

Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission**From: Cheryl Batagol****Dated: 13 November 2024****Submission:**

I am not a First Nations person. I am 71 years old and had absolutely no education (either at school or at home) on the history of Australia before "settlement". As an adult, it was in 1992 when Eddie Mabo's case reached the High Court and the decision was made that my awareness of the indigenous history of Australia and its First Nations people began to grow. It was not until I was asked to mentor an Aboriginal person (in mentoring it is always a two-way process of learning) that full awareness was reached for me. My submission speaks of the lack of knowledge of First Nations history in our education systems (at that time) and the divide between communities that still exists today. Knowledge is the beginning of understanding, of being able to step into another's shoes and walk in those shoes. I am not proud of my early ignorance, but I am proud to call myself an Ally now - always will be. I am proud that Australia has a long First Nations history and I will continue my journey to understand the place/regional history and to seek reconciliation wherever and whenever I can. I support the making of Treaty/Treaties.

END