

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

I know that it was a violent land grab, with catastrophic impacts on First Peoples. Colonisers killed, injured, raped and stole from First Nations people. They wrote about their actions in diaries and letters. First Nations people experienced apocalyptic harm and ongoing damage through the violent occupation which followed the initial waves of colonisation. They survived, but insult was added to injury by colonial erasure and denial of First Nations people's culture, law, relationship to country and even their existence. First Nations people's children and ancestors were stolen from them by colonisers. This is still happening. The colony steals past and future. I know of these impacts but cannot imagine what it is to live and experience 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 52, Victorian all my life. At primary school I learned that First Nations people (called different, racist labels) were 'gone' and had been primitive desert nomads, but nevertheless their language and culture, suitably anglicised of course, could be taken by 'us', and used to claim our ownership of this place. Later, when I did Australian History at secondary school, in the mid 1980s, there was a token 'prehistory' section in the fronts of our textbook, which indicated that Australian history began in 1788. It was vaguely suggested through this curriculum that First Nations people had just faded away. I don't recall learning anything about colonial violence, individual First Nations people, or First Nations people since 1788. I think I learned more about First Nations culture and people from coins and banknotes than from formal education. This education was not comprehensive. It was damaging, and hard to unlearn.

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

I support Treaty, reinstatement of First Nations place names and removal of place names and monuments honouring perpetrators of colonial violence, First Nations people authoring curriculum. Reparations paid and 'crown' land returned to First Nations ownership.

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

Vote only for politicians who commit to truth-telling, treaty, self-determination. Take every opportunity to listen, learn and search our souls, and take action to decolonize our workplaces, schools, places we live, families, lives.

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

Personally I would love to see Melbourne renamed. Lord Melbourne was a truly awful person and no loss. Mandate First Nations people having significant input into all activities with historical or heritage content.

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