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Time to Remove Our White Blindfolds say Non-Indigenous Leaders

Today close to two hundred people participated in a powerful symbolic act of commitment to Australia's ongoing journey towards reconciliation to mark the 12th International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9th August).

At the Melbourne Town Hall people gathered, dressed in white and black and wearing white blindfolds to symbolise how non-indigenous Australians are so often blind to how racism and a lack of respect for Indigenous cultures and communities impacts on Indigenous people. By removing their blindfolds and placing a thumb print on a Treaty Scroll, the non-indigenous participants demonstrated their commitment to 'see things differently' and work in solidarity with Indigenous people in front of Indigenous leaders witnessing the public ritual. Speakers at the event included prominent Human Rights advocate and QC, Julian Burnside, Indigenous academic Lillian Holt, ACTU President Sharon Burrows and Aboriginal community leader Alf Bamblett.

"The message here is about owning, as non-indigenous people, our inability to see the truth and taking the next step to committing to a just resolution of the unfinished business of reconciliation," ANTaR Victoria Chairperson, Jill Webb said today. "This includes cultural respect, self determination and justice for the Indigenous peoples of Australia."

"It is about restoring relationships between the Indigenous and the non-indigenous communities of Australia on the basis of mutual respect."

"It is only through honestly recognising our history and positively valuing the many Indigenous cultures of this nation, that we, non-indigenous, people can find a sense of honour as Australians and, we hope, inspire a new phase in our reconciliation journey which will unite the nation," said Reconciliation Victoria Co-Chair, Di Sisely.

"By participating in this ritual of reconciliation we know the participants have been empowered to walk the talk and action their commitments in their homes, workplaces and communities."

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