

Assembly Member roles and responsibilities

Published: 2nd February 2026

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to provide more detailed information on expected roles and responsibilities of First Peoples' Assembly members within Gellung Warl. This document is supplementary to the general information in the document 'What is the role of Assembly Members'. It is also supplementary to the Information Sheet provided to eligible Traditional Owner Groups in November 2025.

This document is intended to provide information for:

- prospective candidates in the 2026 transitional election for general members, and
- eligible Traditional Owner Groups conducting Selection Processes for transitioned reserved members. A transitioned reserved member is a person selected by an eligible Traditional Owner Group between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026. Transitioned reserved members will be reserved members of the First Peoples' Assembly within Gellung Warl when Gellung Warl is established on 1 May 2026

From 1 May 2026, the Assembly within Gellung Warl can set its own internal rules on the internal affairs of Gellung Warl, including rules that apply to Assembly members and electoral rules for future Assembly elections and appointments.

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About the Assembly within Gellung Warl

Treaty is an opportunity to listen, to learn, and to affirm the rightful place of First Peoples as decision-makers of their own futures, on their own Country. It recognises the need for meaningful change – enabling self-determination to flourish, for the good of all. – [Statewide Treaty](#), Preamble

In 2025 the current Assembly and the State of Victoria agreed the first Statewide Treaty for Victoria, the first in Australia. Treaty is built on a simple principle: First Peoples decide First Peoples' Issues. It follows the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission, Victoria and Australia's first formal truth-telling inquiry into historic and ongoing systemic injustices perpetrated against First Peoples through colonisation. The first Statewide Treaty demonstrates the State of Victoria's commitment to not repeat past injustices and to address the ongoing impacts of colonisation.

This Statewide Treaty is the first of the Treaty era. It begins not as a gesture, but as the rightful claim of First Peoples. It establishes an ongoing First Peoples representative and deliberative body in **Gellung Warl** – a Gunaikurnai word for the tip of the spear – as a powerful tool for self-determination that has been shaped by Ancestors, guided by Lore and Culture and will be carried by Community.

As we enter the Treaty Era, members of Gellung Warl's First Peoples' Assembly will carry a great responsibility: leading the work to put the first Statewide Treaty into action on behalf of First Peoples across Victoria. As political leaders at a local, regional, national and international level, they will face important decisions and navigate complex, sometimes contested issues. This vital work requires both courage and commitment to Community.

On 12 December 2025, the current Assembly Members [made a Declaration](#) to Community about the first Statewide Treaty. In this Declaration, Members spoke about their hopes and aspirations for the Treaty era, and the responsibility of all First Peoples to work collaboratively to harness the collective strength in Treaty:

[This Treaty] is the living expression of who we are — decisions made by us, not about us; truth taught, not buried; accountability held through Nginma Ngainga Wara. It strengthens our self-governance and representation, built in Lore, culture, and the will of our people... It continues what our old people have always done: make law, make peace, make future — laying the groundwork for what comes next, in kinship, care and ceremony.

The **Statewide Treaty Act 2025** (Vic) provides the legal framework for Gellung Warl, to provide advice to the Victorian Government about matters affecting First Peoples in Victoria and to continue the Treaty process.

Gellung Warl is the evolved form of the current Assembly, with expanded functions, powers and responsibilities. Gellung Warl is established under the Statewide Treaty Act as a statutory corporation and will have three arms:

- The First Peoples' **Assembly**, a self-determined, democratically elected, decision-making arm for the political representation of First Peoples at the statewide level. This is like the current Assembly, with expanded functions and powers.
- **Nginma Ngainga Wara**, a First Peoples' accountability mechanism to monitor the performance of State Government to achieve better outcomes for First Peoples.
- **Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna**, a First Peoples' truth-telling mechanism that will build on the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

The Assembly is the representative arm of Gellung Warl. It will be comprised of two types of members:

1. **Reserved members** – Victorian Traditional Owners selected by their Traditional Owner group in accordance with procedures developed by that Traditional Owner group in line with the Statewide Treaty Act.
2. **General members** – Victorian Traditional Owners elected by Victorian First Peoples through the transitional election and then through periodic Gellung Warl elections.

This document provides information for **general member** candidates and persons selected or seeking selection by Traditional Owner Groups as a **reserved member** of the Assembly.

What will the Assembly do?

The Statewide Treaty Act provides for the functions of the Assembly. The Assembly will be democratically and publicly accountable and answerable to First Peoples' Community in the performance of its functions, which include:

- upholding Aboriginal Lore and Cultural Authority including fulfilling cultural responsibilities, obligations and practice including being answerable to Elders, families and communities
- representing and making decisions in relation to First Peoples making representations to the Parliament of Victoria, State government and other entities on matters that affect First Peoples
- representing First Peoples in ongoing Statewide Treaty-making under the Treaty Negotiation Framework, including developing Treaty negotiation briefs
- making rules about the processes for how First Peoples' organisations certify a person is accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community
- making guidelines and standards, including for promoting and protecting First Peoples' cultural safety and sharing and trading water rights, which may be voluntarily adopted by entities
- negotiating guidelines on new ways of working with State government

- appointing First Peoples' representatives to the Heritage Council and Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council
- capacity building in First Peoples' communities
- participating in the ceremonial life of the State
- making its own internal rules, including about its structure, governance, operations and community answerability and engagement
- appointing the CEO of Gellung Warl and members of Nginma Ngainga Wara and Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna
- upholding strong cultural governance of Gellung Warl.

The Assembly also has work to action reforms agreed to by the State in the first Statewide Treaty, including:

- to include truth-telling in the Victorian Curriculum in Victorian schools, using the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Official Public Record as a curriculum resource to support this
- to participate in place-naming of specified geographic features to increase opportunities for the use of traditional or language place names
- to establish a First Peoples' Infrastructure Fund to provide grants for Aboriginal community infrastructure and infrastructure development
- to deliver Aboriginal events and awards, such as the Ricci Marks Award and the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll.

The role of Assembly members

Assembly members are the representatives for their communities. Nominating as a candidate in the transitional election or for selection by a Traditional Owner Group is a chance to serve your community in a vital public leadership role during this historic moment. It is also a significant commitment. Assembly members have important cultural, legal and ethical responsibilities, and will be accountable to Community, media, integrity bodies and the broader Victorian community (See further **Integrity and oversight** below).

Assembly members play a critical role in linking the powers of the Gellung Warl to Community, making sure that the decisions and actions taken by the Assembly reflect the priorities and aspirations of Community and will improve outcomes for Community on the ground.

Assembly members are expected to yarn with Community in their region and make sure the Assembly's discussions and decisions are informed by Community views, ideas and aspirations. Ultimately, Assembly members must make the decisions and vote about how Gellung Warl will put Statewide Treaty to work. (See further **Community engagement and answerability** below).

Assembly members commit to making Assembly business a priority by maintaining availability and actively participating in Assembly Chamber and committee meetings, forums and working groups. This includes travelling to meetings when needed or joining online. These meetings are where the work of the Assembly is progressed, and decisions are made.

Responsibilities of an Assembly member may include:

- representing and being accountable to First Peoples, and working as part of the Assembly's collective leadership
- understanding and staying connected to First Peoples' needs and experiences to inform the Assembly's decisions and actions
- making decisions on behalf of their Community or Traditional Owner Group
- representing First Peoples in future Statewide Treaty-making with Government
- negotiating guidelines on new ways of working with State Government
- engaging with State Government through functions of making representations to Parliament, State Government and other entities
- meeting with MPs and State Government officials on matters that affect First Peoples to advocate for First Peoples' interests
- creating and upholding the rules, guidelines and standards for doing Treaty business
- taking part in State ceremonies, representing First Peoples in local, national and international forums
- Working collaboratively with other Assembly members and members and staff of Gellung Warl to progress the work of the Assembly.

What might an Assembly member do in a day? A typical day might involve:

- engaging with Community – for example, calling community members, facilitating a yarning circle, attending a forum or holding an engagement event. This can often mean travelling to meet people where they are, with regular time on the road
- working with ACCOs, Traditional Owner groups, governance forums, collectives, Elders and young people to understand priorities and identify opportunities through Treaty
- setting the vision and aspirations for the Assembly
- setting up Gellung Warl's other arms, including Nginma Ngainga Wara and Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna
- meeting with Government to influence and discuss new laws and policies affecting First Peoples
- reading papers, analysing information and preparing for Assembly meetings including Chamber meetings, committee meetings and working groups, with travel required for in-person meetings

- attending or chairing Assembly meetings online or in person, including Chamber meetings (where members make decisions on work prepared through committees and working groups), committee meetings and working groups
- contributing to the Assembly's strategic political leadership by thinking ahead about priorities, opportunities and how to advance Treaty outcomes.

Assembly members receive support from staff to carry out their work.

Ways of being and doing

Aboriginal Lore and Cultural Authority will be central to the Assembly's ways of working and will guide members' relationships to one another, to government, to land, to Community and to the Cultural flow. It underpins how Gellung Warl builds the collective strength needed to make this Statewide Treaty transformative.

The current Assembly has designed the [Yurpa Philosophy and Principles](#) which are about relationships with one another. The principles are grounded in and assert the Cultural Authority of the members as Traditional Owners of Country. They have guided the current Assembly's discussions, decision-making, practises, and processes. The interdependent principles are:

- Decolonising systems
- Connection to Country and Place
- Cultural Authority
- Ancestors and Elders
- Upholding Indigenous Rights
- Lore, Language and Ceremony
- Community and Cultural Flow
- Creator Spirits, Moieties and Kinship systems
- Shared Cultural Protocols and Obligations

The new Assembly within Gellung Warl may consider adopting the Yurpa Philosophy and Principles as part of its ways of being and doing.

Community engagement and answerability

Assembly members will be accountable and answerable to Community in everything they do. Gellung Warl and its arms, including the Assembly as elected representatives, will exist to serve First Peoples' Community.

The Statewide Treaty Act enshrines *larbargirrar gnuurtuk tulkuk* (community answerability), meaning 'community account, reckon, truth' in Djab Wurrung language.

This powerful principle requires the Assembly to develop and implement a Community Governance and Answerability Framework in consultation with Community. Through this Framework, Gelling Warl will be guided by Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority in its answerability to Community, ensuring it fulfills its cultural obligations and responsibilities as Community determines.

The Community Governance and Answerability Framework will include *larbargirrar gnuurtuk tulkuk* principles, a Community Engagement Charter, a *Ngarrakeetoong Martongakeeyt* (community vision) and a Strategic Plan.

The Statewide Treaty Act creates a way for First Peoples and First Peoples' organisations to raise concerns about how Gelling Warl is meeting its obligations. The Assembly will develop complaints processes, with support from the Treaty Authority to help resolve issues.

Integrity and oversight

Assembly members will be held to standards of conduct that uphold the trust and integrity expected by the First Peoples' Community and the broader Victorian community. The standards will set clear expectations for how members carry out their work.

The Statewide Treaty Act requires the Assembly to develop and implement the member standards of conduct by 1 November 2026.

If a member does not follow the standards of conduct, this will be misconduct. There will be internal processes for handling allegations of misconduct and serious misconduct, with support from the Treaty Authority.

Gelling Warl will be subject to external oversight by Victoria's independent integrity agencies, including VAGO, IBAC and the Ombudsman, and to Victorian laws ensuring transparency and accountability, including the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, *Audit Act 1994*, *Financial Management Act 1994*, *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2012* and *Public Records Act 1973*. The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* will provide a right to access information held by Gelling Warl, and documents held by Gelling Warl may become public under the Freedom of Information Act where they are not exempt from disclosure.

Gelling Warl will be a public authority for the purposes of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, required to properly consider human rights in its decision-making and act in a way that is compatible with human rights.

Qualifications to be an Assembly member

To stand as a candidate as a general member of the Assembly in this election or for selection by a Traditional Owner Group as a transitioned reserved member of the Assembly, you must:

1. Be validly enrolled on the Assembly Electoral Roll or Gellung Warl Electoral Roll once established.
2. Be aged 18 or older at the time you nominate.
3. For candidates for election as a general member, be a Victorian Traditional Owner. You will need evidence of your place of residence which will have to be within Victoria or within 60 kilometres of the Victorian Border. For candidates for selection as a transitioned reserved member, meet the residency requirements set by your Traditional Owner Group.
4. Not be disqualified from acting as a director of a company under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), in prison, the subject of an order under the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997* (Vic) or restricted by bail, remand, parole or other legal mechanisms from travelling within Victoria.
5. Be able to comply with any requirement set by the Assembly within Gellung Warl once established.
6. For candidates for election as a general member, provide the Returning Officer with any further information necessary to confirm your eligibility, and this will include proof of date of birth, information required for a National Police Records Check and evidence of your place of residence which will have to be within Victoria or within 60 kilometres of the Victorian Border.

After it commences, the Assembly will make internal rules covering a range of matters, including qualifications to be an Assembly member, processes for resigning and filling casual vacancies, and when an Assembly member may be suspended or removed in serious cases.

Once elected in the transitional election or selected by a Traditional Owner Group (in a Selection Process completed by 31 March 2026), you must maintain your eligibility to remain a member. You cannot serve as an Assembly member if you:

- are a member of a Parliament of the Commonwealth or any State or Territory, including Victoria
- are employed as a ministerial, parliamentary, or electorate officer or a corresponding position by a member of a Parliament of the Commonwealth or any State or Territory, including Victoria
- are a Councillor within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) or a member of a corresponding body in another State or Territory
- are a member of Council staff within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) or a corresponding body in another State or Territory
- are a member of the Treaty Authority or holds a paid position with the Treaty Authority
- are the Chief Executive Officer of Gellung Warl
- are a member of Nginma Ngainga Wara, Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna member or a Gellung Warl staff member or holds a paid position with Gellung Warl

- are a public sector employee within the meaning of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic) or in a corresponding position under an Act of the Commonwealth or any State or a Territory
- have property that is subject to control under the law relating to bankruptcy
- are disqualified from managing corporations under Part 2D.6 of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)
- are currently held in a prison
- are subject to an order under the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997* (Vic)
- have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment for an indictable offence and is subject to a parole order that includes a travel restriction condition.

These requirements are similar to other elected officials, with some aimed to minimise the risk of conflicts of interest arising if a member were to hold certain elected or paid positions.

Time Commitment

The Assembly member role is expected to be full time, but members will decide together on the specific time commitment when they start. This may include deciding whether members can hold other paid or unpaid roles on a part time or occasional basis, including to meet community or cultural expectations.

Current Assembly Members have experienced firsthand how demanding this work can be. They recommend that members of the Assembly within Gellung Warl serve full-time, particularly given the additional powers and functions the Assembly will hold and the significant community and cultural expectations on members.

Appointment and Term

Assembly members are not employees of Gellung Warl and are appointed to their positions by election. Members serve through election, not under employment contract.

The term of office of general members elected in the transitional election and transitioned reserved members is 4 years commencing on 1 May 2026. Once Gellung Warl is established, the Assembly may make internal rules that specify different terms for general members and reserved members and may provide for staggered terms for reserved members. The Statewide Treaty Act does not state a limit on the number of terms which a member may serve. However, the Assembly may establish such limits through its internal rules. The Assembly may make rules for how an election is called.

Transitioned reserved members who are selected by their Traditional Owner Group between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026 will hold office as reserved members of the Assembly from 1 May 2026. For more information see the current Assembly [Constitution](#) (clause 2A and Schedule 2 Appointment Rules).

Remuneration

Before the opening of nominations for the election of general members of the Assembly, the current Assembly must publish the proposed remuneration to be paid to Assembly members after 1 May 2026.

Assembly members are paid a stipend – a type of allowance – for their time. The stipend Assembly members receive will depend on their duties, responsibilities and the nature of their position.

The remuneration proposed to be paid to Assembly members after 1 May 2026 is:

- General and reserved members: \$197,683 per annum (inclusive of superannuation)
- Convenor (or higher duties role): \$197, 683 plus applicable higher duties allowance (being \$29 851) (inclusive of superannuation)
- Co-chairs: \$348,000 per annum (inclusive of superannuation)