



grandparents
VICTORIA

The Grandparent

A NEWSLETTER FOR AND BY GRANDPARENTS

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Victoria's Treaty with its Aboriginal people

1835 "Batman Treaty" signed

When John Batman arrived in Port Phillip in 1835, he approached local Indigenous leaders with a contract, to 'buy' their land. His negotiations were successful, and he walked away with 240,000 hectares of prime farming terrain – almost all of the *Kulin nation's* ancestral land.

John Batman recorded in his journal that he had signed a treaty with the local Aboriginal people, the Wurundjeri to buy 2,000 km of land around Melbourne and another 400 km around Geelong. In exchange he gave the eight chiefs whose marks he acquired on the treaty, a quantity of blankets, knives, tomahawks, scissors, looking-glasses, flour, handkerchiefs.

It is also thought by some historians that the 'marks' Batman claims were made by eight Aboriginal chiefs to sign the contract are identical to marks found in his journal, which raises the question of whether they might have been forged.

Batman had with him Aboriginal translators from New South Wales, who would have spoken a completely different language to the Wurundjeri people. It is believed that the Wurundjeri may have thought Batman was offering them gifts in exchange for safe passage – a transaction known as *tandarrum*.

The treaty document signed by John Batman and the Wurundjeri elders is known by several names including Batman Deed, Batman Treaty, Melbourne Treaty or Melbourne Deed. The Aboriginal word for "tribe" is spelt many ways including Doutta Galla, Douta Galla, Dutigalla, Dutergalla and Dutigulla.

1835 Batman's treaty declared invalid

Batman's treaty was almost immediately declared invalid by the Proclamation of Governor Bourke of New South Wales. On 6 August 1835, he declared the British Crown owned the entire land of Australia. Under British law, the treaty was illegal as the land belonged to the Crown, not to the Wurundjeri, and they had no greater right to sell it than Batman had to buy it.

2018 - Aboriginal Victorians Bill

Australia's first ever treaty legislation is now set to become law with the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Bill 2018 passing Victorian Parliament on 21st June 2018

This will see Victoria become the first state to enter into formal treaty negotiations with Aboriginal Victorians.



The treaty will have benefits for all Victorians – promoting reconciliation, fostering shared pride in Aboriginal culture and helping to heal the wounds of the past.

It is an opportunity for Victoria to recognise and celebrate the unique status, rights, cultures and histories of Aboriginal Victorians. It is also an opportunity for reconciliation and to heal the wounds of the past.

The Bill is the culmination of the work of more than 7,500 Aboriginal community members who have been engaged in work to further the treaty process in Victoria. The Government has listened to Traditional Owners, clans and family groups across the state about aspirations for treaty or treaties.

Consistent with the policy of self-determination, the Bill does not specify who the Treaty is with or what it will be about. Rather it requires an independent Aboriginal Representative Body and the Victorian Government to work in partnership to facilitate future treaty negotiations.

The Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner Jill Gallagher AO will continue working with Victorian Traditional Owners, Elders and young people to establish a democratically-elected Aboriginal Representative Body.

Aboriginal Victoria launched its Deadly Questions campaign at The Long Walk event in the lead up to the "Dreamtime at the 'G'" game between Essendon and Richmond.

2018 Deadly questions campaign

Deadly Questions will provide a public space for Aboriginal Victorians to discuss history and how it affects their lives today, as well as to share the strength and vibrancy of their cultures, with the aim of building understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. This will be an opportunity to dispel myths and celebrate the cultures and achievements of Aboriginal Victorians.

The campaign also provides an opportunity for non-Aboriginal Victorians to acquire a deeper understanding of Aboriginal cultures, history, and the issues facing Aboriginal communities.

Deadly Questions will be rolled out online, on social media, in newspapers and on billboards and other displays.

The public will be able to submit questions to the Deadly Questions website. These questions will be vetted before being answered and published on the Deadly Questions website.

The Deadly Questions campaign has been developed as part of the Government's commitment to self-determination and treaty.