



**First Speech by Muriel Bamblett
Inaugural Meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria**

10 December 2019

Hi, everybody. My name is Muriel Bamblett. Can I begin by introducing myself. I am a Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Boon Wurrung woman. I am really proud to be here today because both my parents came off missions and reserves. My dad was born on Lake Tyers mission. My mum was raised on Cumeragunja [Spelling to be confirmed] when it participated in the walk-off. And how proud would they be of me? Can I acknowledge my beautiful granddaughter that is up there who has just given me a great-grandson. I am just so proud to be here.

I do want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation, and all our Elders here and our emerging leaders. Haven't we heard from some wonderful young people today? And to all my Assembly delegates, it is wonderful to be here with you today. To Jill, to the working group, to all the people that contributed. I want to acknowledge the courage and heroism of those who have gone before me. I want to acknowledge my Elder Auntie Fay Carter, who I ring up all the time and who growls at me often.

I want to acknowledge that our people have survived the harshness of mission life, that our stories, our songs, language and ceremonies are still a big part of our lives, and they live on in us. I am so proud to stand with you all as traditional owners of Victoria. Today marks a turning point in Victoria's history. But I do want to acknowledge Natalie Hutchins, Gavin Jennings and the Premier. They fought for this, and I want to acknowledge that we are in a partnership, and I want to thank them for that commitment. This is about Aboriginal day.

I believe that the treaty, or the treaties, will enable us to bring about legal certainty in the social, economic, cultural and political affairs and other issues for our people that impact on us. We want to have voice. With voice comes the right to make our own decisions, to have control over our own affairs, free from the effects of changing governments. This treaty will not work if it is just about empty words, if it is a document that fails to deliver on our rights. I aspire to a future where we no longer are the most disadvantaged, impoverished, imprisoned, culturally dislocated and where trauma and racism are addressed, where our women can live safely in their homes, where our children can grow strong in culture, on their land and in their language.

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.





**First Peoples'
Assembly of
Victoria**

To my granddaughter and daughter, for making this possum skin cloak today, I thank you very much. I am very honoured to have it in front of me. For those that voted for me, I too commit to work personally with respect and uphold the cultural rights of my people.

