

TO Professor Adam Shoemaker
Vice Chancellor
Victoria University
vice-chancellor@vu.edu.au

23 JANUARY 2024

Dear Vice Chancellor

Yoorrook Justice Commission | Tertiary Education sector inquiries

We act as the Solicitors Assisting the Yoorrook Justice Commission (**Yoorrook**).

1 The Yoorrook Justice Commission

Yoorrook is a Victorian Royal Commission, established in May 2021 by the State of Victoria and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria under the *Inquiries Act 2014* (Vic) (**Inquiries Act**).

Its Letters Patent, containing the Terms of Reference, are accessible [here](#).

Yoorrook is Australia's first formal truth-telling commission, tasked with inquiring into and reporting on historical and ongoing systemic injustices perpetrated by State and non-State entities against First Peoples within the State of Victoria since the start of colonisation.

It is currently set to run until June 2025, with a report to be delivered in December 2024.

2 Yoorrook's inquiry into Tertiary Education sector

Yoorrook delivered its first interim report, *Yoorrook with Purpose* (accessible [here](#)), in June 2022.

Yoorrook then delivered its report on the child protection and criminal justice systems, *Yoorrook for Justice* (accessible [here](#)), in August 2023.

Yoorrook is currently inquiring into Land Injustice, Education, Health and Housing, and has published a series of Issues Papers, accessible [here](#).

Yoorrook's inquiries into Education include a specific investigation into Tertiary Education. The relevant Tertiary Education Issues Paper is accessible [here](#).

3 Request for Information

To support its inquiries into Tertiary Education, Yoorrook would be assisted by written responses from your University (**the University**) to the questions set out in **Annexure 1** to this letter by no later than Friday 8 March 2024.

To support Yoorrook's preparations for planned hearings, roundtables and other evidence gathering processes in April 2024, we would be grateful if in providing the responses you would please:

- (1) Cross-reference and enclose any relevant documents that would assist Yoorrook in its inquiries;

- (2) Identify individuals within the University capable of speaking to (or clarifying / expanding upon, as relevant) the various responses (if required);
- (3) Clarify whether the individuals nominated in (2) would be prepared to participate in planned hearings and roundtables, possibly alongside representatives of other Universities; and
- (4) Clearly identify any confidential information within the responses and documents provided.

For completeness, we confirm that whilst the University's co-operation with the enclosed requests is voluntary:

- Yoorrook (at its discretion) may publish this letter, together with the responses received, as part of its ongoing inquiries; and
- In the event that reasonable assistance is not provided, Yoorrook may consider exercising its powers under the Inquiries Act to obtain information on the specified matters (including possibly to compel the production of documents, or the attendance of witnesses).

Please contact us should you have any questions or wish to further discuss.

Yours faithfully

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ANNEXURE | YOORROOK'S REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS	
	For questions 1 - 5 please see Attachment - Yoorrook Commission Victoria University student data 20240313.xlsx
1	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, in relation to First Nations students enrolled at the University, provide an overview of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enrolment numbers (in EFTSL): and b. Completion rates (and results); <p>including as a proportion of all students.</p>
2	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, in relation to First Nations students enrolled at the University, provide a breakdown of demographics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Age; b. Gender; and c. Whether Victorian-based prior to commencing study (i.e. whether they have travelled / moved from interstate to study at the University).
3	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, describe the level of study undertaken by First Nations students at the University:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pre-degree; b. Undergraduate; c. Postgraduate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Graduate Diploma; ii. Masters; iii. PhD, <p>including whether by research or coursework.</p>



4	For pre-degree, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in social work, nursing, medicine, law and education, describe: a. The year that the University had its first First Nations graduate; and
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
	b. The number of First Nations graduates in 2023.
5	For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an overview of the number of First Nations students enrolled in each of the below fields of study (or other relevant breakdown adopted by the University): a. Agriculture and agritech; b. Architecture, construction and planning; c. Business, management and entrepreneurship; d. Creative arts and design; e. Engineering, automation and technology; f. Environmental sciences and sustainability; g. Health, medicine, psychology; h. Information technology and computing; i. Law and paralegal studies; j. Media and communications; k. Personal care and fitness; l. Sciences and mathematics; m. Society, culture and humanities; n. Teacher education and training; o. Travel, tourism and hospitality; and p. Veterinary medicine, including as a proportion of all students enrolled in that field of study.



6	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of alternative entry pathways offered by the University for First Nations prospective students in the study areas nominated in response to paragraph [5].</p> <p>VU Guaranteed</p> <p>VU Guaranteed (VUG) is a Victoria University (VU) program which provides a guaranteed place at VU for Victorian Year 11 and 12 students. Entry into the program works alongside course preferences within the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC). VUG is designed to reduce the stress of course preferences, exams and various challenges that entail senior years of secondary school studies. The program provides expert advice to secondary students to ensure they receive information efficiently related to their course preferences, conditional course offers, access to exclusive scholarships, grants and other relevant resources at the University.</p> <p>Moondani Balluk - Indigenous Academic Unit at Victoria University collaborates with the VU Future Students team, who manage the program, to gain access to a list of First Nations VUG applicants. This collaboration allows us to pro-actively contact First Nations applicants to provide follow up information on First Nations financial, academic, pastoral and pathway support at the University. This collaboration has resulted in over 40 First Nations students accepting a course offer via VUG since being established in 2021. Furthermore, successful applicants can also access the VU First Nations Fund, an additional layer of financial support delivered to First Nations applicants who enrol in a course at Victoria University.</p> <p>Dual sector institution</p> <p>As a dual sector institution that offers both higher education (HE) and vocational programs (VE), Victoria University offers many registered pathways that offer an easy transition between courses at different levels. Examples of pathways include completion of a Diploma of Nursing which allows entry into the second year of a Bachelor of Nursing and completion of an Advanced Diploma of Legal Practice to allow entry into a Bachelor of Laws. Furthermore, Moondani Balluk aids and enabling programs to both First Nations HE and VE students that may be within relevant pathways, which includes, but is not limited to, payment of course materials, scholarships, tutoring, and general assistance navigating the University 'system'.</p> <p>VU Aboriginal Admissions Program</p> <p>Establishment of the Victoria University Moondani Balluk Aboriginal Admission Program in, a priority access program to support access to all levels of education and to increase participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at VU. The program is designed to assess an applicant's capacity to study at tertiary level in their preferred area of study through a non-ATAR, non-competitive selection and informal process. Through collaboration with Admissions, the program went live in late 2022, which included a public webform and draft operating procedure.</p>
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION



7	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, in relation to First Nations-specific pre-degree courses offered by the University, provide an overview of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Total number of students who completed the pre-degree courses; and b. Rate of entry of those students into undergraduate degree courses. <p>For the period, Victoria University did not and currently does not offer any First Nations-specific, pre-degree courses.</p>
8	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of key First Nations-specific modes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Course delivery; or b. Student support, <p>offered by the University, including the period in which each relevant mode was in place, and any external funding sources to support these services.</p> <p>Victoria University Block Model</p> <p>Victoria University commenced an extensive body of work in 2017 to improve success and retention rates of all students. This included the move to the new First Year Model in 2018, now known as the VU Block Model. Over recent years the University has been progressively investing in the first-year experience to improve our students' ability to successfully transition into and succeed in higher education. This has included substantial curriculum reform and a systematic approach to student engagement and support.</p> <p>The VU Block Model is designed to provide integrated personal support and guidance to students. A key feature of the learning model is delivery in a 'block mode' where students study subjects sequentially, rather than concurrently, in small and interactive group learning. The implementation of block mode in an increase of Indigenous student unit success rate jump to 87% from a 2017 rate of 59%. VU extended the block mode of teaching across all undergraduate and postgraduate courses by the end of 2020.</p> <p>Since Block Model delivery has been introduced, it has cut the fail rate of first year students by around 40%, with improvements being higher for students from low SES backgrounds, with fail grades reducing by 45.6% and 46.4% respectively. The unit failure rate among all students declined by 9.2 percentage points between the most recent pre-Block (2017) and post-Block (2019) cohorts, with the equity students' fail rate declining by 9.8 percentage points over this time.</p> <p>Student support</p> <p>Moondani Balluk provides various financial, academic, and pastoral support to all enrolled First Nations students, depending on their wants and needs - via the Indigenous Student Success Program.</p> <p><i>Financial</i></p>



Payment of textbooks, stationery and any other course materials
 Transport costs (Public transport - Myki, etc.)
 Providing laptops on loan for students
 Moondani Balluk student grants (granted on a case by case basis)
 Gifts and rewards for students who have graduated or are achieving a high academic standard
 Scholarships (VU Indigenous Commonwealth scholarships)
 Payment of various administration costs for on campus student accommodation
 Providing emergency funding via grocery gift cards
 Assistance with miscellaneous costs which impacts capacity and ability to study

Academic

Access to individual tutors via Moondani Balluk within a flexible tutoring arrangement that is student friendly.
 General guidance with accessing various academic resources, such as referencing guides and VU Library resources.
 Access to Moondani Balluk's Student Mentoring program as previously mentioned.
 Where needed, general study support provided by the Aboriginal Student Support Coordinator, such as proof-reading essays.
 Providing technical support and the usage of particular platforms related to studies, Powerpoint presentations, formatting assignments, MyVU Student Portal, VU Collaborate, etc
 Navigation of the university system, which may include elements such as course advice, enrolment, timetabling, referral to other University services, etc.

Pastoral

Available to meet at all Victoria University campuses where students are located, whether that is campuses with Moondani Balluk spaces (Footscray Park, St Albans, Footscray Nicholson, Sunshine) or not. This contact also includes face to face, remote meetings, phone calls and emails.
 Ensuring students are cognisant of relevant local Aboriginal and mainstream services and organisations that may help to give students a sense of belonging and connection.
 Helping to link in with both internal and external additional student support services where required, such as Advocacy, Accessibility Services and Course and Unit Advisors.
 General progress meetings, "catch ups" with students to address progress and where needed implement any further supports as outlined above.
 Student engagement - eg. Student lunches, events, and activities.

Victoria University First Nations Fund

The VU First Nations Fund is an additional layer of financial support that aids with unique costs related to studies and/or activities that enrich the student experience at the University. The Fund is a philanthropic program with various internal and external donors generously donating funds to support the delivery of the First Nations Fund, managed by a committee involving Moondani Balluk and Advancement staff.



	<p>The Fund provides three-tiered multi-purpose grants of up to \$10,000 (one off or multiple years, granted on a case-by-case basis) to enable full participation by First Nations students. Smallest grants (\$250-\$500) to encourage aspiration in prospective students by connecting them with tertiary study before they leave school, including VU Guaranteed applicants who accept a course offer at VU. Medium level grants (\$1,250-\$2,500) to support participation in conferences, field work, accommodation, sporting competitions or overseas study. Largest grants (\$5,000-\$10,000) to further support postgraduate students to with costs related to research.</p>
9	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of key surveys (or other feedback processes) conducted by the University in relation to First Nations students' engagement and support within the University, including a description of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> When and how conducted; Numbers of participants; Key themes in feedback; and Any actions taken by the University in response. <p>In February 2024, Moondani Balluk alongside the Vice Chancellor hosted a VU Student Focus - First Nations Action Plan Consultation Session involving students providing feedback on their experiences at the University. 5 students participated and key themes included cultural safety in classrooms, a sense of belonging and student support initiatives. The University will take this feedback on board to implement in the wider Moondani Balluk First Nations Action Plan which guides our work.</p> <p>In 2022 Moondani Balluk worked with Honours psychology students to design and share a survey with all 150 Aboriginal enrolled higher education students. The survey aimed to understand how our students accessed support or services at the university. Key themes from responses showed that Aboriginal students knew about and preferred to access Moondani Balluk support services and programs. A further workshop based on survey responses was held with a lack of presence by the 30 students who responded to the survey.</p>
10	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an overview of any complaints made by First Nations students in relation to racism, lack of cultural understandings and inadequate support at the University, including a summary and explanation of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of complaints received; How the complaints were managed; and The outcome of the complaints. <p>For the period and to the best of our knowledge, Victoria University did not receive any formal complaints of this nature.</p>
STAFF	



11	For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide a breakdown of First Nations staff (as EFTSL): a. Academic staff;
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
	b. Professional staff; and c. Other staff; including (in each case) as a percentage of all staff. Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 11-12
12	For the period 1 January 2018 to present, for the First Nations staff identified in response to paragraph [11], provide a breakdown of employment status i.e.: a. Permanent; b. Contract; or c. Casual; including (in each case) as compared to all staff. Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 11-12
13	In relation to First Nations Professional staff currently employed by the University, provide a breakdown of the areas of the university in which they work. Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 13
14	In relation to First Nations Academic staff currently employed by the University, provide a breakdown of the numbers employed in each of the fields of study identified in response to paragraph [5] above, including: a. As a percentage of the total number of academic staff employed in that field of study; and b. An indication of whether they are employed to undertake research only or teaching and research.



	Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 14
15	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of training and/or programs available at the University for non-Indigenous staff in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cultural awareness, safety and/or competence; and b. Indigenous knowledge recognition, <p>including an explanation of whether each unit of training or program is compulsory, and the completion rates by non-Indigenous staff (broken down by the level of staff and University executive).</p> <p>Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 15-17</p>
16	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of surveys conducted in relation to First Nations staff engagement and support within the University, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. When and how conducted;
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Numbers of participants; c. Key themes in feedback; and d. Any actions taken by the University in response. <p>Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 15-17</p>
17	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an overview of complaints made by First Nations staff in relation to racism, lack of cultural understandings and inadequate support, including a description of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of complaints received; b. How the complaints were managed; and c. The outcome of the complaints. <p>Please see Excel spreadsheet titled <i>YoorrookJusticeCommissionStaff.xlsx</i> Tab 15-17</p>



RESEARCH	
18	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an overview of any First Nations research strategy (or strategies) in place within the University, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How developed (including any input obtained from First Nations staff, students, or stakeholders); Key activities undertaken; and Outcomes recorded. <p>In November 2017, the VU Bathelmun Yalingwa (Shine Bright) Strategy 2017 - 2020 was launched. This Strategy was designed through consultations with all Moondani Balluk staff and some Aboriginal enrolled students. The Action Plan associated with this Strategy was endorsed by the then VC Indigenous Leadership Strategy Committee and included the following research actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop and commit to an Aboriginal Research and Research Training Strategy, ensuring the growth and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in higher degrees by research (HDR) participation and success, and Position VU's research activities and strengths to inform and advance knowledge in areas, issues, and causes of relevance to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. <p>To implement the above actions the university established the Indigenous Participation Strategy Research Working Group, renamed to Bathelmun Yalingwa Research Working Group in 2018 that continues to meet quarterly to monitor and advise on outcomes, continually design relevant actions, and evaluate performance. This Working Group is chaired by the DVC Research & Impact and has membership from VU Research, VU Advancement, Moondani Balluk, the Aboriginal History Archive (AHA), and postgraduate students.</p> <p>The university continues to support the following research outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AHA space infrastructure, IT allocations, ARC and external research grant assistance. Lisa Belleair and Gary Foley PhD scholarships, RTP in postgraduate study. Postgraduate coursework units Aboriginal curriculum and research content delivered by Moondani Balluk academics. ICIP design
19	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of alternative pathways into research higher degrees offered by the University for First Nations students (i.e. residential intensive courses).</p> <p>The university does not have an alternative pathway into research higher degrees. Paul Ramsay Foundation funding (2022) has been granted to the AHA to grow postgraduate and postdoctoral places for First Nations students. This funding includes Intern positions that have enabled the established a small cohort of First Nation VU undergraduate students who will be encouraged to pursue postgraduate study.</p>



20	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of whether any research monies within the University are dedicated towards addressing Traditional Owner priorities and, if so, how those monies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allocated; b. Reported upon, <p>including in each case to the Traditional Owner groups directly.</p> <p>The VU RISE program, funded via State Government 2021 - 2022, established sixteen specific research projects across the university.</p> <p>One of these was dedicated towards understanding water management in the Werribee River Catchment area that included work to help understand Traditional Owner water cultural values and scoping relevant Victorian Water Authority protocols and engagement. The grant for this project was allocated to a team of researchers that included Moondani Balluk staff. The budget and project expenditure included expenditure items specifically to Traditional Owner organisations to engage in consultations in the project, and to enable water researchers at VU to being to create relationships with Traditional Owner water officers. A final report of the project was provided to State Government as required in the university funding agreement.</p> <p>Because of the short-term nature of this project, Traditional Owners with limited capacity could not participate for any length of time, were engaged with other universities in other research projects, or began relationship meetings that could not be continued.</p>
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
CURRICULUM	



21	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of any First Nations-specific units included within the University's courses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social Work; b. Nursing; c. Medicine; d. Law; e. Police; f. Ambulance; g. Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Early Years; ii. Primary; and iii. Secondary, <p>including copies of unit outlines, and an explanation of whether the relevant units are compulsory for students in the relevant courses.</p> <p>Victoria University does not deliver courses in Medicine or vocational training to Police. We do provide the Course in Policing Recruitment Pathway, and work with the Jesuit Social Services to recruit First Nations students into the Victoria Police Aboriginal Diversity Recruitment Program (flyer attached for more information).</p> <p>As background, VU established our First Year College (FYC) in 2017 that completely reshaped nearly 200 first-year courses across all disciplines, at the same time as implementing the Block Model. During 2018 the Moondani Balluk Bachelor of Arts (Kynandoo) undergraduate program was de-established due to falling numbers of enrolled Aboriginal students. Units from this course were reformed into Unit Sets and Course Units. The link to Unit Sets and Course Units provides information on which courses these First Nations specific units are included in, whether they are a compulsory component for students in their courses which also includes a unit outline. Note that VU does not currently have First Nations specific units in Law or Ambulance courses. The university has recently signed a partnership agreement with Ambulance Victoria and further discussion will occur regarding curriculum content and Moondani Balluk delivery in Paramedicine course delivery in 2024.</p>
LEADERSHIP	



22	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of the highest position First Nations leadership position within the University:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Name(s); Level, <p>including in reference to an Organisational Chart.</p> <p>At 2018 Moondani Balluk Indigenous Academic Unit was led by Karen Jackson, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung as Director. This position reported to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-President Prof Marcia Devlin. The position of Director was renamed as Associate Provost in 2019. In September 2020 our new Vice Chancellor Prof Adam Shoemaker commenced, Prof Devlin exited VU, and the Associate Provost reported to Provost (interim) and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Corinne Reid. In September 2021 the position was renamed to Executive Director and reported directly to the Vice Chancellor Prof Shoemaker. This reporting line continues and Ms Jackson was the incumbent for all this time. The current VU organisational chart is available here.</p> <p>Prof Peter Radoll, Anaiwan, was appointed to the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, People and Organisation in 2022. In 2023 his position changed to Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity, Indigenous and Inclusion. Prof Radoll exited VU in December 2023.</p>
23	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide a description of upper leadership accountabilities in relation to First Nations students.</p> <p>For all the named positions listed above in question 22 on the senior leadership position of Moondani Balluk, the incumbents position description overall purpose states that it “is a key leadership role responsible for institutional policy, strategy and advice in relation to all aspects of Indigenous higher education at VU”. With reference to First Nations students, this position is accountable to State Government (Wurreker) and Commonwealth Government (Indigenous Student Support Program) annual reporting on student access, retention, and progression. Moondani Balluk’s Executive Director is accountable to ensuring cultural safety, pastoral care, and the provision of financial assistance for First nations students enrolled in any VU program.</p> <p>The Director of Student Services ensures First Nations student matters are handled with Moondani Balluk Aboriginal student support officers. The Deans of Colleges formerly met through regular Deans’ meetings with the DVC Prof Devlin which the Executive Director also attended and formed part of the previous Indigenous Leadership Strategy Committee and were accountable for implementation of Bathelmun Yalingwa actions related to teaching and student recruitment. Recent changes to student portfolio’s and College management mean that the new First Nations Action Plan will outline high-level objectives and operational plans for upper leadership accountabilities for First nations students.</p>
24	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, in relation to the individual(s) identified in response to paragraph [22] above, provide an explanation of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant committees of which they are a member;
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who they report to in respect of these responsibilities (including, where appropriate, in reference to an Organisational Chart); and Their decision-making powers in the case of First Nations students. <p>From 2018, the Executive Director (and its previously named positions) has been and/or continues to be a member of the following VU committees, with reporting lines in brackets: Academic Board (University Council), Research and Research Training Committee (Academic Board), Vice Chancellor’s Indigenous</p>



	<p>Leadership Committee (Vice Chancellor), Provost Leadership Group (Provost), Senior Leadership Group (Vice Chancellor), Vice Chancellor's Group (Vice Chancellor), Bathelmun Yalingwa Research Working Group (DVC Research & Impact), Planetary Health Steering Committee (Provost, Research).</p> <p>Academic Board - within it's Terms of Reference one of the specific functions of Academic Board is to "monitor and provide advice on polices and procedures that are intended to support participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensure sensitivity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures". This function replicates the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 (HESF) 6.2 (1g).</p> <p>Academic Board and the Research and Research Training Committee (RRTC) must also comply with HESF 2.2 (2) that requires the university to give "specific consideration to the recruitment, admission, participation and completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples". The RRTC is a sub-committee of Academic Board. Academic Board reports to University Council.</p> <p>The VC Indigenous Leadership Committee, Provost Leadership Group, Planetary Health Steering Committee have all been replaced by the VC Group (VCG). The VCG consists of the University Executive staff.</p>
25	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of the key accountability measures in place at the University in relation to First Nations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students; Staff; Individuals within the broader Victorian community; and Traditional Owners of the lands on which the University has campuses and facilities. <p>Regarding students and staff accountability measures the VU Human Research Ethics Committee places strict guidelines in our ethics applications on the ways in which research projects engage with, create and make equal partnerships with, inform, and report back on research results with First Nations people and communities. These research applications must also provide a final ethics report detailing any changes to agreed ethical approaches. Moondani Balluk and the Aboriginal History Archive frame all of their research projects, that include both staff and students, in the premise of community control and self-determination to ensure accountability to First Nations people.</p> <p>The university has mandatory online training that has been in place since 2018. The Yulendj Wurrung package was designed and made by Moondani Balluk and reflects our community and political standpoints. Its aim is to broaden VU staff in historical and contemporary issues for First Nations peoples in Victoria.</p> <p>Under the Protecting Country pillar of our Strategic Plan 2022 - 2028 the Vice Chancellor made a commitment to collaborate with Traditional Owners of the lands on which our campuses are located. In meeting this commitment letters from the VC have been sent to Wurundjeri Woiwurrung and Bunurong Registered Aboriginal Parties to engage in dialogue on opportunities for collective knowledge sharing and potential land use. From 2018 - 2021 the university committed to the implementation of the Bathelmun Yalingwa Strategy to engage with all Aboriginal people and communities, particularly in the west of Melbourne.</p>



26	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, provide an explanation of interaction and/or engagement between the University and Traditional Owners of the land on which the University has campuses and facilities in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recognising Traditional Owners' relationship with the land; b. Truth-telling; c. Proposed works and developments of the University; and d. Day-to-day operations.
27	<p>For the period 1 January 2018 to present, describe any relevant agreements between the University and Traditional Owner groups - for example, in relation to support for operations, use of facilities etc.</p> <p>None signed at this stage. Early meetings held; not fruitful as yet.</p>
UNIVERSITIES AS BENEFICIARIES OF COLONISATION / TRUTH-TELLING	
28	<p>Provide an explanation of the date(s) and circumstances in which the key lands on which the University's campuses and facilities are situated came to be granted to or acquired by the University.</p> <p>The original transfer of land from the Victorian Institute of Technology to the Victoria University of Technology (VUT) was executed in section 56 and 57 of the Victoria University of Technology Act 1990. The Act refers to specific certificates in the Registry of Titles and then transfers the land to VUT. There were three areas of land without a certificate of title and the Act ordered a certificate to be issued to VUT. The Certificates of Title and the three areas of land without certificates transferred to VUT are listed in the Schedule to the Act. Since then, Victoria University has purchased the former Land Titles Office and Records Building Queen St, Melbourne, to house the Law School. We have a lease arrangement on the property named City Tower located at 370 Little Lonsdale St, Melbourne.</p>
29	<p>Provide an overview of any key land grants to the University by prominent early colonisers who may have been involved in (or encouraged, tolerated, or benefited from) violence against First Peoples.</p> <p>It is our understanding that this university has not received any land grants from prominent early colonisers.</p>
30	Provide an overview of the key history of the establishment and operations of the University as it relates to First Peoples, including any history of:
NO	REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Land grants for limited or no consideration; b. Teaching or conducting research based upon racist premises (e.g. eugenics, terra nullius); and c. Holding or acquiring First Peoples' ancestral remains.



	<p>Land grants to the university were made through the <i>Victoria University of Technology Act 1990</i> that specifies the land use is provided for educational purposes. The Western Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (WMIT), which began in various iterations from 1965; would have been granted State Government lands and building from which to operate for educational purposes. WMIT merged with VU in 1993. Footscray Technical School, established in 1916 was also amalgamated into VU under the 1990 Act. Part 5 (f) enacts the university to “use its expertise and resources to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia in its teaching, learning, research and advancement of knowledge activities and thereby contribute to - (i) realizing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspirations; and (ii) the safeguarding of the ancient and rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. It is worth noting that on advice from Moondani Balluk, Traditional Owner organisations were not present in the west of Melbourne until the VAHC began using its powers to appoint Registered Aboriginal Parties.</p> <p>The university is not aware of any teaching in either VU TAFE or in the VU higher education division framed in racist premises or conducted any research or teaching in genetics and heredity. This is regularly monitored with the highest degree of seriousness.</p> <p>We do not hold nor have we acquired any First People’s ancestral remains.</p>
31	<p>Provide an explanation of key interactions between the University and Traditional Owner groups on which its campuses and facilities are based, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regularity and context (e.g. whether ad hoc, or routinely conducted, in accordance with relevant engagement plans, policies); At what level(s) of formal interaction and/or engagement occurs (including the level of seniority of University staff and/or executives undertaking that interaction and/or engagement); and Governance structures for the interactions and/or engagements to be reported through (including, where appropriate, in reference to an Organisational Chart). <p>As mentioned in response to Question 25, the Vice Chancellor has written to the Registered Aboriginal Parties on whose lands the university is located as an action to implement Protecting Country in our Strategic Plan 2022 - 2028. Online meetings have been held and progressed by the then DVC People & Organisation and the Executive Director Moondani Balluk. These meetings have been ad hoc in response to the capacity of these Traditional Owner groups. Advice on the progression of this action is reported to the Vice Chancellor’s Group. The current VU organisational chart is available here.</p>
OTHER	
32	Are there any other matters which the University would like to add, relevant to Yoorrook’s inquiries?