

# JOURNEY TO GELLUNG WARL



FIRST PEOPLES'  
ASSEMBLY OF  
VICTORIA

TREATY  
FOR VICTORIA

## WE PAY OUR RESPECTS

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our deepest respects to all Elders, past and present.

Our work takes us through all Country in the area now known as Victoria, from the coast to the mountains, the rivers and the plains. We give thanks to all who welcome us to their unceded lands and waters, and further extend that gratitude to all First Peoples in Victoria who have generously offered their time, their ideas and their feedback to help guide this shared journey to Treaty.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that the following publication may contain images of deceased persons.

Thanks to the photographers and artists for taking many of the photographs and artwork featured in this report:

Leroy Miller and Amina Briggs

# CONTENTS

Building the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria	<b>05</b>
Weaving together the Treatymaking ecosystem	<b>07</b>
Working with Community to identify priorities for the first Statewide Treaty	<b>10</b>
Negotiating Treaty	<b>23</b>
Getting Treaty done	<b>29</b>
Here's what is in the first Statewide Treaty	<b>30</b>

Since 2019, the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria has been yarning with Community at tables across the state. The elected Assembly Members have been listening to First Peoples' needs, hopes and aspirations for their futures.

We have taken these ideas to the negotiating table and pushed hard to ensure that we can achieve lasting change and progress for communities by having self-determination at the heart of Australia's first ever Treaty!



# BUILDING THE FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA

## FEBRUARY 2016

Victorian Government holds a meeting with representatives from First Peoples communities to understand Community's views on constitutional recognition and self-determination. First Peoples at the meeting call for Treaty, and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Natalie Hutchins commits to beginning talks.

## APRIL - MAY 2016

Aboriginal Victoria holds regional consultations on how the State government can facilitate self-determination. This culminates in the first Aboriginal Victoria Statewide Forum in May 2016. First Peoples in Victoria call for a Treaty.

## JULY 2016 - MARCH 2018

The Interim Aboriginal Treaty Working Group is established in July 2016 and later becomes the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group. It is set up to consult on the design of an Aboriginal representative body and work with the Victorian Government to drive the Treaty process. It holds community consultations across Victoria and establishes the Aboriginal Community Assembly to advise on the design of an Aboriginal representative body.

### Working Group members include:

Eleanor Bourke, Mick Harding, Dan Turnbull, Janine Coombs, Jeremy Clark, Tarneen Onus-Williams, Indi Clarke, Nikayla Bamblett, Jill Gallagher, Douglas Briggs, Muriel Bamblett, Wayne Muir, Paul Briggs, Vicki Clark, Aunty Di Kerr, Geraldine Atkinson, Jamie Lowe, Jordan Edwards, Joy Murphy-Wandin, Ken Stewart, Marcus Stewart, Lidia Thorpe, Gnerick Gnerick Gary Murray, Lawrence Moser and Uncle Rodney Carter.

## NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2017

The Aboriginal Community Assembly meets over six days to discuss and provide recommendations to the Aboriginal Treaty Working Group on the final design elements of the Aboriginal representative body.

### The Community Assembly members were:

Aunty Fay Carter, Aunty Joy Murphy, Uncle Bevan Harrison, Aunty Lois Peeler, Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone, Uncle Colin Bourke, Lyn Thorpe, Neville Atkinson, Uncle Stephen Walsh, Aunty Hilary Saunders, Uncle Michael ('Mookeye') Bell, Karen Jones, Daria Atkinson, Antoinette Gentile, Belinda Duarte, Louise Chatfield, Shane Bell, Tracey Onus Bamblett, Tiriki Onus, Alan Walsh, Alister Thorpe, Kylie Spencer, Jesse Williams, Billy McGuinness, Jordan Edwards, Christopher Saunders, Jade Hudson-Morgan, Madison Connors, Emily Tipping, James Atkinson and Jidah Clark.



## JANUARY 2018

The Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission (VTAC) is established, and Jill Gallagher AO is appointed as the Commissioner. The Aboriginal Treaty Working Group continues to provide advice to VTAC as it establishes an Aboriginal representative body. By March 2018, more than 7,500 First Peoples living in Victoria had been consulted on the design of an Aboriginal representative body. VTAC visits every town in Victoria with a population of 100 Aboriginal people or more within a four-month period, capturing Aboriginal peoples' desires, aspirations, concerns, questions, hopes and dreams for Treaty.

## AUGUST 2018

The *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* (Vic) commences.

## MAY - OCTOBER 2019

VTAC creates and maintains the Aboriginal electoral roll and designs and operates the inaugural Community Elections across 2019, with the purpose of standing up the Aboriginal representative body, later named the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.



# WEAVING TOGETHER THE TREATYMAKING ECOSYSTEM

## DECEMBER 2019

**First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (Assembly) is established following historic elections held by VTAC.**

As the democratically elected representative body for all First Peoples living in Victoria, Assembly Members represent Traditional Owners and First Peoples across Victoria in all their diversity in the Victorian Treaty process.

Assembly Members act and vote in a representative capacity, taking into account the views of their constituents. Under the Assembly's Constitution, Assembly Members are decision-makers on Treaty-related matters and have responsibilities under the Members' Charter to meaningfully engage with the communities they represent.



In the Assembly's first statewide elections, First Peoples voted to elect their representatives in the Victorian Treaty process. Seventy-three candidates ran for election across the five Assembly regions – Metropolitan, North West, South West, North East and South East.

Since the Assembly's first statewide elections, the Assembly has undertaken an ongoing enrolment campaign to strengthen the Assembly's electoral roll. The Assembly's electoral roll remains open to all Victorian Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria who are over 16 years old and have been living here for at least three of the past five years.

### The first term Assembly members were:

Aunty Geraldine Atkinson (Co-chair), Marcus Stewart (Co-chair), Sissy Austin, Nartarsha Bamblett, Aunty Esme Bamblett, Muriel Bamblett, Rueben Berg, Uncle Michael "Mookeye" Bell, Dr Carolyn Briggs AM, Matthew Burns, Jacinta Chaplin, Aunty Charmaine Clarke, Dylan Clarke, Uncle Shane Clarke, Jordan Edwards, Tracey Evans, Sean "Waikarra" Fagan, Trevor Gallagher, Uncle Andrew Gardiner, Raylene Harradine, Peter Hood, Melissa Jones, Jason Kelly, Jamie Lowe, Leanne Miller, Troy McDonald, Travis Morgan, Ngarra Murray, Trent Nelson, Alice Pepper, Robert Ogden, Alister Thorpe, Aunty Donna Wright, Kaylene Williamson.

## JUNE 2020

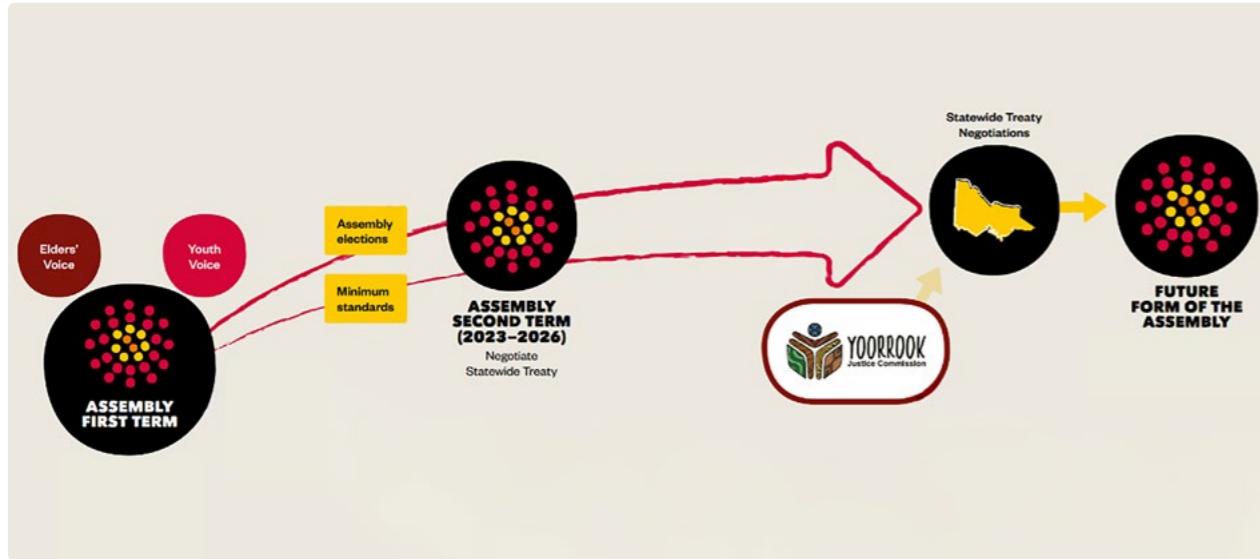
Assembly Chamber decides to pursue both a Statewide Treaty and local Traditional Owner Treaties.

## JUNE 2020

Assembly Chamber calls on the State to establish a truth and justice process.

## FEBRUARY 2021

Members support future forms of the Assembly to negotiate Statewide Treaty and for negotiations to include the possible establishment of a representative body with decision-making and law-making powers.



## FEBRUARY 2021

Members establish the Treaty Committee, to progress the Assembly's Treaty-related work, and the Yurpa Committee, to strengthen the cultural governance of the Assembly.

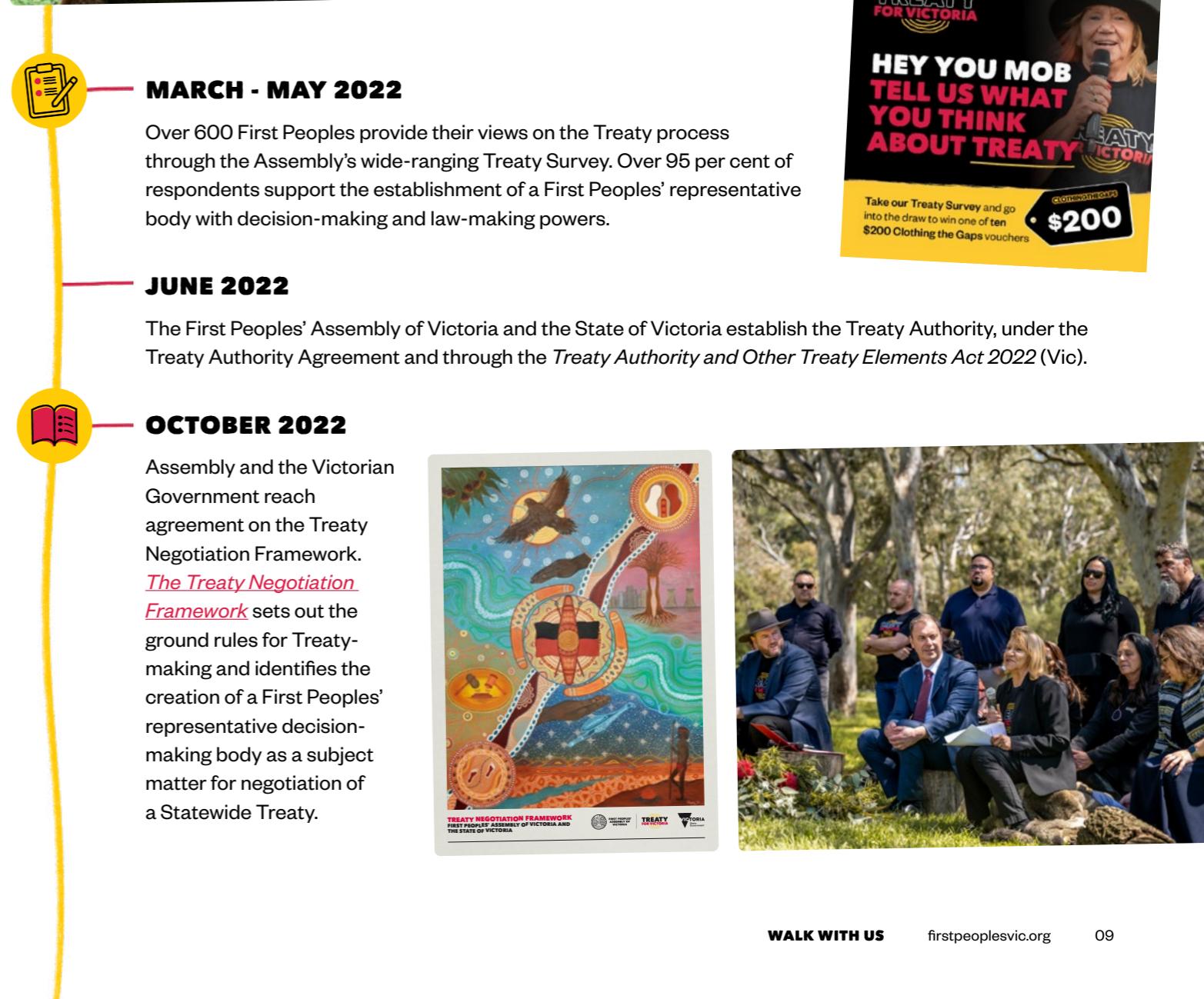
## MAY 2021

Australia's first ever formal truth-telling process, the Yoorrook Justice Commission, is established.



*“Truth-telling is important to Community... Our hope is that the evidence Yoorrook has begun to gather can help us find the path towards Treaty and achieve justice for First Peoples in Victoria.”*

– Marcus Stewart on Yoorrook's interim report, 5 Jul 2022



# WORKING WITH COMMUNITY TO IDENTIFY PRIORITIES FOR THE FIRST STATEWIDE TREATY

## SEPTEMBER 2022

The Assembly publishes a detailed report on Community priorities for Treaty, with putting control and decision-making power back into First Peoples' hands a key theme.

The Assembly held more than 360 engagement activities between July 2021 and June 2022 and yarnded with over 23,000 people (in person and online), which informed the report. Between March and May 2022, there were 602 responses to the Treaty Survey.



### KEY FEEDBACK:

**95%** of Treaty Survey participants supported a First Peoples' representative body, elected by mob to make decisions and pass and administer laws on issues that affect mob.

**97%** of Treaty Survey participants supported a First Peoples' body that can give advice and input into the Victorian Parliament on any matters that affect mob.

**97%** of Treaty Survey participants supported mob taking control over truth-telling.

## YARNING WITH COMMUNITY: DECEMBER 2019 - JULY 2023

Throughout the Assembly's first term, a wide range of community engagement activities were undertaken designed to increase First Peoples' knowledge about the Assembly and the Treaty process and to strengthen relationships with the Assembly. While the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly limited opportunities for in-person community engagement, the Assembly was able to deliver on its role to negotiate and establish the Yoorrook Justice Commission and the elements necessary to support treaty negotiations: the Treaty Authority, Treaty Negotiation Framework and Self-Determination Fund.

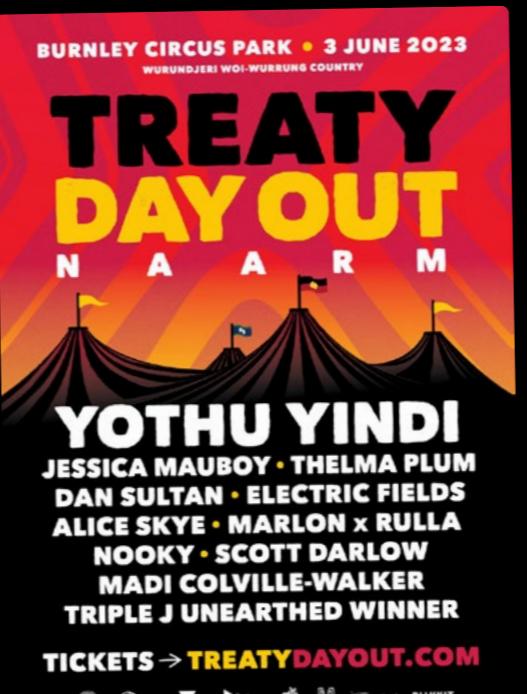
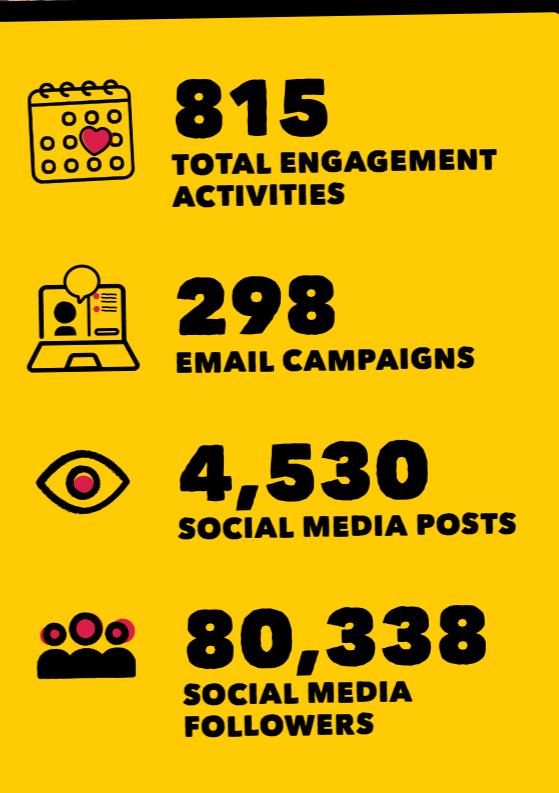
During COVID-19 lockdowns, the Assembly ran online Community Treaty events, online Yarning Circles, visits to prisons, and Q and As to ensure First Peoples' voices fed into the process.

Major events held during the Assembly's first term included Treaty Day Out events, the Comedy for Treaty Roadshow, and a series of Youth Voice Forums. The Assembly also published major reports, including annual reports and the *Our Journey to Treaty: Report on Community Feedback*, on the community participation and community priorities for Treaty informing the development of the Treaty Authority, Treaty Negotiation Framework and Self-Determination Fund.

Through the above activities during its first term, the Assembly built a strong mandate for Statewide Treaty outcomes to focus on the transfer of decision-making away from the state and into the hands of First Peoples.

## SEPTEMBER 2022

The Assembly Chamber establishes the Youth Voice to facilitate engagement and participation of young First People in the Treaty process.



## MARCH 2023

The Assembly releases a [Statement of Intention](#), which announces its intention to negotiate Statewide Treaty and identifies the establishment of a First Peoples' representative body as a key priority for Statewide Treaty negotiations. The Statement of Intention, a formal requirement under the Treaty Negotiation Framework, also details how the Assembly will represent and be accountable to the full diversity of First Peoples in Victoria, and identifies how it will demonstrate the Collective Support of all Traditional Owners and First Peoples living in Victoria for Treaty outcomes.

### Extracts from the Statement of Intention

*"In undertaking this important work, the Assembly will ensure that it can demonstrate the Collective Support of all Traditional Owners and First Peoples living in Victoria for Treaty outcomes. We will do this by:*

- bringing all First Peoples along on the journey to Statewide Treaty to ensure no one is left behind*
- building on the strength, wisdom and advocacy of First Peoples who have come before us*
- ensuring that the Assembly's representative, consultative and advisory processes provide the opportunity for Community to provide feedback on Treaty-related matters and are directed at obtaining freely offered support for Statewide Treaty outcomes, including Interim Agreements."*

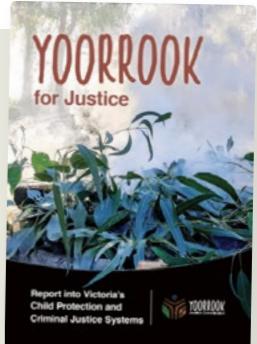
*"Statewide Treaty outcomes that the Assembly intends to pursue includes the establishment of a First Peoples' representative decision-making body... with law-making and decision-making power over matters of particular importance to First Peoples."*

## AUGUST 2023

Yoorrook Interim Report released, [Yoorrook for Justice](#). The report makes 46 recommendations for the Treaty process relating to transformational change of the justice and child protection systems and the establishment of an independent First Peoples' led accountability mechanism.

### Key recommendations:

- 1. The Victorian Government must:*
  - transfer decision-making power, authority, control and resources to First Peoples, giving full effect to self-determination in the Victorian child protection system...*
  - (b) negotiate this through the Treaty process."*
- 2. The Victorian Government must give full effect to the right of First Peoples to self-determination in the Victorian criminal justice system as it relates to First Peoples. This includes negotiating through the Treaty process ... the transfer of decision-making power, authority, control and resources in that system to First Peoples."*
- 4. The Victorian Government must as an urgent priority, having regard to the right of First Peoples to self-determination, negotiate in good faith with the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria... the establishment of an independent and authoritative oversight and accountability commission for the monitoring and evaluation of First Peoples related policies and programs."*



## MAY - JUNE 2023

The Assembly holds its second statewide elections. In the lead up to the elections, the Assembly made clear that it will seek to be the Primary Negotiating Party for Statewide Treaty under the Treaty Negotiation Framework and that the elections were the Community's opportunity to choose who represents them in Treaty negotiations.



Seventy-five Traditional Owners ran as candidates for the second term of the First Peoples' Assembly. Additionally, there was a tripling of enrolments since the Assembly's first election and more than double the number of the voters.

Since the second term elections in 2023, the Assembly's enrolments have almost doubled. This growth in the Assembly's electoral roll and participation in the election process reflects a strong democratic and representative foundation that was built by the Assembly during its first term and is the foundation of the Assembly's mandate for Statewide Treaty.

### As at November 2025, the second term Assembly members were:

Rueben Berg (Co-chair), Ngarra Murray (Co-chair), Nicole Atkinson, Troy Austin, Aunty Esme Bamblett, Uncle Michael "Mookeye" Bell, Belinda Briggs, Lisa Briggs, Matthew Burns, Uncle Rodney Carter, Jacinta Chaplin, Uncle Shane Charles, Indi Clarke, Jordan Edwards, Tracey Evans, Barry Firebrace-Briggs, Uncle Andrew Gardiner, Peter Hood, Melissa Jones, Sheree Lowe, Jason Kelly, Troy McDonald, Lowana Moore, Djarian Murray-Jackson, Gnerick Gnerick Gary Murray, Kaley Nicholson, Alice Pepper, Uncle Bryon Powell, Levi Power, Brian Stevens, Alister Thorpe, Zoe Upton, Nerita Waight, Aunty Donna Wright.

**"Systemic racism lies at the heart of much of the systemic injustice affecting First Peoples in both systems."**

**"First Peoples leaders, organisations and lived experience witnesses are united in their call for self-determination to address the systemic harms of the child protection and criminal justice systems."**

**- Yoorrook for Justice Executive Summary**



“

**This report makes clear that big transformational change is needed. Treaty will put Aboriginal people in the driver's seat by making sure we have the power to design the systems and make the decisions that affect us.”**

**- Ngarra Murray on the Yoorrook for Justice report, 4 Sep 2023**



## NOVEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024

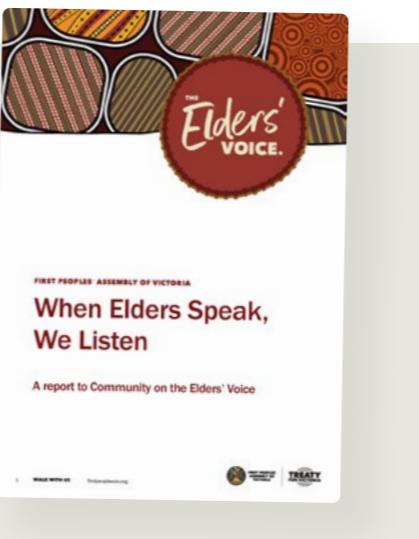
### Establishment of the Elders' Voice Standing Group

A call for nominations to the Elders' Voice Standing Group was conducted and 20 Elders were selected (4 from each of the 5 Assembly regions). The role of the Elders' Voice is to provide guidance and wisdom to the Assembly, with the knowledge of Elders also called upon by the Assembly in the development of Treaty proposals and throughout Statewide Treaty negotiations.

To date the Elders' Voice Standing Group has met eleven times and held three workshops with the Yurpa Committee since its commencement, holding meetings all across the state.

#### When Elders Speak, We Listen: A report to Community on the Elders' Voice

The report presents the findings of an extensive consultation process with Elders across Victoria (August 2021 – March 2023) to help design the Elders' Voice, a body intended to provide cultural, ethical, and advisory oversight to the Assembly on its Treaty processes. The key findings of the report included defining Eldership and cultural authority and direction on the structure, representation and governance of the Elders' Voice. The report played a central role in the establishment of the ongoing Elders' Voice structure and ensuring that the wisdom of Elders informs the Assembly's processes and key decisions.



## JANUARY 2024

The Assembly's Treaty Committee establishes five workstreams to work with Traditional Owner groups, ACCOs and expert knowledge holders to progress the development of detailed Treaty proposals. Over 36 meetings and workshops are held with a diverse range of First Peoples organisations and knowledge holders to develop a list of possible Treaty proposals for the first Statewide Treaty. The workshops identify ideas and priorities that are pivotal in the development and approval of the Assembly's Negotiation Brief.

### THE TREATY COMMITTEE'S FIVE WORKSTREAMS:

1. Future Assembly
2. Government Accountability
3. Families, Community and Culture
4. Inherent Rights
5. Economic Independence

#### Key themes and priorities in the Negotiation Brief that the workstreams developed:

- Establishment of a First Peoples' representative body powers and functions including:
  - » decision-making powers,
  - » providing advice to government
  - » the ability to hold government to account
  - » truth-telling and healing
  - » participating in the ceremonial life of the State
- Outcomes on areas that bring immediate benefits to Community, including education, health, language and culture.

## APRIL 2024

The Assembly held a Statewide Gathering in Geelong on Wadawarrung Country. The purpose of Statewide Gathering 2024 was to provide First Peoples from across Victoria the opportunity to learn about and share their aspirations for the journey to Treaty. Over 350 people registered for the event, which included presentations, workshops and Treaty information sessions, including with experts from across Australia and abroad.





## APRIL 2024

The Assembly conducts a Mob Survey to collect data from Community about their Treaty-making journey and to provide guidance to Assembly Members on early negotiation priorities. There were 765 respondents that broadly represent the diversity of First Peoples in Victoria.

- 84%** of respondents express support for the establishment of a permanent First Peoples' representative body
- 87%** supported using Treaty to be able to hold government to account
- 85%** support truth-telling and the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission



## APRIL - AUGUST 2024

Following the Statewide Gathering, the Assembly holds a round of Regional Gatherings across the state designed to inform and explore community priorities for the first Statewide Treaty. Over 800 participants attend ten regional gatherings throughout Victoria, with key sessions including an overview of the journey to Treaty, updates on what Members have heard from community so far and activities for attendees to identify priorities for Statewide Treaty.



## JULY 2024

First Peoples' Assembly declares it is ready to enter into Statewide Treaty Negotiations.



# ENTRY INTO STATEWIDE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: WE ARE READY

Declaration of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.



his always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Our sovereignty was never ceded.

We are still here and here we will remain. Strong. Resilient. Fearless. Together.

Our connection to Country, our pride in our cultures and collective identities, and the lore of these lands have survived and will thrive once again.

We recognise that this moment is because of the courage, strength and struggle of our Elders, Ancestors and those who have come before us. Their legacy drives our fight for Treaty.

As the elected Members of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, chosen by our communities to represent them on the shared journey to Treaty in Victoria, we now take our next collective step forward.

We declare the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria ready to enter into Statewide Treaty negotiations.

We affirm our right and ability to serve as the First Peoples' Representative Body to negotiate Statewide Treaty as outlined in the Treaty Negotiation Framework and relevant legislation.

For us, self-determination is not just a destination - it is a way of life. It embodies how we operate and all that we do now and into the future.

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is a manifestation of our sovereignty as we exercise our inherent rights, maintain our continuing connection to Country, and uphold our cultures, lore and law.

When it comes to our matters, our communities are the experts. That is why we need the freedom and power to make the decisions about our lives, on our own terms.

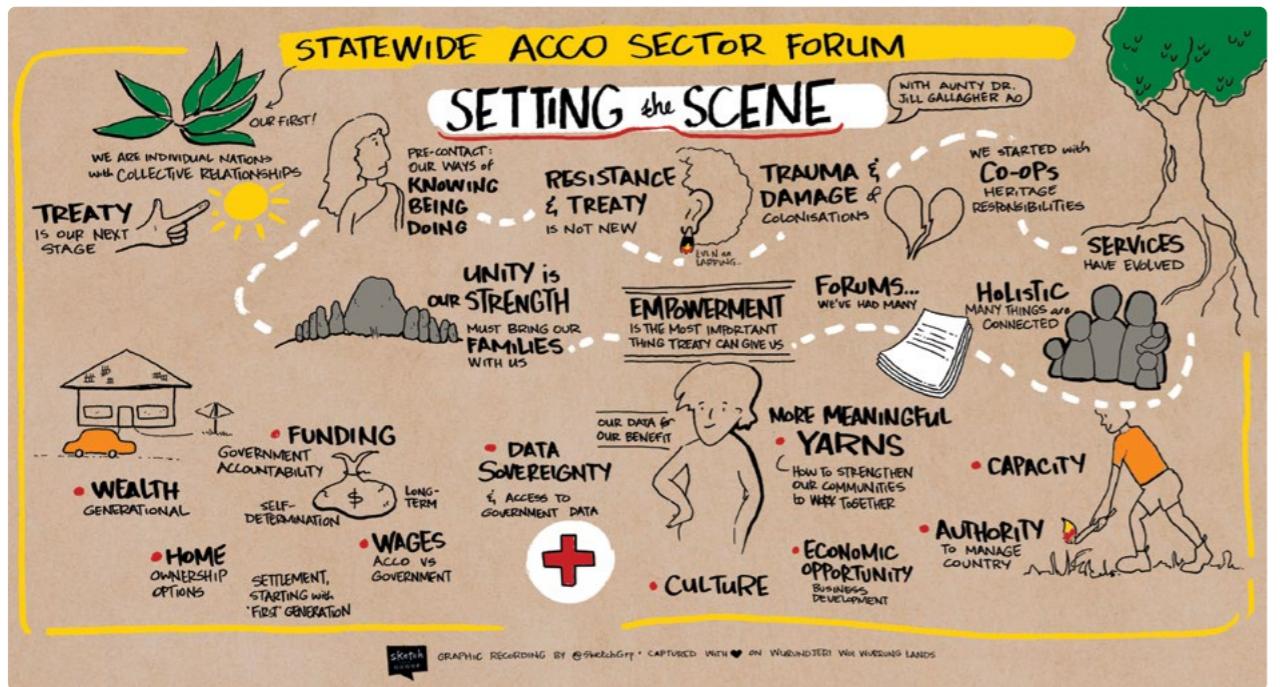
We are ready to negotiate Treaty.





## AUGUST 2024

The Assembly holds its first forum for the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector. More than 50 people from the Aboriginal sector registered for ACCO Forum #1 and the agenda was designed for ACCOs to consider current and future community priorities within a Treaty landscape and to discuss opportunities to ensure greater accountability measures for the state for its obligations to First Peoples in Victoria and the ACCO sector.



## SEPTEMBER 2024

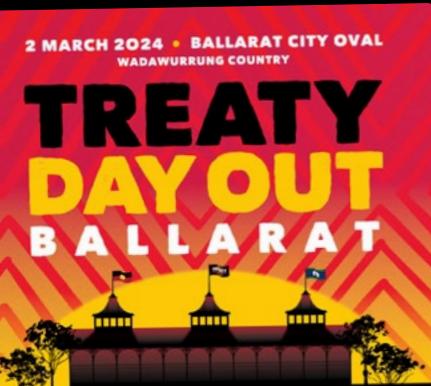
Assembly Chamber approves the Negotiation Brief relating to the components of a Future Assembly. Engagement activities and work with expert knowledge holders informs Members' decision-making. Under the Assembly Constitution, decisions in respect of the Treaty process require a voting majority of up to 75% approval, with this high threshold reflecting the significance of decisions made by Chamber that relate to 'Treaty-Related Matters'.

In November 2024, the Assembly Chamber approves including specific Treaty proposals in the Negotiation Brief.

## SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2024

The Assembly holds a second round of Regional Gatherings designed to test and affirm the priorities identified to date for the Statewide Treaty negotiations.

Eleven Regional Gatherings are held across the Assembly's five regions and with close to 500 participants. The feedback, questions and comments from these forums provide invaluable and timely direction to the Assembly as it develops Statewide Treaty priorities and specific proposals in anticipation of the Assembly's Negotiation Brief.



**JESSICA MAUBOY**  
ELECTRIC FIELDS • MO'JU • 3%  
SCOTT DARLOW • BLACKFIRE  
BROLGA • MADI COLVILLE-WALKER  
JADA WEAZEL • CANISHA  
+ SPECIAL GUEST ISAAC COMPTON  
TICKETS → [TREATYDAYOUT.COM](http://TREATYDAYOUT.COM)



**MARCH 2024: TREATY DAY OUT BALLARAT** 3,700 ATTENDEES



## OCTOBER 2024

The Assembly holds a Traditional Owner Forum on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country on 21 October 2024 with 99 participants. The forum brings Traditional Owner groups together to provide an update on where the Treaty process is up to and to explore the role that Statewide Treaty could play to remove barriers and strengthen the ability of Traditional Owners to assert their inherent rights and responsibilities.

## NOVEMBER 2024

The second forum for the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector is held on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country with 92 attendees. It involves discussions about what a self-determined self-governance model could look like in the Treaty era and seeks participants' feedback and input on the Negotiation Brief.

## YARNING WITH COMMUNITY: JULY 2023 - NOVEMBER 2024

Building on the foundations established in its first term, in its second term the Assembly strengthens its engagement activities to focus on the identification and development of proposals its Negotiation Brief on Statewide Treaty.

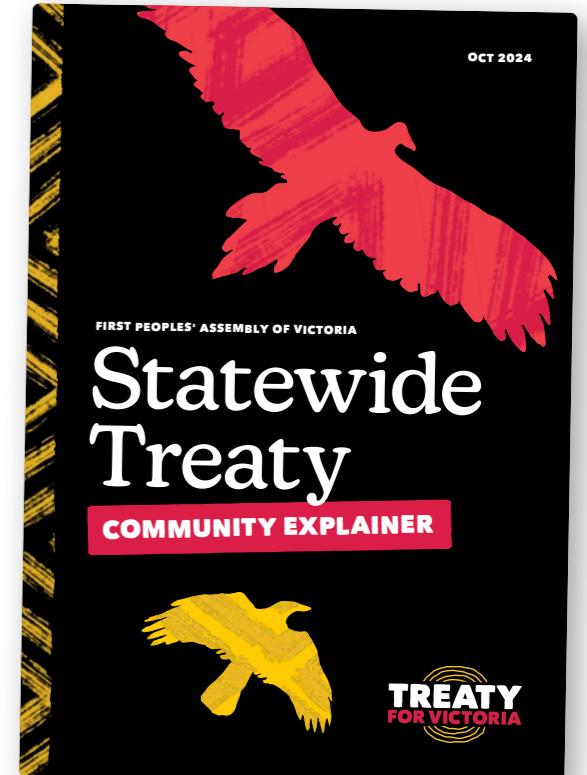
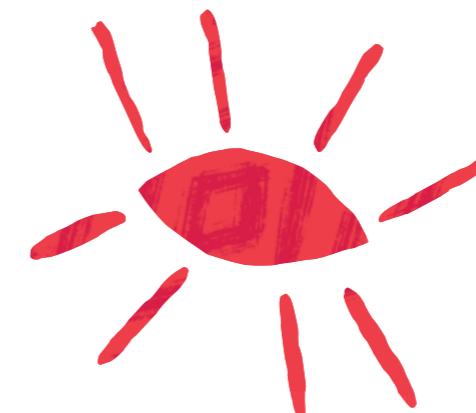
Major events during this phase included a Statewide Gathering, Regional Forums across the state and Treaty Day Out events.

Through the above activities, the Assembly worked closely with community and expert knowledge holders to ensure that the Negotiation Brief is developed based on expertise within community, including Traditional Owners and ACCOs.

## NOVEMBER 2024

The Assembly releases a public facing version of the Negotiation Brief to ensure that Community continues to be informed about what is on the table for Statewide Treaty negotiations.

The public version is posted on the [Assembly website](#) and hard copy versions are printed for distribution at Assembly events and engagement activities.





# NEGOTIATING TREATY

## NOVEMBER 2024

The Assembly and the State host a major community event at Darebin Parklands on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country that marks the official start of negotiations on the first Statewide Treaty. The event involves ceremony and dance with Traditional Owner groups from across the state. Dance groups perform including Dalki Murrup, Maarli Nhuunghus Pikilarna Maarni, Galnya Yenbena, Gunnai Wrookuts, Gadhu Dancers and Yaraan Bundle.

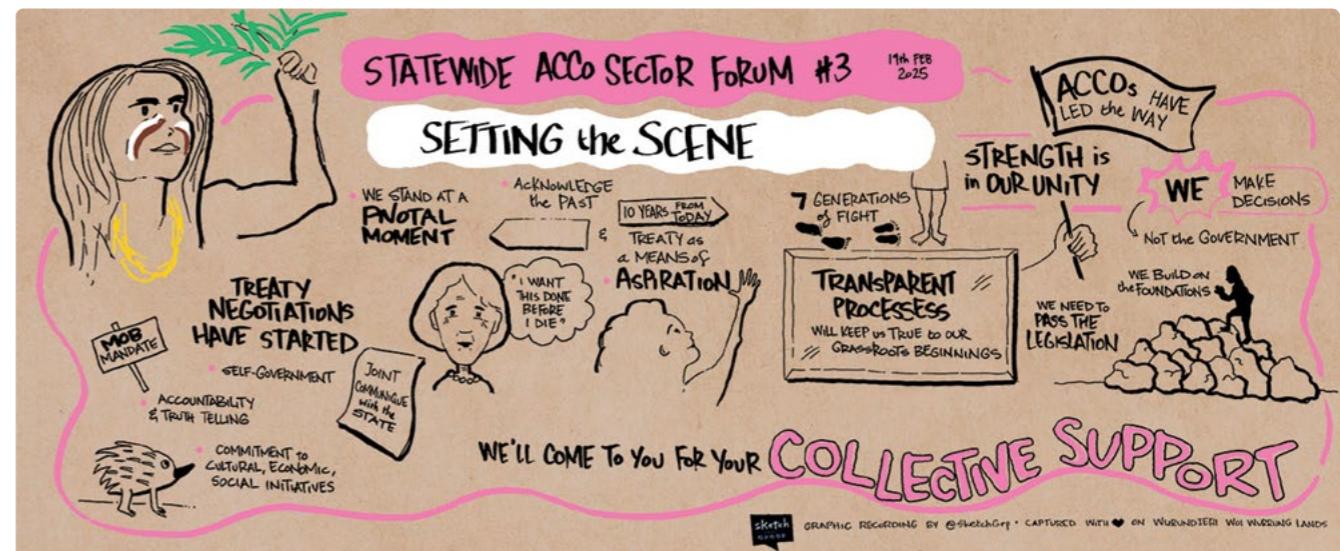


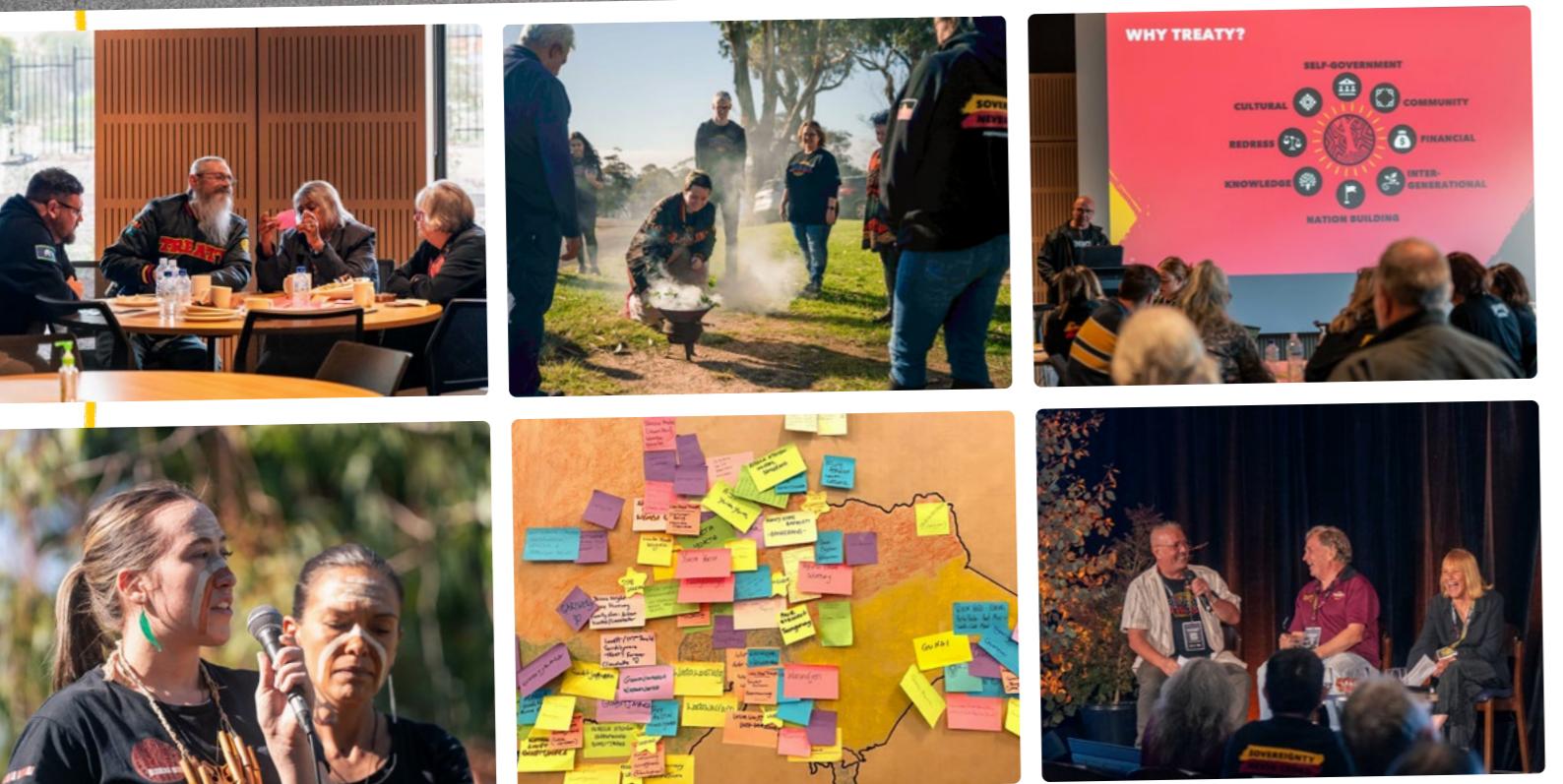
## NOV 2024 TO JULY 2025:

Statewide Treaty negotiations included more than 110 hours of negotiations and regional negotiation events held on Gunditjmara Country in March 2025, on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in June 2025 and on Gunai/Kurnai Country in July 2025.

## FEBRUARY 2025

The Assembly holds a third ACCO Forum on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country with 73 registered attendees. Participants are provided with a comprehensive update on the Treaty era powers and functions that the Assembly is seeking to negotiate in the first Statewide Treaty, as well as discussions to progress a collective governance model.





## FEBRUARY 2025

Traditional Owner Forum #2 focuses on bringing Traditional Owner groups together to provide an update on the Statewide Treaty process. 196 people attend the Forum, with presentations on the likely powers and functions of the future Assembly and discussions on governance and representation on a future First Peoples' Assembly with expanded roles and responsibilities.

## FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025

The second Statewide Gathering 2025 held in Naarm, with 767 registrations on Day 1 and 575 registrations on Day 2. The purpose of the Statewide Gathering was to provide an update on Statewide Treaty negotiations, with key sessions including an update from the Co-Chairs on the current state of play in Statewide Treaty negotiations including the future Assembly's likely powers and functions.

## APRIL 2025

The Assembly establishes the ACCO Sector Design Working Group following discussions at the February 2025 ACCO Forum.

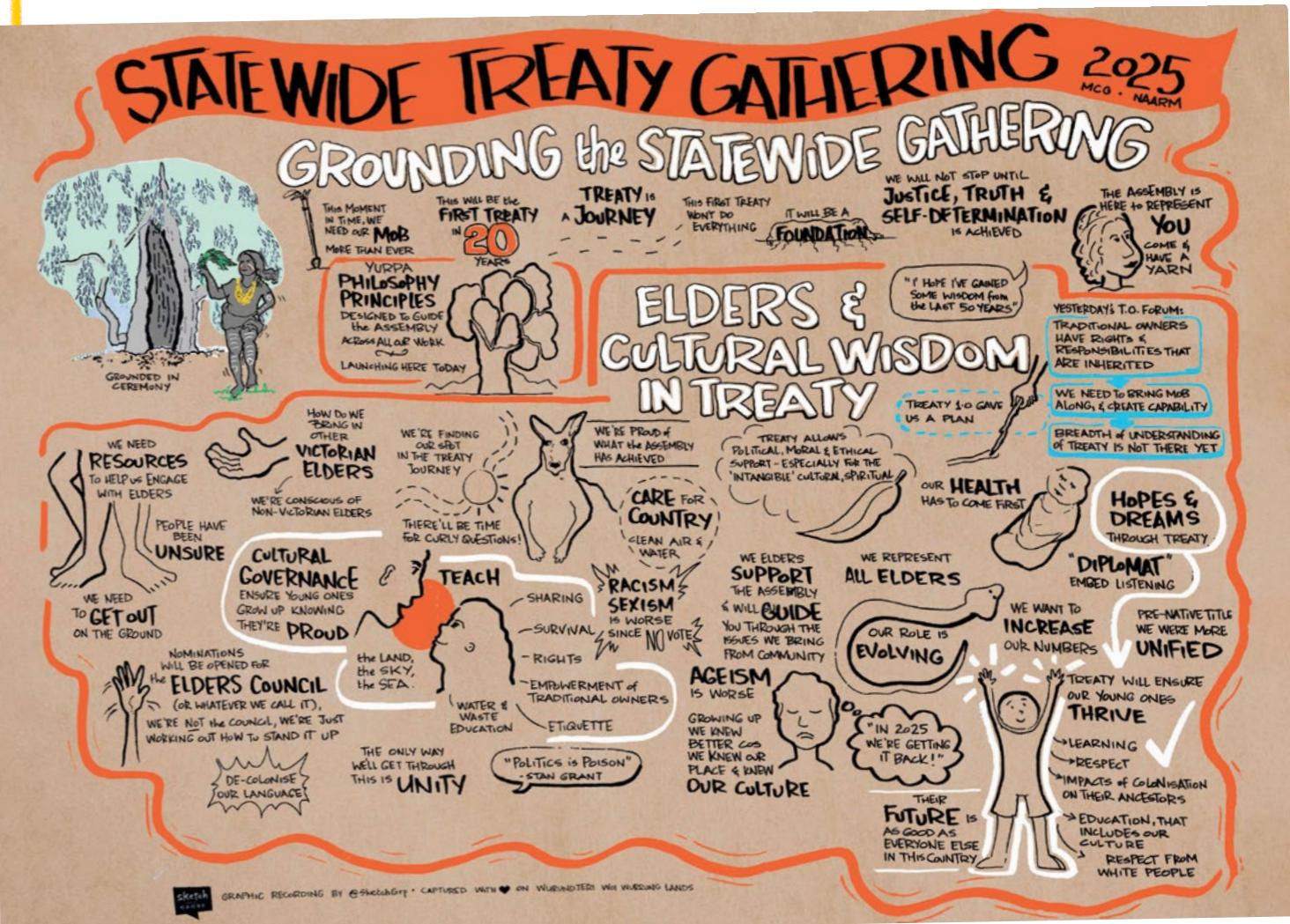
## MAY 2025

Following discussions at Traditional Owner Forum #2, the Assembly establishes the Traditional Owner Working Group as a key mechanism for structured engagement by the Assembly with Traditional Owner groups. The Working Group's primary purpose is to develop a Treaty era governance mechanism that ensures Traditional Owners are embedded in the future Representative Body to be secured through the first Statewide Treaty. The Working Group complements and enhances the Assembly's representative structure and proactive engagement with Traditional Owner groups without formal recognition.

## MAY - JULY 2025

Third round of Regional Gatherings are held to provide an update on how Community feedback has informed negotiations and where agreement is looking possible on the first Statewide Treaty.

Over 430 participants attended 19 forums across the state, which included events in the South West regional alongside the Walk for Truth. Community wanted Treaty to ensure that decisions about First Peoples are made by First Peoples and to embed ongoing truth telling.





## YARNING WITH COMMUNITY: NOVEMBER 2024 - AUGUST 2025

The Assembly continues to engage with Community including updating First Peoples on the proposals put forward for Statewide Treaty negotiations, to keep Community informed on how negotiations are progressing.

Major events included a formal event to mark the launch of negotiations, a second Statewide Gathering, ongoing Regional Forums and Treaty in the Park and Treaty Day Out events.



## JULY 2025

The Yoorrook Justice Commission delivers its third and final interim report, *Yoorrook for Transformation*, which details systemic injustices experienced by First Peoples in Victoria and provides extensive evidence and 100 recommendations for reform across land, health, housing, economic, and political life, and its final report and official public record, *Truth be Told*. Yoorrook's recommendations emphasise Treaty as the essential pathway to genuine self-determination for First Peoples in Victoria.



*“These are not abstract proposals but are based on lived truths and designed to be acted on.”*

*“Across 39 chapters and five volumes, Yoorrook for Transformation delivers clear and practical recommendations for reform across land, education, health, housing, economic and political life, and access to records.”*

*- Professor Eleanor A Bourke AM, Yoorrook for Transformation*

## Yoorrook for Transformation key recommendations

- “1. The Victorian Government must fund the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria to establish an ongoing truth-telling body to continue to take First Peoples’ testimony and build the public record.”
- “3. The Victorian Government must transfer decision-making power, authority, control and resources to First Peoples, giving full effect to self-determination in relation to their identity, information, data, traditional ecological knowledge, connection to Country, their rights to their lands, waters and resources, in the Victorian health, education and housing systems and across economic and political life.”
- “51. Guided by First Peoples, the Department of Education must... Direct the VCAA to elevate First Peoples from a consultative to a leadership role in reviewing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures curriculum, ensuring the accurate representation of history, the impacts of colonisation, and First Peoples’ strength and resistance from Prep to Year 12, including acknowledgement of past curriculum harms...”
- “94. The Victorian Government must ensure that the Self-Determination Fund is adequately resourced on a guaranteed, ongoing basis to meet its current and future purposes.”
- “96. The Victorian Government must negotiate with First Peoples the establishment of a permanent First Peoples’ representative body with powers at all levels of political and policy decision making.”
- “99. The Victorian Government must:
  - a. Officially acknowledge the responsibility of its predecessors for laws, policies and practices that contributed to systemic injustices against Victorian First Peoples;
  - b. Make official apologies to First Peoples in Victoria; and
  - c. Negotiate with the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria a form of words for official apologies to First Peoples individuals and communities.”

## YOORROOK IN NUMBERS



**1ST**

Truth-telling commission in Australia



**9,000**

Engagements with First Peoples



**1,300+**

Submissions received



**65**

Public hearing days



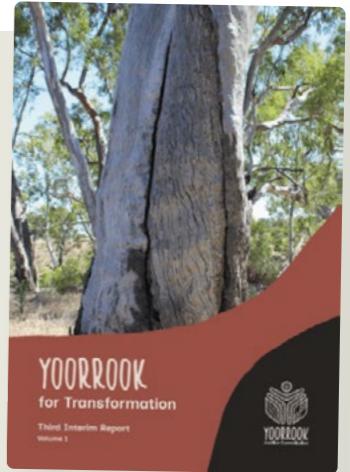
**400+**

Events including community information sessions, speaking engagements, Elders yarning and roundtable discussions



**10,000+**

Documents from government agencies, education providers and other organisations





# HERE'S WHAT IS IN THE STATEWIDE TREATY



## DECISIONS ABOUT US MADE BY US

Government bureaucrats, no matter how well-intentioned, don't know what works and doesn't work for our communities – we do. If we want to see improvements in health, education and housing for our people, the practical solutions need to come from us.

As the democratic and representative body, the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria will be made permanent to make sure our communities are properly represented. Under Treaty, Government must speak with us when making laws, rules or policies about us. Assembly Members will continue to advocate for our needs, hopes and aspirations.



## TRUTH AND HEALING

Through Truth-telling, Yoorrook began a process of healing and created a public record of our true history. The Assembly will set up **Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna** to continue the Truth-telling and healing process so everyone across the state can understand our past and share a better future.



## POWER TO HOLD GOVERNMENT TO ITS PROMISES

Governments like to make promises, now we will have the power to hold them accountable to these promises and delivering real outcomes for First Peoples. We'll establish a new Outcomes and Justice Commission called **Nginma Ngainga Wara** to provide independent oversight and accountability for Government, and we will be able to hold public hearings and question Ministers to make sure they are delivering for First Peoples.

## TEACHING OUR TRUE HISTORY

Under Treaty, all students in Victoria will learn the true history of these lands. For generations, many Victorians were not given the ability to access or reckon with our past, but now the Victorian school curriculum will help future generations understand our history and why we need Treaty. This is a chance for all Victorians to acknowledge our past, heal and move forward together.



## UPGRADING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Aboriginal-led organisations are a pillar of strength of our Community. We'll set up and run a First Peoples' Infrastructure Fund to support them to maintain and upgrade their facilities and infrastructure so they can continue to provide quality services to improve outcomes for our communities.

## MORE FIRST PEOPLES' PLACE NAMES

Every mountain, river and beach across this beautiful land has had a First Peoples' place name for thousands of years. To help celebrate this rich history and to share our languages, we will play a greater role, alongside Traditional Owners, in restoring more place names to their First Peoples' name, including State and National Parks and some water-ways and waterfalls. Names are more than just words, they tell the story of the lands and our peoples and educate the public about its history.



## CELEBRATING AND SHARING OUR CULTURE



Ours is the oldest continuing culture in the world, something that everyone can embrace and take pride in. Through Treaty, we'll lead the celebrating and sharing of 60,000+ years of culture in Victoria.

We will have a ceremonial role in State engagements (alongside the Governor, for example). We'll run the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll to recognise and celebrate First Peoples who have made significant contributions to the community, the Victorian Aboriginal Remembrance Service to honour First Peoples who served in the defence forces and the Ricci Marks Awards to recognise our young people.





## BUILDING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP

Our people have a history of leaders and trailblazers. We will create the First Peoples' Institute to help the next generation continue that legacy with even more support and facilitation to our future leaders. We will work closely with First Peoples-run organisations to build the leadership capabilities for the Treaty era and improve outcomes for our community.

## A TREATY FOR THE GENERATIONS

This marks the beginning of a new Treaty era. Once we've signed the first Treaty, we'll get to work on our expanded roles, responsibilities, and community answerability obligations.

In future, we'll build on this first Treaty, negotiating future Statewide Treaties covering areas like health, education, housing, justice and more. This will mean better outcomes for our communities for generations to come.



## TRADITIONAL OWNER TREATIES

Traditional Owners across the state can come forward to negotiate their own Traditional Owner Treaties that cover their Communities and Country and reflect their local priorities. Those negotiations will unfold over the coming years at different paces as it's not a case of one-size-fits-all.



The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) has been a guiding star for the Assembly in building the Treatymaking ecosystem, preparing our Negotiations Brief and negotiating this Statewide Treaty. We see this Statewide Treaty as UNDRIP in action.

This Statewide Treaty embodies and engages many articles of UNDRIP, including:

- Article 3: Self-determination
- Articles 4 and 20: Self-government
- Articles 3,4 and 5: Economic independence
- Articles 8 and 11: Redress and truth-telling
- Articles 11 and 12: Culture
- Article 18: Selection of representatives and participation in decision-making
- Article 19: Free, prior informed consent
- Article 37: Agreements and treaties
- Article 38: Legislative enshrinement



# THANK YOU

We give thanks to all who welcome us to their unceded lands and waters and further extend that gratitude to all First Peoples in Victoria who have generously offered their time, their ideas and their feedback to help guide this shared journey to Treaty.

We also give thanks to the experts and knowledge holders who have shared their deep thinking and skills over the past two terms of the Assembly.



## YOUR VOTE MATTERS: TREATY ELECTIONS 2026

The next big step on the shared journey to Treaty is for the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria to hold its general elections in early 2026. This is our opportunity to choose who we want to represent us and begin the work of implementing Treaty in Victoria! Will you put your hand up to run?



If you're Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and living in Victoria, the single most important thing you can do to help make Treaty a reality is enrol with the Assembly.

**FIRSTPEOPLESVIC.ORG/ENROL**

SCAN WITH  
YOUR PHONE 



**To our allies:** First Peoples are making history right here in Victoria, and you can be part of it — sign up to Team Treaty today to receive updates and information about how you can help.

**FIRSTPEOPLESVIC.ORG/WALK-WITH-US**





**FIRST PEOPLES'  
ASSEMBLY OF  
VICTORIA**

