

Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission**From: Anonymous 1125****Dated: 4 November 2024****Submission:****What do you know about the colonisation of Victoria and its impacts on First Peoples?**

I know that there were multiple massacres of First Peoples in Victoria. Many Aboriginal people died from disease that was brought by colonisers. There were Stolen Generations where children were taken away from their families and some were never reunited with their family and mob. Children were brought up by strict nuns, were forbidden from speaking language and many were raped countless times. Girls were sent off to be servants for white families and were often raped - the children were labelled as 'half-castes'. Aboriginal people worked for white peoples and took on their surname, there are countless examples of stolen wages. Aboriginal people were kept segregated from others, e.g. they weren't allowed at the local pool. Aboriginal people fought in war for Australia but were not given land like the white soldiers when they returned. The brutality that First Nations Peoples faced was unthinkable, it is a great shame for our history. Colonisers buried Aboriginal people up to their neck and kicked their heads off for fun. Colonisation continues to have an impact through transgenerational trauma, lack of equal opportunity, disconnection to family and culture, and systemic racism. For example, recently the government allowed sacred birthing trees to be cut down, not acknowledging the strong connection that First Peoples had to them - just to make way for a road.

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

Not at all. I went to a private school in Essendon and hardly learnt anything about First Nations history. We watched 'Rabbit Proof Fence' and briefly learnt about how James Cook 'discovered' Australia. We learnt a lot about the genocide that happened in Germany by the Nazis but nothing of the genocide that happened right on our doorstep. I later studied at Melbourne University, where there are still buildings named after racist colonisers.

What changes would you like to see in Victoria to promote better understanding and respect for First People's?

Compulsory curriculum with a First Nations subject from Prep to Grade 12. Teach the bad and ugly history of what happened to First Nations people, at an age-appropriate level for each year level. Embrace and share the knowledge and culture that First Nations People have that all Australians can share and be proud of - astrology, deep listening, bush medicine, music, dance, kinship systems, spirituality.

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

See answer above - compulsory curriculum subject for all years of schooling.

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