

Sunday, 2 June 2024

STATEMENT FROM THE PREMIER

There are so many words to describe the amazing Aunty Fay Carter: Tireless. Grounded. Passionate. Determined.

But to me, the word that epitomises Aunty Fay is generosity. She was so overwhelmingly generous – with her time, her wisdom and her work.

And we just wouldn't have the Victoria we do, without her.

Her life began on the margins. Born on the veranda of the Echuca Hospital – because her mum Iris, an Aboriginal woman, was not permitted inside.

It was a story she shared often, resolute that the true history of our state – and its enduring impact on our present – was not forgotten.

Aunty Fay grew up on the margins too – in the Flats, on the outskirts of Mooroopna. Despite the marginalisation – economic, social and geographic – of her People, she spoke warmly of her childhood. Of the Elders that helped to raise her – and their determination to see their cultures, histories and connection to Country live on.

Aunty Fay carried that same burning determination throughout her life.

Her impact was felt in so many ways: through her work with the Aborigines Advancement League, as a member of the Victorian branch of NAIDOC, and as Chair of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency.

In that role, she helped implement the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, ensuring Aboriginal children remain connected to their family, culture and community.

Her legacy also lives on through her work for the Aboriginal Community Elders Service (ACES) – the first of its kind in our nation. Because of Aunty Fay, Aboriginal Elders are receiving the compassionate, culturally appropriate care they deserve.

Even in her so-called 'retirement', Aunty Fay never wavered. In her late 70s, she was part of the 18 months of intense negotiations to achieve a landmark native title settlement, formally recognising the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of these lands.

Anyone who lives here knows just how lucky we are. To be able to learn and share in the history of this Country – we are indebted to Aunty Fay, and those like her.

On behalf of our community and our state, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Wendy, Rodney, Aunty Fay's grandchildren, family and friends.

Thank you for sharing her with us.