

Statement

The Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Resources
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Crime Prevention
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Youth Justice
Minister for Victim Support

The Hon. Luke Donnellan MP
Minister for Child Protection
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

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

The Hon. Danny Pearson MP
Assistant Treasurer
Minister for Regulatory Reform
Minister for Government Services
Minister for Creative Industries
Acting Minister for Police and Emergency Services



Thursday, 15 April 2021

STATEMENT ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Today marks thirty years since the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was tabled in Federal Parliament.

It was a seminal moment in our nation's history. It was supposed to lay out a clear path to reconciliation, and to justice reform. It was supposed to save lives.

Instead too many Aboriginal Victorians are still dying in custody. Too many Aboriginal Victorians are in custody in the first place.

For families and communities, the recent death of an Aboriginal person at Ravenhall Correctional Centre is a tragedy and yet another reminder that more work is needed.

Reforms to the justice system, such as the abolition of the crime of public drunkenness and the creation of a spent convictions scheme were long overdue, but we are getting on with implementing them.

We are pursuing a Treaty to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians, and finally close the gap in outcomes.

Importantly, the Yoo-rook Justice Commission, afforded the full powers of a Royal Commission, will investigate both historic and contemporary injustices, in a holistic way, so we can continue to make meaningful, systemic and lasting change.

We have made these ongoing and necessary reforms in partnership with the Aboriginal community, the Aboriginal Justice Caucus and the First Peoples' Assembly. We will continue to work together under the principle of self-determination to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal Victorians in the justice system.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission are just as important today as they were 30 years ago – and we will implement them, alongside our partnership with community under Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja - the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4.

We can do better. We will do better.