

Media Release

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



Tuesday, 7 June 2022

HISTORIC BILL BRINGS TREATY A STEP CLOSER

The Andrews Labor Government will mark a significant milestone in ensuring a fair and just Treaty process with First Peoples, with a landmark Bill to establish an independent Treaty Authority.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams will today introduce in the Victorian Parliament the Treaty Authority Bill following an historic agreement reached between the Labor Government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

The Bill will allow the Treaty Authority to be established as an 'independent umpire' to oversee negotiations between the Government and Aboriginal Victorians.

While established by agreement, the Bill gives the Treaty Authority the legal powers necessary to facilitate Treaty negotiations and resolve any disputes between parties.

The Treaty Authority will be a nation-leading institution without precedent, drawing on international best practice but adapted for Victoria to ensure Aboriginal lore, law and cultural authority are observed and upheld.

The legislation is the result of deep engagement and negotiation between the Government and the First Peoples' Assembly, the democratically elected body representing Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to progress Treaty in Victoria.

Agreement on the Treaty Authority will be marked with a ceremonial signing with the First Peoples' Assembly.

Victoria is leading the nation with its commitment to Treaty and Truth, including the truth-telling Yoorrook Justice Commission that continues to hold hearings across Victoria.

The establishment of the Treaty Authority and commitment to Treaty and Truth in Victoria demonstrate what can be achieved when we are led by the aspiration of First Peoples.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"The introduction of the Treaty Authority Bill into Parliament is another vital step towards Treaty and a significant milestone in Victoria's nation-leading efforts to achieve genuine self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians."

"Together with the First Peoples' Assembly, we are establishing an independent Treaty Authority with the ability to deliver an innovative approach to Treaty negotiations based on Aboriginal lore, law and cultural authority."

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

"The Government is relinquishing some of its control and power and together we are creating new institutions that will be guided by Aboriginal lore, law and cultural authority that has been practiced on these lands for countless generations."

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

"Treaty is an opportunity to restore our ability to make the decisions that affect our communities, our culture and our Country and this agreement is a really big step towards that destination. This is a wonderful day."

Media Contact: Claire Vickers | 0499 543 392 | claire.vickers@minstaff.vic.gov.au