**THE FEDERATION OF VICTORIAN TRADITIONAL OWNER CORPORATIONS WELCOMES THE GOVERNMENT’S COMMITMENT TO FURTHER EMPOWER TRADITIONAL OWNERS**

THE FEDERATION welcomes the Victorian government’s decision to invest more than $100 million to empower Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians.

Traditional Owners are front and centre of this year’s Victorian state budget, released by Treasurer Tim Pallas today, with more than $116 million set aside to build on the foundations of self-determination.

Federation CEO Marcus Stewart said he was pleased to see such a strong focus on Treaty and Traditional Owner self-determination in this year’s budget.

“The government has allocated $9 million to advance a Treaty with Traditional Owners and establish an Aboriginal Representative Body,” Mr Stewart said.

“This just reiterates the government’s support for Traditional Owners in Victoria and our continued quest for self-determination.”

“Treaty will enhance current recognition of Traditional Owners and better target health, employment and education outcomes, in turn providing greater economic opportunities.

“This is why we applaud the Andrew’s government for taking a stance and listening to our calls for change.”

The budget will provide an extra $9 million to support Victorian Traditional Owner groups as they work to formal recognition.

While resources will be provided for Traditional Owner groups, the Right People for Country program and the Native Title Unit also assist to improve Native Title recognition and settlement outcomes that empower Traditional Owners on country.

For more information on the budget visit: <https://www.budget.vic.gov.au/>

**For further comment please contact Alexandra Sheehy on 0420 314 221.**