

Treaty in the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Government is committed to progressing a Treaty between Aboriginal Territorians and the Northern Territory Government.

A Treaty will be a new way forward and an important step towards empowering Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory may need multiple Treaties and a Treaty should be relevant to the lives of individuals and their communities.

It is important we work together to get the best outcome for all Territorians.

What is a Treaty?

The word Treaty can be used to describe a range of agreements between states, nations, governments or people.

The Northern Territory Government will be talking with Territorians about what Treaty means to them.

Who makes a Treaty?

Aboriginal people from the Northern Territory will be one party to a Treaty. The Northern Territory Government would be the other party.

There may be more than one Treaty and more than one Aboriginal group that is a party to a Treaty.

Discussions with Aboriginal people will determine how they are represented in the Treaty-making process.

Why is a Treaty needed in the Northern Territory?

A Treaty or Treaties will set the foundation for future agreements between Aboriginal people and the Northern Territory Government. A Treaty will allow both parties to negotiate and agree on rights and responsibilities and establish a long lasting relationship.

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What will be included in a Treaty?

We will be asking what is most important to each community. A Treaty could include a number of different items.

- Acknowledgement of the First Nations people of the Northern Territory, including the deep connection to land and the significant contributions Aboriginal people have made to our society, culture, and prosperity.
- Truth telling process around the history of the Northern Territory, teaching about the displacement, the trauma, and the massacres.
- Rules around how Aboriginal groups and the Northern Territory Government should work together. This may include a formal group that provides a voice to government.
- Protection and support for Aboriginal language and culture.
- Land and sea matters which will vary based on location.
- Potential reparations for past injustices and for the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their resources and land.
- Mechanisms for accountability so that all parties to a Treaty live up to the commitments they make.

When will a Treaty be made?

Developing a Treaty or Treaties will take time.

Engagement will be ongoing and it is important that we establish an inclusive process that supports fair and open discussion.

We will start talking to people in communities from late 2018 onwards.

Initial conversations with Aboriginal organisations have begun to establish a basis for discussions moving forward.

We are committed to working together and taking the time needed to get this right.

What about Constitutional change?

The Northern Territory Government supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

It is important that the national conversation continues. This can occur at the same time, and separately to, the Treaty process in the Northern Territory.