

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Aboriginal Affairs
Witness:	Kate Houghton and Tim Kanoa
Committee member:	Mr Dalidakis
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Relevant text:

And the process from that moment onwards, Minister, the interaction between the First Peoples Assembly and the legislature, how do you see that working?

Answer:

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is intended to be the Aboriginal Representative Body (ARB) as declared under the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* (Act). In accordance with the Act, the primary role of the ARB will be to work in partnership with the State to establish the elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations. The interaction between the ARB and the State's law-making processes is a matter to be determined once the ARB and the State have established the elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations.

Portfolio:	Aboriginal Affairs
Witness:	Kate Houghton and Tim Kanoa
Committee member:	Ms Vallence
Page/s of transcript:	Pages 3-4

Relevant text:

Minister, just to pick up on questions of the Chair and in relation to what you were just discussing—so budget paper 3, page 3, the output initiatives—this is \$30.4 million worth of funding over two years for phase 2 for the treaty and self-determination process. But, Minister, just to take it further than what the Chair did, can you detail what budget expenditure is required for that first point—for the First Peoples Assembly operations? Is that around staffing, office? Could you take us through the detail of the expenditure?

Answer:

The *2019/20 Victorian Budget* commits \$30.4 million over two years to support treaty and self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians. Of this, \$11 million over two years will be provided to the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (Assembly). The majority of this funding will support the Assembly's operations, including staffing and accommodation. Some of this funding will also go towards the establishment of an Elders' Voice, which will oversee and guide the work of the Assembly and ensure its cultural accountability. This allocation also

includes funding to enable the Assembly’s representatives to engage with their communities to ensure that Aboriginal Victorians are adequately represented in the Assembly’s work with the State to establish the elements necessary to support future treaty negotiations. This funding is necessary to ensure that the Assembly can meet its obligations under the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018*.

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Page/s of transcript:	Pages 3-4

Relevant text:

I guess also with the Aboriginal Victorians, how are they being made aware about the process to be able to vote for candidates in the First Peoples Assembly, and is there a marketing or advertising campaign that is part of that \$30.4 million?

Answer:

Of the \$30.4 million over two years provided in the *Victorian Budget 2019/20* for treaty and self-determination, \$5.8 million over two years has been designated to resource the State for the treaty process. In addition to funding specialist negotiating team, this funding will also be used to support the continuation and expansion of the Deadly Questions campaign which commenced in June 2018 and has been successful in raising awareness throughout Victoria of Aboriginal culture and the importance of treaty. This funding will also support other government communications to ensure that all Victorians are kept informed throughout the treaty process.

The Victorian Treaty Advancement Commissioner is an independent office responsible for establishing the Aboriginal Representative Body, to be known as the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria (Assembly). This independence ensures that the process is led by Aboriginal Victorians. The *Victorian Budget 2018/19* provided \$9 million for 2018-19, which included funding to support an election process for the Assembly. The Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission has undertaken its own communications and engagement activities to support the election process and ensure that candidates and voters are adequately informed and supported to participate.

Portfolio:	Aboriginal Affairs
Witness:	Kate Houghton and Tim Kanoa
Committee member:	Mr Hibbins
Page/s of transcript:	Page 6

Relevant text:

Can I move on to one of your priorities here—justice and safety. We have got now record high incarceration rates for Indigenous people in Victoria. Can I ask what initiatives are in the budget this year to address that and reduce incarceration rates for Indigenous people?

Answer:

The Victorian Government is addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal Victorians in the justice system through: advancing self-determination across the whole of government; increasing investment in the mainstream justice system; and furthering self-determination in justice through the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA).

Supporting better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians through self-determination

The Victorian Government's investment in treaty and self-determination reflects a commitment to changing the relationship between Aboriginal Victorians and government.

The *2019/20 Victorian Budget* provides \$109.1 million over four years to support better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, including \$30.4 million for treaty and self-determination. This puts Aboriginal people at the centre and ensures they are supported to make decisions about their own lives, communities and future. Advancing Aboriginal self-determination is the strongest foundation for creating a justice system that is effective in closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal justice outcomes.

In addition to treaty, other key initiatives supporting better outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians include:

- \$28.8 million over four years to continue implementing the Dhek Dja Aboriginal 10 Year Family Violence Agreement
- \$13.6 million over two years to support the case management of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- \$0.4 million to support Aboriginal organisations to deliver targeted youth mentoring programs which support and empower Aboriginal young people.

Increasing investment in the mainstream justice system

The *2019/20 Victorian Budget* also invests in improving the mainstream justice system, which will enhance community safety and reduce reoffending, including for Aboriginal Victorians. Initiatives include:

- \$20 million for diversion and rehabilitation programs for women in prison, including a targeted, strategic response for Aboriginal women, which will help reduce female incarceration and improve treatment pathways for women in prison
- \$22.7 million to continue a range of diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs and services for accused persons, prisoners and offenders to reduce recidivism and enhance community safety
- \$38.5 million to support early intervention and diversion of young people from offending and to reduce recidivism among young offenders.

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement

The Victorian Government is strengthening self-determination and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system under *Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja*, the fourth phase of the AJA, which is a long-term partnership between the Aboriginal community and the Victorian Government.

In August 2018, the Victorian Government announced a \$40.3 million investment to implement the forth phase of the AJA, which included:

- \$15 million for community-led self-determination initiatives, including the expansion of Aboriginal Community Justice Panels across Victoria
- \$12.3 million to expand Koori Courts in the County, Magistrates' and Children's Courts and to strengthen the Koori Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal list
- \$10.8 million for Aboriginal youth justice initiatives, including boosting the Aboriginal Liaison Officer Program and establishing the Elders In-reach program in youth justice custody centres
- \$2.2 million to expand the Statewide Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Program.