

STATEMENT OF ABORIGINAL COUNCIL TO PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP (revised 28 Nov 2018)

We the *Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria* represent a sovereign and free people who continue in our ancient responsibility to nurture this country and its peoples.

We invite you, the bishops of the Province, to join us in attending to the unfinished business between the First and Second peoples of our church. We invite you to walk with us the costly pilgrimage of truth-telling, repentance, reparation and justice. We invite you to join with us in composing a new hymn, a songline that will lead, one day, to the signing of a *makarrata* or covenant that inaugurates a more just settlement and relationship between us.

We therefore ask for a seat at the table in the councils of the Province, and the dioceses therein, so that the aspirations of our people toward self-determination in matters of faith, worship and spirituality may be clearly heard and honoured. Let us take counsel together that the redemption won for us in Christ Jesus may find a home in our common work for justice and for peace in this ancient land.

Below you will find a list of our aspirations as a Provincial Aboriginal Council with the Anglican Church. For us, these aspirations give expression to our longing for a more just settlement between the First and Second Peoples of the church. We ask for your commitment to an ongoing and comprehensive conversation about ways in which these aspirations might be transformed into an agreement that is able to effect a real and lasting reconciliation.

1. That a First Nations bishop be appointed for the Province, and that a First Nations archdeacon be appointed in each diocese of the Province wherever possible. These sisters and brothers would sit on the key policy-making committees of our church as a VOICE for our people. They would also be evangelists for gospel TRUTH, JUSTICE and RECONCILIATION in the congregations, schools and agencies of the Province.
2. That each of the Anglican service agencies, theological colleges and schools be encouraged to appoint a local First Nations person to their governing boards as a VOICE and advocate for our people.
3. That the two Melbourne theological colleges be encouraged to collaborate in appointing at least one First Nations academic who would be tasked with teaching theology from the perspective of our people, and that every theological student on an ordination track be required to study with that academic as part of their core curriculum.
4. That every Anglican school be encouraged to hire at least one First Nations teacher who would be tasked with teaching First Peoples history, language and culture, and that such learning be undertaken by every student as part of their core curriculum
5. Where First Nations people are encouraged to take up study in Anglican schools and colleges, that high levels of pastoral and cultural support are put in place to help our people succeed. Wherever possible, this support would be delivered by our own people.

6. That every Anglican organisation in the Province be encouraged to commit itself to employing and supporting First Nations people to the tune of 5% or more of each organisation's total workforce.
7. That the learning of First Nations history, theology and culture be designated a core part of the professional development curriculum for all Anglican clergy, teachers, administrators, and welfare workers.
8. That all properties granted the Church by government (without fee) be made available for First Nations access and use: and, in the case of such properties being disposed of, that First Nations groups with a traditional claim to such properties be granted title without fee.
9. That 15% of proceeds from the sale of any other church properties be given over to First Nations people – 10% into a Trust Fund to be divested to traditional owners on the completion of a process of treaty and 5% into a Provincial fund set aside for resourcing the Anglican ministries outlined in this document; this as a fundamental act of REPARATION for past acts of thievery.
10. That all local parishes and congregations in the diocese be encouraged to pay an annual rent of 5% or more to either a local First Peoples organisation or else into a Fund held in the Province for resourcing the ministries outlined in this document.
11. That First Nations liturgical rites, including those already produced by clergy within this Province, be authorized for use throughout the Province.
12. That each local church or agency be encouraged to consider raising a memorial to commemorate all who lost their lives in the local Frontier Wars.
13. That each Anglican congregation, school or agency be encouraged – in partnership with this Council and with diocesan bishops – to form respectful relationships with local Aboriginal nations, including a commitment to support them as they take part in the process of treaty-making with the Victorian government.
14. That the bishops of this province commit themselves to working, locally with us, as well as nationally with NATSIAC, towards TREATIES with First Nations that enshrine these and other important aspirations of our people as a matter of gospel JUSTICE. To our mind, any such treaty would also encode the ways in which we are accountable to each other in realizing and reviewing the ongoing work of the gospel to which the treaties commit us.

Please be assured of our prayers as you consider our invitation.

Yours in faith,

The Reverend Phyllis Andy
The Reverend Dr Garry Worete Deverell
The Reverend Glenn Loughrey
The Rt Reverend Chris McLeod
The Reverend Grace Reynolds
The Reverend Shannon Smith

The Reverend Janet Turpie-Johnstone