

North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan 2022–2024

A safe and inclusive neighbourhood where
we value respect, diversity and empowerment



Message from the Co-Chairs

The North Richmond Precinct Action Plan is a practical plan that reflects the community's priorities. All actions were developed by North Richmond residents with support from our local agency partners. It provides a clear story of what we believe a strong, healthy and safe community looks like.

Governments often consult with communities but North Richmond Precinct Community Committee (NRPCC) is a rare example of genuine partnerships; communities working hand-in-hand with government agencies and local community organisations on a shared vision for change. We're not perfect and there is still much work to be done but we're committed to constant improvement as we continue this journey.

While it was challenging to connect and engage in person during the pandemic, we found ways to work together to develop the foundations of this plan and to strengthen our relationships with government, community partners and each other.

The actions in this Plan build on the work of Government and local agencies. It also allows us to identify new opportunities to respond directly to our community's priorities.

The community's voice has been central to the development of the North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan and will continue to drive its implementation. But our work is not done.

The *Investing in a Thriving North Richmond* funding package announced in the 2022–23 State Budget provides resources and continuity for collaborative efforts over the next four years.

So let's be bold as we start the next chapter in what we like to call this grand experiment. Let's seek a deeper understanding of the challenges we collectively face and achieve our shared vision of a North Richmond where everyone feels safe, connected, has a sense of belonging and is valued.

Cheryl Batagol, Greg Hordacre
Co-Chairs
North Richmond Precinct
Community Committee



We proudly acknowledge Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community.

The artwork displayed here and on the front cover, *Connection to Land and Country*, was created by artist Emma Bamblett, from the Wemba Wemba, Gunditjmara, Ngadjonji and Taungurung mobs.

About us

North Richmond and the City of Yarra make up part of the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. For tens of thousands of years, the City of Yarra was looked after by the Wurundjeri-willum people, of the Wurundjeri-balluk clan. The land provided all the food, water, medicine and shelter they needed.¹

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the North Richmond area was defined by industry and manufacturing. In 1956, the Housing Commission of Victoria began purchasing houses in North Richmond to make way for public and social housing. Today, North Richmond is home to more than 15,000 people who live in private, social, public and community housing. The Richmond Housing Estate has five high-rise towers which were built in the 1960s and 1970s. Home to more than 3,000 people, it the largest public housing estate in Australia.

The wide network of community services support residents' employment, health, wellbeing and social connectedness. Services include multicultural health services, community-run programs and the Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR), which provides life-saving services for people who inject drugs.

North Richmond is renowned for its vibrant cultural diversity; more than 70 percent of residents were born overseas and more than 40 languages are spoken. The community's many and varied multicultural traditions and celebrations attract local residents and the wider community, such as the long-running Victoria Street Lunar New Year Festival. Foodies travel from far and wide to experience authentic Vietnamese food, which these days, sit alongside Thai, Chinese, Japanese and Korean eateries.

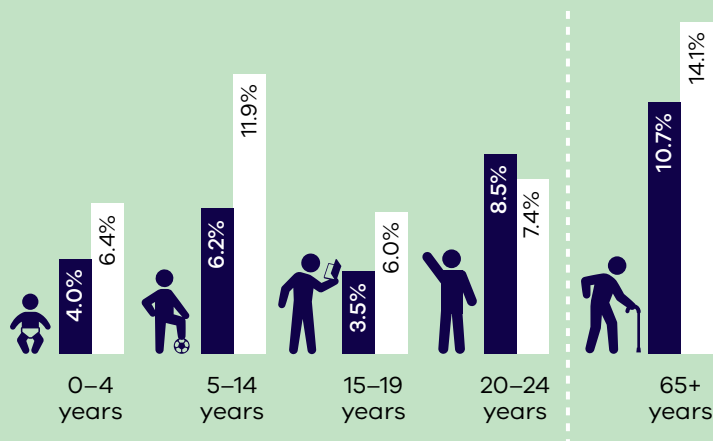
The North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan acknowledges the suburb's rich potential. It has been developed by the community, for the community. It seeks to build on the diverse knowledge, skills, experiences, resources and the enthusiasm that are in abundance, to create a long-term vision for change for local agencies, businesses, and most importantly, the residents of North Richmond.

¹ Wurundjeri History of Yarra
<https://aboriginalhistoryofyarra.com.au>

● North Richmond ● Greater Melbourne

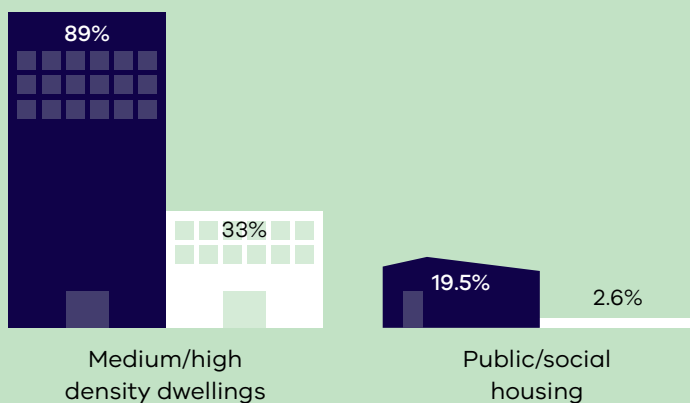
Resident population

15,840



Number of dwellings

6,863

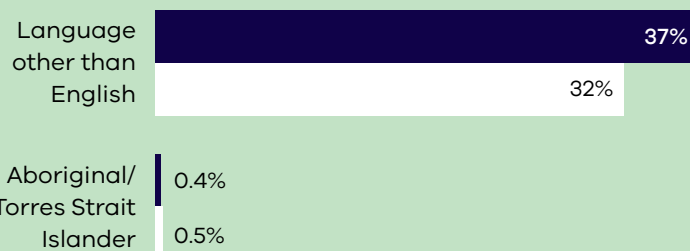


Different languages

40

TOP 5

Vietnamese | Mandarin | Greek | Cantonese | Hakka



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of population and housing, 2016

Investing in a thriving North Richmond

The *Investing in the Thriving North Richmond* initiative in the 2022–23 State Budget includes \$14 million for the local community. This is in addition to the funding provided by other Government agencies, such as Homes Victoria’s Big Housing Build. This new investment delivers on the Government’s commitment to work with residents to build a safer, stronger and more connected North Richmond.

It incorporates resourcing to implement the initiatives in the North Richmond Precinct Action Plan, by promoting improved community health, safety and economic revitalisation; key areas identified by the Precinct governance groups and wider community.

\$6.6 million over four years to continue community governance, including community-identified projects

\$0.3 million to operate the Victoria Street Community Space in its second and third years of operation

\$1.8 million for improvements to the Richmond West Primary School Vere St drop-off zone

\$1.7 million for North Richmond Community Health and MSIR entrance improvements

\$2 million for additional CCTV cameras on the North Richmond estate

\$0.6 million to staff the North Richmond Youth Hub for a further two years

\$0.5 million to continue homelessness outreach at the MSIR

\$0.5 million to enhance the STAY mental health program in Yarra, including North Richmond.

Community governance

Formal governance was established to ensure that people who live, work and access services in the North Richmond Precinct are guiding improvements in the neighbourhood and shaping a vision for the future.

In 2020, the North Richmond Precinct Community Committee (NRPCC) and the three Reference Groups (Safety, Neighbourhood and Amenity; Health, Wellbeing and Community Participation; and Economic Revitalisation and Inclusion) were established as part of the governance model which was approved following consultation with key agencies and partners. Each group comprised a mix of community members and representatives from government and partner organisations.

Over its initial two-year term, the governance groups evolved and matured. The allocation of \$6.6 million for community governance in the 2022–23 State Budget addressed the NRPCC view that meaningful community advice to government is critical, and that the governance model will

continue to evolve to ensure the community is always at the centre so we can create lasting, positive change.

Governance partners

Government departments

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing; Department of Health; Department of Transport and Planning; Department of Education; Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions; Department of Justice and Community Safety.

Stakeholders and partner agencies

City of Yarra; Victoria Police; Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House; Brotherhood of St Laurence; Carringbush Adult Education; Cultivating Community; Drummond Street Services; Fitzroy Legal Service; Neighbourhood Justice Centre; North Richmond Community Health; Richmond West Primary School; St Vincents Mental Health.

The North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan

Our aim is to improve health, social and economic outcomes for those who live, work and regularly visit North Richmond. We start from our strengths and assets and we think big about creating a shared vision for the future. We understand the challenges we face in achieving these outcomes, the actions we are taking and what success looks like in the Precinct.

The North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan was developed in consultation with the NRPCC and Reference Groups.

The NRPCC had broad oversight, and each Reference Group worked on the assets, challenges, strategies and actions in each priority area.

The Plan is a long-term vision for change in the North Richmond Precinct. Actions will be delivered over the short, medium, and longer term in the following key priority areas:



Safety, neighbourhood and amenity



Health, wellbeing and community participation



Economic revitalisation and inclusion



Local jobs for local people

Long-term vision for the North Richmond Precinct

The North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan is part of a broader, long-term plan for the local community. This vision also includes the North Richmond Community Capacity Building Initiative, implementing priorities identified by public housing residents, and the North Richmond Master Plan, a 10+ year revitalisation plan for the Richmond Housing Estate.

North Richmond Precinct Community Action Plan

Vision for change and priorities in the wider precinct, including residents, businesses and local agencies
2022–2024

North Richmond Master Plan

Long term plan for revitalisation of the Richmond Housing Estate
10+ years

Community Capacity Building Initiative*

Public housing resident identified priorities
2020–2022

* The Government is committed to implementing public housing resident identified priorities beyond 2022.



Our priority areas



Safety, neighbourhood and amenity

Our vision

A diverse community working together to create and maintain inclusive, safe, and vibrant spaces for everyone.

Our strengths

- We are strongly motivated to improve safety and amenity in the precinct.
- We have strong support from our precinct stakeholders.
- The Victorian Government is committed to making improvements to the spaces that we live in, work in and visit.

What we are working towards

- Improving community safety and perceptions of community safety.
- Building a common understanding of acceptable public behaviour that is consistent with our community's values.
- Working with community members and stakeholders to address the negative impact of drug-related activity in our neighbourhood.
- Engaging in conversations that drive a positive North Richmond narrative.

Strategic objectives

- Make changes to the use of Lennox Street, activating and promoting safety.
- Develop a communication strategy to showcase positive stories and projects in the Precinct.
- Work alongside the North Richmond Master Plan to improve safety and amenity.
- Encourage behaviour that is consistent with what our neighbourhood stands for.
- Improve community knowledge of local support and outreach services.



“ We need green spaces and a bigger emphasis on the outdoors, to facilitate play and social gatherings. ”

Our priority areas



Health, wellbeing and community participation

Our vision

Everyone has access to services and opportunities to support health, wellbeing and connection to the community.

Our strengths

- We have a strong network of health and community services and hospitals in the Precinct and surrounding areas.
- We can draw on community health and wellbeing knowledge.
- We have strong support around food security and fresh produce on the Richmond Housing estate.

What we are working towards

- Raising awareness of existing services in the Precinct, finding ways to break down cultural and language barriers.
- Creating safe outdoor recreation spaces which encourage local community members to participate in activity on the estate and in the broader Precinct.
- Raising awareness around lifestyle-related disease and empowering our community members from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and underrepresented and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to seek out support from local health services.
- Creating spaces and programs to encourage our community members in high-density living to engage in activities that promote health and wellbeing.

Strategic objectives

- Improve public areas, such as playgrounds, to encourage healthy activity for children and families.
- Establish playgrounds and recreational facilities to support people of different ages.
- Identify and address barriers to accessing health, community and mental health services.
- Continue to develop strategies around food security and access to affordable and nutritious food.



“ We need to build a sense of self-esteem and community. ”

Our priority areas



Economic revitalisation and inclusion

Our vision

Brave economic actions by building on the community's authentic cultural and economic diversity and delivering long-lasting and sustainable outcomes together.

Our strengths

- We are located close to Melbourne's CBD with good transport links to the rest of the city.
- Victoria Street has a strong identity as a food destination and attracts thousands of visitors to the annual Lunar Festival.
- We have strong partnerships with Victoria Street Business Association and Yarra City Council.
- We have a growing population and a vibrant mix of multicultural and creative residents and businesses.

What we are working towards

- Building confidence that North Richmond is a great place to start or grow a business.
- Improving the Victoria Street experience for residents and visitors.
- Working to understand and overcome major factors contributing to long term vacant shops.

Strategic objectives

- Focus on key sites to activate and create welcoming spaces in the retail precinct.
- Work with council, traders, artists and community to increase positive social and commercial activity on Victoria Street.
- Work with state government departments, landowners, real estate agents, businesses and other stakeholders to reduce long term vacancies.



“ I see Victoria Street as a destination of difference, drawing on the multicultural community with more shops and thriving eateries, art spaces and community services. ”

Our priority areas



Local jobs for local people

Our vision

Break down the barriers that jobseekers face and see local employers actively supporting local people.

Our strengths

- We have a diverse local economy with good access to public transport to employment hubs such as Melbourne CBD.
- Employment services are accessible to local jobseekers.
- We have strong engagement with local stakeholders and the goodwill of local employers to develop a diverse workforce.

What we are working towards

- Breaking down the barriers to local job seekers finding and retaining employment.
- Raising local employers' awareness of the supports needed by employment services and incentives.
- Reducing the stigma faced by public housing residents in the job market.

Strategic objectives

- Engage with local employers to create employment opportunities for local people.
- Build awareness in the community around local employment opportunities.
- Seek out and publicise positive stories about employees who have overcome barriers to successfully find employment.
- Build awareness of employment pathways for young people through services and education.



“ I would like to see more internships, mentorships, training and employment for our young people in North Richmond. ”

Projects underway in the community

The Victorian Government's Building Stimulus Package funded a range of innovative community-identified developments in North Richmond.

North Richmond Landscaping and Greening Project

Through community consultation, sustainable outdoor amenity improvements and upgrades were identified and incorporated into the wider North Richmond Master Plan.

Key projects

- Playground improvements
- Lighting upgrades
- Upgraded pedestrian walkways and better
- Wayfinding signage

North Richmond Precinct Community Projects Round One

In early 2021, community-designed project proposals were voted on by the wider North Richmond Community. The twelve most popular projects were then implemented by residents in partnership with local organisations. The diverse range of projects showcased the community's strengths, talents and diversity. By the time they were completed in June 2022, all projects had made a positive impact on the Precinct.

Community Projects

Engagement and services

- North Richmond Community Referral and Support Service
- Let's Keep Cooking
- Migrant Strengthening through Community Engagement and Arts
- Women's Health, Economic and Inclusion Project
- North Richmond Youth Homework Club

Events and festivals

- Festival of Women
- Lennox Markets
- Moon Lantern Festival
- Victoria Street Alive!

Environment and Infrastructure

- Intergenerational Recreation Space
- North Richmond Outdoor Gym
- Recycle and Reuse



Priority actions

North Richmond Precinct Community Projects – second allocation

The second allocation of the North Richmond Precinct Community Projects funded three projects framed that address the highest priorities of the Action Plan; an approach proposed and approved by the NRPCC.

Members of the NRPCC and Reference Groups were instrumental in the development of these projects, which have built on their understanding of local community priorities.

Each project focuses on improvements to Lennox Street and its immediate surrounds. Lennox Street is both a destination (North Richmond Community Health and Richmond West Primary School) and a connecting spine between residential areas and the Victoria Street retail strip.









The community regularly identify Lennox Street as negatively impacted by drug related activity and in need of safety and amenity improvements. These projects will help to change the feel of the Precinct and make it more attractive to enjoy.

Project	Rationale	Our partners	Which of our themes does it address?
Victoria Street Community Space – a leased retail space on Victoria Street for community benefit.	To address shortage of community space and amenity issues at the corner of Victoria and Lennox Streets and bring more people to the Victoria Street shopping strip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local community service providers Residents Yarra City Council 	
Lennox-Highett Street green space improvements – landscaping and program of activities.	A gateway site connecting public and private housing in North Richmond. Current facilities on the site need upgrading to increase use by the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes Victoria Yarra City Council Recreational service providers 	
Multi-storey Carpark activation – infrastructure improvements and community-led activities.	To activate an area with safety issues using a “place-making” approach with physical improvements and community-led activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House in collaboration with Homes Victoria 	

- Safety, neighbourhood and amenity
- Health, wellbeing and community participation

- Economic revitalisation and inclusion
- Local jobs for local people

Actions – Year 1

Project	Rationale	Our partners	Which of our themes does it address?
Identify and commemorate the history, heritage and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait people.	Building an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures within the broader population is crucial to Indigenous people's health, social, economic and emotional wellbeing, as well as providing an enriched appreciation of Australia's cultural heritage and national identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Aboriginal organisations 	 
Work with local mental health services and initiatives to effectively support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and Aboriginal communities.	A lower proportion of public housing residents are accessing mental health services. Mental health impact of COVID-19 emphasises the need to ensure residents have access to support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Richmond Community Health Department of Health Mental health services in North Richmond 	
Improve access to health and community services for CALD and Aboriginal communities. Develop and distribute a community services guide, including in-language versions.	Response to identified need for improved access and culturally appropriate services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Richmond Community Health Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Department of Health Yarra City Council Local health services 	
Work with Victoria Police to ensure policing is responsive to crime and safety issues identified by the community.	To respond to local anti-social and offending behaviour issues, particularly along Lennox Street and Victoria Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victoria Police 	 
Create additional opportunities for community members to engage with state and local government initiatives affecting the local area.	Part of the North Richmond Precinct Community Committee's Terms of Reference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and other state government agencies Yarra City Council 	 

 Safety, neighbourhood and amenity

 Health, wellbeing and community participation

 Economic revitalisation and inclusion

 Local jobs for local people

Actions – Year 1
















Project	Rationale	Our partners	Which of our themes does it address?
Improve responsive and programmed maintenance to ensure public spaces provide good levels of amenity.	Builds community pride and neighbourhood amenity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra City Council • Homes Victoria • Department of Families, Fairness and Housing 	●
Bring the whole community together to address shared priorities.	Improve social connection and community cohesion; address public drug-related activity and anti-social behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Richmond Community Health • Neighbourhood Justice Centre 	● ● ●
Find new ways to share public spaces with the whole community.	Community members report feeling unsafe in some public spaces, which are often dominated by certain groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Justice Centre • Department of Families, Fairness and Housing 	●
Implement strategies to improve safety and social connection of seniors.	There is a large cohort of seniors in the North Richmond community and perceptions of safety has been identified as an important issue for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House • Department of Families, Fairness and Housing • Yarra City Council 	●
Identify ways to connect jobseekers with local job opportunities.	Additional support needed to connect jobseekers with employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions • Employment services • Yarra City Council • Local employers 	● ●
Work with agency partners on digital inclusion initiatives.	Low digital literacy is a barrier to employment, social participation and economic participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions • Yarra City Council • Carringbush Adult Education • Department of Families, Fairness and Housing 	● ●



- Safety, neighbourhood and amenity
- Health, wellbeing and community participation

- Economic revitalisation and inclusion
- Local jobs for local people

Actions – Years 2–3

Project	Rationale	Our partners	Which of our themes does it address?
Conduct an audit of outdoor recreational facilities.	Large number of residents living in high-density apartments rely on shared outdoor facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra City Council • Homes Victoria • Residents 	 
Develop a program of nutrition education with specialist providers combined with connections to community gardening.	This has regularly been identified as a high priority by public housing residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes Victoria • Yarra City Council • Local services 	
Explore opportunities for new place-based mental health and wellbeing supports in North Richmond.	This is a high priority for the community and crucial for social recovery from COVID-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health • Local mental health service providers 	
Investigate opportunities for new place-based employment and training initiatives in North Richmond.	Richmond is an employment hub and there is an opportunity to better connect employers with local jobseekers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions • Department of Education 	 
Build on existing work to revitalise the Victoria Street retail strip.	Opportunity to stimulate local economic activity and jobs, build local pride.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions • Yarra City Council • Victoria Street Traders 	  
Work with Victoria Street landowners to identify opportunities for development interventions to stimulate economic activity.	To stimulate local jobs and economic recovery through appropriate development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Transport and Planning development facilitation • Yarra City Council 	 

-  Safety, neighbourhood and amenity
-  Health, wellbeing and community participation

-  Economic revitalisation and inclusion
-  Local jobs for local people

Actions – Years 2–3



Project	Rationale	Our partners	Which of our themes does it address?
Work with community and partners to design and deliver effective crime prevention solutions.	Opportunities for partnership to respond to local offending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Justice and Community Safety • Yarra City Council • Victoria Police 	●
Explore initiatives to improve business and activity on Victoria Street through physical improvements and incentives.	Shopping strip was hit hard by COVID-19. Opportunity to restore it as a drawcard for North Richmond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra City Council • VicRoads • Victoria Street Business Association 	● ●
Butler Park (Lennox Street) activation and upgrade.	Use and activation of Butler Park to encourage shared ownership of space and build social cohesion. Links with Year One initiative on finding new ways to share public spaces with the whole community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra City Council 	● ●
Investigate opening up Richmond West Primary School facilities outside school hours to local community groups.	Opportunity to fully utilise facilities and address shortage of recreational facilities in area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Education 	● ●
Work with Yarra City Council on footpath and lighting improvements along Lennox Street.	Current pedestrian access has been identified by the community as unsafe and difficult to use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra City Council 	●

- Safety, neighbourhood and amenity
- Health, wellbeing and community participation

- Economic revitalisation and inclusion
- Local jobs for local people

What happens now?

The Victorian Government's *Investing in a Thriving North Richmond* budget package provides the necessary resourcing to effect the sustainable, lasting change outlined in this Action Plan. While this funding provides the essential foundations, community support is also vital to create safe, connected, inclusive and vibrant North Richmond. To realise the long-term vision for the Precinct, the North Richmond Precinct Community Committee will work with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, other State Government agencies, Yarra City Council, service providers and local stakeholders to implement:

- years 1, 2 and 3 actions
- second allocation of North Richmond Precinct Community Projects
- future community project funding opportunities.

Progress reports on the implementation of the Action Plan will be developed and published every six months and shared with the Committee, Precinct partners and the wider North Richmond community.

How can I find out more?

We will provide regular community updates through the North Richmond Precinct Community Newsletter. You can also email us at <engagenorthrichmond@dffh.vic.gov.au> if you would like more detailed information.

To receive this document in another format phone Chris Newland, North Richmond Precinct Manager on (03) 9595 2464, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email <christopher.newland@dffh.vic.gov.au>.

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Top row (L–R): 1. Telepathic Creative, 2. and 3. North Richmond community members.

Bottom row (L–R): 1. North Richmond community member, 2. Reshween Mann and 3. *Connection to Land and Country* (painted by Aboriginal artist, Emma Bamblett – see inside front cover for more information).

Thanks to the North Richmond community members for the photos they have contributed to this Action Plan.

This publication may contain images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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