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## Victoria Urged to Act on Yoorrook Report Findings

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A former commissioner of the Yoorrook Justice Commission has called on the Victorian government to act swiftly on the landmark findings of Australia's first Indigenous-led truth-telling inquiry. Kevin Bell, who served on the Commission for over two years, warned that any delay in implementation would deepen injustices faced by First Peoples.

The Yoorrook Justice Commission was established in 2021 to investigate historical and ongoing injustices suffered by Aboriginal communities in Victoria. After four years of work, the Commission delivered its final report to Parliament on July 1, 2025. The report included

100 recommendations aimed at addressing issues such as land rights, treaty negotiations, health, education, child protection, housing, and justice.

Bell urged the state government to uphold its initial commitment to act on the findings. “The work has been done. What is now needed is action. It’s urgent beyond words,” he said in a recent interview.

The inquiry held 67 days of public hearings and collected evidence from over 2,000 individuals, including more than 1,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Many testimonies highlighted systemic racism, forced child removals, and the long-term impacts of colonisation.

The final report characterises the treatment of First Peoples as a form of genocide, echoing the language used in its interim report. However, three of the five commissioners dissented on some findings and encouraged readers to examine both majority and minority views in the report.

Rueben Berg, co-chair of the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria, welcomed the report and emphasized that it provides a roadmap for meaningful reform. He also confirmed that the state government has committed to legislating the Assembly’s ongoing role in overseeing the Treaty process.

While the Commission was funded with an estimated \$56 million, final costs have not been publicly disclosed. Critics have questioned whether the state has the resources and political will to implement all recommendations, particularly those involving land returns and compensation. However, Bell countered that inaction carries significant long-term costs, including deepening inequality and intergenerational harm.

Premier Jacinta Allan acknowledged receipt of the report and said the government would carefully consider the recommendations. As of July 2025, neither the state government nor the opposition has issued a full response outlining which recommendations they will adopt.

Advocates continue to urge bipartisan support, warning that a lack of follow-through could undermine trust in the truth-telling and treaty processes.