



Community meeting, Dhurringile Prison, March 2018

VICTORIAN TREATY ADVANCEMENT COMMISSION

Quarterly report January to March 2019

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY

New name for the Body

Aboriginal Representative Body was always a temporary name for the body, the Commission has worked with community to develop the official name of the body. In response to a call for feedback, the Commission received dozens of suggestions and many more during meetings with community over the past 12 months.

In February the Commission announced the body will be named the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (the Assembly). The name reflects the power, independence and cultural strength of the Assembly.

The Commission also announced a public competition for the design of the logo of the Assembly, open to all Aboriginal Victorians. The winner is expected to be announced in May 2019.

Key policy developments

The Commission was excited to be able to announce substantial progress in finalising the design of the Assembly.

Responding to feedback following the September 2018 Statewide Gathering the design of the Assembly has been adjusted to expand voter franchise, simplify the voting regions and increase the minimum number of representatives in each region.

Community was clear that all Victorian Traditional Owners must be part of the treaty process. To ensure this the Commission adapted the model to allow Traditional Owners to vote even if they live interstate or overseas.

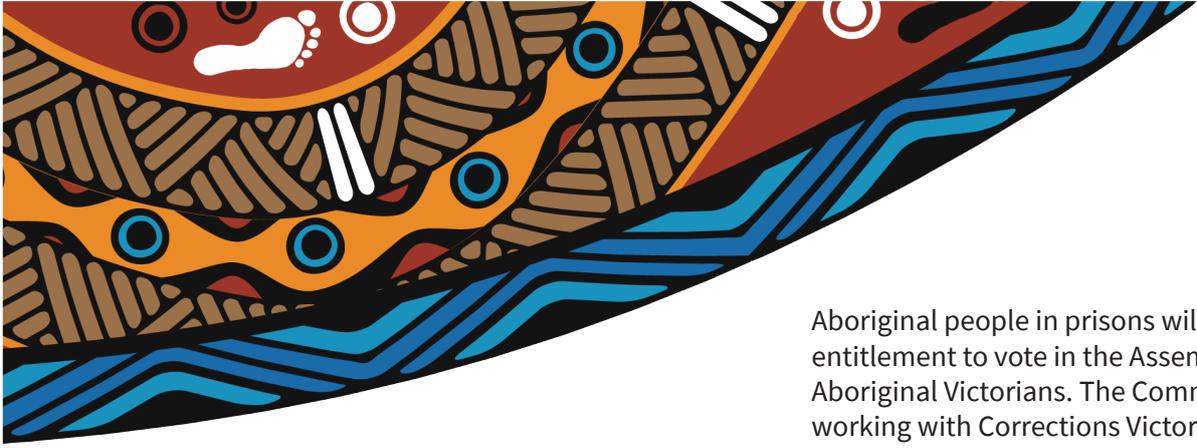
Voting regions have been refined to better ensure consistency across the state and reflect the recommendations of the Community Assembly and Working Group. There will now be five electorates, rather than six, and there is more consistency as every electorate covers the Country of multiple Traditional Owner groups.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE COMMISSION

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 JillGallagherAO

 Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission



The minimum number of elected members for each voting region has also been increased to three. This reflects best practice for elections of this type and will help make sure the Assembly represents the views of communities across Victoria. There will now be three elected representatives in each regional voting region and nine in the metropolitan voting region. This is in addition to the seats guaranteed to existing formally recognised Traditional Owner groups, currently 12.

Designing a voice for Elders

Following the Elders Forum held in September 2018 the Commission committed to speaking with Elders across the state to inform the design of a voice for Elders on the Assembly.

The Commission has engaged with Pricewaterhouse Coopers Indigenous Consulting to lead engagement with Elders on the design of their voice on the Assembly.

Consultations will take place over the following months with Elder's groups across the state. Elders will be able to participate in consultations in person or via phone, post and email. Further details about consultations and contact details will be available on the Commission's website and distributed to communities across Victoria.

ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY

Meeting with prisoners across the state

Over 1,400 Aboriginal people are currently imprisoned in Victoria. It is critical that these members of our community are not left behind in the treaty process.

Over this period the Commissioner and staff visited every prison in Victoria. The Commissioner and her team met with over 350 Aboriginal Victorians held in prisons across the state. These meetings were an opportunity to share information about the treaty process and hear about their aspirations for treaty. Some of the common themes were about the need for truth telling, reparations and support for future generations of Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people in prisons will have the same entitlement to vote in the Assembly elections as other Aboriginal Victorians. The Commission will continue working with Corrections Victoria to support their participation in the election process.

ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

The Commission continues a busy schedule of engagement with community across the state. In addition meeting with community in every Victorian prison, this period included talking treaty with Connecting Home, Bunurong Land Council, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Department of Education and Training's Koorie Education workforce, Bunjilwarra, and the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

The Commission also continued to meet with community, government and corporate stakeholders. This included providing keynote addresses to the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Australian Education Union, Melbourne University, Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, Uniting Church, Catholic Social Services Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association.

In March the Commission was honoured to be invited to the SummerSalt music festival held in Geelong. Headliners Yothu Yindi and the Treaty Project gave a powerful endorsement of treaty in Victoria and dedicated the unofficial anthem of the Commission, *Treaty*, to the work of Jill and her team.

ABORIGINAL TREATY WORKING GROUP



The Aboriginal Treaty Working Group continues to play a key role in providing strategic guidance and input into the work of the Commission. The Commission met with thematic sub-committees of the Working Group several times during this period and with the full Working Group once.