

MEDIA RELEASE



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VICTORIAN LIBERAL NATIONAL COALITION SUPPORTS RECONCILIATION, WILL THE BRUMBY GOVERNMENT? ASKS ANTaR

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation in Victoria (ANTaR Vic) praised the State Victorian Opposition today over their position of support for reconciliation in Victoria. Yesterday, Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Jeanette Powell, called on the State Government to continue funding for Reconciliation Victoria and give consideration to increasing that funding to meet the critical task of reconciliation in this state.

“ANTaR Victoria thanks the State Opposition for their support of our campaign to Save Reconciliation Victoria,” ANTaR Vic Chairperson, Dr Peter Lewis said today. “The question is; does the Brumby Government support reconciliation? Do they have a strategy to address the racism and cultural misunderstanding which impacts so negatively on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing?”

But there remains confusion today as to whether Reconciliation Victoria will continue to receive funding from the State Government. The Victorian Opposition has grilled the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs about the funding position at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) who declared that Reconciliation Victoria will receive ‘interim ‘ funding. This is despite the fact that Reconciliation Victoria has been officially told they will not be funded after June this year.

“In 2000 the Bracks Government stated that they viewed ‘*Reconciliation as an ongoing responsibility of Government that needs leadership and support to ensure that the process of Reconciliation and its key themes of respect, understanding and addressing the past are embraced by the whole Victorian community*’.” Dr Lewis said. “They even gave reconciliation a capital R. It appears that the Brumby Government either has a new policy or they are just totally confused.”

“There is even confusion as to which Minister is responsible for reconciliation,” he said. “Trying to fund reconciliation out of the Aboriginal Affairs budget is missing the point and plain wrong. Why should Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people pay for curing our racism? Hopefully, the Premier will recognise that reconciliation is a task that requires leadership and he will both remove the confusion and take charge of the policy in consultation with the people’s movement for reconciliation.”

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