

Fact Sheet

Our Land Justice Group

The Victorian Traditional Owners Land Justice Group (LJG) is continuing a long tradition of traditional owner activism and working together for land justice in Victoria.

The Land Justice Group has made remarkable progress over the past two and half years. It has achieved changes to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 to provide greater recognition of traditional owners' rights. It has managed to bring about the Government's public acknowledgement that major policy changes are needed to deliver greater land justice to traditional owners.

The State has in turn committed to a Steering Committee process to develop a new native title Framework for Victoria. The traditional owners of Victoria will need to continue to be unified to make the most of this opportunity to create a new playing field for achieving land justice in Victoria.

The LJG is an unincorporated body which provides a voice for each traditional owner group in Victoria. Membership is open to 1 representative, and a deputy, from each traditional owner group in Victoria. It usually meets every 3 months in Melbourne for 1 or 2 days. More regular meetings are needed this year to deal with Settlement Framework business.

Can anyone come to LJG meetings? There are times when non-LJG members attend meetings to either provide information, advice or be part of discussions on specific agenda items. You can contact the Secretariat or Co-Chairs to discuss any issues you'd like to hear about or raise at a LJG meeting and all requests for attendance will be considered.

"It [Land Justice Group] brings everyone together, it connects everybody. We're all on the same wavelength, we're all facing basically the same problems in terms of land justice. We're getting to know one another. It's a more cohesive statewide community to me." **Sandra Onus, LJG member**

Its aim is to lobby the government for improvements to policy, legislation and action to achieve greater land justice for all of the traditional owners of Victoria. Involvement in the Land Justice Group is voluntary work.

"[having a statewide LJG] is important because just by doing it on an individual traditional owner by traditional owner basis it is very hard to win back land justice, and its important because it is a collective voice that includes that sort of critical mass needed to negotiate with the State government. It is a more effective way to achieve your strategic goals of land justice and the broader areas of land justice." **Co-chair Graham Atkinson**

"What we're fighting for in the LJG is Recognition of all our traditional owners groups and our ancestors, our history and connection to the land, and our responsibilities as traditional owners to maintain and protect our culture and our country." **Co-Chair Bobby Nicholls**

Victorian Traditional Owner Land Justice Group

The LJG will always respect the autonomy of each of the first nations. It respects and advocates for each group's right to make decisions for themselves. It respects and supports each group continuing to express its own aspirations and negotiate directly with government about its traditional lands. It is important to have a united voice at the State level when advocating for Statewide change.

The Land Justice Group currently has representatives appointed from the following groups:

Gunai / Kurnai	Albert Mullett
Wurundjeri	Annette Xiberras
Bidawal	Bevan Harrison
Barapa Barapa	Bobby Nicholls
Wadawurrung	Bryon Powell
Boonwurrung	Carolyn Briggs
Dja Dja Wurrung	Graham Atkinson
Wergaia	Gayle Maddigan
Dhudhuroa	Ken Stewart
Kirrae Wurrung	Len Clarke
Taungurung	Mick Harding
Way Wurru	Margaret Gardiner
Yapagulk	Melissa Jones
Latji Latji	Rex Harradine
Wadi Wadi	Reg Edwards
Tati Tati/Robinvale	Richie Kennedy & Lal Pearce
Gunditjmara	Sandra Onus

A number of these groups have nominated deputies. There are a few groups that have yet to nominate their representatives.

For an up to date list of members please go to www.landjustice.com.au

The LJG has three co-chairs – Bobby Nicholls, Graham Atkinson and Len Clarke



Left to Right: Bobby Nicholls, Graham Atkinson and Len Clarke

Who chose LJG representatives? Each traditional owner group chose their representatives, at a meeting of their group and through other discussions amongst families. It is a matter for each group who they nominate. The co-chairs of the Land Justice Group were first elected by their own groups in 2005 and then by the full LJG in August 2005. Their positions were reviewed and confirmed by the full LJG in November 2006.

"[fighting for land justice] it's a very big responsibility. It's a big weight on your shoulders, but it gets lightened by having a land justice group- you got all that support." **LJG Co-chair Len Clarke**

Make sure we can stay in touch with you. Are you on our mailing list?

Contact **Mark Brett**, Secretariat if you would like to contact the LJG members. You can also talk to **Drew Berick** the Community Liaison Officer for the Land Justice Group.

Any formal business should be addressed to:

Co-Chairs
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