



**First Speech by Trevor Gallagher
Inaugural Meeting of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria**

10 December 2019

Ngoon godgin for having me here. My name is Trevor Gallagher. I would like to acknowledge my wife; my kids, Jase and Robert; and my smaller kids, Jack and Billy.

Wow—this is what the Assembly looks like. This is what the team at the commission have been working on over the last few years. Congratulations, sis. I am proud of you and your team at the commission. 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 always.

You know, early in the year I was interviewed. I was asked this question: 'When you talk about treaty, you refer to the Victorian community. Whom are you referring to, Trevor, when you say the community will benefit?'. My response: certainly not the white community. They have had their turn. It is now our turn. We are the ones who will benefit, and we must be compensated for the past wrongs that have been done to our people. When we went to war for white Australia, we fought alongside the white man. When the war was over, they gave the white man the black man's land and the black man got nothing. Need I say more?

I would like to finish this short message to you all with a quote from the Uluru Statement from the Heart. I have made one change:

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the—

Aboriginal—

... people for a better future.

Thank you.

