

MEDIA RELEASE

15 October 2025

Together for Treaty

Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV) welcomes the introduction and progression of Treaty legislation in the Victorian Parliament. To accept the invitation of the [Uluru Statement of the Heart](#) is to embrace the calls of First Nations Peoples to look to a just future and a way forward for healing and learning together. The Uluru Statement has been endorsed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia, the Association of Ministerial PJs (AMPJP), The Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, and many of CSSV's 40-member community and social service organisations. The Uluru Statement calls for Treaty.

CSSV urges a return to bipartisan support for Treaty in Victoria, and for the whole Victorian Parliament to fully support Treaty-making processes. This foundational work should be collegiate, moving beyond any politics and party lines, and set us on the path to a more reconciled and justice-filled future.

The Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, the highest formal Catholic gathering of all local churches in a country, made its first decree [Reconciliation: Healing Wounds, Receiving Gifts](#) in 2022. It establishes that "All Australians have much to learn from the cultures, spirituality, and knowledge of country of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, our society is yet to recognise fully Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters now known as Australia, or to achieve right relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities."

CSSV knows that a better future for all Australians is contingent on the work of Treaty being done. CSSV recognises that negotiating a successful Treaty in Victoria is one element in a much broader reckoning and process. We remain committed to this work alongside others of good will. We are grateful to the [Yoorrook Justice Commission](#) and [First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria](#), which the introduced legislation recognises and builds upon as integral to pursuing a better future for all Victorians.

CSSV Executive Director, Joshua Lourensz, says, 'There is a deep desire from many within Catholic social services and beyond to see renewed and different relationships between Victorians, from a variety of rich global cultural heritages, and First Nations people.

'Our member organisations understand the challenges but are fully committed to working in such a way so that "all may have life and have it to the full".'

'We are grateful to our CSSV life member Vicki Clark OAM, former Coordinator of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria, who was core to laying the foundations for the Treaty process as a member of the Victorian Interim Treaty Working Party and former Co-Chair of Reconciliation Victoria.

'CSSV remains committed to the complex work of reconciliation and sees Treaty as one key aspect of this. We need to bring about tangible change, justice and healing in our country. The agreements of a Victorian State-wide Treaty, and as such this legislation put before Parliament, lay the foundations for this to be possible.'

CSSV will continue to listen to and support the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council (NATSICC) and other First Nations community leaders as we join in the hope articulated by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in their 2023/24 social justice statement, [Listen Learn Love](#): "We hope for an end to the pain, the hurt and the injustice that has burdened the First Peoples of this land for far too long. Let us commit ourselves to fostering a civilisation of love in Australia. Let's come together in friendship and love to show all that love can not only change individual lives, but that it can change society for the better."

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