure if there is any emergency housing available.
- Education – concern re fighting and lockdowns in the schools – lack of information to parents. Lack of face to face parent teacher interviews, and lack of cultural learning goals in PLPs. Some issues of truancy, and schools providing breakfasts then doing mandatory reports re child neglect. Poor care of children injured on school excursion. Need more cultural education and cultural support at schools.
- General problems with access to government and need for advocacy for community members (eg re Centrelink, NDIS and other government services) . Various services supposed to come from Dubbo – but community never sees them, and few know how to relate to Aboriginal people. Need for support to strengthen families and a men's group – grandparents raising a lot of the children. Services need better relationship with the community to be accepted.
- Economic development – Inland Rail on hold from Parkes to Narromine. Inland Rail need to work with local Aboriginal people, eg via the LALC. Deed of Agreement in process.
- Narromine Shire – poor consultation practices, not accountable re MOU they had with LALC.

²⁴ <https://westernplainsapp.com.au/news/news/absolute-wow-500-million-green-energy-project-coming-to-narromine?id=655c23d2c8349500285fef25>

- Wind and solar farm developments – but no benefits, jobs, contracts.

Gilgandra – 5 December 2023

- Housing biggest issue. Elderly need supported accommodation – but only 2 places offering that. Is some in-home care for elderly but they can't look after themselves in big homes any more. Need Aboriginal Aged Units, and free up homes for families. And services run by Council aren't appropriate for Aboriginal people. LALC has land but no finance to develop it. LALC-owned houses being managed by a real estate agent to try to bring money in for repairs/maintenance. Lot of homeless people couch surfing, and organisations struggle to find housing for staff (eg nurses). Jack Towney hostel proposing 'portable houses' for Inland Rail – Jack Towney hostel for people who can live independently – but older people are not able to do that; could use its capacity better.
- Health – only two doctors at the AMS. People sent to Hospital in Dubbo but access there is difficult for many & community bus only gives people an hour in Dubbo! Hospital staff need local cultural education/orientation and better communication skills (particularly for foreign staff brought in). Unconscious bias in treatment evident. Some 'virtual doctors' (A I generated diagnosis). Need to start at high school with education pathways into health work so that there will be local health staff. There are particular problems with after hours medical issues. Paediatrician needed (waitlists over 12 months). Maternity program needed in Gilgandra, as women have to go to Dubbo. There is a problem with communication blackspots which is a problem for emergency situations. There is a research partnership the AMS has with Charles Sturt University.²⁵ It reveals that men's health and heart disease²⁶ are terrible and COPD is also common. Need a chronic and complex care nurse. Need more timely drug and alcohol rehabilitation and mental health services.
- Education – Education system does not have full cultural understanding, though primary school is very good – local principal and a lot of local teachers. About 60% of the kids at that school are Aboriginal. AECG is defunct. Need for intervention program to engage small group of disruptive kids at weekends, particularly evenings.
- Economic Development - Inland Rail delayed – opportunity to provide some school leavers with training to get jobs when they come; Some land the Inland Rail plans to go through is still under claim; some solar farms and battery developments expected (Gilgandra Shire is a REZ). LALC wants to develop a cultural centre on land it owns, but no capital.
- Need to get agencies all working more collaboratively. Shire Council puts brake on a lot of possible developments.

Nyngan 8 February 2024

- Housing is a major issue – people are sleeping rough, couch surfing
 - Dept of Housing properties boarded up

²⁵ <https://news.csu.edu.au/latest-news/institute-takes-a-grass-roots-approach-to-address-the-first-nations-health-gap>

²⁶ Highest per capita deaths between 45 and 60 for heart disease in the region for last 3 years; also highest no of births per capita.

- Need more engagement with AHO
- Outreach Housing good but cant get people into homs
- No housing for survivors of Domestic Violence, no emergency accommodation, no post incarceration housing, no
- housing for homeless youth
- Culture and Language
 - Funding needed for cultural activities such as women’s dance, weaving group
 - Need free access to private, safe, suitable land near river for cultural activities
 - Cultural Centre/hub needed, including a keeping place for cultural artefacts and records
- Education
 - Need engagement with schools beyond NAIDOC week
 - Would like accelerated learning of language in schools, not just word lists
 - Need an Aboriginal counsellor in schools
- Economic Development
 - Nyngan is a mining town, and there is a water pipeline from Nyngan to Cobar -maybe opportunities?
 - Shire training – would be good to get more small contracts with the Shire
 - There is a native title claim and the claimants need an organisation for the Shire, companies etc to engage with them in relation to their rights and interests.
- Health
 - Need an AMS -no permanent Dr in Nyngan, there is an ALO at the hospital but no outreach or home visits by the ALO. Need physical and mental health support eg psychologist.
 - Lot of people don’t know they are eligible for Aged Care packages
 - No ability to give birth on country at Nyngan – women have to go to Dubbo
 - Need transport for appointments in Dubbo.

APPENDIX C DATA REFERRED TO IN THE PLAN

Table A1: Population change by Indigenous status and town from 2016 to 2021 (percentages are of total population).

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2016		2021		% change	2016		2021		% change
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	
TRRA	25,788	10.9%	32,434	13.0%	25.8%	210,921	89.1%	216,497	87.0%	2.6%
Orange	3,795	6.5%	5,210	8.4%	37.3%	54,590	93.5%	57,071	91.6%	4.5%
Bathurst	4,314	6.7%	5,977	8.9%	38.5%	60,150	93.3%	60,996	91.1%	1.4%
Dubbo	7,403	17.1%	9,238	18.9%	24.8%	35,845	82.9%	39,641	81.1%	10.6%
Gilgandra	862	14.3%	1,043	17.3%	21.0%	5,173	85.7%	4,977	82.7%	-3.8%
Mudgee	1,401	6.6%	1,906	8.4%	36.0%	19,855	93.4%	20,841	91.6%	5.0%
Narromine	1,241	25.6%	1,329	27.9%	7.1%	3,609	74.4%	3,435	72.1%	-4.8%
Nyngan	578	20.8%	537	21.9%	-7.1%	2,204	79.2%	1,917	78.1%	-13.0%
Parkes	2,624	12.5%	3,333	16.3%	27.0%	18,354	87.5%	17,167	83.7%	-6.5%
Peak Hill	458	18.7%	554	23.5%	21.0%	1,994	81.3%	1,803	76.5%	-9.6%
Trangie	313	26.0%	334	29.5%	6.7%	890	74.0%	797	70.5%	-10.4%
Warren	501	20.2%	494	21.9%	-1.4%	1,983	79.8%	1,766	78.1%	-10.9%
Wellington	2,298	26.8%	2,479	28.9%	7.9%	6,274	73.2%	6,086	71.1%	-3.0%

Source: ABS. Note: N = Number of individuals, and % = Percentage.

Table A2: Population composition by Indigenous status from 2016 to 2021

	2016		2021		% change (2021-2031)
	N	%	N	%	
Gender					
Indigenous	25,788	100.0%	32,434	100.0%	25.8%
Male	12,991	50.4%	16,374	50.5%	26.0%
Female	12,797	49.6%	16,060	49.5%	25.5%
Non-Indigenous	210,921	100.0%	216,497	100.0%	2.6%
Male	104,414	49.5%	107,210	49.5%	2.7%
Female	106,507	50.5%	109,287	50.5%	2.6%
Age groups					
Indigenous	25,788	100.0%	32,434	100.0%	25.8%
0-14	9,216	35.7%	11,469	35.4%	24.4%
15-19	2,730	10.6%	3,095	9.5%	13.4%
20-59	11,883	46.1%	14,874	45.9%	25.2%
60 and over	1,959	7.6%	2,996	9.2%	53.0%
Non-Indigenous	210,921	100.0%	216,497	100.0%	2.6%
0-14	39,565	18.8%	39,375	18.2%	-0.5%
15-19	12,467	5.9%	11,954	5.5%	-4.1%
20-59	104,887	49.7%	105,138	48.6%	0.2%
60 and over	54,002	25.6%	60,030	27.7%	11.2%

Source: ABS. Note: N = Number of individuals, and % = Percentage.

Table A3: Population projection by Indigenous status and town from 2021 to 2031 (percentages are of total population).

	Indigenous							Non-Indigenous						
	2021		2026		2031		% change (2021- 2031)	2021		2026		2031		% change (2021- 2031)
	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%	
TRRA	32,434	13.0%	39,030	15.0%	45,463	16.8%	40.2%	216,497	87.0%	221,699	85.0%	225,688	83.2%	4.2%
Orange	5,210	8.4%	6,625	10.0%	8,026	11.5%	54.1%	57,071	91.6%	59,529	90.0%	61,760	88.5%	8.2%
Bathurst	5,977	8.9%	7,629	11.0%	9,248	13.0%	54.7%	60,996	91.1%	61,590	89.0%	61,756	87.0%	1.2%
Dubbo	9,238	18.9%	11,069	20.4%	12,871	21.7%	39.3%	39,641	81.1%	43,266	79.6%	46,563	78.3%	17.5%
Gilgandra	1,043	17.3%	1,224	20.4%	1,394	23.5%	33.7%	4,977	82.7%	4,781	79.6%	4,550	76.5%	-8.6%
Mudgee	1,906	8.4%	2,404	9.9%	2,883	11.3%	51.3%	20,841	91.6%	21,791	90.1%	22,634	88.7%	8.6%
Narromine	1,329	27.9%	1,416	30.1%	1,497	32.3%	12.7%	3,435	72.1%	3,289	69.9%	3,138	67.7%	-8.7%
Nyngan	537	21.9%	493	23.2%	446	25.0%	-16.9%	1,917	78.1%	1,632	76.8%	1,338	75.0%	-30.2%
Parkes	3,333	16.3%	4,028	20.1%	4,698	24.1%	41.0%	17,167	83.7%	16,000	79.9%	14,778	75.9%	-13.9%
Peak Hill	554	23.5%	651	28.7%	747	34.5%	34.8%	1,803	76.5%	1,616	71.3%	1,415	65.5%	-21.5%
Trangie	334	29.5%	359	33.3%	380	36.9%	13.7%	797	70.5%	720	66.7%	649	63.1%	-18.5%
Warren	494	21.9%	477	23.5%	454	25.4%	-8.1%	1,766	78.1%	1,551	76.5%	1,331	74.6%	-24.6%
Wellington	2,479	28.9%	2,655	30.9%	2,819	32.8%	13.7%	6,086	71.1%	5,935	69.1%	5,775	67.2%	-5.1%

Source: ABS. Note: N = Number of individuals, and % = Percentage.

Table A4: Population composition projection by Indigenous status from 2021 to 2031

	2021		2026		2031		% change (2021-2031)
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Gender							
Indigenous	32,434	100.0%	39,030	100.0%	45,463	100.0%	40.2%
Male	16,374	50.5%	19,725	50.5%	22,967	50.5%	40.3%
Female	16,060	49.5%	19,305	49.5%	22,496	49.5%	40.1%
Non-Indigenous	216,497	100.0%	221,699	100.0%	225,688	100.0%	4.2%
Male	107,210	49.5%	109,788	49.5%	111,621	49.5%	4.1%
Female	109,287	50.5%	111,911	50.5%	114,067	50.5%	4.4%
Age groups							
Indigenous	32,434	100.0%	39,030	100.0%	45,463	100.0%	40.2%
0-14	11,469	35.4%	12,760	32.7%	13,302	29.3%	16.0%
15-19	3,095	9.5%	4,150	10.6%	4,997	11.0%	61.5%
20-59	14,874	45.9%	17,901	45.9%	21,551	47.4%	44.9%
60 and over	2,996	9.2%	4,219	10.8%	5,613	12.3%	87.4%
Non-Indigenous	216,497	100.0%	221,699	100.0%	225,688	100.0%	4.2%
0-14	39,375	18.2%	38,051	17.2%	37,383	16.6%	-5.1%
15-19	11,954	5.5%	13,232	6.0%	12,626	5.6%	5.6%
20-59	105,138	48.6%	105,313	47.5%	107,406	47.6%	2.2%
60 and over	60,030	27.7%	65,103	29.4%	68,273	30.3%	13.7%

Source: ABS.Census.

Table A5 Projection basis: The demographic events (births, deaths, and migration) of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations over five years, from 2017 to 2021.

The number of births for the period was determined by the count of individuals aged 0-5 in 2021. The data shows a higher number of male births in the Indigenous population compared to the non-Indigenous population, and a lower number of female births in the Indigenous population than in the non-Indigenous population.

Death estimates were obtained by analysing population numbers and life tables from 2016 and 2021 and by calculating the annual linear changes, which were then totalled for the five-year span from 2017-2021. According to the table, there were more male deaths than female deaths in both demographic groups.

Table A5.1: Births and deaths from 2016 to 2021 by Indigenous status and gender.

	Year 2017-2021			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%
Births				
Total	3,763	100.0%	12,291	100.0%
Male	1,982	52.7%	6,360	51.7%
Female	1,781	47.3%	5,931	48.3%
Death				
Total	595	100.0%	7,746	100.0%
Male	324	54.5%	4,059	52.4%
Female	271	45.5%	3,687	47.6%

Source: ABS. Census of Population and Housing 2016. 2021

Table A5.2: Migration flows by Indigenous status between 2017 to 2021.

	Year 2017-2021			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%
Number of people in TRRA in 2021	20,895	100.0%	182,165	100.0%
No-migration/migrate within TRRA	17,923	85.8%	142,473	78.2%
In-migration	2,972	14.2%	39,692	21.8%
Out-migration	7,168	34.3%	44,058	24.2%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021.

Table A5.3: Geographic migration patterns by Indigenous status between 2017 to 2021.

	Indigenous				Non-Indigenous			
	Move to TRRA		Move out from TRRA		Move to TRRA		Move out from TRRA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total (number of people in TRRA)	20,895	100.0%	25,091	100.0%	182,165	100.0%	186,531	100.0%
TRRA	17,923	85.8%	17,923	71.4%	142,473	78.2%	142,473	76.4%
Greater Sydney	556	2.7%	500	2.0%	11,173	6.1%	4,624	2.5%
Regional NSW	2,041	9.8%	6,615	26.4%	23,691	13.0%	38,448	20.6%
Other states and territories	375	1.8%	53	0.2%	4,828	2.7%	986	0.5%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021. Note: N = Number of individuals, and % = Percentage.

Table A6: Equivalised total household income (weekly) for Indigenous and non-Indigenous households in TRRA region for the years 2016 and 2021.

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2011		2021		%Change	2011		2021		%Change
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Total	5,614	100.0%	10,000	100.0%	78.1%	65,760	100.0%	73,730	100.0%	12.1%
0	52	0.9%	182	1.8%	250.0%	589	0.9%	1,361	1.8%	131.1%
\$1-\$299 (\$1-\$299)	1,231	21.9%	667	6.7%	-45.8%	5,755	8.8%	2,313	3.1%	-59.8%
\$300-\$399 (\$15,600-\$20,799)	1,078	19.2%	714	7.1%	-33.8%	11,610	17.7%	3,374	4.6%	-70.9%
\$400-\$799 (\$20,800-\$41,599)	1,902	33.9%	3,354	33.5%	76.3%	21,796	33.1%	22,396	30.4%	2.8%
\$800-\$999 (\$41,600-\$51,999)	534	9.5%	1,143	11.4%	114.0%	7,302	11.1%	8,174	11.1%	11.9%
\$1,000-\$1,499 (\$52,000-\$77,999)	591	10.5%	2,153	21.5%	264.3%	11,345	17.3%	16,341	22.2%	44.0%
\$1,500-\$1,999 (\$78,000-\$103,999)	160	2.9%	1,082	10.8%	576.3%	4,539	6.9%	10,453	14.2%	130.3%
\$2,000 or more (\$104,000 or more)	66	1.2%	705	7.1%	968.2%	2,824	4.3%	9,318	12.6%	230.0%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2021.

Table A7: Number of people per house by Indigenous status and housing tenure types for the years 2011 and 2021.

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2011		2021		% change	2011		2021		% change
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Number of people per house										
Total	6,292	100.0%	10,620	100.0%	68.8%	70,724	100.0%	76,530	100.0%	8.2%
One person	876	13.9%	1,652	15.6%	88.6%	19,436	27.5%	22,533	29.4%	15.9%
Two to four persons	4,071	64.7%	6,957	65.5%	70.9%	44,579	63.0%	47,234	61.7%	6.0%
Five or more persons	1,345	21.4%	2,011	18.9%	49.5%	6,709	9.5%	6,763	8.8%	0.8%
Number of people per house by housing tenure types										
<i>Owned outright</i>										
Total	866	100.0%	1,741	100.0%	101.0%	28,457	100.0%	30,473	100.0%	7.1%
One person	130	15.0%	317	18.2%	143.8%	9,082	31.9%	10,511	34.5%	15.7%
Two to four persons	588	67.9%	1,195	68.6%	103.2%	18,182	63.9%	18,887	62.0%	3.9%
Five or more persons	148	17.1%	229	13.2%	54.7%	1,193	4.2%	1,075	3.5%	-9.9%
<i>Owned with mortgage</i>										
Total	1,766	100.0%	3,434	100.0%	94.5%	23,705	100.0%	26,095	100.0%	10.1%
One person	99	5.6%	255	7.4%	157.6%	3,345	14.1%	4,221	16.2%	26.2%
Two to four persons	1,188	67.3%	2,383	69.4%	100.6%	16,474	69.5%	17,772	68.1%	7.9%
Five or more persons	479	27.1%	796	23.2%	66.2%	3,886	16.4%	4,102	15.7%	5.6%
<i>Private rental</i>										
Total	1,438	100.0%	2,817	100.0%	95.9%	9,938	100.0%	12,848	100.0%	29.3%
One person	215	15.0%	469	16.6%	118.1%	3,319	33.4%	4,525	35.2%	36.3%
Two to four persons	969	67.4%	1,872	66.5%	93.2%	5,708	57.4%	7,249	56.4%	27.0%
Five or more persons	254	17.7%	476	16.9%	87.4%	911	9.2%	1,074	8.4%	17.9%
<i>Social housing rental</i>										
Total	2,222	100.0%	2,628	100.0%	18.3%	8,624	100.0%	7,114	100.0%	-17.5%
One person	432	19.4%	611	23.2%	41.4%	3,690	42.8%	3,276	46.1%	-11.2%
Two to four persons	1,326	59.7%	1,507	57.3%	13.7%	4,215	48.9%	3,326	46.8%	-21.1%
Five or more persons	464	20.9%	510	19.4%	9.9%	719	8.3%	512	7.2%	-28.8%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2021.

Table A8: Weekly rents by rental types for Indigenous and non-Indigenous households in TRRA region for the years 2016 and 2021.

	Indigenous					Non-Indigenous				
	2011		2021		% Change	2011		2021		% Change
	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	
Private Rental										
Total	1,446	100.0%	2,753	100.0%	90.4%	9,799	100.0%	12,611	100.0%	28.7%
\$1-149	222	15.4%	58	2.1%	-73.9%	1,203	12.3%	198	1.6%	-83.5%
\$150-249	793	54.8%	415	15.1%	-47.7%	4,537	46.3%	2,067	16.4%	-54.4%
\$250-349	353	24.4%	1,053	38.2%	198.3%	3,059	31.2%	4,741	37.6%	55.0%
\$350-449	68	4.7%	912	33.1%	1241.2%	797	8.1%	3,826	30.3%	380.1%
\$450-\$549	0	0.0%	262	9.5%	↑	131	1.3%	1,441	11.4%	1000.0%
\$550-\$649	3	0.2%	39	1.4%	1200.0%	21	0.2%	248	2.0%	1081.0%
\$650 and over	7	0.5%	14	0.5%	100.0%	51	0.5%	90	0.7%	76.5%
Social Housing Rental										
Total	1,999	100.0%	2,442	100.0%	22.2%	7,307	100.0%	6,510	100.0%	-10.9%
\$1-149	1,077	53.9%	503	20.6%	-53.3%	3,560	48.7%	1,577	24.2%	-55.7%
\$150-249	768	38.4%	965	39.5%	25.7%	2,673	36.6%	2,053	31.5%	-23.2%
\$250-349	129	6.5%	656	26.9%	408.5%	802	11.0%	1,793	27.5%	123.6%
\$350-449	12	0.6%	240	9.8%	1900.0%	165	2.3%	765	11.8%	363.6%
\$450-\$549	4	0.2%	60	2.5%	1400.0%	32	0.4%	211	3.2%	559.4%
\$550-\$649	3	0.2%	7	0.3%	133.3%	14	0.2%	46	0.7%	228.6%
\$650 and over	6	0.3%	11	0.5%	83.3%	61	0.8%	65	1.0%	6.6%

Source: ABS Census. ↑ represents increase percentage with zero at a starting year.

Table A9: Indigenous populations by health indicators.

	Indigenous					Years
	First year		Recent year		% change	
	No	%	No	%		
Mothers and babies						
Low birth weight babies	75	9.0%	159	8.9%	112.0%	2012-14 to 2017-19
Mother smoking during pregnancy	615	50.8%	651	45.9%	5.9%	
Aboriginal women who did not attend antenatal care within the first 10 weeks	695	49.1%	699	49.1%	0.6%	2016-18 to 2017-19
Fully vaccinated children						
Children fully immunised at 1 year	517	90.2%	589	94.7%	13.9%	2015 to 2021
Children fully immunised at 2 years	489	88.2%	441	77.2%	-9.8%	
Children fully immunised at 5 years	461	96.0%	541	98.2%	17.4%	
Median age at death						
Males	58.1 years		62.6 years		4.5 yrs	2011-15 to 2016-20
Females	65.5 years		67.3 years		1.8 yrs	
Hospital Admissions						
Males	7,443	43.3%	10,969	44.3%	47.4%	2012-15 to 2017-20
Females	9,742	56.7%	13,765	55.7%	41.3%	
Reasons for emergency presentations						
Respiratory system	311	53.7%	300	47.7%	-3.5%	2017-18 to 2019-20
Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	268	46.3%	329	52.3%	22.8%	

Source: PHIDU.

Table A10: Long-term health conditions by Indigenous status in 2021.

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%
Total	29,850	100.0%	242,239	100.0%
Arthritis	1,870	6.3%	24,060	9.9%
Asthma	3,843	12.9%	20,980	8.7%
Cancer	456	1.5%	7,323	3.0%
Dementia	103	0.3%	1,855	0.8%
Diabetes	1,432	4.8%	11,576	4.8%
Heart disease	960	3.2%	10,429	4.3%
Kidney disease	279	0.9%	2,292	0.9%
Lung condition	697	2.3%	5,179	2.1%
Mental health condition	3,603	12.1%	21,351	8.8%
Stroke	228	0.8%	2,331	1.0%
Any other long-term health condition	2,162	7.2%	17,111	7.1%
No long-term health condition	14,217	47.6%	117,752	48.6%

Source: ABS Census 2021.

Figure A1: Percentage of mental health conditions by Indigenous status, sex, and age in TRRA 2021. Source: ABS Census 2021.

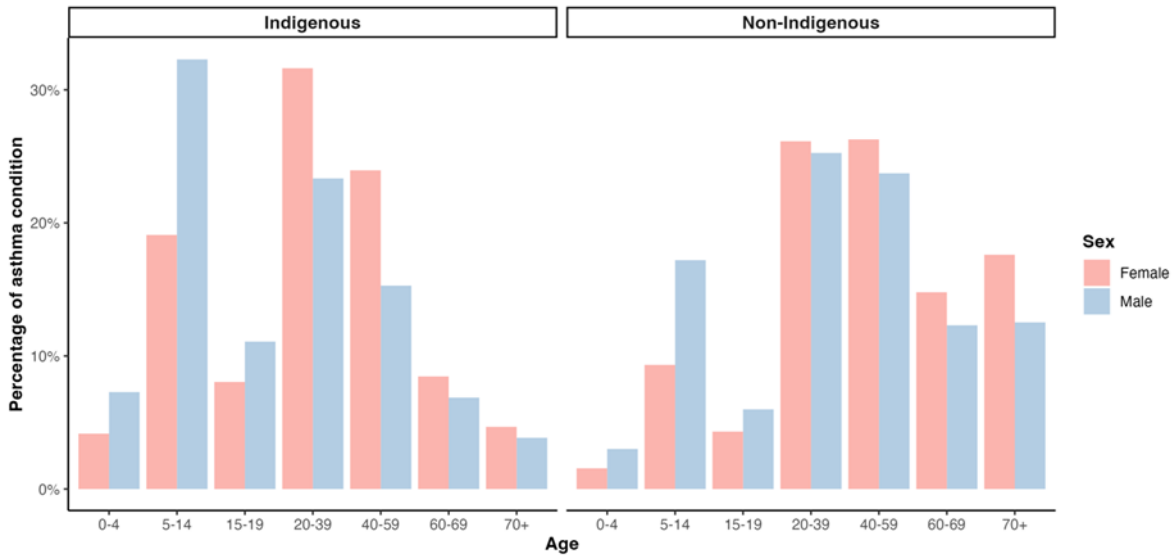


Figure A2: Percentage of asthma condition by Indigenous status, sex, and age in TRRA 2021. Source: ABS Census 2021.

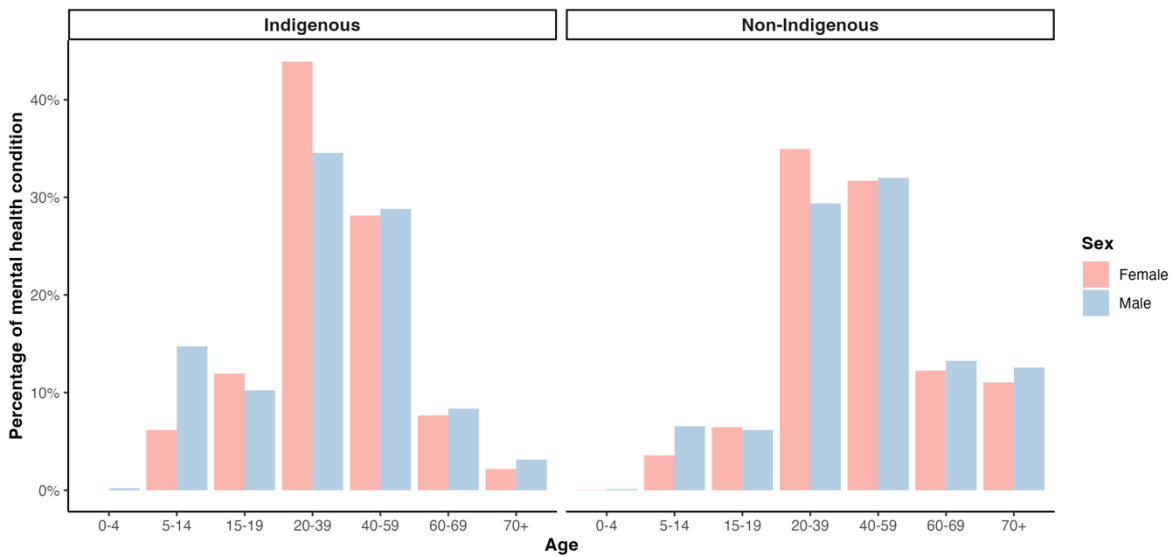


Table A11: Labour force status and employment sectors by Indigenous status from age 18-64 for the years 2011, 2016 and 2021.

	Indigenous							Non-Indigenous						
	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011- 2021)	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011- 2021)
	No	%	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	No	%	
Labour market status														
Total	7,949	100.0%	10,231	100.0%	12,754	100.0%	60.4%	106,713	100.0%	104,925	100.0%	110,389	100.0%	3.4%
In labour force	3,525	44.3%	4,943	48.3%	7,299	57.2%	107.1%	78,493	73.6%	77,696	74.0%	86,747	78.6%	10.5%
Full-time	2,405	30.3%	3,247	31.7%	4,873	38.2%	102.6%	55,842	52.3%	54,136	51.6%	60,799	55.1%	8.9%
Part-time	1,120	14.1%	1,696	16.6%	2,426	19.0%	116.6%	22,651	21.2%	23,560	22.5%	25,948	23.5%	14.6%
Not in labour force	4,424	55.7%	5,288	51.7%	5,455	42.8%	23.3%	28,220	26.4%	27,229	26.0%	23,642	21.4%	-16.2%
Unemployed	910	11.4%	1,098	10.7%	837	6.6%	-8.0%	3,926	3.7%	4,751	4.5%	3,214	2.9%	-18.1%
Not in labour force	3,514	44.2%	4,190	41.0%	4,618	36.2%	31.4%	24,294	22.8%	22,478	21.4%	20,428	18.5%	-15.9%
Employment status														
Total	3,810	100.0%	5,258	100.0%	7,902	100.0%	107.4%	82,790	100.0%	81,153	100.0%	91,479	100.0%	10.5%
Employee and contributing family workers	3,587	94.1%	4,957	94.3%	7,364	93.2%	105.3%	69,479	83.9%	68,734	84.7%	78,437	85.7%	12.9%
Owner managers	223	5.9%	301	5.7%	538	6.8%	141.3%	13,311	16.1%	12,419	15.3%	13,042	14.3%	-2.0%
Employment sectors														
Total	3,767	100.0%	5,238	100.0%	7,795	100.0%	106.9%	82,788	100.0%	81,355	100.0%	91,115	100.0%	10.1%
Government	831	22.1%	1,039	19.8%	1,603	20.6%	92.9%	14,974	18.1%	14,899	18.3%	17,958	19.7%	19.9%
Private	2,936	77.9%	4,199	80.2%	6,192	79.4%	110.9%	67,814	81.9%	66,456	81.7%	73,157	80.3%	7.9%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016 and 2021.

Fig A3 Labour force status by Indigenous status and age group in TRRA, 2011-2021. Source: ABS.

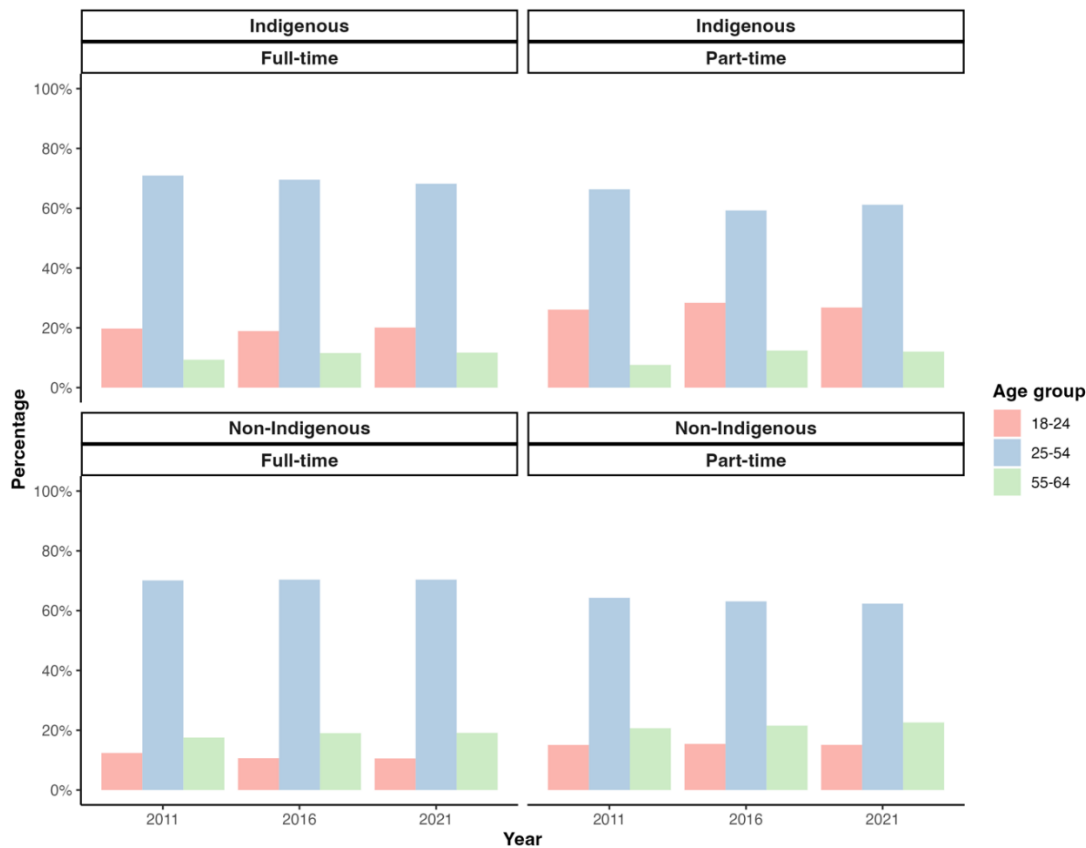


Table A12 – Labour force participation by Indigenous status from age 18-64 for the years 2011, 2016 and 2021.

	Indigenous							Non-Indigenous						
	2011		2016		2021		% change	2011		2016		2021		% change
	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%	
Labour force participation rate by sex														
Male	-	60.5%	-	62.1%	-	64.0%	5.9%	-	82.7%	-	82.3%	-	83.8%	1.2%
Female	-	51.3%	-	56.1%	-	63.5%	23.7%	-	71.8%	-	74.9%	-	79.3%	10.4%
Full-time employed by age groups														
Age 18-24	475	19.8%	614	18.9%	979	20.1%	106.1%	6,906	12.4%	5,759	10.6%	6,417	10.6%	-7.1%
Age 25-54	1,706	70.9%	2,258	69.5%	3,324	68.2%	94.8%	39,145	70.1%	38,087	70.4%	42,775	70.4%	9.3%
Age 55-64	224	9.3%	375	11.5%	570	11.7%	154.5%	9,791	17.5%	10,290	19.0%	11,607	19.1%	18.5%
Part-time employed by age groups														
Age 18-24	292	26.1%	481	28.4%	650	26.8%	122.6%	3,411	15.1%	3,630	15.4%	3,914	15.1%	14.7%
Age 25-54	743	66.3%	1,005	59.3%	1,484	61.2%	99.7%	14,562	64.3%	14,864	63.1%	16,176	62.3%	11.1%
Age 55-64	85	7.6%	210	12.4%	292	12.0%	243.5%	4,678	20.7%	5,066	21.5%	5,858	22.6%	25.2%
Unemployed by age groups														
Age 18-24	333	36.6%	432	39.3%	302	36.1%	-9.3%	1,135	28.9%	1,292	27.2%	771	24.0%	-32.1%
Age 25-54	544	59.8%	613	55.8%	458	54.7%	-15.8%	2,286	58.2%	2,746	57.8%	1,844	57.4%	-19.3%
Age 55-64	33	3.6%	53	4.8%	77	9.2%	133.3%	505	12.9%	713	15.0%	599	18.6%	18.6%
Labour force participation rate by age groups														
Age 18-24	-	57.0%	-	61.3%	-	66.8%	17.1%	-	77.4%	-	77.8%	-	82.4%	6.4%
Age 25-54	-	58.5%	-	60.4%	-	65.6%	12.1%	-	82.2%	-	83.2%	-	85.8%	4.3%
Age 55-64	-	37.7%	-	48.0%	-	51.2%	35.7%	-	62.8%	-	66.2%	-	69.4%	10.5%

Table A13: Occupations by Indigenous status from age 18-64 for the years 2011, 2016 and 2021.

	Indigenous							Non-Indigenous						
	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)
	No	%	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	No	%	
Total	3,754	100.0%	5,227	100.0%	7,772	100.0%	107.0%	82,353	100.0%	80,977	100.0%	90,742	100.0%	10.2%
Professionals	420	11.2%	575	11.0%	914	11.8%	117.6%	14,293	17.4%	14,694	18.1%	17,607	19.4%	23.2%
Health	94	22.4%	151	26.3%	187	20.5%	98.9%	3905	27.3%	4172	28.4%	5011	28.5%	28.3%
Education	138	32.9%	185	32.2%	271	29.6%	96.4%	4619	32.3%	4606	31.3%	4858	27.6%	5.2%
Others	188	44.8%	239	41.6%	456	49.9%	142.6%	5769	40.4%	5916	40.3%	7738	43.9%	34.1%
Non-professionals or other occupations	3,334	88.8%	4,652	89.0%	6,858	88.2%	105.7%	68,060	82.6%	66,283	81.9%	73,135	80.6%	7.5%
Managers	210	6.3%	317	6.8%	602	8.8%	186.7%	12124	17.8%	11026	16.6%	12444	17.0%	2.6%
Technicians and Trades Workers	511	15.3%	778	16.7%	1196	17.4%	134.1%	12730	18.7%	12700	19.2%	14037	19.2%	10.3%
Community and Personal Service Workers	785	23.5%	1118	24.0%	1692	24.7%	115.5%	8509	12.5%	9452	14.3%	12024	16.4%	41.3%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	443	13.3%	560	12.0%	776	11.3%	75.2%	11055	16.2%	10341	15.6%	11285	15.4%	2.1%
Sales Workers	287	8.6%	444	9.5%	646	9.4%	125.1%	6829	10.0%	7008	10.6%	6498	8.9%	-4.8%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	404	12.1%	517	11.1%	775	11.3%	91.8%	7636	11.2%	6864	10.4%	7594	10.4%	-0.6%
Labourers	694	20.8%	918	19.7%	1171	17.1%	68.7%	9177	13.5%	8892	13.4%	9253	12.7%	0.8%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016 and 2021.

Table A14: Employment status by Indigenous status from age 18-64 for the years 2011, 2016 and 2021.

	Indigenous							Non-Indigenous						
	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)	2011		2016		2021		% change (2011-2021)
	No	%	No	%	No	%		No	%	No	%	No	%	
Total	3,810	100.0%	5,258	100.0%	7,902	100.0%	107.4%	82,790	100.0%	81,153	100.0%	91,479	100.0%	10.5%
Employee and contributing family workers	3,587	94.1%	4,957	94.3%	7,364	93.2%	105.3%	69,479	83.9%	68,734	84.7%	78,437	85.7%	12.9%
Male	1,966	54.8%	2,624	52.9%	3,834	52.1%	95.0%	37,895	54.5%	36,715	53.4%	41,991	53.5%	10.8%
Female	1,912	53.3%	2,698	54.4%	4,196	57.0%	119.5%	37,170	53.5%	37,856	55.1%	44,582	56.8%	19.9%
Owner managers	223	5.9%	301	5.7%	538	6.8%	141.3%	13,311	16.1%	12,419	15.3%	13,042	14.3%	-2.0%

Male	135	60.5%	211	70.1%	347	64.5%	157.0%	10,393	78.1%	9,632	77.6%	10,195	78.2%	-1.9%
Female	82	36.8%	101	33.6%	202	37.5%	146.3%	5,041	37.9%	4,995	40.2%	5,367	41.2%	6.5%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2011, 2016 and 2021.

Table A15 : Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC by care giver and placement among Indigenous and Non-Indigenous in TRRA region from 2015 to 2022.

Years	Aboriginal care giver			Non-Aboriginal care giver		
	Relative & Kinship Care	Foster Care	Other	Relative & Kinship Care	Foster Care	Other
2015	515	163	16	89	158	35
2016	546	158	21	91	151	44
2017	505	152	21	92	158	39
2018	442	137	0	113	175	24
2019	406	125	<5	124	158	23
2020	378	114	0	122	148	25
2021	380	111	0	119	156	38
2022	357	109	0	105	147	53

Source: Aboriginal-led data sharing, Child Protection and Out of Home Care Dashboard by DCJ Statistics.

Table A16: Number and percentages of offenders and victims by Indigenous status in 2018-2022 (percentages are of total population).

	Offenders		Victims	
	No	%	No	%
Total	7,192	100.0%	9,378	100.0%
Indigenous	3,983	55.4%	3,005	32.0%
Non-Indigenous	3,209	44.6%	6,373	68.0%

Source: NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2018-2022

Table A17: Offenders by Indigenous status in 2018-2022.

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%
Total	3,983	100.0%	3,209	100.0%
Homicide	<5	0.0%	<5	0.2%
Domestic violence related assault	353	8.9%	437	13.6%
Non-domestic violence related assault	198	5.0%	206	6.4%
Assault Police	49	1.2%	44	1.4%
Sexual offences	20	0.5%	62	1.9%
Abduction and kidnapping	<5	0.1%	0	0.0%
Robbery	37	0.9%	7	0.2%
Intimidation, stalking and harassment	498	12.5%	488	15.2%
Other offences against the person	7	0.2%	10	0.3%
Break and enter dwelling	158	4.0%	51	1.6%
Break and enter non-dwelling	144	3.6%	42	1.3%
Steal, theft and fraud	763	19.2%	292	9.1%
Arson	8	0.2%	<5	0.1%
Malicious damage to property	189	4.7%	139	4.3%
Drug offences	223	5.6%	277	8.6%
Liquor offences	28	0.7%	66	2.1%
Prohibited and regulated weapons offences	85	2.1%	114	3.6%
Disorderly conduct	248	6.2%	190	5.9%
Against justice procedures	914	22.9%	670	20.9%
Transport regulatory offences	<5	0.1%	<5	0.1%
Other offences	55	1.4%	103	3.2%

Source: NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2018-2022. Note: other offences, including betting and gaming, pornography, prostitution (e.g. breaches), and others.

Table A18: Victims by Indigenous status in 2018-2022.

	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
	No	%	No	%
Total	3,005	100.0%	6,373	100.0%
Homicide	<5	0.0%	<5	0.0%
Domestic violence related assault	864	28.8%	1,309	20.5%
Non-domestic violence related assault	364	12.1%	1,183	18.6%
Sexual offences	148	4.9%	529	8.3%
Abduction and kidnapping	<5	0.0%	<5	0.0%
Robbery	13	0.4%	66	1.0%
Blackmail and extortion	5	0.2%	39	0.6%
Intimidation, stalking and harassment	873	29.1%	2,151	33.8%
Other offences against the person	15	0.5%	75	1.2%
Arson	22	0.7%	130	2.0%
Breach Apprehended Violence Order	701	23.3%	891	14.0%

Source: NSW Recorded Crime Statistics 2018-2022.

APPENDIX D TECHNICAL NOTES RELATING TO DATA SOURCES

The following table provides more information about the data sources used for this Plan, how the TRRA region was defined in relation to different data sources, and how population projections were calculated.

Data	Source	Variables	Spatial definition	Notes
Population demographics	ABS Census 2016 and 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age- and sex- specific population - Place of usual residence in the last 5 years 	Mesh Block (MB)	<p>Mesh Block (MB) are the smallest geographic areas defined by the ABS and form the building blocks for the larger regions of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)²⁷.</p> <p>The ASGS is a classification of Australia into a hierarchy of statistical areas. First introduced in 2011, the ASGS replaced the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) that had been used since 1984. The ASGS is a social geography, developed to reflect the location of people and communities, and used for the release and analysis of statistics and other data. The ASGS is updated every 5 years to account for growth and change in Australia's population, economy and infrastructure.</p> <p>Most MB contain 30 to 60 dwellings. MB were developed to fulfil the need for accurate small area statistics. They also improve the relationship between small area geography and the social, physical and economic realities of the landscape. They broadly identify land use such as residential, commercial, industrial, parkland etc. Mesh Blocks cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps²⁸. We grouped the number of building blocks into 12 areas within the TRRA region centred on the towns of Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Mudgee, Narromine, Nyngan, Parkes, Peak Hill, Trangie, Warren, and Wellington.</p> <p>In the census data, all data by Indigenous status is self-reported using the census questions.</p>

²⁷ [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\) | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/australian-statistical-geography-standard)

²⁸ [Mesh Blocks \(MB\) | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/mesh-blocks)

Data	Source	Variables	Spatial definition	Notes
	Estimated Resident Population (ERP) 2016 and 2021	- Age- and sex- specific population	MB	<p>Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the official estimate of the Australian population, which links people to a place of usual residence within Australia. The estimation includes all people who usually live in Australia (regardless of nationality, citizenship, or legal status), with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. At the national and state levels, ERP is updated from the Census base every three months by taking the population estimate at the start of the quarter and adding the components of population change: natural increase (births minus deaths), net overseas migration and (in the case of state populations) net interstate migration²⁹.</p> <p>The ERP was utilised to compare with the census population numbers at the NSW level, aiming to obtain age distribution undercount rates. These rates were then applied to the age- and sex-specific census populations in 2016 and 2021. The population number derived from this method are referred to as the “Pseudo population”.</p>
	ABS Life table (2015-2017 and 2020-2022)	- Life Table for NSW	NSW	Life tables by sex were utilized for calculating deaths and projecting population. For Indigenous populations, we applied the probabilities of dying (q_x) from the ABS life table for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in NSW ³⁰ . For non-Indigenous populations, the q_x values from the general ABS life table at NSW level ³¹ were used.
	ABS Census 2016 and 2021 and ERP 2016 and 2021	- Birth		Births from 2017 to 2021 were determined by counting individuals aged 0-4 years in 2021 within the Pseudo population.
	ABS Census 2016 and 2021, ABS Life table (2015-2017 and 2020-2022), and registered death	- Death		Using the life tables from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which provide mortality rates (m_x), we estimated the number of deaths. This was done by applying the life table calculations—a standard demographic technique ³² —using the provided mortality rates to the population numbers by age and sex. Furthermore, we used the expected number of deaths and an adjustment factor for New South Wales (NSW) provided by the ABS. This adjustment was applied to our estimated number of deaths for NSW level both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. For the TRRA, we calculated deaths using a similar process, applying overcount rate adjustments from NSW, based on the assumption that death rates at the NSW level are similar to those in the TRRA. However, the adjustment

²⁹ [Regional Population Methodology | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/Regional-Population-Methodology)

³⁰ [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-life-expectancy)

³¹ [Life expectancy | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au/Life-expectancy)

³² Preston, S., Heuveline, P., Guillot, M., 2000. Demography: Measuring and Modelling Population Processes. Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA, pp. 71–91.

Data	Source	Variables	Spatial definition	Notes
				<p>numbers were distinct for Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations to achieve more accurate estimates.</p> <p>To determine the number of deaths occurring between 2017 and 2021, we employed a method to calculate the linear change from 2016 to 2021. This was done by dividing the difference in the number of deaths between 2016 and 2021 by the number of years in this period. We then applied this linear change incrementally to each subsequent year. For instance, the number of deaths in 2017 was calculated by adding the linear change to the deaths in 2016, and similarly for each year up to 2021. Finally, we aggregated the total deaths from 2017 to 2021 to obtain the cumulative number of deaths during this period.</p>
	ABS Census 2021	- Migration	Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2)	<p>In the 2021 ABS Census, the variable indicating the place of usual residence five years prior was utilized as a measure of migration. However, this variable was not available at the MB level. Instead, we used the SA2 classification, which still covers 12 towns within the TRRA, including Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Mudgee, Narromine, Nyngan, Parkes, Peak Hill, Trangie, Warren, and Wellington.</p> <p>Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2s) are medium-sized general-purpose areas built up from whole Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s). Their purpose is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically. SA2s are generally the smallest areas used for the release of ABS non-Census of Population and Housing statistics, including Estimated Resident Population and Health and Vitals data³³.</p> <p>In-migration was calculated based on the number of individuals who, five years prior, lived in areas such as Greater Sydney, other parts of Regional NSW (excluding TRRA), other states, or overseas, but had moved to the TRRA by 2021. Out-migration was determined from the count of people living outside the TRRA in 2021 who had resided within the TRRA five years earlier.</p>
	ABS Census 2016 and 2021, ABS explorer, and ABS Life table (2015-2017 and 2020-2022)	Population projection - Pseudo Population - Life Table - Total Fertility Rates (TFRs)	MB	<p>The population projection method utilized the cohort-component model to estimate the population sizes in TRRA for the years 2026 and 2031. We operate under the assumption that both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations are stable and that the demographic trends within the TRRA mirror those at the NSW level.</p> <p>The choice of the cohort-component model aligns with the ABS's methodology for projecting population sizes³⁴, especially when demographic components at the same</p>

³³ [Statistical Area Level 2 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/indicators/statistical-area-level-2)

³⁴ [Demographic Estimates and Projections: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 1999 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/indicators/demographic-estimates-and-projections-concepts-sources-and-methods-1999)

Data	Source	Variables	Spatial definition	Notes
				<p>spatial level are unavailable. The method starts with establishing a base population, distinguished by each sex and single year of age, and then progresses it by applying projected assumptions concerning future fertility, mortality, and migration rates. This process is repeated for every year throughout the duration of the projection period³⁵.</p> <p>Our calculation began with the Pseudo population in 2016, using fertility rates for ages 15-49 from the ABS explorer³⁶ to estimate the population in 2021 for those aged 0-4. We then applied the survivorship rate, calculated as 1 minus the probability of dying according to the ABS life table, to project the population for other age groups. The Pseudo population number in 2021 was also utilized to compare with the projected population number for 2021, allowing us to obtain the migration residual between 2016 and 2021. This process was repeated for subsequent projections. However, for the population projection for the year 2026 and 2031, we did not calculate a new migration number; instead, we applied the migration number calculated for 2021 to the projected population.</p>
Housing	ABS Census 2011 and 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing tenure - Number of people per house - Equivalised total household income (weekly) - Weekly rents 	MB	Housing tenure was categorised based on tenure types and landlords, including: owned outright, owned with a mortgage, private rental (by a real estate agent), and social rental such as rented by state or territory housing authority, by community housing provider, by person not in same household and by other landlord type.
Health	The Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU), 2011 to 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low birth weight babies - Mother smoking during pregnancy - Non-attendance in prenatal care within the first 10 weeks - Fully vaccinated children - Median age at death - Hospital admissions - Reasons for emergency presentations 	Indigenous Areas (IAREs)	<p>Indigenous areas are parts of the ASGS which are medium sized geographical areas designed to facilitate the release of more detailed population and economic statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people³⁷.</p> <p>There are 13 number of IAREs in the TRRA region including, Bogan, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Narromine, Parkes, Warren, Wellington, Bathurst, Blayney – Cabonne, Forbes, Lithgow – Oberon, Mudgee, and Orange.</p> <p>Health data from PHIDU is sourced from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), with the exceptions of vaccinated children, which comes from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register, and median age at death, derived from Death Unit</p>

³⁵ [Population Projections, Australia methodology | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/population-projections-australia-methodology)

³⁶ [ABS Explorer Stat Data | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/abs-explorer-stat-data)

³⁷ [Indigenous Areas \(IAREs\) | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/indigenous-areas-iare)

Data	Source	Variables	Spatial definition	Notes
				Record Files provided by the Australian Coordinating Registry and the Victorian Department of Justice ³⁸ .
	ABS Census 2021	- Long-term health conditions	MB	
Education	ABS Census 2011 and 2021	- Completion of year 12 - Post-secondary Educational Attainment - School attendance	MB	<p>The percentage of individuals who completed Year 12 was calculated based on the proportion of people aged 18 to 24.</p> <p>The percentage of post-secondary educational attainment, which includes Postgraduate Degrees, Diplomas and Bachelors, as well as Advanced Diplomas and Certificates, was derived from the proportion of people aged 18 to 64.</p> <p>The percentage of school attendance, covering primary and secondary education as well as non-attendance, was calculated from the proportion of individuals aged 5 to 18.</p>
	ABS Census 2011,2016, 2021	- Employment, Education, and training	MB	Engagement in employment, education, and training among the population aged 15 to 24 was derived from 1) employment – including labour force status for those employed full-time and part-time, and 2) education and training – based on the type of educational institution attending.
Economic development	ABS Census 2011,2016, 2021	- Industry - Labour market status - Employment status - Employment sectors - Labour force participation - Occupation - Unpaid domestic work - Personal income	MB	<p>Economic development data provide information on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals aged 18 to 64.</p> <p>Industry breakdowns representing less than 3%, such as Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services; Wholesale Trade, Information Media and Telecommunications; Financial and Insurance Services, Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services; and Arts and Recreation Services, were excluded.</p> <p>Labour force participation rates were calculated by dividing the sum of full-time and part-time employed individuals, as well as those unemployed, by the total number of people both in and out of the labour force.</p>

³⁸ [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous status comparison social health atlas of Australia: Topic, Indicators & notes | PHIDU \(phidu.torrens.edu.au\)](https://phidu.torrens.edu.au)

Data	Source	Variables	Spatial definition	Notes
Child protection	Child Protection and Out of Home Care (OOHC) dashboard by the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ) statistics ³⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of children and young people in OOHC - Rate of children and young people (per 1000 population) entering OOHC - Children and young people entering OOHC for the first time - Caregivers 	DCJ District	The dataset is involved of administrative data, providing insights into Aboriginality and district-level breakdowns for children aged 0-17 during the years 2015-2022. We have included only the Western NSW district, as it covers the TRRA region as well as far west areas beyond TRRA's footprint.
Policing	NSW recorded Crime statistics 2018-2022, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offenders - Victims 	Local government areas (LGAs)	<p>Local government area boundaries were updated for the September 2017 quarterly crime release in line with ABS boundary and population updates. These changes reflect the council mergers that occurred in 2017⁴⁰. LGAs are parts of the ASGS which are an ABS approximation of officially gazetted Local Government Areas as defined by each State and Territory Local Government Department. The ABS reviews Local Government Areas annually, and any changes will be applied by including or excluding whole Mesh Blocks. Mesh Blocks are allocated to Local Government Areas primarily based on where population is located⁴¹.</p> <p>There are 12 LGAs which cover the TRRA region including Bathurst Regional, Blayney, Bogan, Cabonne, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Narromine, Orange, Parkes, and Warren.</p> <p>The NSW Police Force records the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status of people in their COPS database using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Standard Indigenous Question (SIQ). BOCSAR obtains this information from NSW Police to produce statistics⁴².</p>

³⁹ [Aboriginal-led Data Sharing: Child Protection and Out-of-home Care Statistics | NSW Government Communities & Justice \(www.facs.nsw.gov.au/\)](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/)

⁴⁰ [NSW Local Government Area crime tables | NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research \(https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au)

⁴¹ [Local Government Areas \(LGAs\) | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](http://abs.gov.au)

⁴² [Definitions and explanations | NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research \(https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au)

