

Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission**From: Anonymous 1146****Dated: 8 November 2024****Submission:****What do you know about the colonisation of Victoria and its impacts on First Peoples?**

I know that John Batman coerced the First Peoples of Victoria to sign an invalid "treaty" which involved them trading certain goods for their lands. I know that Aboriginal Peoples suffered terribly at the hands of the colonisers - that they were forced out of Melbourne and eventually into stations like Corranderrk where they existed under the rule of the so-called 'Protector' of Aborigines. I know that there were many skirmishes between farmers and First Peoples and that many Aboriginal people were massacred and poisoned. I know many caught European diseases. I know that their children were stolen and indoctrinated into Christianity; put into homes and eventually sent to work as domestic servants - virtual slaves - and that their wages were withheld from them.

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

I am 50 years old and received no education at school whatsoever about the First Peoples of this land. I spent most of my formative years growing up in Perth - Noongar country - and the last two years of high school in Victoria. The things I know now I have learnt over many years through my working life, and reading books and newspapers.

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

I think it's really important that our education system incorporates the truth of colonisation into our curriculum. These stories need to be told early and often, so that all people grow up with an understanding of what really happened in this country. I think it would be great if cultural training could be included in schools, because many people grow up having had no contact with First Peoples whatsoever. (And I include myself in this category).

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

I guess by being open and receptive and trying to educate ourselves as best we can.

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

One thing I think could really be capitalised on is the First People's understanding of Victoria's seasons and weather. Melbourne is notorious for its changeable weather, and I've always found the European calendar to be really unhelpful. I think people would really embrace a calendar system based on First Peoples' understanding of country. We should ditch the European calendar in Victoria and go by the Indigenous seasons instead. Hopefully this will give people a greater respect for and understanding of how much knowledge the First Peoples have about the land we are all living on, and will spark them to find out more about their history and culture.

END OF SUBMISSION