

Joint Statement



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Premier

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**First Peoples'
Assembly of
Victoria**

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NEGOTIATIONS FINALISED FOR VICTORIA'S TREATY

A major milestone in Victoria's decade-long Treaty process has been achieved with the Victorian Government and First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria reaching in-principle agreement on Australia's first Treaty.

The first negotiated Statewide Treaty Agreement brings together First Peoples, through the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, and the Victorian Government, to build a new relationship based on respect, trust and integrity. It acknowledges our past and is a chance for all Victorians to move forward together.

The Government will introduce the Statewide Treaty Bill into the Victorian Parliament today. The Statewide Treaty Bill proposes to make the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria permanent and expand its responsibilities to deliver better outcomes for First Peoples in Victoria.

Subject to the passage of the Bill through Parliament, the negotiated Treaty Agreement will be signed by both parties.

Policies and programs work best when the people affected by them have a say in how they are delivered – that's why this Bill proposes to put decision-making power about initiatives and services that impact First Peoples into the hands of First Peoples' Assembly.

The Bill proposes the expanded Assembly:

- Be led by democratically elected Members providing representation of First Peoples
- Make decisions and rules about specific matters that directly impact First Peoples
- Form an independent accountability mechanism as required by the National Agreement to Close the Gap
- Be consulted by government departments on laws and policies affecting First Peoples
- Lead ongoing truth-telling and healing across Victorian towns and regions, including capturing stories and retaining an archive of this information to support education of the broader public
- Make certain statutory appointments for existing designated First Peoples' seats such as First Peoples appointments to the Heritage Council of Victoria
- Lead the Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Fund, Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll and NAIDOC Week
- Develop a First Peoples' Institute to enhance leadership capability across the sector

In Victoria, we have been on a long and steady path to Truth and Treaty for nearly a decade. We have passed legislation twice, developed policies, and made commitments across the government.

We have taken the time required to lay strong foundations for Treaty, and this Bill represents a historical milestone in this journey.

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