



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

The injustices and inequalities that are growing in this country have important origins in the dispossession of Australia's First Nations. This colonial history accounts for how the dominance of the rich and powerful was first established and, importantly, it continues to play a central role, fanning the racism that characterises Australian politics and helps big business divide and conquer working people.

For Victorian Socialists, recognising that sovereignty over land and water was never ceded, while only the beginning of redressing the systematic crimes committed against First Nations people, is important for all working people, as a step toward a country where wealth and decision-making isn't monopolised by a tiny elite.

In a nutshell, First Nations justice is at the heart of our struggle for a better future. We cannot rest while the murder, enslavement, social destruction and cultural desecration of Australia's First Nations remains un-accounted for and continuously perpetrated. This continuing injustice underpins our unequal society and the ongoing destruction of the continent's environment.

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

One of the first actions I took once elected as a local councillor in the City of Maribyrnong was to move a motion in support of First Nations recognition and justice:

That Council:

1. Acknowledges January 26, the day Captain Arthur Phillip first raised the Union Jack flag in Sydney Cove, as Invasion Day: A symbol of the forceful dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a recurring reminder of over 200 years injustice.

2. In support of the continued struggle for land rights and social justice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Council will work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to organise appropriate events for January 26.
3. Will support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in developing local awareness of the history of resistance and survival of Australia's First Nations peoples.
4. Will engage the Maribyrnong community as a whole in a dialogue about how we can support and contribute to the continuing struggle to end racism and ensure social justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

While this motion was voted down, it started a conversation that has led to significant developments among the local community, recognising the need for both acknowledgement and campaigning around key issues reflecting the ongoing racism and brutality our First Nations continue to suffer.

I will continue to campaign with groups such as Justice Action Maribyrnong to make our local area a community that puts its money where its mouth is, and fights for First Nations justice.

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

For Victorian Socialists the key priorities include:

1. End the privileging of business interests over Indigenous land rights by pursuing Treaties with First Nations peoples that include the right to veto mining and other environmentally and culturally destructive activities. In so doing, achieving justice, sovereignty and self-determination.
2. Establish a reparations tax on commercial properties as a contribution to funding land theft reparations for First Nations people.
3. Expand the Victorian Stolen Generations Reparations Package to include people removed from their families after 1976 and compensate families of deceased people who would have been eligible for compensation under the scheme.
4. Acknowledge the Indigenous Stolen Wages Preliminary Investigation and establish a scheme to make payments to workers and the families of deceased workers who had wages stolen or withheld.
5. Further develop the curriculum so that Victorian students are taught about the systemic injustices perpetrated against First Nations people.
6. Fund schools to teach Aboriginal languages.
7. Provide targeted spending to rapidly equalise the health, education and economic outcomes of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
8. Increase access to legal, health and social support services.
9. Protect cultural rights and provide greater support to retain and restore culture and languages lost due to colonisation and genocide, including by supporting First Nations people to live or spend time on country.
10. Recognise January 26 as Invasion Day.
11. Implement all recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.
12. Implement all recommendations of the Bringing them Home Report.