

# Media Release

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



Wednesday, 22 June 2022

## FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY SET TONE ON LANDMARK TREATY BILL

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria today made a historic address to the Victorian Parliament on the importance of Treaty, setting the tone for debate on the nation leading *Treaty Authority Bill*.

Assembly Co-chairs Aunty Geraldine Atkinson and Marcus Stewart addressed the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian Parliament in both English and in language, following the introduction of members of the First Peoples' Assembly.

Members of Victoria's democratically elected First Peoples' Assembly were present in the Parliament Chamber.

The presence of the First Peoples' Assembly in the chamber symbolises the beginning of a new pathway that honours and acknowledges the truth of the past and forges the way to a brighter shared future for all Victorians.

Today's historic address follows Premier Daniel Andrews and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams attending a First Peoples' Assembly chamber meeting on Gadubanud Country of the Eastern Maar people earlier this month to sign the Treaty Authority Agreement with the Assembly, representing true partnership on our path to Treaty.

The Assembly negotiated with the Labor Government to develop the Treaty Authority, which is the 'independent umpire' that will oversee treaty negotiations between the government and Aboriginal Victorians.

Minister Williams introduced the *Treaty Authority Bill* into the Victorian Parliament on 7 June after an agreement was reached between the Victorian Government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

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

### **Quote attributable to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams:**

*"Listening to Aboriginal Victorians and acting on what they need to determine their own future is more important than ever as we work towards starting Treaty negotiations in 2023."*

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

*"The journey to Treaty needs to be guided by First Peoples. This agreement we've reached with the Government reflects what our people want – it's an umpire that they can trust because it will be led by First Peoples, be grounded in our culture, lore and law and be completely independent from government."*

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

*"I hope that all the politicians can see the importance of not only making sure First Peoples determine the destination, but that we can also choose the path we take to reach Treaty. This agreement to establish the Treaty umpire has been developed by First Peoples, for First Peoples. It's what our community wants and we're urging the Parliament to back us in."*