



YORTA YORTA NATION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

ABN: 55 942 996 311 – ICN: 3279

## Media Release September 1, 2025

### Re: Yorta Yorta Community Say Yes to a Reserved Seat on the First Peoples' Assembly

In a major meeting on Sunday in Shepparton, Yorta Yorta community members, including the Yorta Yorta Council of Elders, carefully considered and voted in support of accepting the Yorta Yorta Reserved Seat on the First Peoples' Assembly.

The Assembly is currently negotiating Treaty at the state level. For the first time since it was established in 2019, the Yorta Yorta people will now have a mandated voice to speak directly into the Assembly, ensuring our specific rights and interests are represented.

First Peoples' Assembly Members were in attendance to answer questions and support the meeting.

Robert Nicholls, Chair of YYNAC, nephew of Pastor Sir Douglas Nicholls, and descendant of Yorta Yorta Ancestors Mariah and Kitty Atkinson-Cooper, welcomed the decision:

“The successful applicant for the Yorta Yorta Reserved Seat will be responsible for representing all Yorta Yorta people on Treaty matters. They will be accountable to, and report regularly to, the Members and Board of Directors of the Corporation, the Elders Council, and our wider community. This is about leadership, accountability, and carrying forward our collective vision.”

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation CEO John Patrick Kerr said:

“This decision also reflects the strength and resilience of the Yorta Yorta people. Attempts throughout history to silence or diminish our voice have never succeeded. Far from being washed away, we have endured, adapted, and grown stronger. Each challenge has only sharpened our determination to keep the struggle alive and to ensure our story is heard loud and clear.”

This historic step adds to YYNAC's legal and political strategies to progress and advance Yorta Yorta human rights, community services, cultural heritage management, and economic development. It will also create local opportunities in employment, health, education, heritage, and land management.

The Yorta Yorta people have spoken, and we have chosen to step forward and take our rightful place. For too long, others have spoken for us. That ends here. This Reserved Seat is not just a seat at the table, it is a voice for our Ancestors, for our Elders, and for generations yet to come.

An Expression of Interest process will open shortly, followed by an election to secure the best candidate to carry this responsibility.

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#### Authorised:

R. H. Nicholls, Chair, Board of Directors  
Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation (ICN 3279)

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