

YOORROOK MEDIA GUIDELINES

The First Peoples of Victoria have called for truth telling for generations. Colonisation impacted land, language, lore and people's lives – and these impacts continue today. The stories of Victoria's First Peoples must be told. In telling their stories, all Victorians can share the history and help create a better future – based on truth.

As a member of the media, you have a critical role in sharing these truths with all Victorians. Your ethical, respectful and impartial reporting will challenge outdated public perceptions and ultimately help create a public record of First Peoples' experiences of colonisation in Victoria.

The following Guidelines are to help media report on Yoorrook's work and apply to all interviews with people telling their truth as well as Yoorrook's *wurrek tyerrang*, forums and events (unless advised otherwise). These Guidelines may be varied, changed or replaced from time to time.

MEDIA FACILITES

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, until further notice, *wurrek tyerrang*, forums and events (unless advised otherwise) will not be open for in-person media coverage, except by prior arrangement.

Media wishing to attend *wurrek tyerrang*, forums and events can contact the Yoorrook Media team to discuss access at communications@yoorrook.org.au.

Live streaming of *wurrek tyerrang* will be made available through a webcast via the Yoorrook website.

Wurrek tyerrang -
Wergaia word for
'speaking together'.
This is what
Yoorrook will convene
as public hearings.

RECORDING AND FILMING

Filming, audio recording or still photography at any hearing, forum or event is only allowed by prior arrangement with the Media team.

Yoorrook may at any time revoke an agreement to cover a hearing, forum or event if:

- the media or someone acting on behalf of the media breaches these guidelines or any condition of authority to cover the hearing, forum or event;
- witnesses or participants are being subjected to unreasonable media pressure outside the hearing, forum or event premises;
- Yoorrook determines that the rights of any participant may or will be prejudiced if coverage continues; or
- coverage of the hearing, forum or event is disrupting the inquiry.

Yoorrook will usually arrange a professional photographer for major events and forums. Images can be shared on request as they are available.

RESTRICTED OR EXCLUDED PERSON(S) ORDERS

Consistent with its Letters Patent, Yoorrook is committed to providing a safe, supportive and culturally appropriate forum for First Peoples to tell their truth with dignity. This includes accommodating, to the extent possible, First Peoples' choices in how they wish to participate.

Yoorrook is also obliged to adopt practices and approaches in the conduct of its work to minimise harm and re-traumatisation for First Peoples. To that end, there are several mechanisms that Yoorrook will use if and when necessary or appropriate to protect witnesses and *pil'kneango mirnk*.

Restricted or 'closed' *wurrek tyerrang* orders – In some circumstances, it may be necessary or appropriate for part or all of a witness' *pil'kneango mirnk* to be provided in a restricted or 'closed' *wurrek tyerrang* in accordance with section 24 of the *Inquiries Act 2014* (the Act).

Restricted publication orders – In some circumstances, it may be necessary or appropriate to prohibit or restrict the publication of certain information or *pil'kneango mirnk* produced in a *wurrek tyerrang* in accordance with section 26 of the Act. For example, for reasons of personal or cultural sensitivity or having regard to a witness' entitlement to Indigenous Data Sovereignty protections (see Information Sheet 4 – Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Data Governance).

Excluded person(s) orders – Yoorrook may make an excluded person(s) order upon receipt of an application by a witness or a person granted leave to appear, in accordance with section 24 of the Act. Yoorrook will notify parties and the public of any relevant order including by posting a copy on its website.

Pil'kneango mirnk -
Djab Wurrung for
'open eyes'. This is
what is often referred
to as 'evidence'.

PUBLICATION OF TRANSCRIPTS AND DOCUMENTS

Subject to any restricted or closed *wurrek tyerrang* orders or restricted publication orders, *wurrek tyerrang* and some additional forums and events will be video recorded and the following items will be published on Yoorrook's website as they are available:

- (a) video recordings of *wurrek tyerrang*
- (b) transcripts of the *pil'kneango mirnk*
- (c) *balert keetyarra*
- (d) documents received into *pil'kneango mirnk*

Material published on Yoorrook's website is available for media agencies to broadcast / publish – subject to attribution. For more information, please contact the Yoorrook media team via enquiries@yoorrook.org.au.

Balert keetyarra -
Wathaurong phrase
for 'strong talk'.
This is what is often
referred to as a
'witness statement'.

ACCESSIBILITY

Yoorrook will be implementing measures to ensure accessibility. We encourage media to do the same and include captions, image descriptions, alt-text, Easy English, and audio descriptions as part of their coverage.

SPEAKING WITH PEOPLE TELLING THEIR TRUTH

First People will be telling their truths in a variety of ways through Yoorrook – in *nuther-mooyoop* (submissions), *wurrek tyerrang* (public hearings) and in other settings. They may be sharing personal stories or stories on behalf of their family, community or organisation.

Truth telling may be a liberating experience for some. It may also be daunting and distressing. While Yoorrook provides a way of recording the resilience and strength of First Peoples, it will also highlight the injustice, violence and exploitation visited on First Peoples throughout colonisation.

Yoorrook will provide social and emotional wellbeing and legal support for First Peoples to assist them through the truth telling process. Ensuring the social and emotional wellbeing of First Peoples extends to supporting those that want, to tell their truth publicly through the media. We ask that you use this guidance as a way of creating a safe platform for that truth telling to occur.

It is vital that media approach any conversation or interview with people telling their truth sensitively. Whether they choose to discuss specific details with the media or not, many people telling their truth will be trauma survivors or reflecting on distressing stories from their family's past.

You should:

- Respect and receive the stories of truth tellers shared with you. As with other survivors of injustice where truths have been hidden, there is a long history of Aboriginal people not being believed and heard. Yoorrook's letters patent recognise First Peoples' cultural and legal practices of storytelling and witnessing as legitimate forms of evidence.
- Discuss appropriate areas of questioning with the person before beginning the interview and refrain from asking on-the-spot questions about traumatic subjects without giving prior warning.
- Ask the interviewee how they would like to be identified in the story including whether they would like their nation or clan referenced.

SUPPORT

Disturbing and distressing content will emerge during Yoorrook's *wurrek tyerrang*, forums and events.

We encourage media to include details about support services in their coverage. For further information see the following documents on Yoorrook's website:

- Information Sheet 5 – Keeping You Safe and Strong
- Information Sheet 6 – Social and Emotional Wellbeing Supports
- Lotjpa Independent Legal Service – Legal Help Information Sheet

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the conduct of *wurrek tyerrang*, see Practice Direction 1 – *Wurrek Tyerrang* (public hearings).

For specific guidance on the use of language and terminology when referring to First Peoples, please refer to [Diversity Arts Handbook: Reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Issues](#).

For general enquiries in relation to these Guidelines, please email communications@yoorrook.org.au.

Nuther-mooyoop -
Boonwurrung word
for 'truth'. This is
what is often referred
to as making
'a submission'.