

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Tuesday, 28 March 2023

HISTORIC NATIVE TITLE FOR EASTERN MAAR

Eastern Maar peoples in Victoria's south-west have gained formal recognition of their land rights in the first Victorian native title determination in a decade, with support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Treaty and First People Gabrielle Williams joined the Eastern Maar Country at a hearing on Country at Logans Beach to hear the Federal Court's consent determination - which will formally recognise the groups native title rights.

The Labor Government and Eastern Maar peoples have worked together over the past four years to finalise the determination which covers most of their native title claim area – with other areas currently in mediation before the Federal Court.

The determination acknowledges Eastern Maar's ongoing connection and intrinsic relationship with their Country in south-western Victoria, which includes much of the coastline of the Great Ocean Road and part of the Great Otway National Park

It also recognises Eastern Maar's right to accessm use, and protect public land in accordance with their traditional law and custom. Additionally, it recognises their right to be consulted on the use and development land and natural resources – to ensure the protection and preservation of places and areas with cultural importance.

Native title rights and interests are non-exclusive and sit alongside the broader community's right to enjoy these places. All local governments and individuals that participated in the claim have consented to the determination.

The Labor Government continues to work with Traditional Owner groups across the state to recognise their relationship to land and native title rights through Federal Court processes, as well as the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010.

Victoria is also the only jurisdiction in Australia with comprehensive Treaty processes in place and will look to strengthen the relationship between Victorian traditional owners and the State when negotiations start later this year.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

“Through this court hearing today Eastern Maar Peoples are assured of their rights under Australian law to protect their native title long into the future.”

“This hearing honours the deep cultural significance that Country holds for Eastern Maar People and empowers them to manage and protect Country in accordance with the law and customs.”