

Meet the Assembly Metropolitan



Esmerelda (Esme) Bamblett (G)

Bangerang, Wiradjuri, and Taungurung

I carry within me the image of my grandparents and am reminded of the struggles they overcame to survive in a land where they were dispossessed of Country, language and a culture that was thousands of years old. But I also think about the legacy they passed on—strength, resilience, purpose and a passionate desire to fight for our rights no matter what adversity we may face.



Muriel Bamblett (G)

Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Boon Wurrung

This Treaty will give Victoria the opportunity to turn the page of history towards a future where we are included in the affairs of our land on our Country within the polity of Victoria, something we have never had. All Victorians will share in the richness of a strong Aboriginal footprint, with a shared commitment to righting the wrongs of the past. I look forward to working towards a brighter future for our communities and our peoples.



Rueben Berg (G)

Gunditjmara

My family give me strength and wisdom from the past and hope for the future. I am hopeful this process will bring communities together, that it will bring our Aboriginal community closer together, that it will bring our community closer with all Victorians, that this will empower our people now and in the future to give us control of our lives, communities, lands and waters. But I do not expect this to be easy.



Dr Carolyn Briggs (G)

Boon Wurrung

We must reclaim [our] voice and use it to continue to protect our heritage. We need to ensure that it is our voice that is heard; it is not just the voices of governments and bureaucrats. But we want to fight for a genuine Treaty, and that will only ever be achieved when our voice is heard and respected.



Matthew Burns (G)

Taungurung

I wish to see sovereignty enshrined in all levels of law within the State of Victoria. Specifically the state has responsibility over law and order, schools, hospitals and health care, water, transport, agriculture, forests and local government, and I can see so many things within all those areas that require change to enable each traditional owner group, clan or mob to assert their sovereign rights on Country.



Tracey Evans (G)

Gunditjmara

Here at the table we have members of our community who have been involved in our political, economic and social struggles for as many years if not more than me. There are new leaders here, including me, who will continue to carry the firestick of hope into the future for our Elders, youth and children. We need to be stronger together to give voice to our people.

Meet the Assembly Metropolitan



Trevor Gallagher (G)
Gunditjmara

So, this is what the Assembly looks like. This is what the team at the commission have been working on over the last few years. I might ask myself: why am I here? Well, to be perfectly honest, I am not sure, but what I do know is that I am here to improve the lives of my Aboriginal brothers and sisters. That is the only thing on my agenda. What form or shape that takes remains with my community.



Ngarra Murray (G)
Wamba Wamba, Yorta
Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung,
Dhudhuroa and Wiradjuri

I stand here today as a representative of the Metropolitan Region, and I take this on with full responsibility for carrying my people's voices, initiating action and power from the ground up and being accountable and legitimate to those I represent. I want to ensure that the Treaty process upholds our rights and values and respects our kinship structures in our nations and clans.



Alister Thorpe (G)
Gunai, Yorta Yorta
and Gunditjmara

The impact of colonisation and discriminatory government policies is still felt. Our people were displaced, stolen and removed from their Country. We can only move forward together as a nation if we address the past. It is a true test of a nation's character. In this moment we have an opportunity to determine our own future, and our law must underpin everything we do.



Andrew Gardiner (R)
Wurundjeri
Woi Wurrung

We call on the State to continue to be courageous, generous, and to resource our communities according to their needs, so that we can make truly informed decisions and restorative changes. We must prove a system that works for us to progress to a better, transformative future. This opportunity is what we make it, and as the clock is ticking. I say humbly that I am pleased and honoured to walk with you on this journey.



Robert Ogden (R)
Bunurong

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.

Meet the Assembly

South East



Peter Hood (G)

Kurnai connections to Yorta Yorta, Bangerang, Taungurung and Wurundjeri

I am here to work towards better health, education, housing and justice outcomes for Aboriginal people. It has been a long time coming in this country, let alone this state. I want to see us all work together to find the common theme on what our Treaties look like for our communities and be the trailblazer for other States to look to on how we worked together to get this process done.



Troy McDonald (R)

Gunai Kurnai

I am immensely proud to be nominated by my Traditional Owner group to be a part of this first Assembly. This for me is about our waterways, it is about our air, it is about our stuff in the ground, it is about our trees, our animals and our families. I commit that I will serve our people with integrity, honesty and fairness on all levels.



Alice Pepper (G)

Yorta Yorta, Mutti Mutti, Arrernte, Gunnai, Gunditmara and Djab Wurrung

I want to advocate for my people, to magnify their voices so it is heard at the state level, to change a system that does not work for us because we have not been at the heart of the decision-making self-determining our future around everything from land, water, justice, health, wellbeing, education, economic development, healing, keeping our families together and safe, and restoring our cultural governance structures as sovereign peoples.



Kaylene Williamson (G)

Gunai Kurnai

I have been blessed to have received a good education and gained skills in understanding policies, procedures and legislation. Now it's time for me to use this for my people. I joined the Assembly to give back something to my community, to translate all the 'jargon' back to my community and help them understand it and help to put their words into fancy government language. I am honoured to represent the South East Victoria Region and the Gunai Kurnai.

Meet the Assembly

South West



Sissy Austin (G)

Gunditjmara,
Keeray Woorroong
and Djap Wurrung

I stand here today in the position of representing the South West Region. This role is not about me as an individual; it is about being a listener, a learner and a voice. I commit to being an honest voice for community, Country and everything else in between that shapes us, heals us and grows us.



Michael Bell (G)

Gunditjmara

I have worked across the region for over three decades, working on frameworks that have empowered our people in having a voice in community life. Through this Assembly I will continue the work of my Elders, who have ensured our way of life, and are present. I believe the Assembly will create a culturally appropriate framework to negotiate a Treaty for Victoria.



Jordan Edwards (G)

Gunditjmara, Arrernte
and Waddawurrung

All my people since colonisation have screamed for Treaty, and now the chance is finally here. My aspirations for Treaty are for our people and culture to be uplifted and embedded in all aspects of society. There are many things I want to achieve; the main thing is to make sure that this process will be the most culturally appropriate and best way forward for our people.



Sean Fagan (R)

Wadawurrung

I am grateful to be elected by Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, particularly my Elders. It is an honour to represent their interests, especially our children, with the hope that they may prosper in the future without having to live with struggle, poverty, trauma, dispossession and the many more disadvantages we have faced since colonisation and continue to face with the current structures.



Jamie Lowe (R)

Gunditjmara

I come here today with a message from my people, a message stick of unity, strength and reconciliation. I see Treaty making as being an incredible instrument to change the course of the lives of our First Nations people across the country, and I think that all eyes are on us down here, not only across the nation but also internationally as well.



Donna Wright (R)

Gunditjmara

I am proud to be elected the Gunditjmirring representative. At the December Chamber meeting I was in awe and inspired by the words of the young people who had spoken before me— it was very moving and powerful. I am honoured to be on the Assembly. I will act with honesty, truth and in the best interests of my Elders and community and all First Nations people.

Meet the Assembly North East



Geraldine Atkinson (G)
Bangerang and Wiradjuri

Treaties will provide Aboriginal people of Victoria with legitimate recognition as First Nations people to negotiate sustainable funding agreements, protections of heritage and cultural rights which ensures that our future generations will not have to be beggars within their own Sovereign lands. It is important that the Assembly brings our communities with us.



Nartarsha Bamblett (G)
Yorta Yorta, Gunai Kurnai,
Warlpiri and Wiradjeri

The power of who we are is inside of us – our blood, our soul, our spirits – it is in our DNA, no matter what our face looks like. I want us to know and remember we come from the lines of Aboriginal people that were prepared, that stayed prepared. We stand here together and will continue to be prepared for the challenges that face you and I.



Leanne Miller (G)
Dhulanyagen Ulupna of
the Yorta Yorta people

I would like to say I am honoured to be chosen as a candidate in the North East region by the voting public – thank you. This designing of a framework process needs energy, innovation and a strong woman's voice. This opportunity will not occur again, for us, as a community. I am excited about reinvigorating community discussions on what contents is needed in shaping what a Treaty framework shall be.



Marcus Stewart (R)
Taungurung

I stand here with an enormous responsibility but also an amazing gift. That gift is being elected by the Taungurung people and the Taungurung Elders to represent their interests in this journey towards Treaty. With this gift is an amazing opportunity. And as I look around the Chamber at all 31 representatives, I see amazing talent, I see amazing integrity and I see a fierce leadership.

Meet the Assembly

North West



Jacinta Chaplin (G)
Wadi Wadi

I must acknowledge the strength of my Elders before me and my ancestors before them. When I hear the stories of our people it makes me proud. I also acknowledge our non-Indigenous people that have stood with our Elders in the past and that stand with us today. The tracks we are creating now are the pathways and possibilities for the generations to come.



Dylan Clarke (R)
Wotjobaluk

It is time for agencies to start implementing and being held accountable across multiple sectors like education, justice, health and others. We need agreements that prioritise the reparations for the Stolen Generations to acknowledge the continued identity and connection to families and Country.



Raylene Harradine (G)
Latje Latje and
Wotjabuluk

I will undertake this role to ensure that our future generations are recognised as First Peoples of this vast country and that our children and their children's children are not only surviving but thriving in this Country... I strongly believe that as a collective we can make a difference. I look forward to embarking on this journey with fellow members of the Assembly and our wider communities across Victoria.



Melissa Jones (R)
Latje Latje and
Wotjabuluk

I have been working on native title for many years, helping traditional owners to get recognition. I am passionate about getting our youth skilled up. I want to use this opportunity as an Assembly Member to work towards the best outcomes for our people through both a state-wide Treaty and local Treaties.



Jason Kelly (G)
Mutthi Mutthi and
Wamba Wamba

We haven't had reconciliation in Australia because we haven't had the truth telling and even what's been going on around the world lately just shows how critical it is. We know the history; we know the impacts, but a lot of other Australians don't know the true effects of colonisation and what they have had on us.



Trent Nelson (R)
Dja Dja Wurrung
and Yorta Yorta

My goal is to support conversations and actions from the voice of our Traditional owners and Dja Dja Wurrung Djandak community. I will fight for the rights of our people suffering from the legacy of colonisation with my brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles on the Assembly. It's time we stand together listen to our Elders, community and younger generation to create a better future for our people that hold our Martinga Kuli murrupi (ancestors' spirit).