

Fact Sheet

When to engage with Victoria's Traditional Owners

Context

Victoria's Aboriginal community numbers approximately 37,000 with large populations centred in and around Melbourne, Shepparton, Geelong, Mildura and East Gippsland. Small communities live on Aboriginal owned land at Lake Tyers and Framlingham.

The community has a rich history and comprises Indigenous people from all over Australia. This includes descendents from Victoria's various Traditional Owner groups, who at the time of colonisation maintained complex societies with many languages, laws and customs, and a connection to their land as the basis of their existence and identity (refer <http://www.vaclang.org.au/maps.aspx>).

Traditional Owners today continue to assert their sense of identity, affinity and connection to their country, ancestors and culture and a desire to reclaim, sustain and practice their Traditional law, lore and culture. The **Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group** (<http://www.landjustice.com.au>) was established in 2005 to represent and promote Traditional Owner interests at a Statewide level.

Traditional Owner Corporations

Victoria has several Traditional Owner Corporations which represent their communities, some with established offices and a corporate identity in their region. It is these Corporations (rather than individuals within groups) who are the right people for :-

- local "welcome to country" acknowledgements;
- cultural heritage matters;
- land and natural resource management;
- use of traditional knowledge, language, lore, custom.

Many Corporations have recognition through :-

- settlements and claims under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993* and *Victorian Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*. (refer map at <http://www.nntt.gov.au>);
- appointment as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*; (refer map at <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/indigenous/aboriginal-heritage-council/registered-aboriginal-parties>);
- other land and natural resource management agreements and MoUs with local and State government agencies.

The table overleaf provides a snapshot of currently recognised Traditional Owner Corporations in Victoria. They are responsible for native title, cultural heritage, land, natural resource management, business, employment, economic development and capacity building matters that affect their Traditional Owner groups.

Other Aboriginal Community Organisations

A number of other Aboriginal community-based organisations, such as cooperatives, represent and/or provide a wide range of health, education, housing, employment and other services to the entire Aboriginal community in the area where they are located.

38 Local Indigenous Networks (LINs) exist throughout Victoria to provide a voice for local communities and are involved in community planning and development initiatives.

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TABLE 1 : Traditional Owner Corporations recognised for native title or cultural heritage matters.

(as of October 2011)

Approx. location & nearest towns ⁽¹⁾	Group	Corporation	Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC)	Native Title Claim	Cultural Heritage 'RAP' Body	Corporate Office	NRM Contracting Services
Wimmera (Horsham)	Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia & Yupakulk	Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corp. www.bglc.com.au	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
South West (Portland, Hamilton)	Gunditjmara	Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corp. www.gunditjmirring.com	Y		Y	Y	Y
Gippsland	Gunaikurnai	Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corp	Y		Y	Y	Y
South West (Warrnambool)	Eastern Maar	Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corp	Y				
Mid West (Ballarat, Geelong)	Wadawurrung	Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corp www.wathcorp.com.au/			Y		
Mid West (Stawell, Ararat)	Djab Wurrung	Martang Pty Ltd			Y		
North Central (Bendigo)	Dja Dja Wurrung	Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corp.		Y	Y	Y	Y
North (Wangaratta, Benalla)	Taungurung	Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corp			Y		
North (Shepparton, Barmah)	Yorta Yorta	Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation www.yynac.com.au			Y	Y	Y
Melbourne	Wurundjeri	Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council			Y	Y	Y

⁽¹⁾ refer maps at <http://www.nntt.gov.au> and <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/indigenous/aboriginal-heritage-council/registered-aboriginal-parties>

More Information?

If unsure of the Traditional Owner group in your area you can contact

- **Aboriginal Affairs Victoria** for cultural heritage related matters, Freecall: 1800 762 003 , Email: Aboriginal.affairs@dpcd.vic.gov.au.
- **Department of Justice Native Title Unit** at www.justice.vic.gov.au, Follow links to Your Rights / Indigenous Victorians.
- **Native Title Services Victoria** (<http://www.nts.vic.gov.au>) for native title, land and natural resource related matters and the Secretariat of the Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group.