

# Together for Treaty

## Together for Treaty - Kitchen Table Conversation Guide

A *kitchen table conversation* is a simple yet powerful model of organising. It brings small groups of people together – often friends, neighbours, co-workers or family – to have respectful, values-based conversations about the issues that matter to us all.

Held in comfortable, familiar settings like someone's home, a cafe or even a park, these conversations are designed to be informal, inclusive and empowering. Everyone has the opportunity to listen, reflect, share their experiences, and explore new ideas together.

Kitchen table conversations help shift public opinion from the ground up – fostering understanding, finding common values, and encouraging everyday people to be part of lasting change.

### How to host

Here's everything you need to know to make your kitchen table conversation a success!

#### Before

##### Decide on a date, time and location

- Think through when would work best for you, and the group you'd like to invite.
- When picking the location, choose somewhere relaxed and familiar – like your kitchen table, lounge room, backyard, local park, or a quiet cafe. The goal is to create a welcoming space where people feel safe to share.

##### Invite people

- Aim for 4-8 people to keep the group small enough for everyone to contribute.

##### Read this guide

- Read over this guide to make sure you are across the process and have everything you need. In particular, make sure you are familiar with the agenda on page x.

##### Prepare

- Grab some pens/pencils and paper, print off some spare copies of the agenda and purchase any nibbles you'd like to share!



## During

As the host your key jobs are to chair the meeting and let us know how it went. Welcome your guests as they arrive, introduce the agenda, and help keep the conversation flowing. It can be handy to have a clock or a timer on your phone visible to keep things running to time!

Other things to be mindful of as a host:

### **Set a tone of respect and openness**

- Start by acknowledging Country and letting everyone know this is a space for open, honest and respectful discussion. Remind participants it's okay to disagree, but listening with empathy is key.

### **Share your story!**

- Personal stories are powerful. Share why you care about Treaty, truth-telling, and First Nations justice – and what moved you to take action. This helps motivate others!

### **Give space for everyone to speak**

- Make sure all voices are heard. You might go around the table or invite quieter people in gently. Everyone's experience matters.

### **Ask folks to take action**

- Finish up the kitchen table conversation with a concrete ask. It might be joining you at a local market stall, heading along to a march or attending a conversation training. Pick one that works for your area.

## Afterwards

### **Let us know how it went**

You can share feedback, stories, and pictures (if you like!) and numbers of participants via [info@commonthreads.org.au](mailto:info@commonthreads.org.au).

## Agenda

Below is an agenda for your kitchen table conversation. Use it as a guide and tailor it to your specific event.

Activity	Time Guide
<p><b>Open the conversation and Acknowledgement of Country</b></p> <p>Welcome your guests and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which you're meeting. Here's an example:</p> <p><i>Before we begin today I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the (people) of (nation). I pay my respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.</i></p>	5 mins
<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p>Give everyone the chance to introduce themselves.</p> <p>If everyone knows each other, use some icebreaker questions. Remember we want the tone to be comfortable and relaxed ie . <i>Are you watching any good TV shows? What book did you read last?</i></p>	10 mins
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>A quick overview of what's happening (see copy below)</p> <p><i>Right now, Victoria is closer than ever to making Treaty a reality. The First Peoples' Assembly – an elected body representing First Nations communities – is negotiating a statewide Treaty with the Victorian Government. This historic process has been built on decades of leadership and calls from First Nations people for truth, justice and self-determination.</i></p> <p><i>Treaty is about giving First Nations communities the power to make decisions that affect their lives – from health and education to land and culture. At the same time, the Yoorrook Justice Commission has led a groundbreaking truth-telling process to uncover and acknowledge the full history and ongoing impacts of colonisation. Together, these processes are creating a path forward – towards justice, healing, and a better future for all of us. The Treaty process in Victoria will be a historic moment, and a chance to build momentum for treaties across the country.</i></p>	2-5 mins
<b>Discussion</b>	20-40 mins

<p>A space for folks to talk over questions, thoughts and share visions for the future. Use the questions here to get you started, and think of a few of your own to make sure the conversation flows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What brought you along today?</i></li> <li>• <i>Have you done anything like this before? Have you been involved in any other campaigns?</i></li> <li>• <i>What does justice mean to you?</i></li> <li>• <i>What does Treaty mean to you?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you think are the biggest/some of the challenges?</i></li> <li>• <i>What does change look like in your community?</i></li> </ul>	<p>(use as much time as you need based on your group size)</p>
<p><b>Reflections</b></p> <p>Share a reflection from the chat. Go around the group. <i>ie What's something you'll take away from today?</i></p>	<p>5 mins</p>
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>After the reflections, ask folks to join you at/in an upcoming action. Remember to be specific about a date, time or ask.</p> <p>To find out what's happening, keep an eye on your inbox or reach out to <a href="mailto:info@commonthreads.org.au">info@commonthreads.org.au</a> for suggestions.</p>	<p>2 mins</p>
<p><b>Wrap up and socialise!</b></p> <p>Thank everyone for coming along. Once the formal part of the kitchen table conversation is over, folks can socialise and continue to chat.</p>	

## FAQs

### **What is a Treaty?**

Treaties are essentially agreements that set out the ground-rules for a relationship between different groups. They have often been used to help build peace and prosperity.

In Victoria, a process has been underway since 2016 to enable First Peoples and the Victorian Government to negotiate Treaties. These Treaties will acknowledge the truth about what was done to Aboriginal people and make sure Aboriginal communities always have the freedom and power to come up with and deliver practical solutions at a local level.

### **Why is Treaty important?**

We're all better off when we are free to set our own course and make decisions for ourselves, our families and our communities. But too often, successive Governments have forced their own ideas on how First Nations people should lead their own lives. Decisions about health, education and homelands keep being taken away from them. Treaty is about putting First Nations people in the driver's seat so together they can make the decisions that affect their communities, culture and Country. They know their communities best - so when they have a say over policies that impact them, they work better.

Treaty is also about how we can move together towards unity and a fairer future for everyone. We want a country that values all people, whether they have been here five years, five generations or five thousand generations. But too often, First Nations people have been ignored when they discuss who they are and what sort of country we want to be. Treaties provide a way to acknowledge past injustices, resolve differences, and work out how to create a shared future. Just as New Zealand has embraced Māori culture, we can create a future where we respect and value Aboriginal people and take pride in the oldest living culture in the world.

### **Tell me more about the truth-telling and Treaty process happening in Victoria?**

Yoorrook truth-telling process: We can only be our best and create a country where everyone can thrive when we listen and acknowledge the truth of our past and present. We must be honest about Australia's ugly history regarding Aboriginal people - including massacres, stolen land, stolen children and violent repression of language and culture - and how this has led to ongoing inequality today. The Yoorrook Justice Commission has led a groundbreaking truth-telling process here in Victoria: listening to the experiences of First Nations people and charting a course forward for action, healing and justice. When we face the truth with open hearts, we can build a better future together for us all.

Statewide Treaty process: Right now, the First Peoples' Assembly - an elected body representing First Peoples across Victoria - is negotiating a statewide Treaty with the Victorian government. This Treaty can make sure Aboriginal communities have the freedom and power to set the course and design solutions that work for their mob across a range of areas - like removing unfair barriers to healthcare and housing, making sure young people can thrive, and making sure all Victorians can learn about and celebrate First Nations cultures. Alongside the statewide process, there is the opportunity for different Traditional Owner groups to negotiate Treaty arrangements around local matters and their priorities for looking after Country.

You can watch, read and learn more about the work underway in Victoria here:

- [ABC feature](#) + [Four Corners episode](#) on the Yoorrook truth-telling process
- [Videos, media stories and submissions](#) on the Yoorrook website
- [Yarning up podcast episode](#) with Commissioner Travis Lovett
- [It's a Lot podcast episode](#) with Commissioner Lovett & Abbie Chatfield
- [Statewide Treaty explainer](#) from the First Peoples Assembly

### **What about Treaties in other states?**

Australia is one of the only Commonwealth countries that has not signed a federal treaty or agreement with First Nations people. Treaty processes have fallen to the State Governments and are at varying stages:

- **NSW** committed to a 12-month consultation process in 2023 with discussions beginning in the coming months.
- In **Queensland**, a Path to Treaty process which began under Labor in 2019 was scrapped in 2024 by the incoming Liberal National Party.
- In **South Australia**, Aboriginal leaders are keen for discussions to restart but the state government has said no treaty will be negotiated before the next state election in March 2026.
- The **Tasmanian** government has committed to a truth-telling process, but has dropped Treaty discussions.
- The **Northern Territory's** Country Liberal Party (CLP) government scrapped the treaty process in February 2025.
- **Western Australia** has made no formal commitments

### **Who is Common Threads?**

Common Threads is a new First Nations led organisation that aims to grow and harness the power of emerging First Nations leadership, advocacy and changemaking to win

transformative change. We are forging a new pathway to build Indigenous power and drive systemic change that centres the aspirations of our people - for Country, for community and for our rights.

Common Threads was co-founded by Dr Jackie Huggins AO (Bidjara / Birri Gubba Juru), Larissa Baldwin-Roberts (Widjabul Wia-bul / Bundjalung), and Amelia Telford (Bundjalung and South Sea Islander). Over the past five years, our team has led a range of movement-building and storytelling projects: from groundbreaking Passing the Message Stick research, to Common Threads summits bringing together hundreds of people in Magand-jin and Gimuy. In 2025, Common Threads officially launched as an independent, non-profit organisation. We are building national campaigns for truth, Treaties, land rights and climate justice - while providing support and resources to grassroots movements across the continent. We honour the leadership, knowledge and vision already held in communities and we work inclusively, backing collective action.