



MEDIA RELEASE
21 September 2021

YOO-RROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION STATEMENT ON RECENT REPORTS ON TOM WILLS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH-TELLING.

The Commissioners of the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission (Yoo-rrook) wish to highlight how the recent reports into historical figure, Tom Wills, further validate the need for Yoo-rrook's mandate creating Victoria's first formal truth-telling process.

Chair of Yoo-rrook, and distinguished Wergaia/Wamba Wamba Elder, Professor Eleanor Bourke said, "The story of Tom Wills illustrates exactly why Yoo-rrook was established and further validates Yoo-rrook's mandate for a formal truth-telling process."

Yoo-rrook intends to remain respectful of the surviving families and communities affected by the events in the Cullin-la-ringo massacre of 1861.

"Yoo-rrook is an opportunity for First Peoples to tell the truth about colonisation. The work of Yoo-rrook will also provide the opportunity to tell powerful stories of pride, survival and resilience. It will lead to critical changes for healing, systems reform and legal and educational reform."

The recently reported story of devastating violence in the Cullin-la-ringo massacre of 1861 is one of many known to First Peoples across Australia. Much of this history is in plain-view and has been shared by Aboriginal communities for generations.

The objectives of Yoo-rrook are to:

- Establish an official record of the impact of colonisation on Traditional Owners and First Peoples in Victoria.
- Develop a shared understanding among all Victorians of the impact of colonisation, as well as the diversity, strength and resilience of First Peoples' cultures.
- Make recommendations for healing, systems reform and practical changes to laws, policy and education, as well as to matters to be included in future treaties.

Yoo-rrook will propose changes to laws, institutions, and systems which can be taken up through Treaty negotiations and other ways to build new relationships between all Victorians.



Over the coming months, Yoo-rrook will call for submissions from First Peoples and non-state entities, such as clubs, associations, organisations and institutions, to come forward to help establish a formal record of history.

“Listening to the voices of First Peoples’, hearing their experiences and how their cultures have survived despite the trauma, will give the broader Victorian community an understanding of the resilience and strength of First Peoples’ and their culture”

To learn more about Yoo-rrook visit the website at:

<https://yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au>

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