

Submission to Yoorrook Justice Commission**From: Anonymous 1185****Dated: 14 November 2024****Submission:**

I was born in New Zealand and moved to Australia about 20 years ago. In my time in Australia I have very rarely encountered First Nations face-to-face people in contexts other than drug and alcohol affected people in the street. I find it a sad and disgraceful state of affairs that so many of the proud guardians of this land for thousands of years have been forced to exist in such degraded conditions as a result of colonialism, dispossession and genocide. I have recently been invited into a First Nations controlled space for the first time in my life in my role as an evaluator. For the first time I got to hear First Nations people telling their stories from a position of pride and strength. I can say that it was one of the most powerful and humbling experiences of my life to be able to hear their stories of how they have overcome adversity and gained the strength to reclaim connection to Culture, Community and Country. I hope that Yoorrook is the first step towards Victoria coming together in solidarity with our First Nations people to forge a better future together.

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