

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS?



WHAT DOES THE ASSEMBLY DO?

At the centre of the Statewide Treaty is a commitment to bring about improved and enduring outcomes for First Peoples through the creation of Gellung Warl – an accountable, democratically elected and culturally strong representative of First Peoples in Victoria.

Gellung Warl will comprise:

- the democratically elected **First Peoples' Assembly**, for the political representation of First Peoples and the decision-making arm of Gellung Warl,
- **Nginma Ngainga Wara**, a First Peoples' accountability mechanism to monitor the performance of State Government to achieve better outcomes for First Peoples, and
- **Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna**, a First Peoples' truth-telling mechanism that will build on the work of the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

The Assembly is answerable to First Peoples in Victoria and is an evolution of the current First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

The Assembly will be responsible for making rules and appointing members to Nginma Ngainga Wara and Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna, be able to represent and advocate for the interests of First Peoples to the Victorian Parliament, Government and other State entities, and will engage in ongoing Statewide Treaty-making.

Our Communities have been walking the path to Treaty since 2016 — and now, a decade on, Treaty is here.

For the first time in Australia, Treaty is law, right here in Victoria. Since 2019, the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria has been elected by Community to advocate, consult and negotiate on behalf of community — and together, we've delivered what generations before us fought for.





IF TREATY IS HERE, WHY DO THESE ELECTIONS MATTER?

Treaty is Blak Democracy in action. Tens of thousands of First Peoples have called for Treaty for generations, shared their ideas and aspirations and stood strong to make this moment possible. Now we're calling on Community to continue walking with us — the strength of Treaty comes from Community and the voices chosen by Community to lead in the Treaty era.

In 2026, the next Assembly will be elected to represent Community in the Treaty Era — a new generation of leaders chosen directly by Community to make sure Treaty at a Statewide level delivers self-determined practical solutions for First Peoples using local knowledge.

The strength in Treaty is simple to understand: decisions about Aboriginal communities, cultures and lands must be made by Aboriginal people.

Treaty belongs to us — and its future will be shaped by the leaders we choose.

The next Assembly will set up and make decisions within Gellung Warl. Key functions of the next Assembly include representing First Peoples and advocating for First Peoples' interests.

The Assembly will have the power to make representations directly to the Parliament, the Victorian Government and Government-funded service providers for matters that affect First Peoples in Victoria. It will be informed about and be able to comment when legislation going to Parliament. It will be able to work with Community to make rules and set standards and guidelines on certain matters, participate in the ceremonial life of the State and represent First Peoples in national and international forums.

The Assembly will continue to work with:

- **Traditional Owner Groups** to support Traditional Owners' self-determined decision-making
- **the Self-Determination Fund**, empowering the diverse Traditional Owner groups in Victoria to prepare to negotiate Traditional Owner Treaties in their areas that reflect their specific aspirations and priorities and
- **Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations** as experts on the Community sector, and to support the sector's work for Community.

The Assembly will also negotiate with Government to strengthen and expand the Statewide Treaty to get better outcomes for generations to come.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN ASSEMBLY MEMBER?

Members are the representatives for their Communities. They play a critical role in linking the powers of the Gellung Warl to Community, making sure that the decisions taken by the Assembly reflect the priorities and aspirations of Community, and working with Community to harness those powers to improve outcomes for Community on the ground.

Members are expected to yarn with community in their region and make sure the Assembly 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.

They are required to attend and actively participate in Assembly meetings. These meetings are where the work of the Assembly is progressed and decisions are made.

Other duties of an Assembly Member include:

- representing First Peoples in future Statewide Treaty-making with Government
- engaging with State Governing 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 national and international forums.

Assembly Members are not employees of Gellung Warl and are appointed to their positions by election.

What might an Assembly Member do in a day?



Engage with Community – for example call a Community member, facilitate a yarning circle, consult with Community and hold engagement events



Set the vision and aspirations for the Assembly



Work with ACCO, Traditional Owner groups and collectives to understand priorities and identify strategic opportunities through Treaty



Meet with Government to influence and discuss new laws and policies affecting First Peoples



Read papers, analyse and prepare for Assembly meetings



Attend or chair Assembly meetings and contribute to strategic political leadership

Ways of being and doing

Aboriginal Lore and Cultural Authority will be central to the Assembly's ways of working and will guide Assembly 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.

Different roles and duties

After 1 May 2026, the Assembly must make internal rules which will govern the internal affairs and operation of Gellung Warl, subject to requirements in the *Statewide Treaty Act 2025* (Vic). This means that the Assembly will make decisions about Member's roles and responsibilities in Gellung Warl.

It is expected that there will be Chairpersons of the Assembly as well as chairpersons/conveners of committees, sub-committees and other leadership positions.

Assembly Members will be able to receive information about these positions and how to nominate for them once the elections are completed and the Gellung Warl is established on 1 May 2026.

Support

Assembly Members will receive operational support to carry out their work. This includes assistance with engagement activities and public communications, policy and legal advice, briefings and general organisational support (ie. travel, accommodation)

Key information

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.
Term	It is intended that Assembly Members hold their position until the next Assembly elections, which are held approximately every 4 years.
Remuneration	Members are paid a stipend – a type of allowance – for their time. The Assembly is required to publish the proposed remuneration of members of the First Peoples' Assembly within Gellung Warl and will do so in early 2026. The stipend Assembly members receive will depend on their duties, responsibilities and the nature of their position.

For more information on time commitment, term and remuneration see **Assembly member roles and responsibilities – detailed information** available at www.TreatyElections.org.

All Assembly Members receive a comprehensive induction on their role and the work of the Assembly.