

Monday, 26 September 2022

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

Victorians will have the chance to pay tribute to Uncle Jack Charles, his life and contributions to our state at a State Funeral Service.

The family has accepted the offer of a State Funeral, to be held at Hamer Hall at 2pm on Tuesday 18 October 2022.

Uncle Jack Charles was a proud Boon Wurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Woiwurrung and Taungurung man – he had a talent like no other and paved the way for Aboriginal actors to follow in his footsteps.

As an actor, musician, potter, performer and activist, Uncle Jack took on many roles. As a mentor and guiding light for young Aboriginal men, he touched the lives of many.

He was named the 2016 Victorian Senior Australian of the Year for his enduring impact on Australian theatre and his contributions as a role model for his community.

Earlier this year, he made history as the first Aboriginal elder to testify at Victoria's truth-telling Yoorrook Justice Commission.

And in doing so, he permanently etched it into our state's history.

His life was once marred by great injustice, but he did not let that dim his bright and generous spirit.

As an infant, he was forcibly removed from his mother by state authorities.

Uncle Jack's harrowing experience as a member of the Stolen Generations had a devastating impact on his sense of self, as he grappled with a cycle of addiction, homelessness and imprisonment for much of his early life.

His separation from his family led him down a lifelong journey of discovery – of his family history, culture, and his Aboriginal identity.

A larger-than-life personality, his warmth and humour saw him through, as he drew others into his remarkable life.

There is no actor, no activist, no survivor and no Victorian quite like Uncle Jack Charles.

He leaves behind a legacy – one of profound honesty, survival and reconciliation – and one that every single Victorian can be proud of.

In recognition of his vital work within our justice system, his service will be streamed into prisons, remand centres and youth justice centres across the state.

Further details about how to obtain tickets to attend or how to view the live stream will be shared in coming weeks, with the most up to date information available at vic.gov.au/unclejack-charles.