



# YOORROOK

Justice Commission

GUIDING THE PATH TO YOORROOK

# YOORROOK'S VALUES

The following values serve as guiding principles which underpin and inform all aspects of the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission (Yoorrook). They are interdependent concepts that must be observed holistically.

## **Culture & Connection**

Yoorrook recognises the diversity of First Peoples' history, cultures, languages, and ways of knowing, being and doing. Yoorrook will observe and uphold cultural values of the First Peoples of Victoria in the way it operates. To ensure truths are told fairly and safely, this includes respect for:

- ancestral connections, survival and cultural continuity
- the cultural authority of Elders and others
- Aboriginal knowledges and lived experience
- place and time past and present
- relationships and reciprocity

One of the most important Victorian Aboriginal cultural values is connection to Country. Connection between humans, and between humans and Country is critical to telling, listening to, and recording the truth.

## **Deep Listening**

Yoorrook must do more than merely document people's stories as they tell their truth. Yoorrook must also undertake deep listening which can create understanding, reflection, healing, atonement and justice. Deep listening also means hearing the strength, resilience and continuity of First Peoples of Victoria.

## **Honesty & Respect**

Yoorrook values integrity in its highest form, meaning deep commitment to the inquiry and doing the greatest good within its powers, laying the foundations for justice and atonement, and promoting community healing. Deep healing can only come from deep honesty.

## **Strong Spirit**

Yoorrook recognises the dignity of all people and the resilience and survival of First Peoples in the face of colonisation's injustices. To keep people's spirit strong, Yoorrook must create safe forums to facilitate truth-telling and healing.

## **Justice & Rights**

Yoorrook's work is predicated on human rights and First Peoples' rights to truth, justice, equality, reparation, and self-determination. These rights are recognised in international law including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which guides the work of Yoorrook. Yoorrook's work must contribute to a fairer Victoria for all people now and those who will come after.

### **Inclusivity**

Yoorrook welcomes all peoples' stories, testimonies, and lived experiences fairly, compassionately and with a spirit of reciprocity. Yoorrook welcomes everyone to be part of its journey toward truth and justice - Victorian Traditional Owners, First Peoples, and non-Indigenous people alike.

## **INTERNAL CULTURAL PROTOCOLS**

Guided by the Yoorrook Justice Commission's values, Yoorrook will follow these cultural protocols for the conduct of its business.

### **Aboriginal Ways of Making Decisions**

The Commissioners will observe and uphold Victorian Aboriginal ways of decision-making and governance, including:

- Respectful communication between Commissioners, with respect for each other's expertise, lived experience and opinions
- Respecting community inputs and views
- Building trusting relationships
- Approachability
- Honesty & openness
- Justifying one's own views
- Consensus decision-making, taking as long as it takes, and not rushing
- Working through disagreements to find common ground

### **'No Gammin'**

The Commissioners will hold themselves accountable to Yoorrook's Values & Principles and will discharge their duties and responsibilities fairly, ethically and respectfully.

### **Two-Way Learning**

There will be respect for the diverse knowledges and fields of expertise between Commissioners. They will be conscious to grasp opportunities for two-way learning.

### **Respect for Culture**

The Commissioners are required to understand and show due regard for Aboriginal knowledges and competently work within an Aboriginal paradigm.

### **Risk Management**

The Commissioners will take all steps possible to mitigate risks, including from psychological or emotional distress, sorry business, external factors such as COVID-19, and other unforeseen circumstances.

### **Conflict Management**

The Commissioners commit to acting in a respectful manner if disagreements arise, and to resolve any conflict in good faith and good heart.