

MEDIA RELEASE – 9 September 2025

Lowitja Institute welcomes Victorian Government's Statewide Treaty Bill

Lowitja Institute welcomes today's Victorian Parliament bill legislating a Treaty Agreement between the Victorian Government and First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. The legislation is the first of its kind in Australia and provides an opportunity for genuine self-determination.

'We support this historic moment that will advance relations between the First Peoples in Victoria, and the State,' Lowitja Institute CEO Paul Stewart said. 'This outcome has been made possible by a decade of community consultation led by First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria with our mob here in Victoria, and we thank them for their many years of work leading to this moment.'

Mr Stewart noted Victoria's Statewide Treaty Bill should be seen as an important development by all First Nations peoples, since it provides a blueprint for other states and territories.

'There has been a gap in existing systems when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being able to hold state and territory governments to account on their commitments to our people,' Mr Stewart said. 'This bill offers an ongoing, independent way to make a measurable impact on Victoria's Aboriginal communities.'

Lowitja Institute is Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health research institute. In 2021, the Institute began working with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), the peak body for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people living in Victoria, on a feasibility study of a new, Aboriginal-led independent entity focusing on the state's statutory accountability. The joint study, [Victorian Aboriginal Authority: an initial feasibility study for discussion](#), proposed a number of mechanisms embedded in today's bill.

'We are proud Lowitja Institute has been able to play a small role in this process,' Mr Stewart said. 'We look forward to witnessing reforms in the way government services and programs are designed for and delivered to Aboriginal people in Victoria.'

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ABOUT LOWITJA INSTITUTE

Lowitja Institute is Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health research institute, named in honour of its patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG. It is working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by facilitating high-impact quality research, tools, resources and knowledge exchange, and supporting a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

Established in January 2010, the Lowitja Institute operates on key principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, a broader understanding of health that incorporates wellbeing, and the need for the work to have a clear and positive impact.

The history of the Lowitja Institute dates back to 1997 when the first Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health was established. Since then, the Institute and the CRC organisations have led a substantial reform agenda in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research by working with communities, researchers and policymakers, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people setting the agenda and driving the outcomes.