

Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission**From: Jesse John Lee Fleay (Warlitje Moodjarluk)****Dated: 18 November 2024****Submission:**

As a Noongar man who has commenced internal migration to Narm from my ancestral Whadjuk Noongar Boodja homelands in Western Australia, I can speak to the certainty that Victoria's social and economic prosperity relies on the continuation of this Yoorrook Justice Commission for at least another 30 years. Coming from a State which refuses to enter into treaty negotiations or establish a First Peoples' Assembly--and having witnessed the Queensland Government dissolve its own attempt at initiating a Truth and Justice Commission--I can speak with a renewed certainty in the process for Victoria. This process must remain, and the States and Territories must take Victoria's lead.

My submission relates to a significant lack of justice in the higher education sector. As an academic, I continue to work with the National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth, and Justice, and the United Nations' GEO7 Process. Both of these projects seek to amplify, embolden, and create more certainty in First Nations voices and knowledges nationally and internationally. A lack of support in the university sector has held First Nations academic leadership and voices, specifically. Too many non-Indigenous led faculties, schools, programs, courses, units of study; and research projects; fail to seek appropriate representation, consultation, or consent from First Nations Australians.

The Commission would be advised to look into the process by which senior academics are hired, and assigned responsibility over First Nations portfolios in the university sector, including the control of funding, grants, and awards. Members of the community are often unaware of projects with outcomes in research that will affect them, and performative 'engagement' with First Nations participants is too frequent. There are no independent regulatory bodies or officials tasked with this important accountability, and no penalty for the misuse of funds which are established to empower our community. Many First Nations academics are paid lower than their non-Indigenous counterparts. These issues must be resolved, for the benefit of the community.

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