

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Wednesday, 25 February 2026

NEW PARTNERSHIP TO POWER FIRST PEOPLES TOURISM

Labor is backing First Nations-led tourism with a new industry partnership to empower the community and create jobs across Victoria's tourism sector.

Minister Dimopoulos today announced the Quality First Peoples Tourism Business Program at the Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) Vision Summit at Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The new \$2.5 million initiative will expand First Peoples cultural tourism, showcase the state's competitive edge and deliver meaningful, connected experiences for travellers seeking authentic cultural experiences.

The program is being delivered in partnership with VTIC and the Kinaway Chamber of Commerce who have co-designed workshops, mentoring and market-readiness support for existing and emerging First Peoples tourism businesses.

The initiative was established through community consultation. It provides a platform for First Peoples communities to develop tourism products and experiences while offering visitors a chance to learn about traditional knowledge, culture and truth telling.

The new program reflects priorities in the *Experience Victoria 2033* strategic plan, which identifies First Peoples-led experiences as a key pillar that the government will invest in to shape the future of the state's visitor economy.

It builds on the *First Peoples Tourism Plan for Victoria 2025–2030* which aims to empower and strengthen cultural pride, while fostering sustainable, authentic tourism experiences that increase participation in the state's \$46 billion visitor economy.

This program is an important step towards First Peoples self-determination and progress towards Treaty and backs in the Allan Labor Government's Yuma Yirramboi (Invest in Tomorrow) Aboriginal economic development strategy.

Expressions of interest open soon for the *Quality First Peoples Tourism Business Program*. For further updates on the program, visit tourism.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"This program is an important step in strengthening and growing First Peoples-led tourism across Victoria, creating new economic opportunities and supporting local businesses."

"We're proud to grow a thriving, sustainable First Peoples tourism sector that empowers community, shares Traditional knowledge and positions Victoria as a global leader in meaningful, authentic travel experiences."

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Ros Spence

"First Nations Victorians have stories, knowledge and culture that the world wants to experience. This program makes sure community is in control of how those stories are told."

Quotes attributable to Victoria Tourism Industry Council CEO Lisa Patroni

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“VTIC is proud to support this partnership to deliver the Quality First Peoples Tourism Business Program. Demand for authentic cultural experiences continues to grow, with 511,000 visitors to Victoria including a First Peoples activity and contributing \$1.3 billion to the visitor economy.”

“This program is an important step in closing that gap by directly supporting and developing First Peoples tourism businesses, building capability, visibility, and long-term growth in this vital sector.”