



HOW TO APPLY FOR A RESERVED SEAT

**COMMUNITY GUIDE FOR
TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

MAY 2025

TREATY
FOR VICTORIA

More room at the table for our mob, doing business our way

The Assembly has developed an additional pathway for Traditional Owner groups who do not have formal recognition under legislation to apply for a reserved seat.

Groups can apply directly to the Assembly and will need to meet certain criteria. The Assembly Members will decide whether to grant a group a reserved seat. Once a group is granted a reserved seat, they can choose a representative to sit on the Assembly and work with other elected Members on developing the foundations for future Treaty-making.

Our application process is now open. In this guide you will learn how to apply for a reserved seat on the Assembly.

Recognition for Wamba Wemba



In March 2024, Assembly Members voted to accept a request from Wamba Wemba peoples – Traditional Owners of Country in North-West Victoria – for the creation of a new seat on the Assembly. It was a historic moment that paves the way for other groups without formal recognition.

In June 2024, Wamba Wemba woman Lowana Moore, was officially appointed as the Assembly's 33rd Member following the Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation's election process.

WHO IS THE ASSEMBLY?

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria represents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria.

There are currently 33 Members who sit on the Assembly, 22 occupying general seats and the remaining in reserved seats. Reserved Seats are designated for Traditional Owner groups recognised either through formal recognition or the Assembly's Additional Pathway process.

We believe it's time to negotiate Treaty and we're getting the job done.



WHO CAN APPLY?

ADDITIONAL TRADITIONAL OWNER GROUP CRITERIA

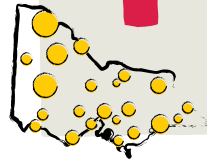
Victorian Traditional Owner groups who do not have formal recognition under Government legislation can apply for a reserved seat on the Assembly.

We have developed a process that is fair, culturally strong and culturally safe.

It respects the right to self-determination of all First Peoples in Victoria and honours our cultural way of doing business.

To apply your group must meet these four criteria:

1 The group's application area is not represented by an existing reserved seat on the Assembly



2 The group is an established group or nation



3 The group has an ongoing connection to Country



4 The group's application has significant support amongst Traditional Owners for the area



WHAT DOES THE ASSEMBLY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY GROUP?

To apply, your group needs to complete an application form and submit information and evidence to show you meet the Additional Traditional Owner Group Criteria.



You can provide information and evidence as an attachment to the application form or you can come and yarn with us to provide verbal evidence. Meetings can be held on your Country, at our Narmm or regional offices, or online.

APPLICATION FORM

- ✓ Applicant details and contact information
- ✓ No Assembly reserved seat over all of the application area
- ✓ Significant support amongst Traditional Owners for the area
- ✓ Established group or nation
- ✓ Ongoing connection to Country

What is the application area?

The 'application area' refers to the parts of your Country you are applying for a reserved seat over. In discussions with the Assembly, we will use your preferred language and will avoid jargon and legal terms.

We respect your right to self-determination. Your belonging, identity and Country are matters for you and your community. Learn more by downloading the Guidelines for Applicant Groups:

firstpeoplesvic.org/pathway

As Traditional Owners, we have the right to choose how to represent ourselves.

This means more room at the table for our mob, doing business our way.

PATHWAY TO A RESERVED SEAT



Applications
received



Assembly and
applicant group meet

Assembly and
applicant group
consider further
information
(including from
comments)



Assembly and applicant
group meet to discuss



**Assembly Chamber
considers all information
and makes decision**

The Assembly Chamber will make a decision about your application based on whether you meet each of the 4 Additional Traditional Owner Group Criteria, taking into account all the available evidence.



**Comments Period:
Individuals and
Organisations can
comment on your
Application**

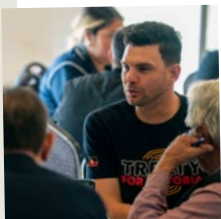
When we receive your group's application, the Assembly will assign two of its members to work with you to progress your application through our process.

You will have opportunities to speak and meet with these assigned members and our staff to discuss your application face-to-face on Country, online or at our Narrm or regional offices.

These members may make suggestions along the way about how your application could be strengthened. Any opinion expressed by them is not part of the final decision. The decision on your application is made by all members of the Assembly Chamber.

Visit our website to download the Guidelines for Applicant Groups and Guidelines for Comments:

firstpeoplesvic.org/pathway



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



What does a Reserved Seat appointment mean for my group?

If your group's application is successful, you will be able to appoint a representative to sit on the Assembly as it negotiates a Statewide Treaty with the State Government. This representative will attend regular Assembly meetings and keep the members of your group updated about the progress of Treaty. The Additional Reserved Seat Coordinator can provide more information on Member roles and responsibilities.



How does my group apply?

Firstly, you should read the Guidelines for Applicants. If you think you're ready to apply and you have all the information, you can submit the application form and supporting material through our website. If you want to have a yarn with the Additional Reserved Seat Coordinator first to get any more information or discuss anything about your group's circumstances, see the contact details on the back cover of this guide.



Does my group need to be involved in formal recognition processes to apply for a seat?

No, our process does not require you to seek formal recognition of your Traditional Owner group through existing legislation.



If my group's application is successful, will we automatically become a Registered Aboriginal Party?

No, having a reserved seat in the Assembly does not change your group's status under state or federal legislation.



If my group's application is successful, are we able to start negotiating our Traditional Owner Treaty?

Having a reserved seat in the Assembly does not give a group specific rights to negotiate a Traditional Owner Treaty. For information on how to begin a Traditional Owner Treaty, you should contact the Treaty Authority who oversees that process under the Treaty Negotiation Framework.

treatyauthority.au



What if another group is formally recognised over the same area after my group is granted a seat by the Assembly?

A reserved seat granted using the Assembly's process will be cancelled if another Traditional Owner Group is formally recognised under legislation over all or part of the same application area.





My group wants to apply but we're not quite ready or we don't have any resources, is there support available?

The Self-Determination Fund (the Fund) is open for Phase 1 – support for Traditional Owner Groups with Treaty Readiness activities. If applying for a Reserved Seat on the Assembly is part of your group's pathway to prepare for Treaty you can get in touch with the Fund to discuss how the Fund may be able to support these activities.

selfdeterminationfund.org.au/apply-for-funding



What kind of information can my group use to support our application?

You can submit written evidence or material with your application, or you can come and yarn with us to give verbal evidence at a face-to-face meeting. If your group is currently or has previously prepared for formal recognition under legislation, you can re-use information and evidence you gathered to support your application for a Reserved Seat, if it is relevant to the Assembly's Criteria. The Guidelines for Applicants contain more information on the kinds of material that you can submit to support each of the Criteria.



What happens if someone objects to my group's application?

Your group will be notified if an interested individual, family group or organisation makes an adverse comment (objection) on your application and you will be given the opportunity to provide a response. The name of a commenting organisation will be shared with you. Individuals and family groups have the option to remain anonymous or share their identity with the you. You can provide additional information as part of your response if you wish. The Guidelines for Comments are on the Assembly's website and explain the process for making comments that support or object to an application for a new reserved seat.

If my group's application is not successful, can we re-apply?

If a decision is made that you do not meet the Additional Traditional Owner Group Criteria, you may resubmit your application if new information arises which is likely to change the outcome of the decision.



ADDITIONAL PATHWAY TO RECOGNITION

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN



Thinking about applying?

Visit our website to download the Guidelines for Applicant Groups and Guidelines for Comments:

firstpeoplesvic.org/pathway

Questions? Let's have a yarn!

If you're thinking about putting together an application, get in touch today:

Declan Kelly

Additional Reserved Seat Coordinator

coordinator@firstpeoplesvic.org

1800 TREATY (87 32 89)



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**SCAN WITH YOUR
PHONE'S CAMERA**

