

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land, winds, sky, and water we now share.

Queensland is committed to working towards a treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Path to Treaty is for all Queenslanders to come together to learn, share, listen and heal as we move towards becoming treaty ready. By walking this path together, we are honouring generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have called for self-determination, truth-telling and agreement-making.

Path to Treaty started in 2019, with state-wide consultation led by a high-profile group of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders (the Eminent Panel) and a Treaty Working Group. The Treaty Advancement Committee came together to build on the work of the Eminent Panel and Treaty Working Group, conducted further engagement and research and made recommendations to the Queensland Government on the next steps along the Path to Treaty. The Committee presented its report to the Queensland Government in 2021. The recommendations provided the foundation on which to build solid processes to see the treaty reform take shape. In 2020, a Statement of Commitment was issued by the Queensland Government, followed by a further Response to the Treaty Advancement Committee Report in 2022.

From consultations to date, Queenslanders have told us of three things they consider most important in this process:

1

Inclusion: Treaty is a conversation for all Queenslanders.
Everyone's voice must be heard.

2

Reconciliation: Telling the truth about our collective past (truth-telling) and healing is an important first step in this journey. Participation in this process must be accessible for all Queenslanders.

3

Treaty readiness: That all Queenslanders feel ready and supported to participate equally in treaty negotiations – 'treaty ready'.

What is a treaty?

A treaty (or treaties) is a negotiated agreement between two (or more) parties. It is only signed when all parties agree.

Treaties can be different, and are shaped by the social, political, and historical background that exists between the groups negotiating the treaty.

For Queensland, treaty is about the Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples coming together as equals to write our future together.

First, the First Nations Treaty Institute, once established, will co-design a Treaty Making Framework that sets the ground rules for treaty negotiations and will guide treaty-making in Queensland.

Why does Queensland need a treaty?

A treaty or treaties will set the foundation for a shared future between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland Government. It will allow all parties to come together and negotiate a new way of working and set the foundation for a positive co-existence. An equal partnership based on truth, not just about the wrongs of the past, but on a shared truth about the culture and language of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples¹.

Why is truth-telling and healing an important step on our Path to Treaty?

Any treaty must be based on truth. The truth about our past will help Queenslanders understand how modern Queensland came to be, but it may be difficult and traumatic. That is why truth-telling must be combined with healing.

Queenslanders have told us that they wish to hear and record the history of our State through a truth-telling and healing process. Hearing the truth about our shared histories helps us to understand how past laws, policies and practices have, and continue to, impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It also helps us to heal. It is the most important step on the Path to Treaty.

The Treaty Advancement Committee's report recommended a two-stage approach to truth-telling and healing:

1. Local truth-telling and healing activities working with our public institutions – for example the Queensland State Library, museums, Queensland State Archives, and art galleries.
2. A formal Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry set up under legislation, for a period of three years.

¹Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, *Final Report*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2018.

Getting treaty ready

The Queensland Government is committed to listening to all Queenslanders, working together, and taking the time needed to get this right.

Where we are?

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we are building the structures that will support the Path to Treaty work. These are:

- An Interim Truth and Treaty Body to support community readiness and local truth-telling before establishment of the First Nations Treaty Institute (Institute).
- The creation of the legislation to establish a formal, three-year Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry (Inquiry) and support the establishment of the Institute.
- A Path to Treaty Office to support government and community treaty readiness.

Where to next?

Our next steps on the Path to Treaty include:

- Setting up the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to hear and record the stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-First Nations Queenslanders.
- Setting up the First Nations Treaty Institute (Institute) – to support truth-telling and healing, and to create a Treaty Making Framework.
- Continuing our conversations with Queenslanders so that all voices are heard and included.

Funding Queensland's Path to Treaty

Queensland's Path to Treaty Fund has been established as a major investment in reconciliation and healing. Returns from the Fund will be used to progress Queensland's Path to Treaty providing a secure funding source for the Institute for the duration of treaty-making in Queensland.

Path to Treaty in Queensland and the national conversation about constitutional change

The Path to Treaty aligns with the Uluru Statement from the Heart themes of Voice, Treaty, and Truth and echoes other work happening in Queensland and at the national level that seeks to uphold the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It is important that the national conversation continues. This can occur at the same time, and separately, to Queensland's Path to Treaty.

Together Queenslanders can reshape our future. To do this, we encourage all Queenslanders to join the Path to Treaty. Visit www.qld.gov.au/treaty for more information.

Other fact sheets available:

- What is a treaty?
- Why is truth-telling and healing important?