

Media Release

Mr Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Child Protection and Family Services
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers
Acting Minister for Mental Health
Acting Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Thursday, 20 October 2022

HISTORIC FRAMEWORK PAVES WAY FOR TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

The Andrews Labor Government and First Peoples' Assembly are together delivering the next critical phase of the state's landmark Treaty process, with the final elements now in place to commence treaty negotiations in 2023.

Acting Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Colin Brooks today joined members of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria on the banks of the Yarra River on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country for a ceremonial signing of the Treaty Negotiation Framework and the Self-determination Fund.

The framework sets out the ground rules for negotiating treaties between the State and First Peoples, including both a statewide treaty with all First Peoples in Victoria and individual treaties with local Traditional Owner groups.

The framework guarantees an open and inclusive treaty process, where all First Peoples groups in Victoria, including Traditional Owners, will have the opportunity to register for treaty negotiations.

Today's announcement also includes a historic investment of \$65 million to establish a Self-determination Fund to provide First Peoples with a financial resource to ensure Treaty negotiations are fair and equitable and create a new mechanism to build capacity, wealth and prosperity for First Peoples communities.

Today's announcement follows agreement on the Treaty Authority in June and subsequent passing of the Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act through the Victorian Parliament.

Treaty is a significant step towards transferring power and resources to First Peoples so they can control the policies and programs that affect their lives, in line with supporting for Aboriginal self-determination. Victoria is leading the nation in implementing all elements of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart – Voice, Treaty, Truth*.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Colin Brooks

"The Andrews Labor Government was the first in the nation to take action towards treaty- the success of treaty and truth processes demonstrate what can be achieved under the leadership of First Peoples."

"The Treaty Negotiation Framework ensures a fair treaty process, while the Self-determination Fund ensures Traditional Owners are properly resourced, supported and equipped to lead meaningful change."

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

"We all want to get on with creating a better future together as equals, but to do that, we need Treaty to help us rebalance the relationship and we need to eliminate the unfair burden that Aboriginal people have been carrying since invasion. Now, with this agreement, we have a clear pathway forward. I couldn't be happier."

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

"Today marks the beginning of a new and fairer chapter for this state's history. Colonisation saw our freedom, dignity and agency stripped from us. We were driven from our lands, had our families ripped apart and every aspect of our lives – where we could live, who we could marry – was controlled by the State."

"This agreement puts the power back into Aboriginal hands so that we can decide how we want to do things and how to get Treaty done."

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