

VLSB+C Statement in support of the Victorian Treaty-making process

The Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB+C) acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Victoria.

As the regulator of the Victorian legal profession, we acknowledge the profound and ongoing impact of colonisation on First Peoples and the role that the law, the legal system and lawyers have played in this context.

VLSB+C is proud to support the Treaty-making process for Victoria and welcomes the commencement of Victoria's first Statewide Treaty Agreement on 12 December 2025.

Treaty negotiations between the Victorian Government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria officially commenced in late 2024, after nearly a decade of preparation. The Victorian Treaty-making process is breaking new ground in Australia and provides the chance to recognise and honour the distinct standing, rights, practices and histories of First Peoples. It is a powerful symbolic acknowledgement of First Peoples' rights and sovereignty while also offering a practical approach to understanding and cooperating on critically important areas, including justice, education and health.

Lawyers occupy a critical role in the justice system, which has enabled them to work alongside First Peoples communities and individuals to advocate for systemic reform as well as advancing

First Peoples' interests through the courts. They also represent an important safeguard in the system to defend First Peoples' rights and protect against injustice.

At the same time, we recognise the harmful and unjust experiences many First Peoples have had - and continue to have - within the legal system and are committed to building partnerships and opportunities with Victoria's First Peoples to chart a path towards improving justice outcomes and promoting a culturally safe legal profession.

We are proud to support a number of First Peoples organisations through our Funding Program, in recognition of the role that the justice system played in the dispossession of First Peoples, the damage subsequently inflicted on their communities, and the over-representation of First People in the justice system.

We provide recurrent annual funding to the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Djirra to support their vital work in providing access to justice for Victoria's First Peoples. We have also funded a number of other First Peoples' community-controlled organisations, including The Torch and Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-Operative.

We look forward to supporting our First Peoples' partners and Victoria's First Peoples on the shared journey toward Truth, Treaty, and self-determination.

Victorian Legal Services
BOARD + COMMISSIONER