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Yoorrook Commissioner Urges Action on Truth-Telling Promises

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A former commissioner of the Yoorrook Justice Commission, along with Victorian Aboriginal leaders, has urged the Victorian government to fulfill its commitment to address systemic injustices identified by Australia's first Aboriginal-led truth-telling inquiry.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission, established in May 2021 as a royal commission under Victorian law, concluded its work on 30 June 2025. The commission investigated historical and continuing injustices experienced by First Peoples in Victoria. Its final reports, *Yoorrook*

for Transformation and *Yoorrook Truth be Told*, were tabled in the Victorian Parliament on 1 July 2025.

The commission—named “Yoorrook,” meaning “truth” in the Wemba Wemba/Wamba Wamba language—presented evidence of frontier violence, child removals, dispossession, and social and economic marginalisation. The inquiry described certain actions by the state as constituting genocide and crimes against humanity. It issued 100 recommendations, covering treaty-related reparations, independent oversight of police conduct, and reforms across education, healthcare, and justice sectors.

Dr. Wayne Atkinson, a former Yoorrook commissioner and Yorta Yorta/Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, stated in an interview with NITV that the government must now take responsibility for acting on the commission’s findings. “The state made a genuine promise to face our history, and now it’s time to deliver,” Atkinson said.

Auntie Jill Gallagher, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), also called for the government to implement the recommendations. Speaking to NITV, Gallagher emphasised that the findings affirmed the lived experiences of Aboriginal communities. She highlighted the inquiry’s focus on economic justice, including estimates of significant unremunerated resource extraction—such as \$290 billion worth of gold—from Aboriginal lands, as documented in the reports.

The *Yoorrook Truth be Told* report also noted the sustained resistance of Aboriginal communities in the face of colonial laws and policies.

However, the Victorian government’s response has drawn criticism. According to ABC News, of the 46 recommendations from the commission’s 2023 interim report, only six were fully accepted by the government. Another 24 were supported “in principle,” while the remaining 16 were either noted or not supported.