



2018 Koori Court Conference, Melbourne, 26 October 2018

# VICTORIAN TREATY ADVANCEMENT COMMISSION

## Quarterly report October to December 2018

### PROGRESS TOWARDS THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY

#### Responding to community feedback

Following the September Statewide Gathering and subsequent feedback period, the Commission received more than 40 written submissions, in addition to more than 70 text messages and hundreds of comments written by attendees at the Statewide Gathering. Each comment provided valuable feedback on the proposed model for the Aboriginal Representative Body (Body).

The Commission has continued to work through this feedback focusing on three key policy areas:

#### 1. Voting options for Victorian traditional owners living interstate

We know it's important for people with connections to Country in Victoria to be able to participate in elections for the Body.

This includes people whose Country extends beyond Victoria's borders.

#### 2. Setting the most suitable voting regions

The Commission is considering whether we can improve the voting regions proposed at the Statewide Gathering.

#### 3. Support for Traditional Owner groups to be eligible for a reserved seat


Some community members have discussed alternative ways for Traditional Owner groups to be eligible for a guaranteed seat, while also respecting existing recognition that has taken decades to achieve. This is explored further below.

In working through this feedback the Commission is continuing conversations with communities across the state. Community will continue to be at the heart of the design of the Body.

### KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE COMMISSION

[enquiries@victtreatyadvancement.org.au](mailto:enquiries@victtreatyadvancement.org.au)  
[victtreatyadvancement.org.au](http://victtreatyadvancement.org.au) | 1800 TREATY (1800 873 289)

 JillGallagherAO

 Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission



## **Additional methods for formally recognising Traditional Owner Groups**

In the proposed design of the Body, all formally recognised Traditional Owner Groups are guaranteed a minimum of one seat on the Body.

The Commission continues to explore a range of ways to support Traditional Owner groups to be engaged in the Body, including those that are yet to achieve formal recognition.

Community feedback on the proposed design of the Body spoke to options to engage the groups such as alternate forms of formal recognition for Traditional Owner groups as well as different levels of engagement with the Body, such as 'observer status' as Traditional Owner groups progress through different stages of formal recognition.

The Commission is working through these suggestions and will continue meeting with groups across the state as they finalise a design that can be as inclusive, fair and strong as possible.

## **Preparing for elections in 2019**

In mid-2019 Aboriginal Victorians will go to the polls to elect representatives for the Body.

The Commission is working to establish this election process. This includes engaging with suppliers and refining policy settings that will ensure a vote that is inclusive, independent and best supports participation by all members of the Victorian Aboriginal community.

## **ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY**

The upcoming Christmas season proved no slow down in the Commission's work. Following the September Statewide Gathering the Commissioner and team were back out on the road engaging with communities and seeking further feedback on the proposed design of the Body.

In this period this included meetings with Eastern Maar, the Victorian Traditional Owners Land Justice Group and other Traditional Owner representatives as well as presentations or appearances at the Koori Court Conference, Marngrook Footy Show, Monash University Annual Elders Day, Willum Warrain and the Kirrae Health hosted Elders Gathering in Lorne.

## **ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY**

During the November state election, the Commission observed caretaker conventions to preserve the independence of their work. Outside of this the Commission continued to provide advice to government, community and corporate stakeholders. This included delivering the 2018 Castan Centre Annual Lecture and presenting to the Melbourne Forum, Barwon Health, and Australians for Native Title & Reconciliation.

The Commissioner also had the privilege to travel to Sydney to meet with Reconciliation NSW and speak with members of the NSW Parliament about the treaty process in Victoria and the importance of starting treaty conversations across the border.

## **ABORIGINAL TREATY WORKING GROUP**

The Aboriginal Treaty Working Group provide invaluable guidance to the work of the Commission and set the Commissioner's broad strategic direction.

The Commission met with the Working Group twice in this period. In addition to this, Working Group members represented the work of the Commission at events across the state.

