Bunjilwarra is a 12 bed residential rehabilitation and healing service for Aboriginal young people (male and female) aged between 16 and 25 years. It is a purpose-built, statewide service situated on a 1.7 hectare site in Hastings.

As a voluntary program, Bunjilwarra enables:
- A safe and supportive environment for young people to manage their alcohol and drug issues through active participation in therapeutic and structured programs designed to assist them, to develop their living skills, and to strengthen their cultural identity and spiritual wellbeing.
- Young people to improve their physical, social and emotional wellbeing, and strengthen their connection to family, community and culture through the use of a holistic recovery model which includes individual and group therapy, as well as recreational, educational and vocational activities.
- Young people to develop alternative behaviours and coping strategies, and skills for resilience and reintegrating into the community based on therapeutic community principles and Aboriginal cultural practices.

Bunjilwarra provides:
- A holistic journey of healing, embracing Aboriginal culture.
- A culturally and clinically safe residential rehabilitation program in the form of a therapeutic community for Aboriginal young people who require treatment to manage their alcohol and drug use problems, and to build resilience.
- A stable and secure environment where young people work on managing problematic behaviours, improving their life skills and interpersonal skills, learning alternative habits to develop personal resilience and confidence, build social networks and reintegrate into the community.
- An effective, clinical alcohol and drug recovery orientated program that is staffed 24/7 by a strong clinical team.
- Improved social and emotional wellbeing, by providing a culturally appropriate program, comprising a range of treatment interventions and healing, which aim to build cultural knowledge and connections, increase protective factors, build
resilience, and decrease risk factors.

- The (re)connection or engagement with their cultural heritage through participation in programs, interaction with community members, and involvement with Elders.

- Opportunities for residents’ families, Elders and significant others, to be involved in the treatment, healing and cultural education of the young person.

- Coordination of appropriate local support services, especially primary health

- A program based on recovery principles, which is staged and allows the residents to move through a Care and Recovery Plan at their own pace with short and long term goals, and a community connection and reintegration component which involves active involvement of the community they will be returning to.

- Facilitation of post discharge support, especially with youth AOD service agencies and ACCHOs, including assistance to (re)connect with the Aboriginal Community, access to safe, secure and affordable accommodation, links with education, training and employment, and ongoing access to relevant services.

Bunjilwarra operates under the following principles:

- **Aboriginal Culture** is imbedded in all aspects of Bunjilwarra including the service management, the service model and all programs.

- **Healing** - a focus on improving the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the young person, in the context of their family and the Aboriginal Community.

- **Respect** - which require staff and residents to have respect for themselves and respect for others.

- **Person centred and recovery oriented** practice places the needs of the young person at the centre, whilst recognising the importance of the family and Aboriginal community to their healing and recovery.

- **Clinical Effectiveness** through a strong clinical program that will bring about change in a person’s approach to AOD issues, address underlying trauma, and tackle broader health and wellbeing needs.

- **Family Inclusion** with family members supported, informed and engaged in planning, treatment and recovery for the young person, wherever possible and
appropriate.

- **Harm Reduction** within Australian government principles to ensure safety and harm minimisation.

- **Youth focused/friendly** which caters for the specific needs of Aboriginal young people, including young parents and young people with a physical and/or intellectual disability, mental illness, and involvement with the justice system.

- **Social and Emotional Wellbeing**, combining alcohol and drug treatment, therapeutic practices, trauma informed practices, and Aboriginal spirituality and healing.

- **Integration and Coordination** with appropriate support services through established links with other relevant services and specialists.

- **Continuum of Care** recognising that Bunjilwarra is only one part of the young person’s treatment and recovery journey which builds on past treatment and provides for ongoing care post discharge.

- **Evidence Based** - utilises best practice evidence from both VAHS and YSAS and other relevant services or peak bodies.

The Bunjilwarra service model incorporates current Victorian Government policies, including Koolin Balit, Victorian Health Priorities Framework, *New directions for alcohol and drug treatment services- a roadmap*, as well as Services Connect principles.

The Bunjilwarra service model is **firmly placed in context of the Aboriginal-defined notion of healing and in a cultural framework**, supported by trauma-informed practice; adolescent developmental framework; therapeutic community and recovery frameworks.