



**First Speech by Robert Ogden
Inaugural Meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria**

10 December 2019

Thank you. First of all I would like to pay my respects to my Elders, past and present, and everyone's Elders all around Victoria and everyone here today. I also want to pay respect to my mother, my partner, Leanne, and my family for their ongoing love and support. I would also like to thank Uncle Shane and Aunty Di for their welcome and their wise words today. I also want to pay respect to the Commissioner and the treaty working group that have done a great job to get us where we are here today.

I hope through this process we can honour our ancestors and pave the way for a future and make sure that the atrocities of the past never happen again. I hope we can listen to the aspirations of Victoria's First Peoples and find solutions to issues that have plagued us, plagued our people, since colonisation. We will have our differences, but we must at least try to work together for an outcome. I am committed to work as hard as I can to take this process as far as it can go. I want to see treaty really mean something for our people.

Aboriginal people in Victoria have ached for a change and for real outcomes for too long. We have had tokenism for many years and missed opportunity and poorly conceived policies which have worked against us. The dark stain of colonisation brought to the First People can never be removed and never be forgot. This damage will always be there with us. However, it is up to us now to take the mantle and with the people lead the change to a treaty that we can deliver. We need to listen hard and talk up strongly for a future that reconciles our past and fully addresses the issues that are critical to the First Peoples in Victoria. Achieving our long-overdue justice and rights for many wrongs of the past will be a difficult task but one we must face together and overcome. We must seize this moment and make it count now. Thank you.

