

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women



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DELIVERING TRUTH AND JUSTICE FOR ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS

The Victorian Government will establish a truth and justice process to formally recognise historic wrongs – and address ongoing injustices – for Aboriginal Victorians.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams announced the historic process today, which will be the first of its kind anywhere in Australia, and represents a significant step forward on Victoria's path towards Treaty.

In partnership with the First Peoples' Assembly, work will begin immediately to determine the terms of reference and how the process will work.

The Assembly – as the state's first and only democratically-elected body for Aboriginal people – will play a key role in ensuring Aboriginal communities are heard in all stages of planning, design and implementation.

Assembly members last month voted – in one of its first formal motions – for the state government to set up a truth and justice process. Similar processes have been established in countries such as South Africa, Canada and New Zealand.

Other truth telling processes have played an important role in reconciliation by uncovering and acknowledging past human-rights violations and ongoing injustices towards First Peoples.

Truth telling also recognises the incredible strength and survival of Aboriginal people – ensuring their voices are heard and respected.

The process means Victoria is now the first and only jurisdiction to have actioned the Treaty and Truth elements of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. It builds on our state's nation-leading work on Treaty and redress plans for Stolen Generations members, which was announced earlier this year.

Significant reforms are already underway across government to address issues that continue to disproportionately impact Aboriginal Victorians, including more social housing and changes to address the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"There is nothing more powerful than the truth. Because with honesty comes healing. It's going to take courage from all sides to uncover the truths of our past and understand ongoing impacts – establishing this process brings us one step closer to genuine reconciliation."

"We owe it to Aboriginal Victorians to be frank and honest about the injustices they have faced – and continue to face. This will help us to address these injustices and build a stronger Victoria on a foundation of trust."

Quote attributable to First Peoples' Assembly Co-chair Geraldine Atkinson

"We commend the Victorian Government for agreeing to work with the Assembly on a truth and justice process which will help shape and create a more equitable society that brings pride to all Victorians."

Quote attributable to First Peoples' Assembly Co-chair Marcus Stewart

"This is an historic moment in time, never before have we seen a truth telling process in this country or state."

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