

*This is the second edition of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council's bi-annual newsletter and also my last message as Chairperson as my term as Chairperson ends in September this year.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Council members for their dedication and contribution to Council's work during my time as Chairperson. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude for their support and guidance, particularly that of Tim Chatfield and Eleanor Bourke who served as Deputy Chairpersons during my two years as Chairperson.*



*It has been a privilege to lead the Council and continue the work of those before us who have fought for the due recognition of our inherent rights and responsibilities as Traditional Owners. I have also appreciated working in partnership with various stakeholders around the state to see Traditional Owners appropriately recognised and valued as the first peoples of Victoria.*

*In addition to the various projects outlined in this newsletter, Council has been preparing for the government's response to the review of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Establishment and Effectiveness of RAPs. Council also looks forward to participating in the development and implementation of the Victorian government's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Strategy.*

*I wish the next Chairperson all the best in leading a strong and passionate Council to realise its vision where all Victorians appreciate our heritage and our collective responsibilities to see it protected and enjoyed for our future.*

*Rodney Carter  
Chairperson*

### **Meetings with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Attorney General of Victoria**

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson met with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Natalie Hutchins MP, in February to outline Council's current work and key priorities. The full Council will meet the Minister in June 2015.

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson also met with the Attorney General of Victoria, the Hon Martin Pakula MP to discuss alignment between the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010*.

### **Promoting awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage**

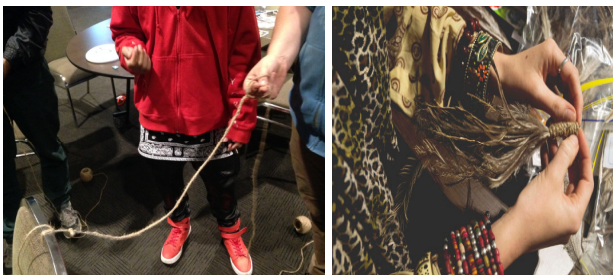
Council is determined to see that the cultural rights and responsibilities of Traditional Owners are realised and respected. We have advocated this through working with stakeholders and making submissions including making a submission to the review of the Guidelines for Geographic Names 2010. We will also be making a submission to the review of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006. We have also begun work on a partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria to strengthen engagement between RAPs and local councils.

## The Shared Values Project

Council has been continuing its work in partnership with the Heritage Council of Victoria (HCV), looking to strengthen the recognition and recording of Aboriginal heritage values for places with shared Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values. The project has focused on nine pilot sites, using these to develop a methodology for ongoing work in this area. Consultation has taken place with Traditional Owners regarding the pilot sites and through a strategic workshop. This work will be finalised soon and shared with Traditional Owners, heritage professionals and interested others.

## Partnership with the Koorie Youth Council

Since 2012, the Council has been working with the Koorie Youth Council (KYC) to understand the way in which young Koories feel about and engage in their cultural heritage, and to identify opportunities to support their engagement. This year, the Council supported the KYC's Koorie Youth Summit, a state-wide gathering which brings together Koorie youth to connect and share views and ideas. Council was involved in the Elder's Yarning Circle and facilitated a workshop on women's and men's adornment making with over 80 participants. It was a privilege to hear from our young leaders about their experiences, including about the barriers they face in engaging with their cultural heritage and their suggestions to overcome these. Council will build this engagement to ensure that Koorie youth have a respected voice in decisions that affect their cultural heritage now and in the future.



## Documentary about the return and protection of Ancestral Remains

Since November 2014, Council has been working to produce a documentary about the return and protection of Ancestral Remains. We acknowledge with thanks the generosity of the sixteen Traditional Owners and other stakeholders across Victoria who gave their time and knowledge to shape the documentary, which is due for release later this year.



## Regional Meetings regarding the protection of Ancestral Remains

The Council and the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria Ancestral Remains Joint Steering Group (JSG) held its fifth and final regional meeting in Eltham on 26 & 27 February 2015. The JSG guides the development of policies, procedures and records regarding the management and return of Ancestral Remains. The fifth regional meeting was hosted by the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council and brought together Traditional Owners and other stakeholders.

All of the regional meetings have allowed the JSG to learn about local issues and to provide information about the JSG's work regarding the protection and management of Ancestral Remains.

A report is now being prepared by the JSG which summarises the issues at each regional meeting and proposes recommendations to address these. The report is expected to be published later in 2015.

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