First Speech by Trent Nelson
Inaugural Meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

10 December 2019

Thanks, Aunt. I would just like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we meet on today and would like to thank Aunty Di and Shane for that warm welcome—very important. My name is Trent Nelson. I am a Yorta Yorta-Dja Dja Wurrung man. I grew up in Shepparton. The Murray River runs through my veins, but also the Dja Dja Wurrung country of my grandfather runs through my veins as well. I would just like to acknowledge everyone here in this room. This is the best, I suppose, environment for us to start this conversation. We are turning this room black, and it has never been black before—really important.

I would like to acknowledge my grandparents, Priscilla James, born on Cummeragunja, Henry Harmony Nelson, born in Carisbrook, Dja Dja Wurrung country. I would also like to acknowledge [Member spoke in language]—she is up here in the audience—my Aunty, for the strength that she gives me. She puts the fire in my belly to be here, and the strength.

Interjection from gallery.

No worries, Aunt. Love you.

[Member spoke in language] is our ancestor spirit. It is what we are all here today to talk about and to be present. I am here representing Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. I am the reserve seat for that. I am here as a representative, as a conduit, from all 18 clan groups of Dja Dja Wurrung, to be a voice here. It is not my opinion. I am here to actually portray the 18 clan groups' voice here, present. And I will not speak on behalf of clan groups, they have a voice at this table, but I will walk the line with every mob here—my brothers, my sisters, my aunties, my uncles—to achieve what we need to achieve for the future generations. For these [Member spoke in language] that are here. They are the ones we are doing it for—not for us, we are doing it for them. And we are using our old people and our ancestors that have paved the way in their footsteps. Treaty: it is time. Time for us. Thank you.