



Focus Communities Strategy

Ensuring all Victorians' voices are heard
in the prevention of corruption

2021–23

 **ibac** independent broad-based
anti-corruption commission

Victoria

Our purpose

The purpose of the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) is to prevent and expose public sector corruption and police misconduct.

IBAC needs community members to know about IBAC and to contact us about suspected corruption and police misconduct.

IBAC understands the challenges faced by people making a complaint and that making a complaint or being part of an IBAC investigation may be a difficult or confronting experience.

Our strategy

IBAC's Focus Communities Strategy is part of our commitment to ensuring IBAC is accessible, accountable and engaged with our community. The strategy focuses on how IBAC interacts with members of three identified communities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, LGBTIQ+ communities and multicultural communities.

These communities have been selected as the initial focus communities for IBAC's strategy because existing projects or relationships have been formed or are underway with these community stakeholders. We recognise the intersectionality of these communities, and the overlapping forms of discrimination these communities may experience. Many of the activities in the strategy will benefit the Victorian community.

The strategy supports IBAC's commitment under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

Focus communities

The three identified communities of initial focus for this strategy are growing in Victoria. These communities are often less visible and less well understood. Statistics illustrate the diversity and scale of the respective communities in Victoria.

Following is more information on the key demographic statistics.

Acknowledgements

At IBAC, we respect the diverse range of life experiences, skills, abilities, cultural backgrounds, and knowledge that staff, stakeholders and the community bring to creating a public sector and police organisation that Victoria can trust.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay respect to them and their cultures and to elders past, present and future. We reside on Wurundjeri lands.

Multicultural communities*

1.5+ million

Victorians speak a language other than English (26%)

4.5%

have low or no English language proficiency

53% increase in CALD population (between 2006–2016)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*

47,788

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people live in Victoria

They comprise

0.8%

of the Victorian population

Grew by 26%

9,796 people (between 2011–2016)



Key demographic statistics about focus communities in Victoria

LGBTIQ+ communities**

3-4%

of the population identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual (estimated by International & Australian research)

25 years +

This figure is larger among Australians in this age group. Some evidence in Australia that reporting of LGBTIQ+ identity may be growing.



*ABS 2016. 2016 Census QuickStats: Rest of Vic. (abs.gov.au)

**Rainbow Health Victoria 2020. Research Matters: How many people are LGBTIQ? [Researchmatters-numbers-lgbtqi.pdf](#) (rainbowhealthvic.org.au)

1. Principles

IBAC's consultation with community members, with community organisations, and with public sector organisations, has highlighted that we need to do more with how we engage with Victorian communities that experience vulnerability and remove the barriers that community members may experience in accessing IBAC and reporting corruption and police misconduct.

Our engagement principles and the approach we are taking to deliver this strategy are:

RESPONSIVENESS

- › Respond to the needs and input of focus communities quickly.

TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY

- › Address community concerns in an open and honest way.
- › Communicate outcomes of community input in IBAC activities in an accessible way.

OPENNESS AND AWARENESS

Understand and acknowledge the experiences of focus communities in all decision-making and engagement activities.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Provide enough time and resources to ensure that focus communities members can participate in a meaningful way.

INCLUSIVENESS

- › Remove barriers to accessing IBAC information, services, events.
- › Adopt collaborative and inclusive approaches to activities.

2. Current state

IBAC currently undertakes a wide range of activities to support engagement and communications with focus communities. IBAC recognises that it must do more to ensure we can expose and prevent corruption.

The below information provides an overview of the work currently undertaken by IBAC to engage with focus communities.

Communication, education & resources

IBAC undertakes activities to raise awareness and build trust in our role and ability to manage complaints and investigations effectively via our website, social media, media liaison, stakeholder engagement, public presentations, events, and seminars.

IBAC produces a wide range of information and resources, available in printed form and on our website in multiple community languages. IBAC's website is also compliant with accessibility standards, with provision of services for people who need an interpreter, or people who are deaf, hearing or speech impaired.

Complainant support

IBAC's [service charter](#), which is available on IBAC's website, explains what can be expected when a complaint is made. Our charter requires that we will be:

- › focused on exposing and preventing public sector corruption and police misconduct
- › independent, fair and free of cost
- › sensitive and responsive to the circumstances and needs of people who make a complaint.

When people do complain, we commit to provide tailored support for people experiencing vulnerability, members of diverse communities or those with other additional needs. Support may include providing translation services or providing material in a variety of accessible formats and languages. We also put complainants in contact with support agencies to assist with their complaint process.

IBAC also publishes information on available [mental health support services](#) on our website, in recognition that making a complaint can be a challenging experience.

Data collection

IBAC has developed a road map to improve complainants' experience with IBAC's complaint form and to promote inclusivity that is aligned with data collection standards. A key adjustment includes collecting personal information through the provision of a non-mandatory inclusive gender question, capturing when a complaint is made by or on behalf of a minor, and ensuring that the question asking whether a complainant identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person aligns with the Standard Indigenous Question.



Research, audits and investigations

IBAC undertakes investigations, research and audit activities that intersect with members of focus communities. Engagement and communication activities following investigations that impact focus communities are undertaken on a case-by-case basis.

Organisational and employee development

IBAC has developed a Diversity and Inclusion Statement and Roadmap to outline the organisation's strategy and action plan for how we will build a truly diverse and inclusive workforce over the coming years. Key initiatives under the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy include the provision of Aboriginal cultural awareness training to all staff, developing IBAC's first Reflect Reconciliation Action

Plan and developing a three-year Disability Action Plan to explain and strengthen workplace accessibility for people with a disability.

IBAC requires all its employees to undertake mandatory and refresher human rights training. Several employees have also completed Aboriginal cultural awareness training including investigators, assessment and review officers and strategic policy and research officers.

IBAC requires all its employees to undertake mandatory and refresher human rights training.





3. Future state

From 2021–2023, IBAC aims to consolidate and increase its approach to working with focus communities.

This includes how we engage and communicate aspects of IBAC’s activities including assessment and management of complaints, investigations, and through our targeted prevention and education work.

We understand that to do this we must identify opportunities to strengthen internal processes and practices that influence how we engage and communicate.

IBAC wants to be an organisation that has:

ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES

(policies, processes, knowledge and skills) that provide inclusive and accessible services to the focus communities.

ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS

with key representative stakeholders and peak bodies (within government and community) of the focus communities.

DEVELOPED A RANGE OF MORE ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES

to help increase awareness and understanding of IBAC with focus communities.

4. Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives are based on the key themes that emerged from IBAC's consultations about the development of this strategy.

OBJECTIVE 01

BUILD AWARENESS AND TRUST



of IBAC's role and remit, and in our ability to manage complaints and investigations appropriately and sensitively.

OBJECTIVE 02

SUPPORT AND TRAIN IBAC OFFICERS



to have the knowledge and skills to provide culturally appropriate, respectful, and inclusive services to community members.

OBJECTIVE 03

STRENGTHEN ACCESSIBILITY



of IBAC's services, engagement, and communications with focus communities.

IBAC recognises that there are mixed levels of awareness and trust of the organisation within and across the focus communities.

Trust is essential for IBAC to have meaningful engagement with focus communities, and awareness of our role and remit is crucial for focus community members to understand what IBAC can and cannot assist with, to avoid frustration and meet expectations.

Objective two aims to ensure IBAC's internal environment is strengthened to meet the needs of our external engagement and communication with focus communities.

Trust is essential for IBAC to have meaningful engagement with focus communities.



Activities an overview

Objective 01



BUILD AWARENESS & TRUST

1. Planned and proactive stakeholder engagement during or after IBAC operations and/or activities.
2. Build community awareness of IBAC via community media.
3. Better information sharing with government bodies.
4. Increase collaboration.

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

5. Establish regular IBAC attendance at existing forums for focus communities.
6. Increase our insights.
7. Establish new ways to notify complainants of the progress/outcomes of the complaint.

Objective 02



TRAINING & SUPPORT

8. Deliver employee training programs.
9. Develop an internal practice guide on inclusive language and practices.
10. Ensure community members are appropriately directed to other agencies when required.

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

11. Explore creation of dedicated internal liaison officers for focus community members.

Objective 03



STRENGTHEN ACCESSIBILITY

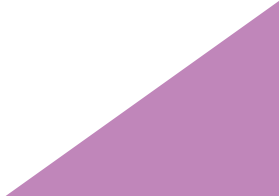
12. Develop easy-read versions of key resources.
13. Develop targeted resources for communities.
14. Continue to look for opportunities to promote available supports for complainants.
15. Increase accessibility at IBAC events.
16. Audit all external-facing forms and documents to ensure inclusive language is used.
17. Make improvements to the complaint form.

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

18. Scope information-sharing practices (within legislative boundaries).
19. Explore how IBAC can accept complaints via alternative methods.
20. Update all external forms and documents in line with audit findings.
21. Make further complaint form improvements.

Objective 01

Build awareness and trust of IBAC’s role and remit and in our ability to manage complaints and investigations appropriately and sensitively.



Activity 2.

RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF IBAC VIA COMMUNITY MEDIA

In the communications planning process, we will seek opportunities to promote IBAC via community radio and other media interviews and advertising. For example, via JOYFM, 3KND, 3ZZZ, and the Star Observer.

OUTCOME

Better planned communication activities that result in the focus communities having more awareness and understanding of IBAC and more confidence in engaging with IBAC.

Activity 3.

BETTER INFORMATION SHARING WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES

We will share resources and information about IBAC, corruption prevention and reporting with peak agencies or bodies (government or not-for-profit) that work with or represent focus communities to empower these bodies to inform focus community members better.

OUTCOME

The public sector and focus communities have more understanding of corruption and IBAC’s role, and awareness of how and what to report.

Activity 4.

INCREASE COLLABORATION

1. We will work with Victoria’s integrity bodies to co-deliver presentations and jointly attend community forums and events, including those outlined in other activities.
2. We will regularly meet (minimum once per year) with peak agencies or bodies (government or not-for-profit) that work with or represent focus communities public sector bodies to gain a deeper understanding of the communities and to identify opportunities for engagement.

OUTCOME

IBAC attendance at more public forums and events. Increased exposure of IBAC with public sector bodies that work with or represent focus communities that result in further engagement with focus communities or the development of new activities/resources to increase the awareness and understanding of IBAC within the focus communities.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

Activity 5.

ESTABLISH REGULAR IBAC ATTENDANCE AT EXISTING FORUMS FOR FOCUS COMMUNITIES

1. We will seek opportunities to participate in existing community events. For example, Midsumma Festival, Pride Marches, NAIDOC celebrations and relevant cultural diversity celebrations.
2. We will engage with key stakeholders to discuss opportunities for regular attendance at key forums to hear from and share relevant issues with focus communities. These forums could include:
 - > the Aboriginal Justice Forum.
 - > the Victoria Police LGBTQ+ and Multicultural Portfolio reference groups.
 - > the Victorian Multicultural Commission Regional Advisory Councils.

OUTCOME

IBAC attendance at more events that will increase our exposure within these communities so that they have more awareness of IBAC and more confidence in engaging with IBAC.

IBAC has a routine and accepted presence in a variety of community forums.

Activity 6.

INCREASE OUR INSIGHTS

1. IBAC survey focus community members through the Perceptions of Corruption survey format, seeking participants through existing forums and communication channels through peak and relevant government bodies.
2. We will explore the possibility of a joint survey with other Victorian integrity bodies to gain insight into community understanding of the Victorian integrity system.

OUTCOME

A report on community perceptions of corruption that includes the views of focus communities, and that provides information for IBAC about community perceptions of IBAC, corruption and the integrity system. This information will inform future work, including for this strategy.

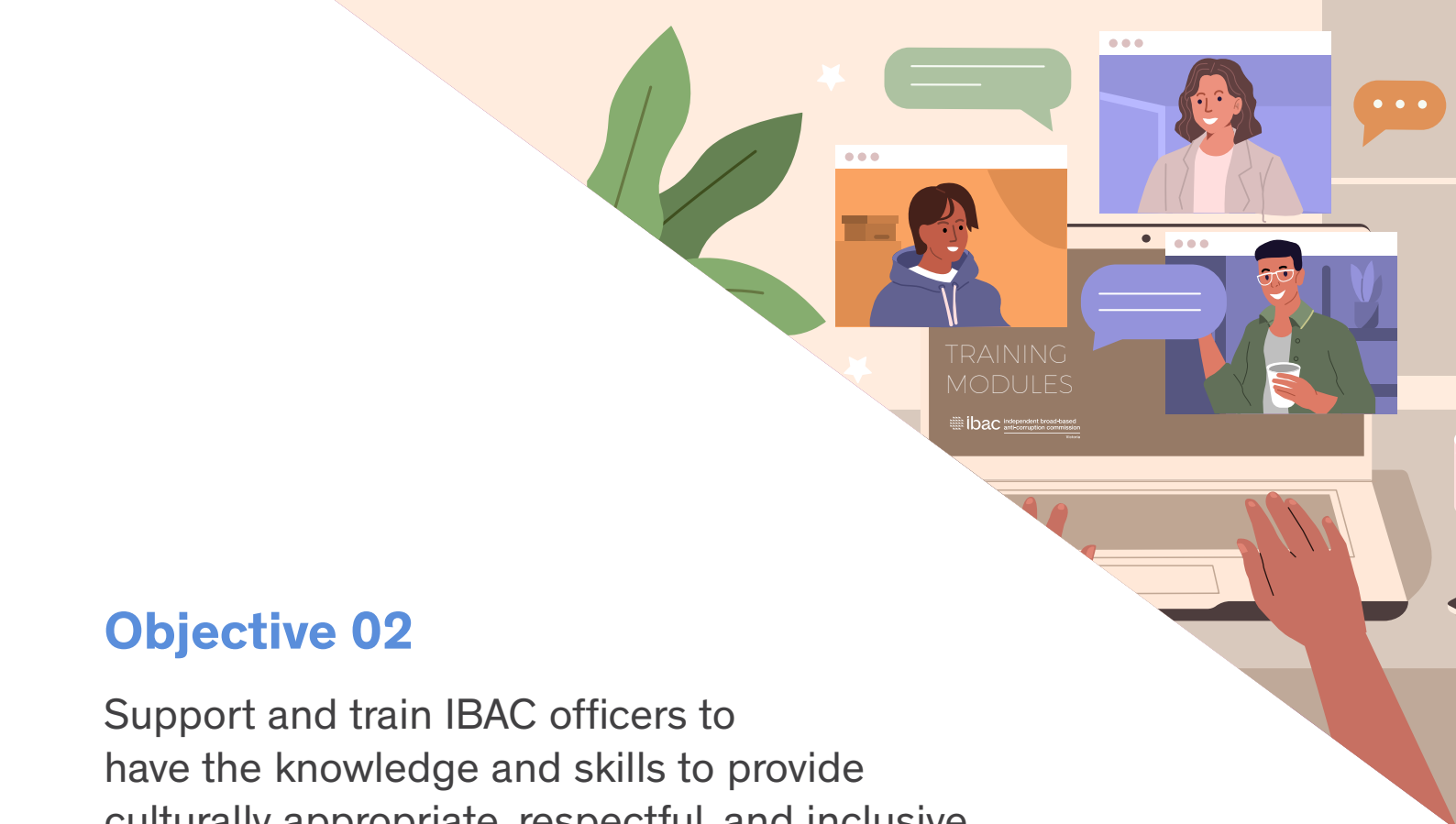
Activity 7.

ESTABLISH NEW WAYS TO NOTIFY COMPLAINANTS OF THE PROGRESS/ OUTCOMES OF THE COMPLAINT

We will develop a systems approach to better engage and update complainants about the status of their complaint. This could include an online portal, text messages and notifications via IBAC's complaints management system.

OUTCOME

Improved responsiveness in providing assessment outcomes to community members that empowers the community member to access the advice provided at a time and in a manner suitable and safe for them.



Objective 02

Support and train IBAC officers to have the knowledge and skills to provide culturally appropriate, respectful, and inclusive services to community members.

Activity 8.

DELIVER EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Human Resources and the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group will also deliver LGBTIQ+ awareness and cultural awareness training to all IBAC staff.

IBAC's communications team will attend SCOPE training to improve our capacity to write and produce more accessible information and communication aids.

OUTCOME

All IBAC officers will have completed training to increase their knowledge and understanding of human rights and cultural diversity.

Relevant staff will have completed SCOPE training to produce more accessible material for our focus communities.

Activity 9.

DEVELOP AN INTERNAL PRACTICE GUIDE ON INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND PRACTICES

We will develop new inclusive language chapters in IBAC's existing writing guide, leveraging off the Australian Government Style Manual and Victorian Government inclusive language guides, to provide information and guidance to IBAC officers on how to use culturally appropriate, respectful and inclusive language when interacting with or referring to members of focus communities.

OUTCOME

IBAC officers know and understand the appropriate language and practices when interacting with or referring to members of focus communities.

Focus community members have a more inclusive experience when interacting with IBAC.

Activity 10.

ESTABLISH A FORMAL PROCESS TO REFER COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO OTHER AGENCIES AS REQUIRED

We will develop a guidance to support and empower Assessment & Review officers to better inform complainants about agencies to go to about their concerns, where it is not a matter IBAC can progress (eg because it will be dismissed or it is outside of IBAC's jurisdiction).

Where appropriate, IBAC may contact the other agency to share relevant information, with the permission of the complainant.

✓ OUTCOME

Complainant-centric guidance is accessible to all A&R officers to use as guidance to assist all members of the community.

A&R officers are responsive to complainant issues and needs.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

Activity 11.

EXPLORE CREATION OF DEDICATED CONTACT POINTS AND INTERNAL LIAISON OFFICERS FOR FOCUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS

IBAC will consider whether to create dedicated liaison officers, or dedicated contact points (email) amongst IBAC officers (across the organisation) to be the contact point, at least initially, for focus community members to contact.

✓ OUTCOME

At a minimum, dedicated contact points (email addresses) could be established to handle enquiries from members of our focus communities.

Over time, IBAC may train dedicated IBAC staff to have the skills and knowledge to provide (culturally) appropriate support for focus community members.

Focus community members receive (culturally) appropriate guidance and feel supported to make a complaint to IBAC.



Objective 03

Strengthen accessibility of IBAC’s services, engagement, and communications with focus communities.



Activity 12.

DEVELOP EASY-READ VERSIONS OF KEY RESOURCES

We will work with SCOPE to develop and publish easy-read versions of key website resources such as information sheets and factsheets that are concise, easy to understand, use simple language and include appropriate images to support key messages.

OUTCOME

Key existing resources are produced in easy-read versions and all key future resources have an easy-read version produced.

We will see an improved engagement with easy to read materials online and an increase in contact or reporting from focus communities.

Activity 13.

DEVELOP TARGETED RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

At the commencement of investigations or other activities, we will identify if focus communities are impacted and plan if targeted communications will be required to address the needs of the impacted community.

We will develop and publish targeted, accessible resources for focus communities that are culturally appropriate, easy to read, use inclusive language and address community needs or concerns.

We will also explore ways of enabling these resources to be shared by community members via non-traditional media.

OUTCOME

The communications plan process will include proactive identification of impacted focus communities and include the development of relevant targeted resources.

We will see improved engagement with targeted materials online and an increase in contact and/or reporting from focus communities.

Activity 14.

CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE AVAILABLE SUPPORTS FOR COMPLAINANTS

We will develop a communications plan that will aim to better communicate the available supports for complainants via our website, social media and through direct interaction with complainants.

OUTCOME

Development of a two-year communications plan to increase the awareness of supports available to complainants and a greater satisfaction with the level of support provided.



Activity 15.

INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY AT IBAC EVENTS

We will improve accessibility by mandating live captioning and subtitles for all external virtual events, event recordings and videos.

We will consider the use of AUSLAN for large events.

We will continue to show our respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country by incorporating an acknowledgement of country into all face-to-face and virtual event materials.

OUTCOME

All IBAC staff will pay their respect to Traditional Owners by embracing the acknowledgement of country in any events they participate in as facilitators, presenters, guest speakers and panellists.

All public IBAC events, event recordings and video resources will include live captions and subtitles.

Activity 16.

AUDIT ALL EXTERNAL-FACING FORMS AND DOCUMENTS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IS USED

To ensure IBAC is accessible, we will audit all external-facing forms and documents available to ensure inclusive language is used. For example, forms, website information and fact sheets.

OUTCOME

A comprehensive list of relevant material is prepared, with clear direction on which documents should be prioritised for updates.

Activity 17.

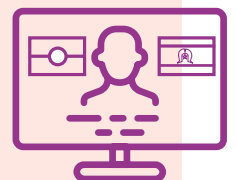
MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COMPLAINT FORM

We will undertake enhancements to the IBAC's complaints form to make it easier for complainants to understand and use, and to promote inclusivity that is aligned with data collection standards. This includes:

- > Replacing the question about biological sex with a non-mandatory inclusive gender question.
- > Updating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity questions to align with the ABS Standard Indigenous Question.
- > Collecting data on complaints made by or on behalf of a minor.

OUTCOME

We will see increased contact and/or reporting from focus communities or advocates on behalf of members of focus communities.



EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

Activity 18.

SCOPE INFORMATION-SHARING PRACTICES (WITHIN LEGISLATIVE BOUNDARIES)

We will scope work with relevant stakeholders to scope the opportunities, risks, and benefits to share de-identified complaints and allegations data trends between agencies.

OUTCOME

We will have more information available to inform IBAC's strategic intelligence activities on police misconduct. We will also have improved understanding about who is not reporting to IBAC and the nature of the issues being experienced.

Activity 19.

EXPLORE HOW IBAC CAN ACCEPT COMPLAINTS VIA ALTERNATIVE METHODS BEYOND WRITTEN SUBMISSION

- > We will engage with external stakeholders to scope alternative complaint taking mechanisms.
- > We will develop and clearly communicate a policy on the alternative methods for complaint making, including the circumstances in which the alternative methods can be used.
- > We will publicly communicate the policy eg via campaigns or engagement with relevant stakeholders.

OUTCOME

IBAC can receive more complaints via multiple channels.

Focus community members submit more complaints.

Activity 20.

UPDATE ALL EXTERNAL FORMS AND DOCUMENTS IN LINE WITH AUDIT FINDINGS

We will update all external-facing forms and documents in line with audit findings and recommendations (see activity 16).

OUTCOME

All documents prioritised for updates will be reviewed and updated in line with the audit findings and recommendations and signed off by relevant business units.

Activity 21.

MAKE FURTHER COMPLAINT FORM IMPROVEMENTS

We will make it easier for complainants to understand and submit complaints.

This could include:

- > Providing information about translation support at the top of the 'Make a complaint' webpage.
- > Reviewing the mandatory and optional fields in line with privacy and human rights laws and best practice.
- > Undertaking a plain language review and update of the online and printable PDF forms.

OUTCOME

We will see increased contact and/or reporting from focus communities or advocates on behalf of members of focus communities.



5. Implementation

Governance

IBAC will establish a governance framework to drive accountability for implementation of this strategy. IBAC will:

- ✔ Allocate an executive sponsor
- ✔ Appoint the Deputy Commissioners as the relationship owners
- ✔ Create an Implementation Working Group
- ✔ Liaise with the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group



6. Evaluation

An important element of this strategy is to monitor its effectiveness over time and the impact for focus communities.

The performance of this strategy is assessed against three broad measures of success. These measures also align with the three strategic objectives.

TRUST & LEGITIMACY



- > Level of trust in IBAC and the agency's ability to prevent and expose corruption and police misconduct.
- > Awareness about IBAC's role and the broader Victorian integrity system.
- > Stakeholder and community perceptions of and confidence in IBAC and the agency's ability to appropriately and sensitively handle complaints.

SERVICE DELIVERY QUALITY



- > Quality of IBAC's services, activities and products.
- > Relevance of IBAC's services, activities and products.
- > Stakeholder and community perceptions of IBAC's services, activities and products.

EFFICIENCY



- > Knowledge of officers about the needs of focus community members and stakeholders.
- > Confidence of officers in interacting with and addressing the needs of focus community members and stakeholders.
- > Organisational practices that build the agency's internal capability to address the needs of focus community members and stakeholders.



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