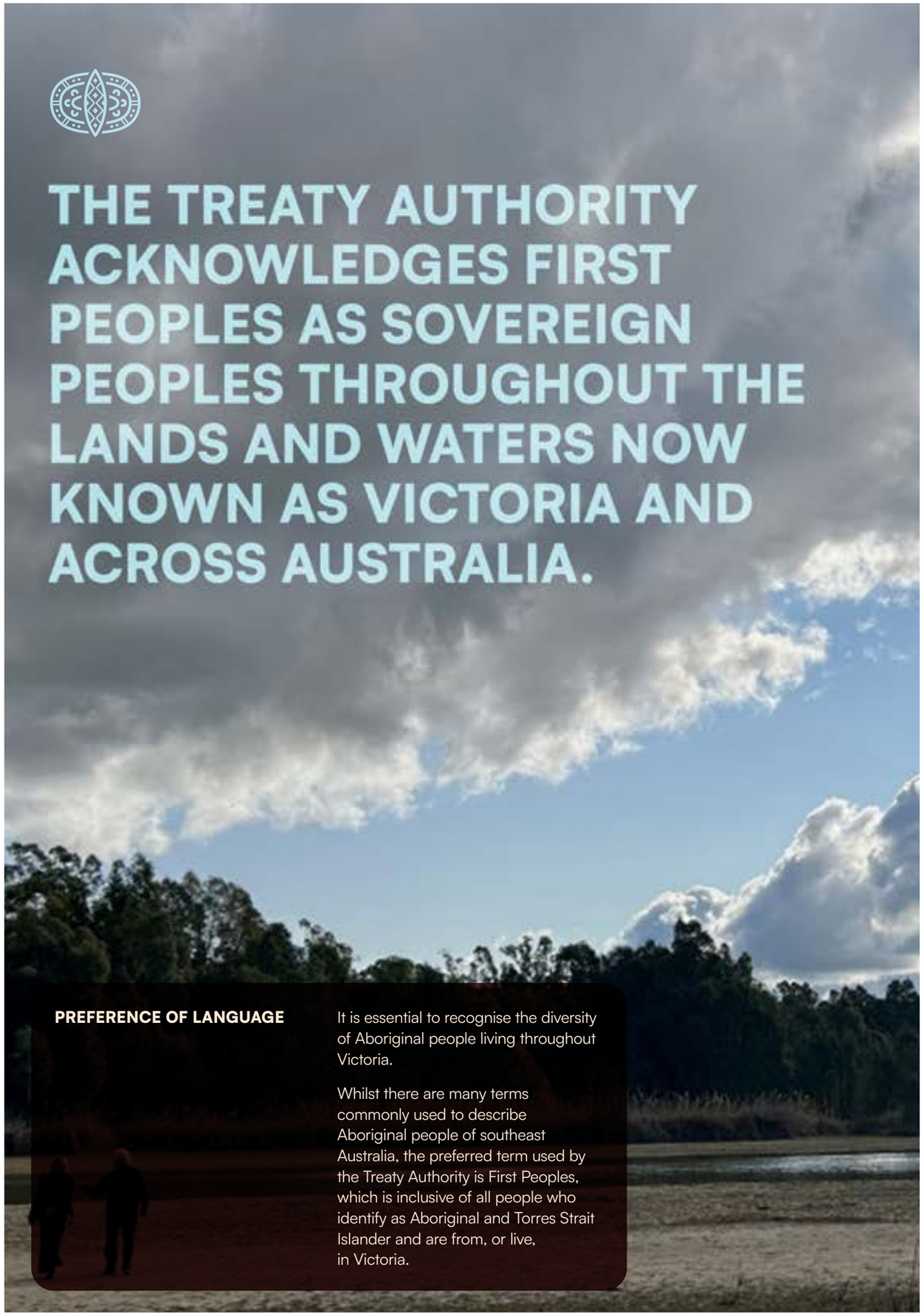
TREATY AUTHORITY
2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

TREATY
AUTHORITY

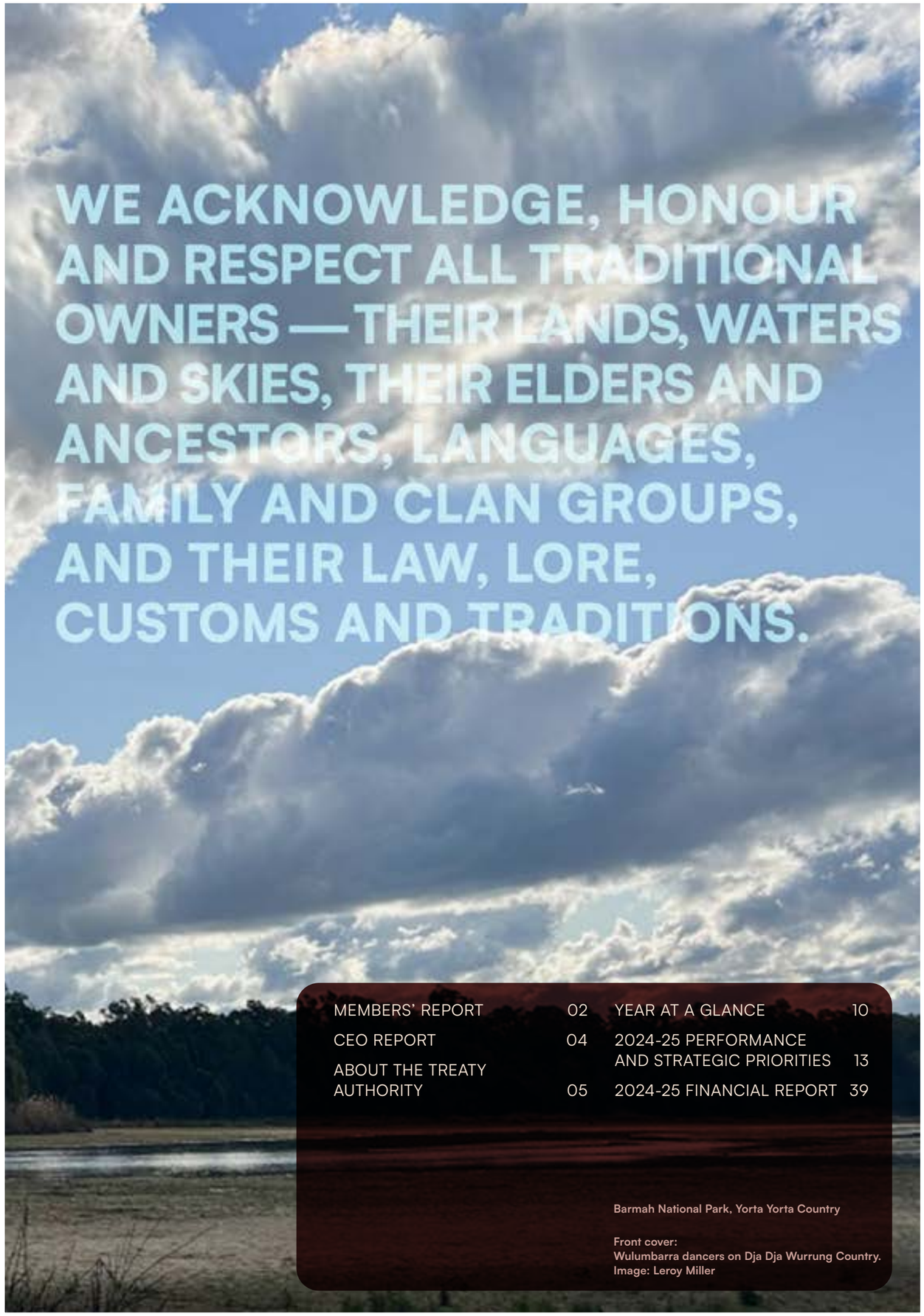


THE TREATY AUTHORITY ACKNOWLEDGES FIRST PEOPLES AS SOVEREIGN PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE LANDS AND WATERS NOW KNOWN AS VICTORIA AND ACROSS AUSTRALIA.

PREFERENCE OF LANGUAGE

It is essential to recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria.

Whilst there are many terms commonly used to describe Aboriginal people of southeast Australia, the preferred term used by the Treaty Authority is First Peoples, which is inclusive of all people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and are from, or live, in Victoria.



WE ACKNOWLEDGE, HONOUR AND RESPECT ALL TRADITIONAL OWNERS — THEIR LANDS, WATERS AND SKIES, THEIR ELDERS AND ANCESTORS, LANGUAGES, FAMILY AND CLAN GROUPS, AND THEIR LAW, LORE, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS.

Barmah National Park, Yorta Yorta Country

Front cover:
Wulumbarra dancers on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.
Image: Leroy Miller

THE TREATY AUTHORITY IS THE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL FACILITATOR OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS IN VICTORIA. WE PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST IN THE TREATY PROCESS.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission delivers its final truth-telling report to the Victorian Parliament. Image: Luke Currie-Richardson

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MEMBERS' REPORT

"We are bantamweights fighting in a heavyweight division", reflected a Victorian Traditional Owner. This statement captures the reality of how First Peoples are required to navigate complex Western legal systems in pursuit of their rights and recognition over Country. Striving for equal footing in the Treaty process is at the heart of the Treaty Authority's mandate.

The Treaty Authority is the independent and impartial facilitator of Treaty negotiations in Victoria. We play a critical role in ensuring accountability, transparency and trust in the Treaty process. As Members, one of our roles is to support Traditional Owner groups on their Treaty readiness journey. Through our oversight function, we provide confidence to the Victorian community that the Treaty process is undertaken fairly and with integrity. Our mandate is also to ensure we uphold two systems of law — Aboriginal and Western.

The past year was monumental for Treaty-making. Along with the commencement of Statewide Treaty negotiations, the first in the country, we saw the first Traditional Owner Group, Dja Dja Wurrung, enter onto the Treaty Authority's Negotiations Register. This step officially indicated that they are ready to proceed with their Traditional Owner Treaty journey. These milestones are not just procedural formalities, they represent the progress Victoria has made in recognising and activating the inherent rights of First Peoples.

The Treaty Authority's role is not to sell Treaty. Should Traditional Owners wish to move forward on the Treaty journey, we are here to support them to do so. Self-determination does not mean you are on your own. We have taken numerous foundational steps to develop systems and processes that will support First Peoples, Traditional Owners and the State of Victoria in delivering this nation-leading work. Over the past year, we have been overseeing negotiations between the State and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, which on 9 September 2025 resulted in a negotiated Statewide Treaty that will initiate a process to deliver broad, long-term reform.

While Treaties are a mechanism for advancing First Peoples' self-determination, their benefits are far-reaching and multi-generational. Treaties will benefit all Victorians by allowing everyone to share in a more prosperous, equitable state. Evidence is clear that Treaties bring economic benefits. However, the benefits are far broader than that. Imagine a state that knows its shared history — that learns from and celebrates the world's oldest living cultures as a source of pride and strength.

Under the Treaty Negotiation Framework, the Treaty Authority has a critical role in guiding the Treaty process. While some of its steps seem straightforward on paper, how they are applied practically for a diverse number of Traditional Owner groups with different needs must vary. As Members, supported by our dedicated and skilled staff, we've brought the Treaty Negotiation Framework to life while cultivating a fair and inclusive environment where no one is left behind.

Looking back over the past year, the Treaty Authority has achieved notable successes. Our organisation has more than doubled in size, ensuring there is capacity to deliver on our key functions. We are proud of the team we've built, including recruiting many First Peoples staff. Everyone arrives with something to contribute and something to learn, including the Members.

Equally, we're proud of the number of engagements we've held out on Country. To Traditional Owners, we say: we will meet with you any time, any place. As part of the Treaty Authority's enduring commitment to self-determination, Traditional Owners must decide to progress Treaty on their own terms. For this reason, we travel the breadth of the state building connections, exchanging knowledge and doing business the way our people have always done.

This year also saw the culmination of the Yoorrook Justice Commission's groundbreaking and courageous truth-telling inquiry. We now have an authoritative Official Public Record to reckon with — another first for the country. As Members, we are confident the recommendations in Yoorrook's final report will enable parties to enter negotiations with a broader knowledge of the ongoing impacts of colonisation and a deeper understanding of our communities — the challenges faced and the strength, resilience and deep knowledge First Peoples hold and have always held.

We anticipate continued momentum as we move into next year. With strong foundations embedded, we expect to see more Traditional Owner groups step forward onto the Negotiations Register. We expect to see our robust work on delegation formation take shape — the next stage in the journey where Traditional Owner groups establish exactly who will sit at the negotiating table and the parts of their Country they will negotiate over.

We wish to thank all community members, Negotiating Parties, staff, suppliers and stakeholders who made this past year possible. We are excited for the road ahead.

JIDAH CLARK
CHAIR & MEMBER

DR PETAH ATKINSON
MEMBER

THELMA AUSTIN
MEMBER

ANDREW MORGAN JACKOMOS
MEMBER

DUEAN WHITE
MEMBER

CEO REPORT

As the Treaty Authority moved through its first full year of operations, we have emerged as a stronger and more resilient organisation.

I am humbled and honoured to have joined the Treaty Authority this year. The opportunity to lead a team where Aboriginal Lore and Law, Culture, self-determination and empowerment are at the heart of everything the organisation does is inspiring and deeply meaningful. In my time in the role, I have been uplifted by the passion, experience and unwavering commitment Members and the Treaty Authority team demonstrate every day.

Over the past year, we undertook a lot of astute recruitment, which is a credit to our people, our values and our robust processes. We now have a complete leadership team and an expanded workforce in place, with new roles created in almost every team. This has significantly lifted our capacity to assist the Members in discharging their responsibilities and functions. We have worked hard to establish a workplace that is culturally grounded and safe, where our people are supported to be their best.

We are well underway in moving into our permanent office next year — a building dedicated to the Treaty journey and for community use. This space has been designed purposefully with cultural knowledge and our shared history in mind.

We have managed agreement-making and disputes between Parties in a culturally strong and intelligent way. I am proud of the extraordinary amount of engagement our team has had to support Traditional Owners with the different stages of their journeys, including groups without Western legal recognition. This support has occurred alongside increasing engagement with many other stakeholders in this journey including local councils, non-Indigenous people and organisations with an interest and role to play in Treaty.

The year ahead will be significant with a negotiated Statewide Treaty reached and with Traditional Owner groups learning about the Treaty journey and considering their aspirations for their Country and people. The Treaty Authority is proud to play a part in what is a watershed moment for Victoria and First Peoples.

I am inspired daily by the people I work alongside and the meaningful work we are privileged to lead in supporting the Treaty story for Victoria.

KEN MARKWELL

THE YEAR AHEAD WILL BE SIGNIFICANT WITH A NEGOTIATED STATEWIDE TREATY REACHED AND WITH TRADITIONAL OWNER GROUPS LEARNING ABOUT THE TREATY JOURNEY

ABOUT THE TREATY AUTHORITY

THE TREATY AUTHORITY IS THE INDEPENDENT BODY CREATED TO OVERSEE AND FACILITATE TREATY-MAKING BETWEEN FIRST PEOPLES AND THE STATE OF VICTORIA.

THE TREATY AUTHORITY WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE TREATY AUTHORITY AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED BY THE FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA (THE ASSEMBLY) AND THE STATE OF VICTORIA (THE STATE).

It is an organisation independent of the State, the Assembly and all Traditional Owner groups. The Treaty Authority is accountable to the broader community and culturally accountable to all First Peoples from and living in Victoria.

The Treaty Authority commenced operations in December 2023 with the appointment of its five inaugural Members. The Members were selected by an Independent Panel and appointed by the Assembly and the State.

Treaty Authority Members follow Standards of Conduct when they carry out their roles, including when making decisions. These standards include being impartial and independent, acting reasonably and with integrity and respect, being culturally safe, managing conflicts of interest and being transparent.

The Treaty Authority acts in accordance with human rights frameworks and principles.

Role of the Treaty Authority

The Treaty Authority exists to ensure negotiations are conducted in a fair environment and on equal footing.

Its four key functions include:

- Overseeing Treaty negotiations in Victoria, and facilitating and assisting Parties to make agreements
- Administering the Treaty Negotiation Framework
- Helping to resolve disputes related to Treaty-making
- Carrying out research to support Treaty negotiations and the administration of the Treaty Negotiation Framework.

The Treaty Negotiation Framework (the Framework) helps govern the work of the Treaty Authority. It is a formal agreement and a foundational document that lays out the ground rules for Treaty-making. The Treaty Authority is responsible for making sure that Negotiating Parties follow the rules in the Framework.

The Treaty Authority will oversee and facilitate negotiations for two types of Treaty in Victoria: Statewide Treaty and Traditional Owner (or local) Treaties.

Statewide Treaty will address broad matters that impact all First Peoples in Victoria and bring benefits to all Victorians. On 9 September 2025, the State and the Assembly announced that agreement had been reached on Victoria's and Australia's first Treaty.

Traditional Owner Treaties will reflect the aspirations and priorities of different Traditional Owner groups for their Communities and for Country.

The Negotiations Register

The Treaty Authority administers the Negotiations Register (called the Negotiations Database in the Framework), a central database that stores information about Treaty negotiations. Information on the Negotiations Register is publicly available online, including information such as who is negotiating a Treaty, the territory it will cover and the status of negotiations.

Any group eligible to participate in the Treaty process can notify the Treaty Authority to be entered onto the Negotiations Register. These include the Assembly, Traditional Owner groups and the State.

Any other entity or individual may be invited to participate as an Additional Negotiating Party on invitation by a Primary Negotiating Party.

Behind the Negotiations Register are robust policies and processes so that First Peoples and Negotiating Parties are supported throughout.

The Treaty Authority recognises First Peoples' information as a valuable cultural resource where cultural knowledge is sacred and cannot be shared publicly without consent. First Peoples have a right to control how their data is used, to enable their self-determined priorities and aspirations in the Treaty process.

Knowledge and information, in any format or medium, received from First Peoples is cared for in accordance with the Framework, the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)* and Australia's Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Principles (Maiam nayri Wingara, 2018). The Treaty Authority is committed to upholding the highest standards of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Data Governance throughout the Treaty process, while acknowledging that some information must be made public on the Negotiations Register. This balances the need to uphold Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance principles with the importance of maintaining transparency.

THE INDEPENDENT PANEL

The Independent Panel comprises five individuals, at least four of whom are First Peoples. They are appointed for a term not exceeding six years and are responsible for the development of the appointment process for Members. The Independent Panel recommends the appointment or reappointment of Treaty Authority Members.

The Independent Panel also developed the Standards of Conduct that Treaty Authority Members are required to meet. They may recommend to the State and the Assembly that a Treaty Authority Member should be removed or suspended if they hold a reasonable belief that specific grounds for removal apply.

" HAVING BEEN PART OF THE TREATY JOURNEY NOW, I CAN SEE THE VISION THAT THE STATE AND THE ASSEMBLY HAD IN BRINGING THE TREATY AUTHORITY TO FRUITION. WE PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN ADDRESSING THE POWER IMBALANCES FROM COLONISATION AND ITS ONGOING IMPACTS. BEING AN INDEPENDENT BODY, WE'RE NOT HERE TO SUPPORT ANY ONE PARTY. HOWEVER, BECAUSE WE ARE GROUNDED IN ABORIGINAL LORE AND CULTURAL AUTHORITY, WE DO BRING INSIGHT, COMFORT AND SUPPORT TO FIRST PEOPLES PARTIES TO ENSURE THE PROCESS IS FAIR. "

DR PETAH ATKINSON, TREATY AUTHORITY MEMBER

" SPENDING TIME ON COUNTRY FROM ONE END OF THE STATE TO THE OTHER OVER THE PAST YEAR AND WORKING WITH TRADITIONAL OWNER GROUPS TO UNDERSTAND THE TREATY JOURNEY, HAS BEEN ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF MY CAREER. TREATY MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT GROUPS WITH DIVERSE TREATY ASPIRATIONS. BUT THE COMMON FACTOR AMONGST ALL THE GROUPS I HAVE SPENT TIME WITH HAS BEEN THEIR PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO ENSURE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. "

ANDREW MORGAN JACKOMOS PSM, TREATY AUTHORITY MEMBER

Statewide Treaty Bill introduced to the Victorian Parliament. L-R: Christine Couzens MP, Ngarra Murray, Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan, Rueben Berg, Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP, Jidah Clark, Dr Petah Atkinson and Sheena Watt MP. Image: Leroy Miller

Jidah Clark
Chair and Member

Dr Petah Atkinson
Member

Thelma Austin
Member

Andrew Morgan Jackomos
Member

Duean White
Member

THE TA MEMBERS

Jidah is a Djab Wurrung man also with Kirrae Wurrung, Peek Wurrung, Boon Wurrung, Wamba Wemba, Taungurung and Palawa ancestry.

Jidah is a lawyer with strong policy expertise, having worked across the private, public and community sectors. His professional experience crosses commercial litigation, official inquiries, human rights, systemic and organisational change, youth justice, child protection, community development and business.

Jidah has made significant contributions to social and transitional justice, and brings strong cross-cultural understanding to the Treaty Authority. Jidah is also dedicated to First Peoples' cultural resurgence.

Petah is a Yorta Yorta woman with strong family connections to Kulin Nation through Wurundjeri, Taungurung and Ngurai Illum Wurrung Peoples.

Petah has an extensive background in the Aboriginal health sector. She worked there for more than 25 years, including leadership roles in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.
Petah has a PhD in medical education, specialising in Aboriginal health.
Her research is situated within an Indigenous Research Paradigm and Indigenous Standpoint Theory.

Importantly, Petah brings to the Treaty Authority highly valued expertise from her cultural safety work in academia and on-the-ground experience working with the community.

Thelma is a Djab Wurrung, Kirrae Wurrung, Peek Wurrung and Gunditjmara woman from Framlingham in Victoria's south-west who has long dedicated herself to the advancement of First Peoples through a series of roles across community, government, not-for-profit and the private sector.

Thelma's work over 25 years is broad. She has experience as a cultural advisor, respected person on the County Koori Court, and as a board member for mainstream organisations, and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. She has previously worked on government programs, in the corporate sector and as a small business owner. She has a strong commitment to cultural integrity and understanding of cultural nuance. Thelma is experienced in creating safe and healthy workplace environments.

Thelma is also an experienced mediator, facilitator and trainer. She was the Manager of the Victorian Aboriginal Dispute Resolution program at the Department of Justice.

Andrew is a Yorta Yorta man with direct heritage to Gunditjmara, Taungurung and Boandik nations.

Andrew has an extensive history of serving the community and championing fairness. Since the late 1970s, Andrew has worked across the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments and with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, leading social justice policies and programs and driving self-determination initiatives. This includes leading the development and implementation of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement for 13 years and becoming the inaugural Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People in 2013, where he led a landmark review into the impact of the child protection system on Aboriginal children and young people.

In 2006, Andrew received the Public Service Medal in recognition of his work in the field of social justice and was acknowledged as a National Fellow with the Institute of Public Administration Australia in 2011.

Duean is a Biripi woman (NSW) and a former consultant who has worked across the corporate, government, not-for-profit and community-controlled sectors.

Duean has significant dispute resolution expertise as a nationally accredited mediator and is an experienced facilitator, coach and trainer. Before joining the Treaty Authority, she served as a panel mediator with the Victorian Small Business Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality and the Native Title list of the Federal Court, and was a member of the Review Panel for the Victorian Stolen Generations Reparations Fund. She has been a non-executive director of various government and community boards.

Her qualifications include law, business (Senior Executive MBA), leadership and coaching, training, career development and corporate governance (AICD graduate).

YEAR AT A GLANCE

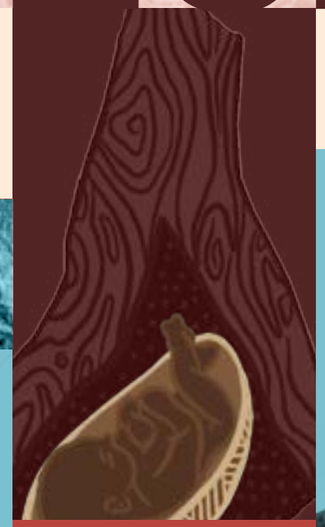
2024

JULY

Treaty Authority Negotiations Register is launched

Ceremonial event officially launches the Treaty Authority

The Assembly is entered onto the Negotiations Register as the First Peoples' Representative Body for the Statewide Treaty process. The Treaty Authority begins facilitating a two-month Comment and Dispute period



SEPTEMBER

The Treaty Authority completes the purchase of permanent premises in Collingwood, which will house agreement-making and Treaty education spaces for the Victorian community and the Treaty Authority's main office

Statewide Treaty Comment and Dispute Period closes

The Assembly notifies the Treaty Authority that it wishes to invite the State to commence Statewide Treaty negotiations

The Treaty Authority invites the State

The State accepts the invitation and notifies the Treaty Authority of its compliance with the Minimum Standards and fulfilment of Additional Preparations

NOVEMBER

The State is entered onto the Negotiations Register for the purpose of commencing Statewide Treaty negotiations

Statewide Treaty negotiations commence

OCTOBER

2025

JANUARY

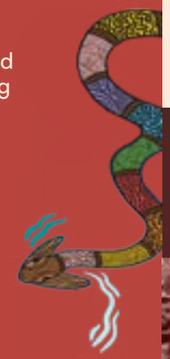
Treaty Authority appoints CEO Ken Markwell

Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties agree on areas of focus for first round of negotiations

MARCH

Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties hold their first regional meeting on Gunditjmara Country to progress negotiations

Dja Dja Wurrung becomes the first Traditional Owner group to be entered onto the Negotiations Register, paving the way for their Traditional Owner Treaty negotiations



JUNE

Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties hold a regional meeting on Dja Dja Wurrung Country to progress negotiations

MAY

The Yoorrook Justice Commission delivers its final report, *Yoorrook: Truth be Told*

20+

Number of Victorian Traditional Owner groups the Treaty Authority held engagements with

01

Number of Traditional Owner groups on the Negotiations Register

37%

First Peoples staff as at 30 June 2025 (including Members)

03

Public guides released to build confidence and understanding in the Treaty process

14

Oversight and facilitation meetings held with Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties (First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and the State of Victoria)

04

Additional discussions facilitated between Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties on matters complementary to Statewide Treaty

THE TREATY AUTHORITY'S VISION IS FOR A FAIR TREATY PROCESS THAT DELIVERS JUSTICE, PROSPERITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT FOR ALL VICTORIANS.

2024-25 PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Treaty Authority's vision means:

- Honouring the enduring connection of First Peoples to land, culture and identity — and their rightful place in the narrative of Victoria's shared history.
- Creating a collaborative and transparent process that builds trust and acknowledges past injustices, the Treaty Authority hopes to pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive future for all Victorians.
- Fostering harmony and balance in the relationships that exist across First Peoples communities and all Victorians.
- Upholding self-determination and building a greater understanding and respect of Aboriginal lore and law.

2024-25 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

In February 2024, Treaty Authority Members identified four strategic focus areas for the organisation's establishment and first full year of operation. These focus areas have informed the Treaty Authority's work in support of the organisation's vision.

1. Support stakeholders to be informed and engaged

- Build confidence and understanding by First Peoples and all Victorians on the Treaty process
- Conduct information sessions, including on Country, to support First Peoples to engage in the Treaty process on their terms

2. Be Treaty ready

- Agreement-making and dispute resolution functions are in place
- Support Traditional Owner groups through the Treaty process
- Oversee and facilitate Treaty negotiations

3. Embed a robust research and evaluation framework

- Support the Treaty Authority's work from a position of evidence
- Put in place a long-term monitoring and evaluation framework for the Treaty Authority

4. Create a culturally strong, resilient and engaged organisation

- Finalise organisational set-up, with the right people in the right roles, supported by fit-for-purpose governance, compliance and financial management
- Create a sense of place and identity
- Finalise a First Peoples employment strategy to attract and retain First Peoples

The four strategic focus areas identified will continue into the 2025-26 period.

The Treaty Authority's values

The Treaty Authority is guided by its four values. They are shared beliefs that guide and ground how the Treaty Authority conducts itself and what it stands for.

- **Fairness:** The Treaty Authority is committed to building an equitable Treaty process that strives for a level playing field and creates an experience of fairness for all Parties. The Treaty Authority performs its functions with humility and impartiality.
- **Responsibility:** The Treaty Authority upholds and respects First Peoples and Western systems of law and First Peoples' Culture through the Treaty process, ensuring the highest standards of integrity are always evident. Trust and confidence will be built through the Treaty process by maintaining open communication.
- **Honour:** The Treaty Authority honours the courage and wisdom of ancestors and Elders in its ways of working and recognition of self-determination. Treaties are sacred, living agreements that will benefit current and future generations. The Treaty Authority respects the diverse experiences, stories and hopes of all Parties through deep listening and enquiry and maintains accountability in the Treaty process.
- **Connection:** Connection to Country and Culture is core to the Treaty Authority's identity. It adopts approaches that preserve, restore and build enduring and respectful relationships. The Treaty Authority acts in a spirit of collaboration and good faith.

Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority

The Treaty Authority has obligations to uphold Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority in Treaty negotiations and disputes in Victoria. The Treaty Authority reflects this obligation in both its work with negotiating parties and stakeholders and how the organisation operates every day. This is to say that Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority is embedded in how the Treaty Authority is delivering against each of its strategic focus areas.

The Treaty Authority was built from the ground up with Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority considered in every aspect of operations. These principles and obligations function alongside Western approaches to the Treaty Authority's ways of working and the development of its organisational policies and procedures.

10

Internal events held to build cultural knowledge — ranging from international academics to hosting student groups

38

Number of staff as at 30 June 2025, up from 10 people at 1 July 2024

20+

Events participated in with First Peoples and the broader Victorian community

12

Research projects undertaken to build a stronger evidence base for Traditional Owners and the Treaty Authority

04

Forums participated in to discuss and advance principles in the Treaty Authority's First Peoples Data Sovereignty and Governance Framework

$1.1m

Spend on First Peoples suppliers during 2024-25

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 01:

SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDERS TO BE INFORMED AND ENGAGED

THE TREATY AUTHORITY ENGAGES WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS, THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC AND A BROAD RANGE OF TREATY STAKEHOLDERS. IT PROVIDES THEM WITH INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES ABOUT TREATY, HOW IT MAY AFFECT THEM, AND WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, THEY MAY HAVE IN THE TREATY PROCESS.

Helping First Peoples engage in the Treaty process on their terms

Over the past year, the Treaty Authority has engaged with over 20 Traditional Owner groups to inform and support them at various stages in their Treaty journey.

These engagements have provided insight into what Traditional Owner groups consider their priorities for Treaty-making, as well as identifying key areas of focus.

Traditional Owners have been most interested in:

- Treaty accountability and enforceability
- Treaty Authority's delegation and dispute resolution processes
- Intersections with other formal recognition pathways
- Involvement of other organisations/ entities in the Traditional Owner Treaty process
- Nation-building.

The Treaty Authority's Engagement team is made up of First Peoples staff. The team builds ongoing relationships with Traditional Owner groups to ensure they are supported throughout the entirety of the Traditional Owner Treaty journey.

" WHEN WE MEET WITH MOB DURING ENGAGEMENTS, WE'RE NOT THERE TO CONVINCE THEM TO DO TREATY. OUR JOB IS TO ADMINISTER THE FRAMEWORK AND PROVIDE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROCESS SO TRADITIONAL OWNERS CAN DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHETHER TREATY IS RIGHT FOR THEM AND, IF SO, WHEN AND HOW. "
DUEAN WHITE, TREATY AUTHORITY MEMBER

Thousands of Community and allies join the final leg of the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Walk for Truth. Image: Luke Currie-Richardson

MAPPING THE TRADITIONAL OWNER TREATY JOURNEY

As a result of extensive engagement with Traditional Owner groups and Treaty partner organisations, including the Assembly and the Self-Determination Fund, the Treaty Authority has articulated steps to the Treaty journey that help Traditional Owner groups decide if Treaty is the right path for them.

The Treaty Authority is working alongside the Self-Determination Fund, whose role is to support First Peoples to have equal standing with the State in Traditional Owner Treaty negotiations.

The Treaty Authority starts its first engagement with Traditional Owner groups by providing information about the Treaty journey and gaining an understanding of the group's Treaty aspirations. If a group decides to pursue a Treaty, the Treaty Authority will meet with the group to understand the group's readiness to commence the process and provide support regarding how the group can meet the Minimum Standards required to be entered onto the Negotiations Register.

Once a group is on the Negotiations Register, the next step is Delegation Formation. Under the Framework, there can only be one Treaty Delegation and one Treaty for an area of land and waters. This means groups with overlapping interests need to come together to reach a collective agreement to form a Delegation.

Collective agreement involves all Traditional Owner groups on the Negotiations Register agreeing on four key matters set out in the Framework: i) the land and waters over which the Delegation will negotiate a Treaty; ii) any excluded or restricted subject matters not to be discussed in negotiations; iii) the Delegation's leadership and decision-making arrangements; and iv) the Delegation's inclusivity arrangements.

The Treaty Authority understands that Delegation Formation may be a challenging process, as many groups have been affected by the impacts of colonisation and the Western legal system. If Traditional Owners indicate they require support, the Treaty Authority can play a role in facilitation to support groups to come together to reach a collective agreement.

01
GATHER INFORMATION
Traditional Owner group gathers information to learn more about Treaty journey

02
YOU DECIDE
Traditional Owner group decides if it wants to do Treaty and, if so, lets the Treaty Authority know

03
YARN WITH US
Group discusses its path to Treaty with the Treaty Authority

04
MINIMUM STANDARDS
Traditional Owner group self-determines it meets Minimum Standards and enters onto the Negotiations Register

05
DELEGATION FORMATION
Traditional Owner groups form a single Delegation over Country to negotiate Treaty

06
STATE MEETS MINIMUM STANDARDS
Treaty Authority assesses the State's compliance with Minimum Standards. If the State complies, it is entered on the Register

07
COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS
Delegation and State agree on the subject matter of Treaty negotiations, how they will be conducted and how to enforce Treaty

08
FINALISE TREATY
Delegation and the State conclude and document Treaty

Building confidence and understanding in the Treaty process

The Treaty Authority has released three public guides to date, reflecting feedback from stakeholders. The guides provide detailed information on the Treaty process.

- **How to start a Traditional Owner Treaty:** targeted to Traditional Owner groups of Country in the land and waters now known as Victoria, providing practical information on how to begin the process to negotiate a Traditional Owner Treaty.
- **Finding Common Ground to Resolve Disputes:** a step-by-step guide to the Treaty Authority's unique process for resolving disputes (i.e. 'Finding Common Ground') which reflects a flexible and non-adversarial approach to dispute resolution based on First Peoples' ways of culture, coming together, healing and mutual benefit.
- **Information for Local Government in Victoria:** a public guide targeted to local governments in Victoria that answers explicit questions on their potential role in the Treaty process.

Further bespoke guides will be developed at later stages of the Treaty journey, including for Delegation Formation and for different stakeholder groups.

In addition to engagement with Traditional Owners, the Treaty Authority has also taken part in engagement with other stakeholders in Victoria. This includes participating in forums held by organisations such as Reconciliation Victoria, the IPAA and the Municipal Association of Victoria. Members have also participated in leadership summits, presented to legal students at Melbourne University's Indigenous Law and Justice Hub, the Women in Leadership Summit and at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Summit.

Treaty and Truth

The Yoorrook Justice Commission was Australia's first formal truth-telling process tasked with investigating historical and ongoing injustices against First Peoples in Victoria since colonisation.

After four years of evidence-gathering and hearing the truth, the Yoorrook Justice Commission handed down its final report. The Commission received evidence from over 2,000 individuals, including 1,500 First Peoples and more than 1,300 submissions.

Yoorrook: *Truth Be Told* includes 100 recommendations aimed at broad institutional reform across Victoria.

Established in 2021 with the powers of a royal commission, the Yoorrook Justice Commission investigated areas such as health, education, criminal justice, land, sky and waters and child protection.

First Peoples including Elders, youth, members of the Stolen Generations, Traditional Owners, and community members, provided crucial evidence to Yoorrook.

Other witnesses, including Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan, government ministers, senior bureaucrats, academics, historians, church leaders, descendants of colonisers and the Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police also testified.

Every Victorian is indebted to Yoorrook for its historic truth-telling enquiry - and to the thousands of First Peoples who told their truths - to correct the history books and rewrite our shared future.

The conclusion of Yoorrook's truth-telling inquiry marked a significant milestone on the journey to Treaty. First Peoples have long recognised that truth and Treaty go hand in hand.

The Treaty Authority would like to acknowledge the Yoorrook Commissioners including Chair Aunty Eleanor Bourke, Commissioners Travis Lovett, Sue-Anne Hunter, Distinguished Professor Maggie Walter, Hon Tony North, Dr Wayne Atkinson and Kevin Bell AM KC.

WALKING FOR TRUTH

Over 25 days, Travis Lovett, Kerrupmara Gunditjmara man and Deputy Chair of the Yoorrook Justice Commission, walked from Portland on Gunditjmara Country to Parliament in Naarm, on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, on the 'Walk for Truth' to mark the conclusion of Yoorrook's truth-telling inquiry and the delivery of its final report.

More than 10,000 Victorians signed up to walk alongside Commissioner Lovett on the 500km journey, including 5,000 community members and allies on the final leg through Melbourne and up to Parliament House in Spring Street. The Treaty Authority was proud to walk alongside Commissioner Lovett, in deep respect and gratitude to the Yoorrook Justice Commission and every Community member who shared their truths.

Treaty Authority Member Andrew Morgan Jackomos walks with Travis Lovett past Flinders Station on the Walk for Truth. Image: Luke Currie-Richardson

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 02:

BE TREATY READY

ONE OF THE TREATY AUTHORITY'S PRIMARY FUNCTIONS IS TO SUPPORT NEGOTIATING PARTIES THROUGHOUT THE TREATY PROCESS AND TO ENABLE TRADITIONAL OWNERS, INCLUDING GROUPS WITH AND WITHOUT FORMAL RECOGNITION, TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT WHETHER TREATY IS THE RIGHT PATH FOR THEM.

THIS INCLUDES PROVIDING INFORMATION AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES TO MAKE THOSE DECISIONS AND TO UNDERSTAND WHAT STEPS TO TAKE SHOULD THEY WISH TO PURSUE TREATY. ASSISTING TRADITIONAL OWNERS TO BE TREATY-READY ALSO MEANS CULTIVATING A FAIR NEGOTIATING ENVIRONMENT TO ADDRESS POWER IMBALANCES BETWEEN FIRST PEOPLES AND THE STATE.

Dja Dja Wurrung begins their Treaty journey

In May 2025, Dja Dja Wurrung, a Traditional Owner Group of Central Victoria whose Country includes Bendigo, became the first Traditional Owner Group to be entered onto the Negotiations Register, indicating they are ready to begin preparations for Traditional Owner Treaty negotiations.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA), acting on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung People, began by advising the Treaty Authority that they had decided to start the Treaty process. The Treaty Authority worked closely with DJAARA over several months in a process the Treaty Authority calls the Yarn Stage, to ensure DJAARA was prepared to notify the Treaty Authority that it meets the Minimum Standards to be entered on the Negotiations Register. At the conclusion of the Yarn Stage, DJAARA submitted its formal notification to the Treaty Authority and was entered on the Negotiations Register.

As the first Traditional Owners in Victoria to progress their Treaty journey onto the Negotiations Register, this event was an historic milestone for First Peoples on the long journey to Treaty.

" A DIVERSITY OF VIEWS, LESSONS AND EXPERIENCES FROM COMMUNITIES ACROSS VICTORIA HAVE LAID STRONG FOUNDATIONS FOR TREATY-MAKING IN VICTORIA. TREATIES WILL RECAST THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST PEOPLES AND THE STATE, BRINGING US CLOSER TOGETHER. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MARKER ON THE PATH TOWARDS UNITY. "
JIDAH CLARK, TREATY AUTHORITY CHAIR & MEMBER

" THE TREATY AUTHORITY HAS BEEN AN INVALUABLE PARTNER FOR DJA DJA WURRUNG ON THE ONGOING PATH TO A STATEWIDE TREATY AND OUR LOCAL TRADITIONAL OWNER TREATY. WE THANK EVERYONE AT THE TREATY AUTHORITY FOR PROVIDING CLEAR AND RELIABLE SUPPORT IN NAVIGATING COMPLEX LEGAL AND BUREAUCRATIC LANDSCAPES, FOR BEING FLEXIBLE, COLLABORATIVE AND FOCUSED ON FACILITATING TREATY FOR VICTORIA. "
DJARAN MURRAY-JACKSON, RESERVED SEAT HOLDER REPRESENTING DJA DJA WURRUNG CLANS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION, FIRST PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA

Wulumbarra dancers perform on Dja Dja Wurrung Country for the opening of a regional meeting for Statewide Treaty negotiations. Image: Leroy Miller

Overseeing and facilitating Statewide Treaty

The Treaty Authority plays a role in overseeing and facilitating negotiations in accordance with the rules set out in the Treaty Negotiation Framework.

For Statewide Treaty in 2024-25, the focus has been on working with both the Assembly and the State to ensure they are prepared for negotiations and then assisting both Parties in conducting fair negotiations.

Meeting Minimum Standards

Under the Framework, before the commencement of Statewide Treaty negotiations, both Parties must be entered onto the Negotiations Register. To do this, Parties must meet their respective Minimum Standards required under the Framework.

In July 2024, the Assembly submitted its notification that it sought to be entered onto the Negotiations Register as the First Peoples' Representative Body for the purposes of the Statewide Treaty.

In line with the Framework, the Treaty Authority reviewed the notification and determined it as complete, with the Assembly entered onto the Negotiations Register on 17 July 2024.

The entry of the Assembly onto the Negotiations Register triggered a two-month Comment and Dispute Period. This was an opportunity for First Peoples in and from Victoria to raise a comment or dispute about the Assembly's satisfaction with the Minimum Standards.

The process was overseen by the Treaty Authority, with several submissions proceeding as disputes facilitated under the Treaty Authority's Finding Common Ground process.

At the conclusion of the two-month Comment and Dispute Period, the State was invited to commence negotiations for the Statewide Treaty. Under the Framework, the Treaty Authority plays a more "hands-on" role in assessing the State's satisfaction with the Minimum Standards and Additional Preparations.

The State provided its notification in October 2024. After careful consideration, the Treaty Authority's five Members assessed that the State had satisfied the Minimum Standards and made sufficient progress towards fulfilling the Additional Preparations in November. The Treaty Authority entered the State of Victoria onto the Negotiations Register on 21 November 2024.

With both Parties officially on the Negotiations Register, Statewide Treaty negotiations commenced.

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM STANDARDS?

The term "Minimum Standards" originates from the Treaty Negotiation Framework. All Parties that wish to negotiate a Treaty must meet the Minimum Standards before entering negotiations, which include the State of Victoria, the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and Traditional Owner groups.

The Minimum Standards are about:

Land and waters

Community

Leadership and decision-making

Inclusivity

Treaty Authority Member Dr Petah Atkinson at the Statewide Treaty negotiations ceremonial opening. Image: Evan Martin DPC

The Treaty Authority's role in Statewide Treaty negotiations

According to the rules outlined in the Framework, the Treaty Authority oversees and facilitates negotiations, to ensure a fair and equitable negotiating environment.

For Statewide Treaty, this meant meeting with both Parties regularly regarding compliance with their agreed Negotiation Protocols, which operationalise the Negotiating Standards as set out in the Framework.

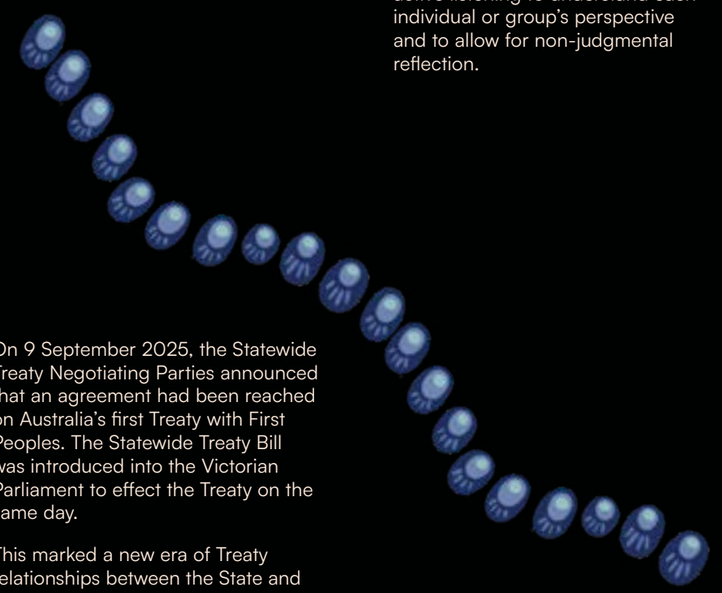
In January 2025, Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties agreed on the focus topics for the first round of Treaty negotiations:

- The principles and objectives for the Statewide Treaty
- The creation of an ongoing First Peoples' representative body, including:
  - Implementing the accountability mechanism under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
  - Work to support ongoing truth-telling, education, healing and reconciliation in Victoria
  - Dispute resolution under a Statewide Treaty
  - Processes for negotiating future iterations of a Statewide Treaty.

The Treaty Authority held a total of 14 dedicated oversight meetings with the Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties.

Four of the meetings were held with the Parties jointly and the remainder were with each of the Parties' negotiating teams separately. Meetings focused on how the Parties were progressing against agreed timeframes and adherence to the Negotiations Protocols. Through these meetings, the Parties kept the Treaty Authority abreast of the progress of negotiations.

Throughout negotiations, the Treaty Authority supported the Parties by facilitating additional meetings that were focused on ensuring the partnership between Parties remained strong and productive.



On 9 September 2025, the Statewide Treaty Negotiating Parties announced that an agreement had been reached on Australia's first Treaty with First Peoples. The Statewide Treaty Bill was introduced into the Victorian Parliament to effect the Treaty on the same day.

This marked a new era of Treaty relationships between the State and First Peoples in Victoria.

The Treaty Authority notes the relationship between First Peoples and the State is characterised by a long history of injustice and systemic exclusion. The Treaty Authority envisions a new chapter that marks the culmination of years of activism by First Peoples, recasting this relationship to the benefit of all Victorians.

Finding Common Ground

The Framework calls for a dispute resolution process that is flexible and allows for tailored approaches. The Treaty Authority has established a set of principles to guide the resolution of disputes and facilitate the establishment of common ground. The principles apply to all participants in the process.

The principles have been developed to reflect First Peoples' ways of coming together and are designed to promote balance between the Parties, healing, good faith and respect.

- **Listening:** Embedding deep and active listening to understand each individual or group's perspective and to allow for non-judgmental reflection.
- **Culture:** Agreement-making is grounded in ceremony, ritual, cultural practices and protocols as guided by the participants. All participants should feel culturally safe.
- **Consent:** Consent requires a genuine willingness to participate from all Parties and can be undermined where there is not an equal footing between the Parties.
- **Flexibility, Choice and Empowerment:** Encouraging self-determination, dispute processes are flexible and designed with the input of the Parties to ensure there is choice about where, how and with whom the Parties will come together.
- **Fairness:** The processes are developed in a way that recognises historical and current imbalances of power and the potential for future abuses of power. Fairness encompasses both procedural fairness and ensuring equal footing.
- **Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit:** There is a focus on culturally strong outcomes where both Parties benefit, acknowledging Parties' interconnectedness and the need for sustainable agreement-making for Treaty.
- **Healing:** The process will seek to heal, restore, and develop trust and enduring respectful relationships so Treaty negotiations can continue.

The Treaty Authority will always encourage parties to find common ground in a way that ensures equal footing, provides for flexibility and creativity, draws on First Peoples' ways and wisdom and affords respect and fairness.

In 2024, Treaty Authority staff and Members undertook accredited mediation training with a focus on a conflict transformation approach to mediation.

Treaty Authority Chair and Member Jidah Clark at Victorian Parliament during the introduction of the Statewide Treaty Bill.
Image: Leroy Miller

Treaty Authority Members and staff attend AIATSIS 2025 Summit on Larrakia Country.

Participation in the 2025 AIATSIS Summit

In June, Treaty Authority Members and staff travelled to Larrakia Country to participate in the Aboriginal Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2025 Summit.

The Treaty Authority participated in four sessions over the five day program, including presentations on:

- *The Importance of Treaty literacy: Knowledge and Integration in the Broader Community* by Treaty Authority Senior Researcher Dr Jessica Horton
- *Implementing Indigenous Data Sovereignty in the Treaty Process* by Treaty Authority Senior Researcher Thomas Watson
- *A Meeting of Two Laws in the Treaty Process in Victoria* by Treaty Authority Chair Jidah Clark.

Treaty Authority Member Duean White also facilitated a panel discussion on the Traditional Owner Treaty Journey, with the panel featuring Treaty Authority Member Thelma Austin, elected Members of the Assembly Peter Hood and Djaran Murray-Jackson and the CEO of the Self-Determination Fund Dr Rohan Henry.

Supporting the Treaty process from a position of evidence

Research is one of the four functions set out in Section 28 of the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* and in the Framework. This includes research to support Treaty negotiations and to administer the Framework.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 03:

EMBED ROBUST RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PRACTICES

THE TREATY AUTHORITY PERFORMS ITS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES USING AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH, ENSURING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PRACTICES ARE EMBEDDED ACROSS THE ORGANISATION. THIS ENABLES THE TREATY AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT FOR TRADITIONAL OWNERS, NEGOTIATING PARTIES, THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS DURING THE TREATY PROCESS.

The Treaty Authority has adopted an internal Research Strategy that guides this function. The Strategy sets the direction for research and evaluation, identifies five strategic focus areas and establishes how research will be conducted in line with our obligations and national ethical standards. Across its five areas, the Treaty Authority's research and evaluation work focuses on:

- Building a strong evidence base for Treaty Authority decision-making and guidance
- Working with Traditional Owners to create and share research knowledge that supports their progress
- Supporting public Treaty literacy and factual knowledge
- Monitoring, evaluating and improving Treaty Authority and Treaty processes
- Embedding Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance.

The Treaty Authority has a Research. Evaluation and Data Governance team composed of highly experienced researchers from various social sciences, humanities and health disciplines. They facilitate and produce research across three broad categories: knowledge-building, agreement-building and nation-building.

In 2024-25, 12 requests were completed to produce Treaty-related evidence and literacy. These outputs included:

- How Treaties differ from other types of agreements and constructive arrangements between First Peoples and the State
- The social and economic benefits of modern Treaties in Canada and Treaty settlements in Aotearoa New Zealand, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and sectors
- The costs of Treaties in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand, such as the emotional toll on families
- A snapshot of 200 years of historical events and advocacy leading up to the current Treaty process in Victoria
- First Peoples' nation-building, nationhood and governance structures overseas and around Australia
- How Treaties are finalised and enforced in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand
- A research and project evaluation report in the context of the Treaty Authority.

These outputs continue to inform internal design and policy development, engagement with groups in the Treaty process and public communications.

Privileging Indigenous methodologies

The Research, Evaluation and Data Governance team works internally to support staff in respecting First Peoples' values and ways of knowing and being in their research, legal and policy work. This is cultivating cultural respect and cultural humility across important design and advisory roles and helps ensure the Treaty Authority honours and respects the right of First Peoples to control their information and knowledge.

In 2024-25, regular internal workshops were held on topics such as Indigenous research methodologies, Indigenous sovereignty and governance and research ethics, alongside hosting local and international guest speakers to share knowledge on essential issues to Treaty and First Peoples.

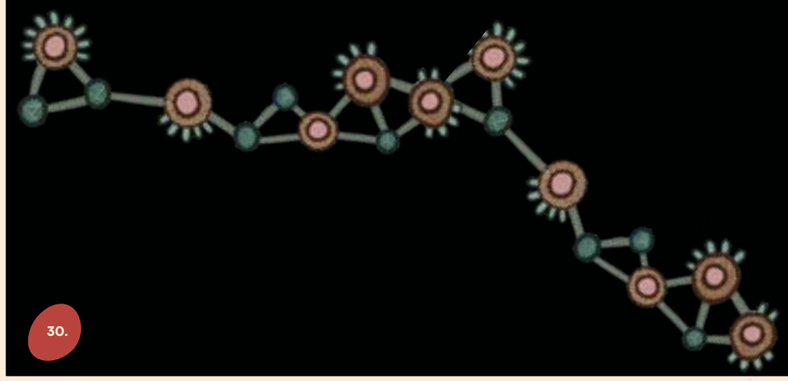
Upholding and respecting First Peoples' right to control their information

First Peoples' data refers to any information or knowledge about First Peoples, collectively or individually, that may affect them. This data can take many forms.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty is the right of First Peoples to exercise ownership over their data. Indigenous Data Governance refers to the practices through which First Peoples exercise that ownership, including the right to decide how their data is used, managed and shared.

As part of the Treaty process, First Peoples will need to provide the Treaty Authority with certain information and knowledge. Some of this data may be culturally sensitive. Under the Treaty Authority Agreement, the Treaty Authority is committed to fully upholding and respecting Australia's Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous Data Governance principles, while also complying with applicable laws.

The Treaty Authority must make publicly available specific information about Negotiating Parties through the Negotiations Register. However, culturally sensitive data provided by First Peoples will not be shared publicly without consent. Our approach ensures that First Peoples' cultures and knowledges are protected, with their control embedded at every stage of the 'data life cycle' (see artwork opposite), from creation to management to application. This process will be upfront and transparent.



Artwork by Merring-Jippa Murray, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wamba Wamba and Kamilaroi

In the centre of the artwork is a flowing river to represent the journey to data sovereignty.

We see representations of our stories, language and information, empowering our people, Communities coming together and working together, taking control of our data and protecting our stories and information. Of conceptualisation, creation, collection and storage, access, analysis, use and reuse and deletion. It also represents connectedness and the connection of story and information.

Framing the river are sections of rock art at the top and bottom - a traditional practice of recording our stories.

Above the river are contemporary and traditional ways of sharing information and stories from the utilisation of modern technology to possum skin cloak burning, message sticks and yarning circles.

Andrew Morgan Jackomos, Thelma Austin and Charles Pakana.

Treaty Authority Members and staff with Assembly staff at Barapa Barapa Full Group meeting in Kerang.

Dr Janine Gertz joins Treaty Authority staff and Members for a presentation and workshop on Nation-Building.

Treaty Authority CEO Ken Markwell with Travis Lovett on the Walk for Truth.

Treaty Authority staff join the Yoorrook Walk for Truth. Image: Luke Currie-Richardson

STRATEGIC
FOCUS AREA 04:

CREATE A CULTURALLY STRONG, RESILIENT & ENGAGED ORGANISATION

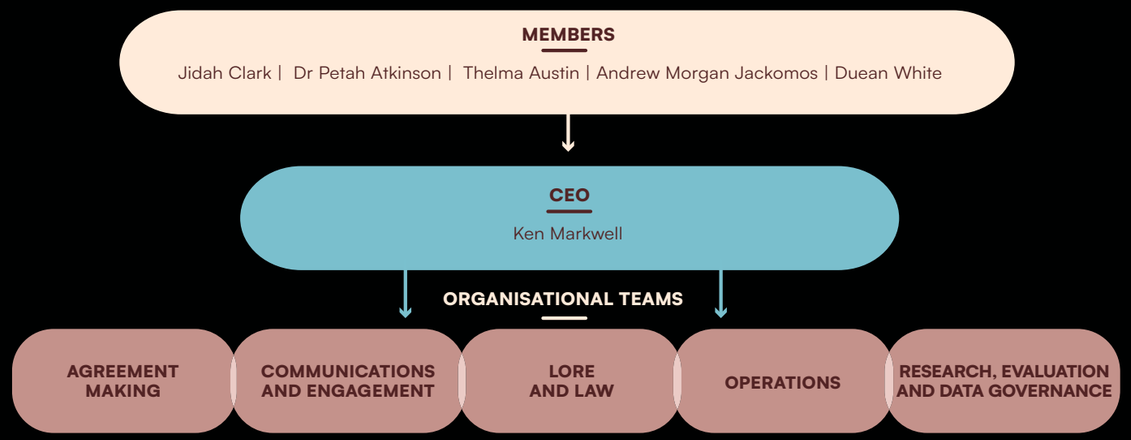
PRIORITISING STAFF WELLBEING, RESILIENCE AND CULTURAL SAFETY ENABLES THE TREATY AUTHORITY TO EFFECTIVELY DISCHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES. AS A FIRST PEOPLES-LED ORGANISATION, THE TREATY AUTHORITY BELIEVES THAT HEALTHY PEOPLE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES NOT ONLY CREATE BETTER BUSINESS OUTCOMES BUT ARE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES IN HOW FIRST PEOPLES HAVE ALWAYS CONDUCTED THEIR AFFAIRS.

Setting the Treaty Authority's organisational structure

Over the 2024-25 reporting period, the Treaty Authority expanded from 10 directly employed staff to 38 by year-end, reflecting the organisation's shift from its initial six months of operation to a more established state. This growth enabled several functions previously conducted by external contractors or consultants to move in-house.

A full leadership team was in place by May 2025, following the appointment of CEO Ken Markwell in January 2025. First Peoples' representation in the Treaty Authority at the end of the current financial year was 37% (including Members), with further growth anticipated in the 2025-26 financial year.

An organisational structure was finalised for the Treaty Authority, centred on its legislative functions. Three 'frontline' teams of Agreement-Making, Communications and Engagement, and Research, Evaluation and Data Governance work closely with Traditional Owner groups, First Peoples and other stakeholders. These teams are supported by enabling functions of Law and Lore (Cultural Counsel and General Counsel) and an Operations team.



Appointment of CEO

In January 2025, the Treaty Authority was proud to welcome Ken Markwell as CEO. Ken is a Mununjhali man from the Yugambeh language region in southeast Queensland.

With experience leading major First Peoples reforms across the country in community, government and business sectors, Ken approaches the Treaty process with deep respect and humility.

Before joining the Treaty Authority, Ken was the Director of a successful Aboriginal professional services consulting business specialising in connecting people through Aboriginal cultural values and wisdom. He previously led Australian Unity's Indigenous Services team, which was one of the largest employers of First Peoples in the aged and disability sector. He was instrumental in establishing the Indigenous Rangers Program while at the Commonwealth Government.

Supporting its People

The Treaty Authority's staff are at the heart of its ability to serve Traditional Owner groups and other stakeholders through the Treaty process. The organisation places importance on ensuring staff feel supported in their roles and are in a safe environment where they can thrive.

The Treaty Authority is currently finalising a First Peoples Employment Strategy, which will support employment and career development for First Peoples to help address systemic disadvantage and racism, provide opportunities and pathways to progression and support an increase in First Peoples representation at all levels of the organisation.

Initiatives undertaken in 2024-25 include:

- Facilitating organisation-wide cultural safety and critical consciousness, healing and wellbeing sessions
- Providing staff with access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and social and emotional wellbeing sessions. This includes on-site one-on-one yarning sessions for First Peoples staff and critical allyship coaching sessions held by a First Peoples-led provider
- Organising workshops and staff learning opportunities on topics including yarning, the history of Treaty and First Peoples activism in Victoria, and learnings from Aotearoa New Zealand
- Implementing a human resources information system to provide for more streamlined management of recruitment, compliance, performance and people management.

Foundational people policies are in place to provide for a safe and inclusive workplace. These policies have been developed with input from Members and staff and reflect the cultural considerations of First Peoples.

Policies will continue to be reviewed and refined to ensure they remain responsive to the needs of the Treaty Authority's workforce. Providing cultural humility and capability will stay at the core of the Treaty Authority's operations.

Cultural Counsel

The Treaty Authority has appointed both male and female Cultural Counsel. The Cultural Counsel role is a living expression of the Treaty Authority's commitment to cultural integrity, and their work enables the organisation to walk respectfully and confidently with First Peoples.

Cultural Counsel leads the Treaty Authority's work to recognise and uphold Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority, providing expert advice to Members and ensuring practices of cultural safety and humility are embedded across the organisation. This role works with Members to develop a Cultural Lore, Law and Authority Charter that will assist Members to undertake their responsibilities in the most culturally informed way.

Cultural Counsel enables a culturally strong Treaty process, assisting Members and staff in analysing and interpreting information provided by Traditional Owners and supporting the Treaty Authority in building its knowledge, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal law, governance systems, kinship structures, cultural protocols and obligations.

Cultural Counsel is also leading the development of a Treaty Authority Cultural Safety Plan, driving strategic projects that uphold Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority and overseeing the delivery of cultural activities, staff mentoring and recruitment.

The role of Cultural Counsel is shared by Nicole Cassar, a Gunditjmara, Wotjobaluk and Maltese woman, and Mark Williams, a Yiradyuri man born in Melbourne and raised in country Victoria.

Together with their cultural knowledge, lived experience and leadership, Nicole and Mark work to ensure the Treaty Authority is led by cultural protocols and values, and that its engagement with First Peoples is respectful and culturally informed.

A RESPONSIBLE AND FIRST PEOPLES-BASED APPROACH TO PROCUREMENT

In February 2025, Members approved a procurement policy for the Treaty Authority, which is aligned with the organisation's vision and values. The policy aims to:

- **Support the Treaty Authority's aim of self-determination and reconciliation for First Peoples**
- **Support First Peoples' opportunity for economic prosperity through upholding and honouring Cultural knowledge systems**
- **Ensure continuous improvement in service provision to First Peoples' Communities**
- **Ensure resources are used efficiently, effectively and ethically**
- **Provide a procurement framework to achieve value for money in procuring goods and services**

In 2024-25, $1.1m was spent with First Peoples suppliers.

" I THINK OF THE TREATY AUTHORITY AS THE GUARDIAN OR PROTECTOR OF THE TREATY JOURNEY. I VISUALISE OUR ANCESTORS WATCHING OVER THE PROCESS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THEY HOLD AND THE HEART THEY HAVE, MAKING SURE THE RULES ARE BEING ADHERED TO WITH THE UPMOST RESPECT AND INTEGRITY. THIS PROTECTION ENSURES STRONG, SAFE TREATIES. THIS IS HOW I SEE AND FEEL WHEN WE UPHOLD THE IMPORTANT AND SACRED ROLE OF THE TREATY AUTHORITY. IT'S DIFFICULT FOR OUR PEOPLE TO COME INTO SPACES WHERE THEY'RE NEGOTIATING WITH THE GOVERNMENT, DUE TO A LONG HISTORY OF DEVASTATION. HAVING THE TREATY AUTHORITY IN PLACE, LED BY FIVE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, TO BE THOSE GUARDIANS, I HOPE GIVES OUR PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE OF VICTORIA COMFORT IN THE PROCESS."
THELMA AUSTIN, TREATY AUTHORITY MEMBER

Thelma Austin, Jidah Clark and Duean White at the Treaty Authority launch, July 2024. Image: TJ Garvie.

Treaty Authority Members on the steps of Victorian Parliament on the final day of the Walk for Truth. Image: Luke Currie-Richardson

Fit-for-purpose governance, compliance and financial management

The Treaty Authority held 16 meetings during the year, involving either all or a quorum of Members. Meetings of the Treaty Authority are conducted like a typical board meeting and serve as the forum for ensuring the Treaty Authority complies with its cultural and statutory obligations. The Treaty Authority has adopted governance processes that ensure transparency, accountability, and strategic alignment, alongside the embedding of First Peoples governance principles that are grounded in collective decision-making, relationality and strength-based approaches.

The Treaty Authority also finalised an Internal Review Policy, which is available on its website. The Internal Review Policy outlines the decisions and actions that are subject to review and specifies who is eligible to request a review.

A sense of place and identity

The Treaty Authority completed the purchase of a permanent premises in Collingwood, which will house agreement-making spaces for the Victorian community and the Treaty Authority's main office. Architectural firm Jackson Clements Burrows has been engaged to design a space informed by the cultural narratives of First Peoples.

TREATY AUTHORITY

2024-25 FINANCIAL REPORT

ABN 25 193 474 723 FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2025

Barmah National Park, Yorta Yorta Country

RSM Australia Partners

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AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

As lead auditor for the audit of the financial report of Treaty Authority for the year ended 30 June 2025, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of:

(i) the auditor independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies in relation to the audit; and

(ii) any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS

WARWICK JA SPARGO
Partner

Dated: 30 September 2025
Melbourne, Victoria

Treaty Authority
Contents
30 June 2025

General information

The financial statements cover Treaty Authority as an individual entity. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is Treaty Authority's functional and presentation currency.

The Treaty Authority was established by the Treaty Authority Agreement made under Part 4 of the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018. The Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act 2022* upholds the independence of the Treaty Authority and gives legal force to the Treaty Authority.

The attached financial statements for the Treaty Authority have been prepared in accordance with Section 53A of the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

Treaty Authority is a not-for-profit entity registered under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* on 7 December 2023, domiciled in Australia. Its registered office and principal place of business is:

Level 7
51 Langridge Street
Collingwood VIC 3066

The financial statements were authorised for issue, in accordance with a resolution of members, on 30 September 2025. The members have the power to amend and reissue the financial statements.

Principal activities

The Treaty Authority is the independent body overseeing Treaty negotiations. The Treaty Authority ensures the process is fair for all negotiating parties, according to the rules set out in the Treaty Negotiation Framework.

The *Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act 2022* (Treaty Authority Act) was enacted by the Victorian Parliament on 23 August 2022, allowing for the creation of the Treaty Authority as an 'independent body' to oversee negotiations between the State of Victoria and First Peoples in Victoria.

The Treaty Authority's objects, set out in clause 1.2 of the Treaty Authority Agreement, are:

- To facilitate the journey towards reconciliation, mutual respect and tolerance between the First Peoples and other people of the State; and
- To maintain, promote and advance the self-determination and empowerment, culture and human rights of First Peoples.

The Treaty Authority is a necessary element in the Treaty Process. Through the advancement of the Treaty Process, the Treaty Authority will promote the empowerment of First Peoples in Victoria, address Indigenous disadvantage and, by doing so, relieve distress and provide relief to First Peoples.

Treaty Authority
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income
For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 $	2024 $
Income			
Special appropriations	3	18,323,990	4,318,350
Interest income		374,308	93,040
Total income		18,698,298	4,411,390
Expenses			
Employee benefits expenses	4	(5,933,141)	(1,233,054)
Rental expense	5	(36,955)	(129,102)
Secondments expenses		(194,173)	(264,391)
Professional fees		(3,006,032)	(1,881,833)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(393,994)	(18,248)
Office expenses		(655,876)	(40,396)
Travel expenses		(282,904)	(81,153)
Finance costs		(20,286)	(131)
Administration costs		(473,451)	(129,593)
Total expenses		(10,996,812)	(3,777,901)
Surplus for the year	13	7,701,486	633,489
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		7,701,486	633,489

The above statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

Treaty Authority
Statement of financial position
As at 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 $	2024 $
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	12,912,954	12,680,214
Trade and other receivables	8	325,794	4,944,904
Total current assets		13,238,748	17,625,118
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	10	7,808,247	558,697
Right-of-use assets	9	59,381	-
Total non-current assets		7,867,628	558,697
Total assets		21,106,376	18,183,815
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	12,540,871	17,479,557
Employee benefits	12	216,741	55,095
Total current liabilities		12,757,612	17,534,652
Non-current liabilities			
Employee benefits	12	13,789	15,674
Total non-current liabilities		13,789	15,674
Total liabilities		12,771,401	17,550,326
Net assets		8,334,975	633,489
Equity			
Retained surpluses	13	8,334,975	633,489
Total equity		8,334,975	633,489

The above statement of financial position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

Treaty Authority
Statement of changes in equity
For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Retained surpluses $	Total equity $
Balance at 7 December 2023	-	-
Surplus for the year	633,489	633,489
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	633,489	633,489
Balance at 30 June 2024	633,489	633,489

	Retained surpluses $	Total equity $
Balance at 1 July 2024	633,489	633,489
Surplus for the year	7,701,486	7,701,486
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	7,701,486	7,701,486
Balance at 30 June 2025	8,334,975	8,334,975

The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

Treaty Authority
Statement of cash flows
For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 $	2024 $
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from Government (inclusive of GST)		18,108,865	15,907,178
Payments to suppliers and employees (inclusive of GST)		(10,527,223)	(2,742,928)
		7,581,642	13,164,250
Interest received		374,308	93,040
Interest and other finance costs paid		(20,286)	(131)
Net cash from operating activities	7	7,935,664	13,257,159
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, plant and equipment	10	(7,406,021)	(576,945)
Net cash used in investing activities		(7,406,021)	(576,945)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liabilities		(296,903)	-
		(296,903)	-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		232,740	12,680,214
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		12,680,214	-
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	6	12,912,954	12,680,214

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes

Note 1. Material accounting policy information

The accounting policies that are material to the Treaty Authority are set out below. The accounting policies adopted are consistent with those of the previous financial year, unless otherwise stated.

New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted
The Treaty Authority has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted.

Basis of preparation
These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB'), the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and *Section 53A of the Financial Management Act 1994*, as appropriate for not-for profit oriented entities.

The comparative numbers of these financial statements are for the period commencing 7 December 2023 to period end 30 June 2024.

The accrual basis of accounting has been applied in the preparation of these financial statements whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid. The only exception is for special appropriation recurrent income which is recognised on a cash basis when the amount appropriated is received by the Treaty Authority.

Historical cost convention
The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Critical accounting estimates
The preparation of the financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the Treaty Authority's accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements, are disclosed in note 2.

Income recognition
The Treaty Authority recognises income as follows:

Special appropriations
Special appropriations recurrent income becomes controlled and is recognised by the Treaty Authority when it is appropriated from the Consolidated Fund by the Victorian Parliament, via the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and applied to the administration of the *Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act 2022.*

Where specifically designated appropriations are received and the designated expenditure for such appropriations during the period has not occurred or is incomplete and there is likely to be an obligation to repay, the residual balance is deferred to the balance sheet as a financial liability. This residual balance is subsequently deducted from future appropriations.

Deferred income
During the financial period, the Treaty Authority received special appropriation capital funding for building fit outs and/or improvements. In accordance with *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, this funding has been deferred, as the related construction has not yet occurred and the associated performance obligations remain unfulfilled.

Special appropriations were also received to fund the Treaty Authority Panel. This funding has similarly been deferred and will be recognised as income only when the related expenditure is incurred, consistent with the recognition requirements under *AASB 15*.

Interest income
Interest income is recognised as interest accrues using the effective interest method. This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and allocating the interest income over the relevant period using the effective interest rate, which is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset to the net carrying amount of the financial asset.

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Income tax
As the Treaty Authority is a tax exempt institution in terms of subsection 50-10 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*, as amended, it is exempt from paying income tax.

Current and non-current classification
Assets and liabilities are presented in the statement of financial position based on current and non-current classification.

An asset is classified as current when: it is either expected to be realised or intended to be sold or consumed in the Treaty Authority's normal operating cycle; it is expected to be realised within 12 months after the reporting period; or the asset is cash or cash equivalent unless restricted from being exchanged or used to settle a liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other assets are classified as non-current.

A liability is classified as current when: it is either expected to be settled in the Treaty Authority's normal operating cycle; it is due to be settled within 12 months after the reporting period; or there is no unconditional right to defer the settlement of the liability for at least 12 months after the reporting period. All other liabilities are classified as non-current.

Cash and cash equivalents
Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value. Cash equivalents are held for the purpose of meeting short-term cash commitments rather than for investment or other purposes.

Trade and other receivables
Trade receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any allowance for expected credit losses. Trade receivables are generally due for settlement within 30 days.

The Treaty Authority has applied the simplified approach to measuring expected credit losses, which uses a lifetime expected loss allowance. To measure the expected credit losses, trade receivables have been grouped based on days overdue.

Other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any allowance for expected credit losses.

Property, plant and equipment
Plant and equipment is stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant and equipment (excluding land) over their expected useful lives as follows:

Motor Vehicles	8 years
Office Equipment	3-8 years
Leasehold Improvements	10 years
Furniture and Fittings	5-10 years
Computer Equipment	2-3 years

Land and buildings are held at cost and have not been depreciated during the year as the asset has not been brought into use.

The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each reporting date.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the assets, whichever is shorter.

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the Treaty Authority . Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss.

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Right-of-use assets
A right-of-use asset is recognised at the commencement date of a lease. The right-of-use asset is measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability, adjusted for, as applicable, any lease payments made at or before the commencement date net of any lease incentives received, any initial direct costs incurred, and, except where included in the cost of inventories, an estimate of costs expected to be incurred for dismantling and removing the underlying asset, and restoring the site or asset.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the asset, whichever is the shorter. Where the Treaty Authority expects to obtain ownership of the leased asset at the end of the lease term, the depreciation is over its estimated useful life. Right-of use assets are subject to impairment or adjusted for any remeasurement of lease liabilities.

The Treaty Authority has elected not to recognise a right-of-use asset and corresponding lease liability for short-term leases with terms of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets. Lease payments on these assets are expensed to profit or loss as incurred.

Impairment of non-financial assets
Non-financial assets are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised for the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

Recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value-in-use. The value-in-use is the present value of the estimated future cash flows relating to the asset using a pre-tax discount rate specific to the asset or cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. Assets that do not have independent cash flows are grouped together to form a cash-generating unit.

As the Treaty Authority is a not-for-profit entity and the future economic benefits of the Authority's assets are not primarily dependent on their ability to generate cash flows, value in use is taken to be the current depreciated replacement cost of the asset, provided the Authority would, if deprived of the asset, replace it.

Trade and other payables
These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Treaty Authority prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

Finance costs
Finance costs attributable to qualifying assets are capitalised as part of the asset. All other finance costs are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Employee benefits

Short-term employee benefits
Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled. Non-accumulating sick leave is expensed to profit or loss when incurred.

Other long-term employee benefits
The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

Defined contribution superannuation expense
Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are expensed in the period in which they are incurred.

Note 1. Material accounting policy information (continued)

Fair value measurement
When an asset or liability, financial or non-financial, is measured at fair value for recognition or disclosure purposes, the fair value is based on the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date; and assumes that the transaction will take place either: in the principal market; or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market.

Fair value is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming they act in their economic best interests. For non-financial assets, the fair value measurement is based on its highest and best use. Valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data are available to measure fair value, are used, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and other similar taxes
Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated GST, unless the GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case it is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

As at 30 June 2025, the Treaty Authority is endorsed for the GST charity tax concession and FBT rebate.

Note 2. Critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. There are no critical accounting judgements, estimates and assumptions that are likely to affect the current or future financial years.

Employee benefits provision
As discussed in note 1, the liability for employee benefits expected to be settled more than 12 months from the reporting date are recognised and measured at the present value of the estimated future cash flows to be made in respect of all employees at the reporting date. In determining the present value of the liability, estimates of attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation have been taken into account.

Recognition of deferred income
When the Treaty Authority receives specifically designated appropriations, income is recognised in proportion to the stage of completion of the undertaking. The Treaty Authority applies the input method to measure its progress towards satisfaction of the undertaking based on actual expenditure incurred.

Estimation of useful lives of assets
The Treaty Authority determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non-strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

Note 3. Special appropriations

	2025 $	2024 $
Special appropriations	18,323,990	4,318,350

	2025 $	2024 $
Geographical regions		
Australia	18,323,990	4,318,350

Special appropriations were received from the Department of Premier and Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of the *Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act 2022.*

Note 4. Employee benefits expenses

	2025 $	2024 $
Salaries and wages	5,209,408	1,040,320
Superannuation	650,836	144,582
Workers' compensation	72,897	48,152
	5,933,141	1,233,054

Note 5. Rental expense

	2025 $	2024 $
Rental expenses	36,955	129,102

Rental expenses relate to short-term lease payments.

Note 6. Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 $	2024 $
Current assets		
Cash at bank	4,098,892	3,604,214
Cash in trust account	8,814,062	9,076,000
	12,912,954	12,680,214

Cash in trust account
The cash in trust account consists of cash held in a solicitor's trust account that is set aside for:
(1) building fit-out and/or improvements, and
(2) the purpose of funding the Treaty Authority Panel established under clause 6 of the Treaty Authority Agreement for the purpose of performing its functions under the Agreement.

The account is at call, does not attract fees, and is readily available to be withdrawn on instructions.

Note 7. Notes to the statement of cash flows

(a) Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents

Note 7. Notes to the statement of cash flows (continued)

For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand and in banks and held in trust.
Net cash flow from operating activities as shown in the cash flow statement is reconciled as follows:

	2025 $	2024 $
(b) Reconciliation of surplus for the year to cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus for the year	7,642,105	633,489
Adjustments for non-cash income or expenditure		
Depreciation and Amortisation	393,994	18,248
Change in operating assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/ decrease in debtors	4,533,685	(4,944,904)
Increase/ (decrease) in payables	(4,793,880)	17,479,557
Increase/ (decrease) in employment benefits	159,760	70,769
Net cash flows from operating activities	7,935,664	13,257,159

Note 8. Trade and other receivables

	2025 $	2024 $
Current assets		
Trade receivables	-	4,652,305
Other receivables	220,862	106,860
GST receivable	104,932	185,739
	325,794	292,599
	325,794	4,944,904

Other receivables
Other receivables consists of prepaid expenses and workcover refund.

Note 9. Right-of-use assets

	2025 $	2024 $
Non-current assets		
Land and buildings - right-of-use	296,903	-
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(237,522)	-
	59,381	-

Note 10. Property, plant and equipment

	2025 $	2024 $
Non-current assets		
Land and buildings - at cost	7,087,772	-
Fixtures and fittings - at cost	109,139	5,862
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(8,426)	(1)
	100,713	5,861
Motor vehicles - at cost	202,057	202,057
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(27,114)	(3,238)
	174,943	198,819
Computer equipment - at cost	275,724	178,008
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(80,788)	(10,890)
	194,936	167,118
Office equipment - at cost	196,480	171,818
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(49,336)	(4,117)
	147,144	167,701
Leasehold improvements - at cost	111,795	19,200
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(9,056)	(2)
	102,739	19,198
	7,808,247	558,697

Reconciliations
Reconciliations of the written down values at the beginning and end of the current financial year are set out below:

	Motor vehicles $	Office equipment $	Leasehold improvements $	Fixtures and fittings $	Computer equipment $	Land and buildings $	Total $
Balance at 1 July 2024	198,819	167,701	19,198	5,861	167,118	-	558,697
Additions	-	24,661	92,595	103,277	97,716	7,087,772	7,406,021
Depreciation expense	(23,876)	(45,218)	(9,054)	(8,425)	(69,898)	-	(156,471)
Balance at 30 June 2025	174,943	147,144	102,739	100,713	194,936	7,087,772	7,808,247

Note 11. Trade and other payables

	2025 $	2024 $
Current liabilities		
Trade payables	255,391	529,338
Deferred Income	8,626,000	13,728,305
Payable to the Department of Premier and Cabinet	3,040,303	2,805,427
Superannuation payable	45,221	31,934
PAYG withholding payable	324,631	98,579
Accrued expenses	249,325	285,974
	12,540,871	17,479,557

Note 11. Trade and other payables (continued)

Payable to the Department of Premier and Cabinet
Amounts payable to the Department of Premier and Cabinet consists of special appropriations received and unused.

Deferred Income
Deferred income relates to funds held in a solicitor's trust account that are set aside for specific purposes. This includes $6,626,000 relating to building fit outs and/or improvements, and $2,000,000 for the purpose of funding the Treaty Authority Panel.

Note 12. Employee benefits

	2025 $	2024 $
Current liabilities		
Annual leave	216,741	55,095
Non-current liabilities		
Long service leave	13,789	15,674
	230,530	70,769

Note 13. Retained surpluses

	2025 $	2024 $
Retained surpluses at the beginning of the financial year	633,489	-
Surplus for the year	7,701,486	633,489
Retained surpluses at the end of the financial year	8,334,975	633,489

Note 14. Key management personnel disclosures

Compensation
The aggregate compensation made to members and other key management personnel of the Treaty Authority is set out below:

	2025 $	2024 $
Aggregate compensation	2,209,092	1,054,094

Note 15. Remuneration of auditors

During the financial year / period the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by the auditor of the Treaty Authority:

	2025 $	2024 $
Audit services - RSM		
Audit of the financial statements	35,000	23,000

Note 16. Economic dependency

The Treaty Authority is dependent upon the State of Victoria via the Department of Premier and Cabinet, for the funding of its operations. At the date of this report, management has no reason to believe that this financial support will not continue.

Note 17. Related party transactions

Key management personnel
Disclosures relating to key management personnel are set out in note 14.

Transactions with related parties
There were no transactions with related parties during the current and previous financial year.

Receivable from and payable to related parties
There were no trade receivables from or trade payables to related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

Loans to/from related parties
There were no loans to or from related parties at the current and previous reporting date.

Note 18. Events after the reporting period

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2025 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Treaty Authority 's operations, the results of those operations, or the Treaty Authority 's state of affairs in future financial years.

In the members' opinion:

- the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, and *Section 53A of the Financial Management Act 1994*, and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the Treaty Authority's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and of its performance for the financial period ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Treaty Authority will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable

Signed in accordance with a resolution of members made pursuant to the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.*

On behalf of the members

30 September 2025

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
To the Members of the Treaty Authority

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of the Treaty Authority, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including material accounting policy information, and the Members' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Treaty Authority has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act* 2012 ACNC Act), including:

(a) giving a true and fair view of the Treaty Authority's financial position as at 30 June 2025 and of its financial performance for the year ended on that date; and

(b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures under AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Treaty Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Responsible Entities (Members) for the Financial Report

The Members of the Treaty Authority are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures under AASB 1060 *General Purpose Financial Statements – Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities* and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the Members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Members are responsible for assessing the Treaty Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Members either intends to liquidate Treaty Authority or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Members are responsible for overseeing Treaty Authority's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Independence

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act, which has been given to the Members of the Treaty Authority, would be in the same terms if given to the Members as at the time of this auditor's report.

RSM AUSTRALIA PARTNERS

WARWICK JA SPARGO
Partner

Dated: 2 October 2025
Melbourne, Victoria

PHOTO CREDITS

THE TREATY AUTHORITY SINCERELY THANKS PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS AND CREATIVE CONTRIBUTORS FOR THEIR ARTISTRY AND INSIGHT. YOUR IMAGES BRING DEPTH AND INSIGHT, CAPTURING MOMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES THAT WORDS ALONE COULD NEVER CONVEY.

Front Cover
Wulumbarra dancers on Dja Dja Wurrung Country for Statewide Treaty negotiations regional meeting.
Image: Leroy Miller

Page 03
Image: Luke Currie-Richardson

Page 07
Image: Leroy Miller

Page 10
July - Image: TJ Garvie

Page 11
June - Image: Leroy Miller

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Artwork and words by Merring-Jippa Murray

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Page 38
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Page 39
Barmah National Park, Yorta Yorta Country

Back Cover
Image: Leroy Miller

Illustrative animals and textural patterns throughout
Merring-Jippa Murray, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wamba Wamba and Kamilaro

A FAIR TREATY PROCESS THAT
DELIVERS JUSTICE, PROSPERITY
AND MUTUAL RESPECT
FOR ALL VICTORIANS

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