

BERNADETTE THOMAS - FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE

I pay my respects to all the Traditional Owners of this land. Their languages, culture, & connection to Country are still strong.

1. What priority are First Nations justice issues for you?

First Nations Justice is a high priority for me and for the Victorian Greens. Our approach is based on treaty, truth, and justice.

I've been involved in partnering with First Nations groups in my work conserving grasslands in the NW of Melbourne, providing opportunities for mentoring working on Country, and building partnerships with First Nations people.

In my work as a Councillor at the City of Maribyrnong, I have guided the decision making around January 26, including engaging local First Nations peoples and the Maribyrnong community, and participating in Big Business conversations with Traditional Owners.

2. How will you support First Nations people in Footscray / Western Victoria Region?

I'm a founding member of JAM! (Justice Action Maribyrnong) and have participated in organising JAM! Activities like the film night and petition. I'll continue to be a member of JAM! If I'm elected.

I'll continue to promote deliberative and culturally appropriate engagement practices with First Nations peoples with both local and state government, promoting cultural safety, and First Nations led conversations.

I'll work to elevate First Nations justice issues that are important to local First Nations peoples, taking the time to meet local people and build relationships and trust over time. My work will be guided by the issues identified by First Nations communities.

3. What do you believe are the priorities for First Nations people that need to be addressed and how will you do that?

The Victorian Greens have a comprehensive plan to address issues of First Nations justice, based on the ongoing impacts of colonisation, trauma, and self-determination.

Treaty and Truth Telling: continue to support the process for treaty; advocate for funding so First Nations Victorians can participate equally in Treaty processes

Reform the criminal justice system: that affects First Nations people at a much higher rate than other Victorians. I'll advocate to:

- Raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years
- Fix our broken bail laws to reduce deaths in custody

- Provide additional funding for the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Create an independent commissioner to monitor progress on implementation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage and caring for Country through:

- Strengthening First Nations rights to water, aquifers, and oceans
- Limit water taken from rivers; ensure cultural flows available for cultural practices
- Support for Traditional Owner management of national and state parks
- Funding to allow First Nations people to participate in environmental consultation

Fair sentencing: repeal mandatory minimum sentencing laws which are a driver of over incarceration of First Nations people and entrench offenders' likelihood of ongoing contact with the criminal justice system

Monitor police and prisons: to end Aboriginal deaths in custody and hold our police to account; develop a framework to monitor potential racial profiling by police

First Nations justice policy: <https://greens.org.au/vic/platform/first-nations-justice>

F: <https://www.facebook.com/BernadetteThomasGreens>

E: Bernadette.thomas@vic.greens.org.au

W: <https://greens.org.au/vic/person/bernadette-thomas>