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ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA PROVINCE OF VICTORIA

Statement from the Bishops of the Anglican Province of Victoria in response to the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Third Interim Report and Final Report 2 July 2025

The Anglican Province of Victoria stands by the hard truths told during the Land, Sky and Waters Hearings last year, as reflected in the Province's written submissions and the Commission's Third Interim Report and Final Report released on 1 July 2025. Our dioceses reiterate the apologies made during that process.

Policies of enforced segregation and assimilation separated First Nations peoples from Country, language, lore and family, and prevented the practice of culture and spirituality. The Anglican Church was complicit in the implementation of these policies in Victoria.

The cultural genocide that marked the early period of Victoria's colonisation has led to inter-generational trauma and ongoing injustice for First Nations people up to the present day. Systemic racism and structural disadvantage persist in our communities and our churches.

We are grateful for the Commission's reports and acknowledge with contrition its account of the historic and ongoing impacts of the dispossession of First Nations peoples.

We hear the strong recommendations to churches from the Commission in the chapter addressing land injustice.

The matters raised in the recommendations are under active consideration by all Victorian dioceses in relation to current land holdings, regardless of how that land was acquired.

Several dioceses have already resolved to increase the proceeds from land sales directed to First Nations organisations and in support of ministry by First Nations leaders.

We will continue to engage with Traditional Owners, State Government, and the emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria, in working through the Commission's reports and recommendations.

The Anglican Province of Victoria remains committed to Reconciliation that is founded on truth-telling and expressed in just outcomes for First Nations peoples.

Signatories:

The Rt Revd Genieve Blackwell
Administrator, Diocese of Melbourne

The Rt Revd Garry Weatherill
Bishop of Ballarat

The Rt Revd Dr Matt Brain
Bishop of Bendigo

The Rt Revd Dr Richard Treloar
Bishop of Gippsland

The Rt Revd Clarence Bester
Bishop of Wangaratta