

**Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission****From: Vicky Grosser****Dated: 5 October 2024****Submission:**

I am a fourth generation white Australian, European heritage female in my 60's. My mother's Jewish family came to Wadawurrung Country in the 1850's to the 'gold rush'. They were very poor, but became wealthy - in the sense that they took and had more resources than they needed. My father's Christian: Welsh, English, Prussian Christian heritage family came I think, to Naarm in the 1850's. They did clerical jobs, and working jobs - they also became wealthy, gaining more resources than they needed, and deserve.

Growing up, I was educated in a private school, then independent and public schools until Year 12. I heard praise about England, and that we lived in an 'uncultured' country. As I saw people who had darker skin, and different features to me, I asked questions. I could sense there was information I wasn't receiving. And I picked up negative messages about Aboriginal people.

As an adult (including 20 years living in England), I sought out more about our history, and as I learnt I decided to join a reconciliation group in my 50's - in Geelong. I have learnt from First Nations people, and through strong allies, that I live a profoundly privileged life: that I was separated, misinformed and taught superiority patterns and greed behaviors. This deeply saddened me. I have sought to change my ways, and have given unearned money to First Nations organisations. I am currently giving land back.

As I watch the younger generations grow up in my family, I see less defensiveness and more willingness to learn about our true history, to live with more integrity. To raise their children with more awareness, and positive stories and some connection to Aboriginal people. But fundamentally they are still separate, privileged and biased in their lives. It is still easy to turn away from hearing from First Nations people in many ways. To hold onto supremacy, work in colonizing organisations.

Elders have taught me, and younger Aboriginal people that I know now, that education and relationships are key to change the structures we live in. Truth telling, which we all deserve. I believe that this is key to making changes that we were unable to achieve though last years Voice referendum. To move from control to creating genuine, community based lives and society.

Please can all educational organisations, all local Councils, all service providers be provided with enjoyable, connecting sustaining First Nations determined education as a bedrock of the Treaty intentions? I believe that they will be fundamental in shifting the defensiveness and control, moving us away from current colonial structures and communities. Including - do we need an 'Australia Day'? Some of us are allies who would like to support these changes. With enormous appreciation, and personal excitement about treaty developments on these countries.

**END**