

Media Release

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



Monday, 3 August 2020

NEW MILESTONE FOR TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

The Victorian Government and the First Peoples' Assembly will today hold their first official negotiating meeting, marking a historic moment on Victoria's path to Treaty.

In keeping with Stay at Home restrictions, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams will meet virtually with Assembly Co-Chairs Geraldine Atkinson and Marcus Stewart to formally commence Treaty negotiations.

Following a Welcome to Country by Gunaikurnai man, Uncle Nicky Moffatt, the parties will set the forward agenda, discuss negotiation protocols and processes, and a timeline for future meetings.

The Assembly is the first democratically elected body of Aboriginal Victorians in the state's history and is made up of 21 members elected by Aboriginal Victorians across five voting regions and 11 members appointed by each formally recognised Traditional Owner groups.

It is tasked with negotiating the framework that will ultimately lead to Treaty. In partnership with the Government, it will also help establish a Treaty Authority to act as an independent umpire throughout the negotiation process and a self-determination fund.

Treaty is an opportunity for Victoria to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians. It is also an opportunity to heal past wounds, achieve genuine reconciliation and build a stronger state for all Victorians.

While the content of a Treaty or treaties is not yet known, it will reflect a shared aspiration to tangibly improve the lives of Aboriginal Victorians and future generations.

Work on Treaty builds on Victoria's nation-leading efforts to support Aboriginal communities, having last month announced Australia's first truth telling process to formally recognise historic wrongs and address ongoing injustices for Aboriginal Victorians.

Victoria is now the first and only jurisdiction to have actioned both the Treaty and Truth elements of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"This is an important milestone for our state and represents the next step forward on this historic path to Treaty – a Treaty that will not only benefit Aboriginal Victorians, but all Victorians."

"We're determined to find a new way forward with our First Peoples, forging a new, shared future for us all."

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

"We hope that this day will be looked back on as the starting point in our history when Aboriginal Victorians and the State Government began to work towards greater reconciliation and a stronger future."

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

"This meeting is the first step towards a productive negotiation between the First Peoples' Assembly and the Victorian Government."

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