

# SAMPLE MODEL FOR THE ELDERS' VOICE: For community consultation



**First Peoples'  
Assembly of  
Victoria**

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria has been working on developing an Elders' Voice model to ensure the Assembly's work includes the guidance, wisdom, and cultural oversight of our Elders.

Since the start of 2020, the Assembly has held dedicated workshops, meetings, and discussions to develop a model that we need your input and feedback on. Over the coming months, Assembly Members and engagement staff will be reaching out to our communities to ask you what you think of this model. The model is not the final model, and we need your input to ensure it is developed and created by you, our Elders.

## Seeking feedback from Elders on establishing the Elders' Voice

We are seeking community members help to get Elders in their families to connect with the Assembly to consider the sample model for the Elders' Voice - and whether they would consider being involved in future.

## Proposed role of the Elders' Voice

### The Elders' Voice will:

- Provide guidance, wisdom, and cultural authority to the Assembly to strengthen its decisions
- Provide strong and transparent cultural oversight to ensure the integrity of the Assembly, including upholding cultural lore
- Act as a conduit to share the views of other Elders and local Elders' groups as needed, including raising issues impacting their communities, to ensure they feel their voice is heard and they are meaningfully contributing to the Treaty process
- Support the Assembly in communicating information about the Treaty process and Assembly decisions back to local Elders groups and the wider community.

### The Assembly will:

- Ensure that the Elders' Voice is treated with the respect and esteem that reflect Elders' position within our communities.
- Consider the guidance of the Elders' Voice and ensure the contributions of the Elders' Voice are heard and responded to accordingly and respectfully.
- Be accountable to the Elders' Voice in how they use the Elders' guidance.

### In performing their roles, the Assembly will:

- Engage with the Elders' Voice including inviting representatives of the Elders' Voice to attend Assembly meetings as required.
- Seek written or verbal guidance from the Elders' Voice, provided this does not place an undue burden on the Elders' Voice.
- Attend meetings of the Elders' Voice as requested.
- invite members of the Elders' Voice to participate in negotiations with the State as necessary.



- The Elders' Voice will be provided with secretariat support to undertake its role.
- The structure of the Elders' Voice will be reviewed periodically.

## Proposed meetings of the Elders' Voice

- The meeting schedule of the Elders' Voice will be agreed by the Elders' Voice at the start of each year based on the meeting schedule of the Assembly Chamber.
- Subject to the above, the Elders' Voice will seek to meet before each Assembly Chamber meeting to provide guidance to inform the Assembly's decision making. This would take place approximately four times a year.
- The Elders' Voice may also provide reports to the Assembly on the Assembly's decisions and provide advice and recommendations outside of the meeting schedule.
- The Committee has also recommended consideration be given to holding a larger Elders gathering once a year. This will be informed further by consultations with Elders.

## Proposed structure and size of the Elders' Voice

- The Elders' Voice should be inclusive of representation from across Victoria and be respectful of the work of self-determined, existing Elders groups across the State.
- The Elders' Voice composition will include existing Elders groups and representatives from communities without established Elders groups.
- There should be a minimum number of members to ensure regional representation across Victoria, whilst avoiding reaching an unsustainable number of Elders.
- To achieve the above, the Voice will be open to representatives from each existing Elders group as well as additional representatives from each regional voting region and from the metropolitan voting region.
- There should be a gender balance on the Elders' Voice.
- Members of the Elders' Voice will elect a male and female Co-Chair.

## Proposed membership of the Elders' Voice

- The Assembly will not adopt a definition of Elder. Instead, the Elders' Voice, once established, will consider if they wish to define who an Elder is, or continue with self-identification.
- The Elders' Voice will be open to representatives from each existing Elders group as well as additional representatives from each voting region.
- For example, this may be two members from each non-metro voting region and four from the metropolitan voting region. This will likely amount to approximately 24-25 members.
- Elders from across Victoria will be invited to self-nominate to sit on the Elders' Voice.
- If more nominations are received than there are available positions on the Elders' Voice, a process will be used to elect members. For example, this could initially be a vote held by Assembly Members from that local region, or by all Assembly Members. Consideration will be given to any rules in this process to ensure a balance of representatives from different groups.
- All members of the Elders' Voice will serve a term of two years.

We want to hear from **you**, our Elders! The Assembly's Engagement Team will be reaching out over the coming months to schedule Zoom meetings to talk to Elders' Groups and individuals across Victoria.

Let us know how we can support you in this process to have your say.

You may also be interested in nominating for the inaugural Elders' Voice in the future.

Call **1800 TREATY** (1800 87 32 89) or email **engagement@firstpeoplesvic.org**.