



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



# YOO-RROOK

Justice Commission

The Yoo-rrook Justice Commission has received a historic mandate as a Royal Commission from the State of Victoria and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, which is described in detail in its Letters Patent. In interpreting this mandate, Yoo-rrook has heard the messages contained in the Tyerri Yoo-rrook report and is planning its way forward. This includes how it will work, what it will focus on first and why, and who must be part of the process. Yoo-rrook outlines here its vision, goals, values, proposed priorities and approach.

# 1. YOO-RROOK'S VISION

**A transformed Victoria, based on truth and justice, and grounded in First Peoples' enduring spirit, cultures and self-determination.**

## 2. YOO-RROOK'S GOALS

Yoo-rrook has identified three interconnected goals which underpin Yoo-rrook's vision for the future:

- TRUTH
- UNDERSTANDING
- TRANSFORMATION

Everything Yoo-rrook does must contribute towards achieving these three goals. These goals are based on and link with Yoo-rrook's formal objectives described in the Letters Patent.

## TRUTH



**Yoo-rrook will create a lasting public record about what has happened in the past and is still happening, how it came to occur and who or what is responsible. It will draw on a wide range of sources and take a holistic approach that recognises both the diversity, commonalities, and continuities of First Peoples' experiences.**

## UNDERSTANDING



**Deep listening to the voices of First Peoples, hearing their experiences and learning how culture has evolved and survived amid trauma, will enable the broader Victorian community to understand the links between past, present and future.**

## TRANSFORMATION



**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. These reforms must remedy injustices against First Peoples so that Victoria can turn a new page.**

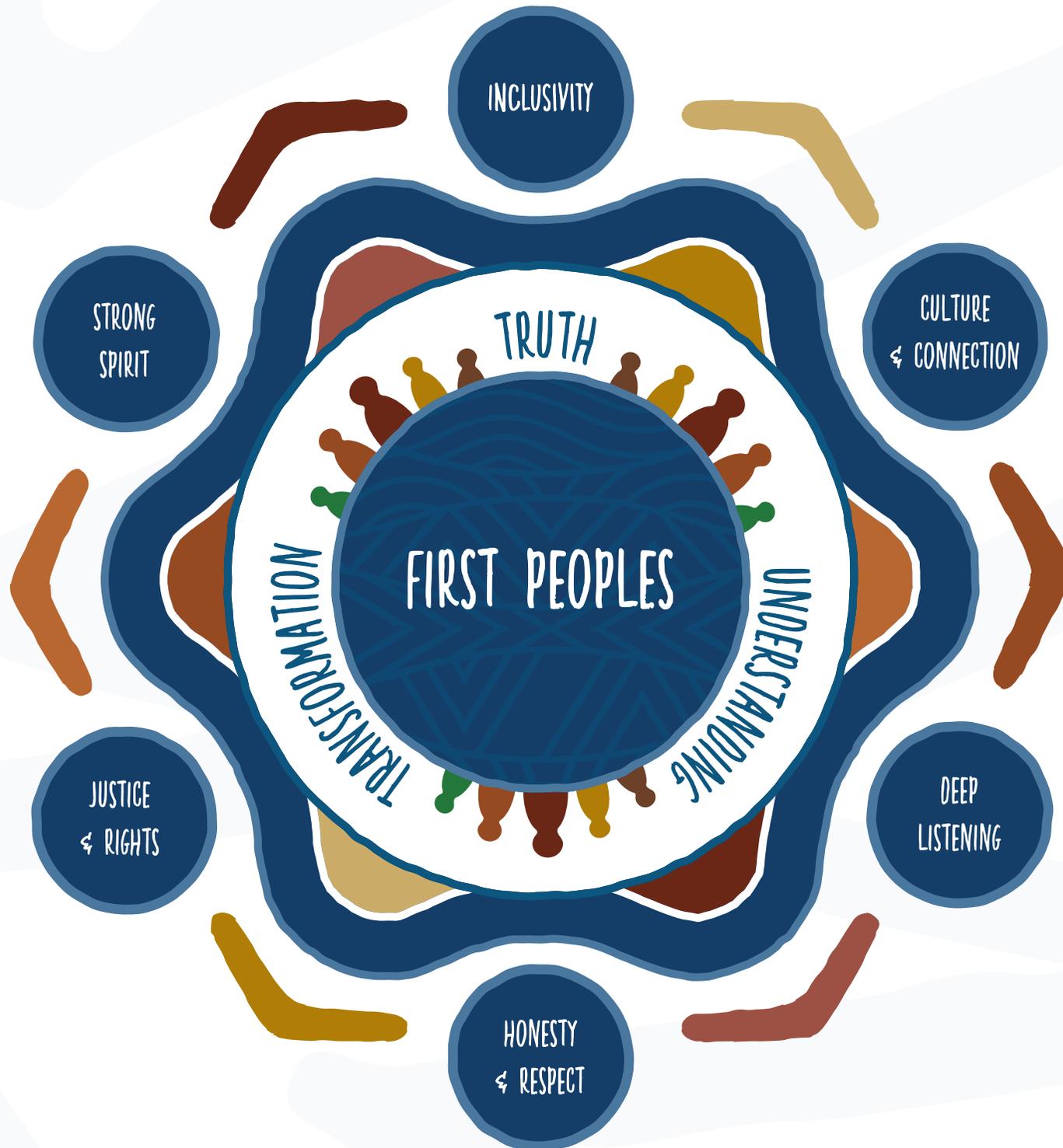
Connections to Letters Patent objectives:

- **2(a)** establish an official public record based on First Peoples' experiences of Systemic Injustice since the start of Colonisation.
- **2(c)** determine the causes and consequences of Systemic Injustice including the role of State policies and laws and which State Entities or Non-State Entities bear responsibility for the harm suffered by First Peoples since the start of Colonisation.
- **2(g)** identify Systemic Injustice which currently impedes First Peoples achieving self-determination and equality and make recommendations to address them, improve State accountability and prevent continuation or recurrence of Systemic Injustice.
- **2(b)** develop a shared understanding among all Victorians of the individual and collective impact of Systemic Injustice and the intergenerational trauma that has flowed from them since the start of Colonisation.
- **2(d)** develop a shared understanding among all Victorians of the diversity, strength and resilience of First Peoples' cultures, knowledge, and traditional practices.
- **2(e)** help build the foundations for a new relationship between First Peoples and the State of Victoria and all Victorians, based on truth and justice to prevent the recurrence of injustice.
- **2(f)** support the treaty-making process between the State of Victoria and First Peoples, including through the identification of subject matters for potential inclusion in a treaty or treaties.

# 3. YOO-RROOK'S VALUES

Yoo-rrook's values will guide all aspects of its journey. Its values are:

- CULTURE AND CONNECTION
- DEEP LISTENING
- HONESTY AND RESPECT
- JUSTICE AND RIGHTS
- STRONG SPIRIT
- INCLUSIVITY



# 4 YOO-RROOK'S PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Yoo-rrook must inquire into historical and ongoing systemic injustices against First Peoples in all areas of life from the beginning of colonisation to the present. This mandate is both very broad and flexible which allows Yoo-rrook to choose how to approach its historic task. Yoo-rrook is unique among Royal Commissions because, while it is for the benefit of all Victorians, First Peoples drove its design and remain at its centre.

Guided by its values, Yoo-rrook proposes to focus on four priority areas that aim to take into account Yoo-rrook's historic function, the current context and the feedback presented in the Tyerri Yoo-rrook report.

Yoo-rrook will need to:

- adapt its processes to First Peoples' needs, rather than just following past Royal Commission or research practices, to avoid replicating injustices
- recognise prior and ongoing reforms and reviews to avoid duplication and focus on gaps and connections
- preserve the safety and well-being of all participants including being sensitive to trauma and cultural safety, as well as the ongoing reality of a public health pandemic
- recognise that Yoo-rrook's contribution sits alongside the path to treaty in Victoria and other processes to realise self-determination, as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

# YOO-RROOK'S PRIORITY AREAS OF FOCUS (SEPTEMBER 2021 TO JUNE 2022)

Yoo-rrook proposes to focus on four priority areas as necessary first steps before calling for additional submissions and evidence, and announcing hearings. Indicative activities are described for each priority area and its contribution to achieving Yoo-rrook's goals.

## PREPARATORY STEPS



### Priority 1: Laying strong foundations for trust and cultural legitimacy

Yoo-rrook seeks to avoid replicating injustices and trauma and demonstrate integrity to its values. To do so Yoo-rrook will:

- 1.1** Introduce Yoo-rrook's values and approach - Meet with Traditional Owners, First Peoples community members, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, government and others.
- 1.2** Monitor progress and accountability – Develop systems to ensure Yoo-rrook meets its goals, including through feedback from community.
- 1.3** Protect First Peoples' data sovereignty - Design a comprehensive policy and operational approach to manage the information Yoo-rrook receives.
- 1.4** Design a research methodology that weaves together First Peoples' knowledge systems and worldview with Western methods of scientific and legal analysis.
- 1.5** Establish support systems - Develop and implement a culturally appropriate program to protect the wellbeing and associated needs of First Peoples to enable their effective participation in Yoo-rrook's work.

## UNDERSTANDING



## TRUTH



### Priority 2: Honour First Peoples' Elders and preserve knowledge

Yoo-rrook's work will take time to gather and analyse input from a wide range of sources. To begin it will:

- 2.1 Call for priority input and knowledge-sharing from Elders and those most vulnerable.
- 2.2 Create a public conversation - about Yoo-rook's vision and approach.

### Priority 3: Lay the foundations for a comprehensive picture of systemic injustices against First Peoples

Yoo-rrook must create a public record supported by evidence from many domains. To do so Yoo-rrook will:

- 3.1 Map existing knowledge – including First Peoples' or community-led, academic and official sources of documentation and identify gaps.
- 3.2 Develop a human rights-based framework based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for analysing systemic injustices across key time periods.
- 3.3 Reflecting UNDRIP, launch lines of inquiry into the following themes:
  - Political organisation, resistance and self-determination
  - Law and lore
  - Culture and cultural heritage
  - People, society and wellbeing
  - Land, water and resources
  - Ecology and caring for country
  - Economy, productivity and sustainability

## TRANSFORMATION



### **Priority 4: Promote a coherent and holistic reform agenda**

Yoo-rrook acknowledges the ongoing urgency and historic continuities of trauma involved in many First Peoples' experiences with legal and state structures and policies. To do so it will:

- 4.1** Map relevant reform processes and coordinate with ongoing efforts.
- 4.2** Assess state custody reforms related to First Peoples' interaction with policing, youth and criminal justice, and corrections, including progress in implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

## 5. WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH YOO-RROOK'S WORK

PROVIDE TESTIMONY

COOPERATE WITH REQUESTS

HEAL AND CLEANSE

INFORM TREATY

BE ACCOUNTABLE

CHANGE-MAKERS  
/INFLUENCERS

ABORIGINAL  
COMMUNITY  
CONTROLLED  
ORGANISATIONS

MEDIA

TRADITIONAL OWNERS  
AND FIRST PEOPLES

THE STATE OF  
VICTORIA

BROADER  
PUBLIC

ARTS  
/CULTURE  
/SPORT

NON-STATE ENTITIES,  
INCLUDING CHURCHES  
AND BUSINESSES

FIRST PEOPLES'  
ASSEMBLY  
OF VICTORIA

COUNTRY

RESEARCHERS

SHARE EXPERTISE

GIVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

PROVIDE REDRESS

MODEL CHANGE

SUPPORT PARTICIPANTS

WITNESS, LISTEN AND LEARN

DESIGN AND  
IMPLEMENT REFORM

SHARE CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

To provide feedback on the draft priorities, please complete a short [survey](#) by 31 October 2021.