



**First Speech by Jordan Edwards
Inaugural Meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria**

10 December 2019

[Member spoke in language] Hello. My name is Jordan Kamara Edwards—my skin name Kamara from Aranda. I belong to the Keerraywurrung, Peek Woorroong, Waddawurrung and Aranda language groups. We meet here on Bunjil's country. I pay my respects to the sky spirits, the water spirits, the land spirits. I pay my respects to the Boon Wurrung and their ancestors and their country; I pay my respects to the Woiwurrung and their ancestors and their country—and I thank them all for being here and allowing me to be here. And I thank all my Elders and all the Elders that are here today.

I also [Member spoke in language] that raised me.

All my people since colonisation have screamed for treaty, and now the chance is finally here. But I feel the lack of love for this process, and I feel the lack of distrust in this process from all of our community. I feel the lack of blackness in this process on all levels, including holding this meeting in this chamber. A meeting of this magnitude should have been out in the scrub, in the bush, on country. But I understand that we are taking this place back. Another conversation is where we were going to have it, but I think that should have been up for all of us to discuss.

I also see the hope in this process to finally make a change for our people, but only if we eliminate everybody's egos and self-agendas. We are not government. We do not have to act like them. We do not have to be like them. We start to put our laws and our culture as equal and ahead of the colonisers. [Member spoke in language] Thank you.

