

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

I was not born in Victoria but since moving here have progressively learned more about its history from multiple sources - written histories, oral histories, exhibitions, displays and places of cultural significance. A few particular things I'd like to note are: - I found the First Australians series to be profoundly moving and informative, especially regarding the story of William Barak, Simon Wonga and Coranderrk. - living in Central Victoria I have appreciated the leadership and generosity of the Dja Dja Wurrung people in sharing their history and culture, particularly as expressed through the work of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. - each January 26 we have made it a family commitment to learn something about the colonisation of this country. This may include visiting and acknowledging massacre sites, missions, participating in First Nations community events or acts of resistance, or other places of cultural significance that are promoted to settler communities. - I found the book 1835 by James Boyce to be a very accessible text that powerfully connected the story of the colonisation of Luruwita with Victoria. This helped to dispel the myth of John Batman as someone who was seriously interested in treaty and protecting the interests of First Peoples. - I have appreciated participating in cultural learning through the Koori Heritage Trust, Bundjilaka at Melbourne Museum and on Country learning, such as tours of Budj Bim. - I am constantly struck, as I travel across regional Victoria, by the rock cairns marking the route of settler explorer Thomas Mitchell. There is a different story, an ancient and continuing story of First Peoples in this land that should be imprinted more boldly than these markers of colonisation.

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

Because I did not grow up in Victoria I cannot comment on the school curriculum for myself. However, I think that learning for my children has improved from when I attended school. They acknowledge Country, they progressively learn about history and culture at a general level and increasingly are learning about the histories of local areas through traditional owner groups. But, it is by no means comprehensive and can significantly improve. It is a history and culture that enriches us all, and we should be privileged to learn about it.

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

Treaty with the State Government and more localised treaties, that respect and promote First Peoples cultures and transfer power and authority to support self-determination. I would like to see Jan 26 replaced with a different date, that celebrates First Peoples or celebrates our coming together after a struggle, Makarata or marking a Treaty making day here in Victoria. I would like to see curriculum improved in schools and a breadth or foundational learning subject introduced into TAFE and University courses. Cultural sites should be well protected and where appropriate, celebrated by the wider community. More traditional language should be used on Country for place names, to replace place names or introduce dual names.

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

By making a submission to Yoorrook. By participating in local story telling / exchanges within local areas. By learning about the treaty making processes and speaking with their families and friends about it to reduce distrust and dispel misinformation. By supporting the transfer of resources and power to begin to reestablish an independent resource base for First Peoples and support self-determination.

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

'- School events/curricula - University/Tafe curricula - Cultural festivals, events, displays, statues/place marker

END