

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

My understanding of the colonisation of victoria and australia are one and the same, unfortunately. I'm aware of the massive scale of murder, displacement, destruction of language and culture, forced removal of children into white families to further destroy culture, and the legacy that all of the above holds today. I understand that first peoples of victoria and this country have managed to hold on to these horrific stories, and feel that enabling the truth to be told is a small, but very important step to healing.

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

I learned very little about first peoples and their history in the education system. I'm sure there was a bit there, but through my time in the system (1986-1998) not a lot was told, and not a lot was remembered (the remembering part was my fault!)

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

Steal white people's children and put them in first nations homes. Oh and pay first nations people a boat load of money in reparations. More seriously (reparations payments is totally serious) I would like to see the true history taught in schools, not just cultural artefacts, stories of dreaming, etc (these are important too), but the true, complete, and horrible history of colonisation, should be taught from early on in school. Age appropriate language should be used (e.g. don't traumatise young kids) but this must not be shied away from. The truth can be told, but to matter, it must also be heard. I would also like our governments to do more than say sorry. They must be the leaders informing the non first peoples public that their role in truth telling in listing & hearing. They must also take meaningful actions to address systemic inequalities impacting first peoples communities that stem from colonisation.

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

Read, listen and learn. Develop compassion. Challenge any biases you might have.

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

Our government leaders must do more to promote the history and culture. So much is happening at grass roots levels, and some of our younger citizens are engaging, which is great. Welcome to country at sporting events seems to be a good thing in uplifting visibility, but more needs to be driven by our leaders to ensure it is not taken as tokenism. These things must lead to greater engagement.

END