



**Treaty for  
Victoria**



Photographer - Hollie Johnson

We proudly acknowledge the First Peoples of Victoria and their unbroken and unwavering connection to Aboriginal law, lore, culture and customs. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We also recognise the ongoing enrichment Aboriginal people, culture, and communities bring to the cultural landscape of this state. We acknowledge the long-lasting, far reaching and intergenerational consequences of colonisation and dispossession. We acknowledge all those who have fought and advocated to pave the way for the rights of First Peoples.

To receive the publication in an accessible format, please email First Peoples – State Relations, Department of Premier and Cabinet, at [statetreatybranch@dpc.vic.gov.au](mailto:statetreatybranch@dpc.vic.gov.au).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may include photos, quotations and/or names of people who are deceased.

For generations, First Peoples communities and leaders have called for Treaty to acknowledge the sovereignty of First Nations and to improve the lives of First Peoples. Victorian Traditional Owners maintain that their sovereignty has never been ceded and have called for a Treaty process that delivers self-determination for Victoria's First Peoples.

### What is Treaty in Victoria?

- Treaty is the embodiment of Aboriginal self-determination. Treaty provides a path to negotiate the transfer of power and resources for First Peoples to control matters which impact their lives. Treaty is also an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of First Peoples.
- In negotiating Treaty with First Peoples, the Victorian Government is acknowledging that prior to the formation of the State of Victoria, First Peoples communities were here - practicing their own law, lore, and cultural authority.
- A Treaty is an agreement between states, nations or governments. This can include an agreement between First Peoples and governments. In Victoria, there will be one overarching Statewide Treaty and multiple local Treaties with individual Traditional Owner groups, covering matters as diverse as political representation, land and water, and economic development.
- Treaty is an opportunity to reframe how all Victorians view ourselves, our culture, and our State. Victoria's Treaties will be shaped by the social and political context of our state, and the aspirations of Victoria's First Peoples. Treaty will be based on an honest reflection of our history – one that asks for respect and courage, to listen and respond to the voices of those who have cared for this Country for thousands of years.
- Treaty will deliver long term, sustainable solutions because First Peoples will be in the driver's seat, making decisions about the matters that impact their lives.

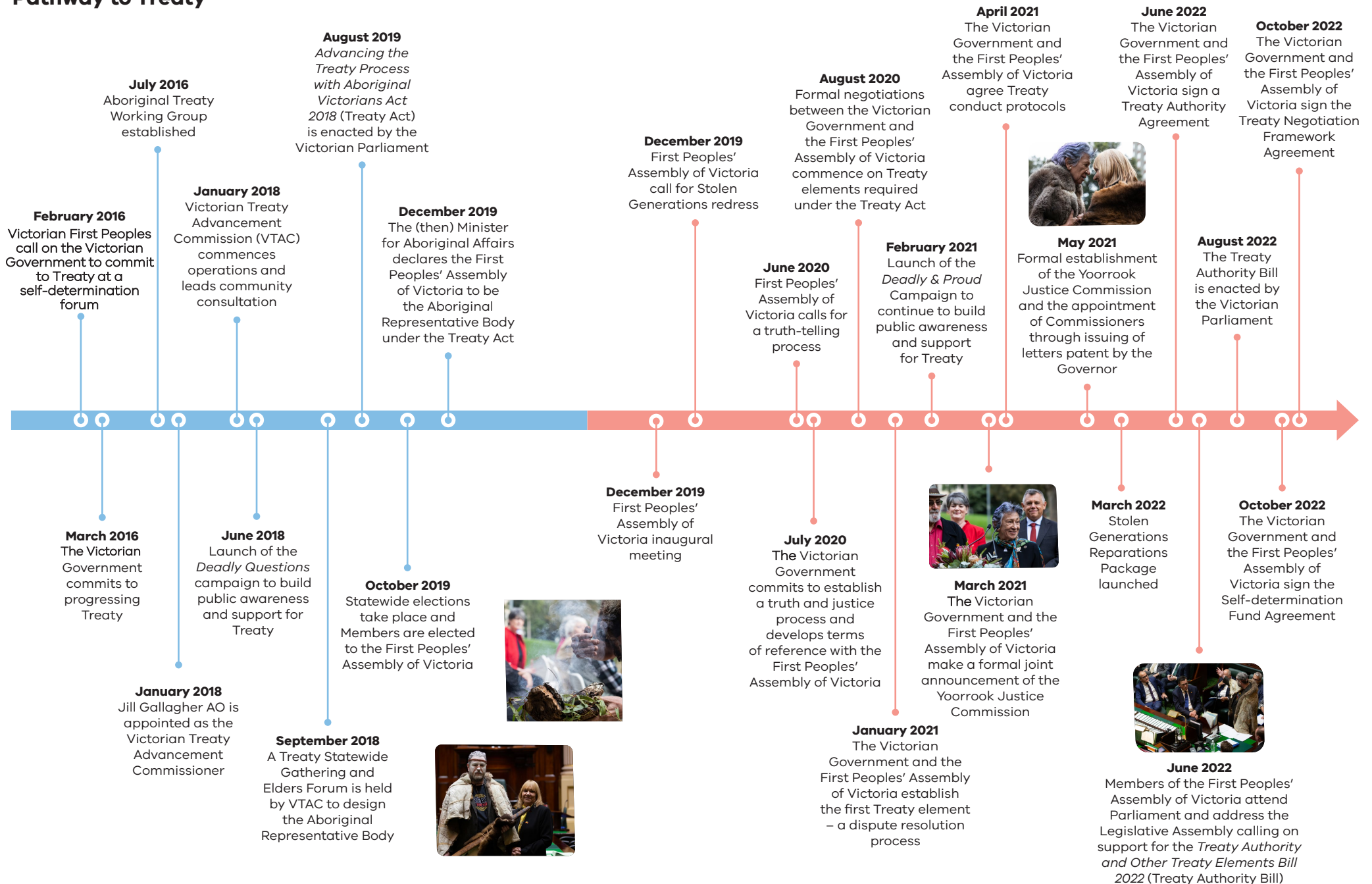
### Uluru Statement from the Heart

Victoria is the first Australian jurisdiction to commit to and action all elements of the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* - Voice, Treaty, and Truth.

In 2017, over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates gathered in Mutitjulu near Uluru and put their signatures to the historic *Uluru Statement from the Heart* - addressed to the Australian people as an invitation to work together to create a better future.

The Victoria Government supports commitment and action from all levels of government to implement the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, including the establishment of an 'Indigenous Voice to Parliament' in the Australian Constitution.

## Pathway to Treaty



PHASE ONE 2016-2019

PHASE TWO 2020-2022



### **Laws to protect Treaty**

*The Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* (Treaty Act) was enacted as Australia's first ever Treaty legislation.

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### **A representative Voice for First Peoples**

A Statewide election established the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria to represent the voice of First Peoples in the Treaty process.

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### **Truth-telling**

The Yoorrook Justice Commission is established to inquire into historic and contemporary injustices experienced by First Peoples across all areas of social, political and economic life, and the relationship between historical injustices and ongoing systemic injustices experienced today.

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### **An independent 'Treaty Umpire'**

The Treaty Authority is independent from Government and will consist of five to seven members who will oversee and facilitate Treaty negotiations. The *Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Act 2022* supports the establishment and ongoing operation of the Treaty Authority.

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### **Agreed rules and process for Treaty-making**

The Treaty Negotiation Framework sets out the process and rules for negotiating a Statewide Treaty and Traditional Owner Treaties between the State and First Peoples. The Framework establishes a Treaty process in Victoria that is inclusive and open to all First Peoples, as well as ensuring the protection of Traditional Owners with existing legal rights such as Native Title.

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### **Independent funding for Treaty negotiations**

The Self-determination Fund will provide First Peoples, including Traditional Owners, with a financial resource, independent from the State, to achieve 'equal standing' in Treaty negotiations. The Self-determination Fund will also build capacity, wealth and prosperity for First Peoples.

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### **Treaty negotiations commence**

With these elements in place, Treaty negotiations can now commence. The Treaty Authority, once operational, will support First Peoples groups to register for Treaty negotiations and will invite the State to join Treaty negotiations.

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First Peoples—  
State Relations

