

**Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission****From: Anna Ritman****Dated: 4 November 2024****Submission:****What do you know about the colonisation of Victoria and its impacts on First Peoples?**

I hardly know anything about colonisation of Victoria from the First Peoples' perspective and experience. I know some of the European story of settlement in Victoria and Australia, and I know more generally about the massacres, brutality and injustice experienced by First Peoples as Australia was colonised, but not specific to Victoria.

**What has been your experience learning about First Nations history and culture in Victoria's education system? Do you feel it was comprehensive?**

Nil and no. I'm Melbourne born and raised and well into middle age and I have learnt nothing about First Nations history and culture in Victoria's education system. My first exposure to First Nations history and culture was when I visited Uluru (then called "Ayers Rock") when I left school. I spent time with Anangu people who generously shared their stories. Being a white Australian with European ancestors, I felt great shame. I also felt great respect for the Anangu people and wanted to know more and understand how I could contribute to some kind of reconciliation - not a word I fully understood or had at the time.

**What changes would you like to see in Victoria to promote better understanding and respect for First Peoples?**

So many changes. Mostly awareness among the masses of our history - truth telling, systemic education - not just in pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary, but readily available and accessible to all people in the community - in public places/ events/ online information and learning modules/webinars/ cultural centres/ on-country experiences. Mainstreaming the good, the bad, the ugly, and enabling Victorians to understand how lucky we are to have First Peoples still with us generously sharing their wisdom and culture.

**In what ways do you think non-First Nations Victorians can contribute to the process of truth-telling and treaty?**

Building our own knowledge. Connecting with First Nations people in Victoria. Being active allies and advocates, speaking out to build awareness and getting involved/ supporting that process of education.

**In what ways could First Peoples history and culture be promoted in Victoria?**

Ceremonially as a matter of course at all events - acknowledgement and where possible Welcome to Country. Embedding it in Vic education system - pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary Investment to enable information and experiences to be available and accessible to all people in the community - in public places/ events/ online information and learning modules/webinars/ cultural centres/ on-country experiences.

**END OF SUBMISSION**