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| Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks |
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# Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks

The Victorian Government is working with local Aboriginal communities to establish Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks (Networks).

The Networks are a platform where community members and organisations can access and share information about the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts; seek referral points; raise systemic issues and risks directly to government; and identify gaps in the mainstream and Aboriginal-specific COVID-19 response.

The Networks will also provide a mechanism for local VPS staff to come together to coordinate and consolidate efforts in order to respond to COVID-19 in an effective and timely way.

The Networks are intended to strengthen and support the work of the Victorian Government and Aboriginal organisations in delivering important services to local communities.

# How the Networks work

* The Networks will provide a single point of contact for the Aboriginal community in engaging with government and accessing dedicated resources in relation to the COVID-19 response and recovery.
* All Aboriginal community members are encouraged to participate in an existing Network or establish a new Network.
* Networks could comprise representatives of the Victorian Government; local governments; Aboriginal governance forums; Aboriginal Organisations; Traditional Owner Groups and Corporations; mainstream service providers and the local community.
* The membership and geographic coverage of the Networks will be determined by the Network itself, informed by the local Aboriginal community.
* The Networks will meet regularly online or in person (within public health guidelines for physical distancing).
* There is no limit to the number of Networks in existence across the State.
* The Networks are not replacing or replicating the State Government’s networks such as the RAJACs, LANs or Dhelk Dja.
* Existing community networks may choose to assume the function of a Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Network.

# Appointment of Network Coordinators

* Each Network will appoint at least one Network Coordinator.
* Network Coordinators should be appointed by consensus of Network members.
* Network Coordinators should have relevant experience as well as the ability to authoritatively drive action with many and varied stakeholders.
* If consensus to appoint a Network Coordinator cannot be achieved, a member of the Network Coordination Team will support the Network members to appoint a Network Coordinator. See below for more information on the Network Coordination Team.

# Network Coordinators role and responsibilities

* The Network Coordinators will chair and convene meetings and share information with the Networks.
* The Network Coordinators will also share information with Network members about COVID-19, including information about available supports.
* Network Coordinators will drive and coordinate local responses to the concerns of the Aboriginal community concerns from the relevant service, agency or department.
* If a local solution cannot be found, the Network Coordinator will escalate the matter to the Network Coordination Team for resolution.
* If a solution is still not reached, the issue will be elevated to the Aboriginal Community COVID-19 Taskforce (Taskforce).
* Network Coordinators will be supported by a member of the Network Coordination Team and Aboriginal members of the VPS.
* Networks Coordinators will be invited to participate in Taskforce meetings to share the experiences, gaps and opportunities identified by their Networks that warrant Taskforce attention.

# Network Coordination Team

The Network Coordination Team (NCT) will:

* Support the establishment and ongoing functioning of Networks;
* Provide relevant information to Networks;
* Support the Network Coordinators to perform their roles and fulfil their responsibilities;
* Support the coordination of actions and priorities across the State;
* Act as a conduit between the Networks, the Taskforce and Government.

The NCT includes the below VPS staff from Aboriginal inclusion and engagement roles:

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| **Name**  | **Role**  | **Contact details**  |
| Joshua Atkinson  | NCT Lead  | joshua.atkinson@dpc.vic.gov.au0427438379 |
| Cathy Austin  | Network Support  | cathy.austin@dpc.vic.gov.au  |
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# Further information

For further information on the Local Aboriginal COVID-19 Response Networks please contact:

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