

Joint Statement



Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Government Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence
Minister for Women

Ngarra Murray

Co-Chair of the
First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Rueben Berg

Co-Chair of the
First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Friday, 21 March 2025

JOINT STATEMENT ON TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

Recently the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins and the First Peoples' Assembly Negotiation Delegation held a regional meeting on Gunditjmara country to progress negotiations for Victoria's first statewide Treaty.

Parties met at a significant site on the beach of Allestree at Portland Bay, known as the Convincing Ground – in reference to a massacre of the Kilcarer Gundidj clan which took place in 1834.

The site is significant for these discussions, with parties discussing how truth and reconciliation will be embedded in outcomes from Treaty discussions. This follows the nation-leading work of Victoria's Yoorrook Justice Commission.

Topics discussed in negotiations at Allestree included:

- Capturing stories from across the Victorian community of the history and experiences of First Peoples
- Retaining an archive of this information and public education opportunities
- Continuing the truth-telling journey after the conclusion of the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

Negotiations in January and February have focused on how to close the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, including a new independent accountability mechanism. States and territories have previously agreed to this under the National Agreement to Close the Gap.

The Government is carrying out an engagement program to inform local government, community and business leaders about the Treaty process in 2024 and 2025. This includes information sessions across Victoria as well as regular updates to the website and Joint Statements.

The Victorian Government is represented by senior Department of Premier and Cabinet executives. The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria are represented by appointed Member Negotiators.

Negotiations are overseen by the independent Treaty Authority according to rules set out in the Treaty Negotiation Framework. Negotiations include weekly talks, and the parties are releasing regular Joint Statements to keep Victorians updated.

Media contacts

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins: Michaela Weston 0403 483 023

First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria: Tommy Clarke 0422 545 763