

SUPPORT FOR THE TREATY PROCESS IN VICTORIA

We, the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands where we do our ministry across Victoria. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. We acknowledge the Covenant relationship that we have with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

We acknowledge that when it comes to First Peoples communities, cultures and lands, the true experts are of course First Peoples themselves, and we are grateful for the leadership of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

We acknowledge that the past cannot be altered or erased, but we choose to take steps today that will foster healing in the enduring pain caused by injustices. As an organisation firmly committed to advancing social justice and equality, we want to play our part in righting the wrongs of the past and be part of collaborating towards a better future together.

We believe a better tomorrow is possible. Consistent with the Church's declared support for the principles in the Statement from the Heart, we commit our support to the First Peoples' Treaty process in Victoria.

To help build support for the shared journey to Treaty, we will:

- Collaborate with the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria on the advancement of a Treaty in Victoria;
- Advocate in support of the Treaty process;
- Continue to provide information to our congregations and faith communities about the Treaty process and its importance to First Peoples, as a significant step to address some of the injustices of racist colonialism;
- Encourage members of Congress Victoria to enrol to vote and participate in the First Peoples' Assembly processes as they work on the advancement of Treaty in Victoria
- Continue to develop and communicate a clear theologically robust rationale for supporting the Victorian Treaty process;
- Inform church members about the role of churches in past injustices related to First Peoples in Victoria;
- Encourage our congregations and faith communities to
 - learn the stories of First Peoples in their areas;
 - acknowledge Country in their services and meetings;
 - seek to forge relationships with the Traditional Owners in the places where they are situated;
 - consider how they might support the Treaty process
- Partner with other churches and organisations, as appropriate, to foster the Victorian community's acceptance and embrace of the Treaty process.

In making this commitment, we affirm the right of self-determination for First Peoples in charting a path towards Treaty.

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Victorian Regional Council, are united in this support.

Together, all Victorians can create a future where First Peoples' voices are heard, rights are respected, and justice is realised for generations to come.

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