

## **Media Release**

**Tuesday 26 November 2019**

### **RESHAPING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

A new Local Government Bill is being debated in the Victorian Parliament this week, which could see Traditional Owners acknowledged for the first time as a distinct ‘Municipal Community’.

In addition to a requirement for Councils to consider the rights and interests of those who live, pay rates or conduct business in the municipality, the new legislation would mandate that Traditional Owners also be included in key decisions and policy making.

If passed, the new Act would ensure that Councils:

- Provide information and services in a way that’s accessible, equitable and responsive to the diverse needs of Traditional Owners
- Consider the financial impact of policies and strategic plans on Traditional Owners
- Develop their community engagement policy and ‘Community Vision’ with input from Traditional Owners and describe Traditional Owners’ aspirations for the future of the municipality
- Collaborate with Traditional Owners in the development of their Council Plan and the first budget after a general election; and report to the Traditional Owners at least once a year on the implementation of the Council Plan
- Facilitate and participate in effective communication between the Council and the Traditional Owners
- Give priority to achieving the best outcomes for Traditional Owners, including future generations
- Impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of Traditional Owners
- Engage Traditional Owners in strategic planning and strategic decision making

#### **Quotes attributable to –**

##### **Marcus Stewart, CEO, Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporations:**

“This is a great example of how – in just about every new piece of legislation or public policy – there’s an opportunity to underpin the rights and interests of Traditional Owners”

“To Minister Somyurek’s credit, he’s listened to the voice of Traditional Owners through the review of the Local Government Act and included these simple, but very meaningful amendments”

“With the Treaty process gathering momentum, this is a really positive sign that the Victorian Government understands the important role Traditional Owners play at all levels of public policy”

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