



Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

First Peoples Assembly – Treaty Negotiation Framework

The First People's Assembly of Victoria (FPAV) and the State Government have started discussions about who should be negotiating treaties over their traditional lands and waters. This is the Treaty Negotiation Framework that will establish the basis of treaty negotiations. Part of this discussion involves talking about a single treaty for the entire state, or local treaties negotiated by Traditional Owners, or both. **As to who represents the Traditional Owners for Bunurong Country, it is the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC).**

BLCAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for and on behalf of Bunurong People. We have overcome many obstacles on the way, but Bunurong People are now recognised as the Traditional Owners of their lands and waters across greater Melbourne, Mornington Peninsula, and the Bass Coast.

There is a proposal being put forward that the treaties be negotiated by nations and clans. The proposal covers areas where formal recognition has not yet been obtained. It also seeks to advance groups that are already included in existing recognised areas and organisations. **We do not support this approach. It has the clear and obvious potential to undermine much of what has been achieved by Traditional Owners across Victoria, often in very difficult circumstances. These hard-won gains must not be lost.**

One of the reasons underpinning this proposal is that while 75% of Victoria is covered by formally recognised Traditional Owner groups, 25% is not. **A far better way to address the issue, is that as a priority, every effort should be made to get the remaining 25% recognised without delay.**

Just as other Traditional Owner groups have done, we also draw upon section 18 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions."

The BLCAC will not support any proposal for treaty negotiations that diminishes these rights for Bunurong People. The best outcomes for treaty will be found in the strength of the voices of Traditional Owners speaking for people and Country in a unified and inclusive way. Bunurong People will speak strongly for

Bunurong Country, and we support Traditional Owners across Victoria to do the same.

We have got to this point on the back of much struggle and many heartbreaking setbacks. The Victorian Treaty process is a key component of the enduring legacy of our Elders and community. We must take this opportunity to make it the best success it can be. It is best done by Traditional Owner groups that are unified about the aims of treaty and the interests of its people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Turnbull', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dan Turnbull
Chief Executive Officer | Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation