

VICTORIAN RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING FOUNDATION

INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN SCORECARD

June – November 2023

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation will close on 30 June 2024. Our work in gambling harm prevention with First Nations communities will continue at the Department of Health.

While this is the last scorecard of our final Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) we will proudly keep working in the spirit of reconciliation.



BETTER WAYS TO HANDLE MONEY

Story by Melissa Bickford

Proud Gundiṯjmara, Yorta Yorta and Wiradjuri woman Chantelle McGuinness is a financial counsellor with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS). She and her team take a positive approach to helping community manage their money, helping them to create a budget, make regular payments, and learn how to save.

‘We encourage clients to put essential living expenses first, put some savings away each pay, and then do what they like with the rest,’ says Chantelle.

When it comes to harm from gambling, ‘We still get clients in who think they can pay all their bills if they just have a significant win.

When someone tells me, “But Auntie won up big,” I ask, “How much do you think Auntie lost before she had her big win?”

‘I suggest to clients that if they saved a little each pay then it will build up and they’ll have real savings. It’s about changing that mindset from having to win money to better managing the money they already have.



Above: Chantelle McGuinness

‘Our message is that gambling can be harmful if you don’t have barriers in place to help you stick to a set limit. Gambling harm happens when you can’t afford it but you do it anyway.

‘When someone seeks help from us for their financial difficulties, we advise them to tell debtors they are engaged with a financial counsellor and are sorting things out.’

The Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF) has funded VAHS since 2006, knowing that financial and gambling counselling can make a big difference.

A new guide, *Financial literacy and gambling behaviour in Victorian First Nations communities*, has been put together by the First Nations Foundation and Professor Nerilee Hing, with help from the VRGF.

The VAHS team works with the lessons in the guide in the real world.

They see some deadly results.

‘We’re seeing more people saving for a family holiday or a deposit on a car which shows they understand money better,’ says Chantelle. ‘And we’re not seeing them as often because they’re on top it.’



KOORIE ACADEMY IS ALL FOR THE KIDS

More than 1500 young people had great fun with Koorie Academy in 2023, playing basketball and taking part in cultural activities.

Rick Baldwin is the energetic founder and leader. He's passionate about First Nations kids from all across Victoria having the same opportunities as everyone else.

'Part of my healing is leading change through basketball,' says Rick.

'Everyone is welcome. We start with basketball but also get the kids involved in grassroots events led by Elders that help them feel connected to culture, country and community. We want them to feel healthy physically through sport but also safe and happy socially, mentally and emotionally.'

Koorie Academy clinics also teach the young people life skills to support their education and relationships. In the future, these skills will help them in their jobs.



Above: Rick Baldwin (centre back) with excited Koorie Academy players and coaches

'They learn to show gratitude,' explains Rick. 'Be polite, look at me when I'm talking to you, no playing up, show respect to gain respect. Sit and listen to the big boys and girls coaching you, listen and learn from the storytelling of the Elders.'

'We want to inspire them to step into their power. We wrap them in the possum or roo skins and you can see the sense of pride and of belonging – one united mob.'

'They're part of the oldest living culture in the world!'

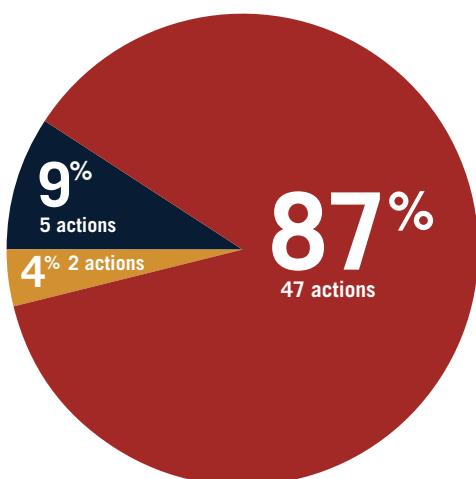
Rick recalls one child telling him, 'I'm a proud Aboriginal basketballer'.

'Only through the young ones can we make generational change,' he says.

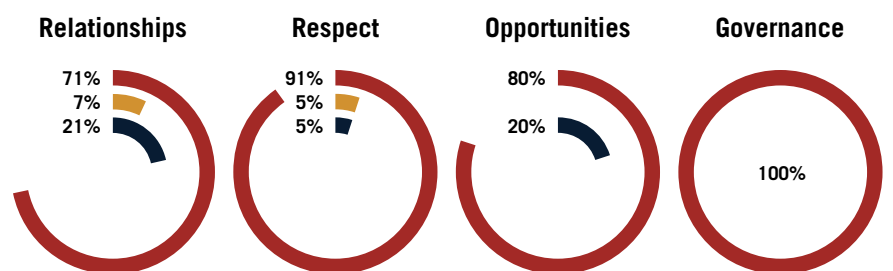
Koorie Academy receives funding through the Foundation's First Nations Love the Game program. Love the Game is all about bringing community together around positive and healthy activities.



HOW DID WE DO?



Progress on our actions



Total 54 actions

- Completed
- On track
- On hold/delayed

It is our sincere hope that actions not completed in this reporting period will be progressed at the agencies taking over the VRGF's work in gambling harm treatment and support.

For more information about this report, please contact Dea Morgain at dea.morgain@responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au