**­­**

**Embargoed until 12:15pm Tuesday 7 December 2021**

 **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday 7 December 2021**

**TRADITIONAL OWNERS JOINT MANAGING STATE GAME RESERVES**

A MILLION-dollar investment in a Traditional Owner-led sustainable hunting plan for Victoria will create jobs and care for Country across more than 200 state game reserves.

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations today welcomed the funding boost to the Traditional Owner Corporations across Victoria which will see them kick-start the implementation of an Indigenous-led plan to protect, preserve and maintain Country.

The Sustainable Hunting Action Plan 2021-2024 was unveiled by Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas and welcomed by the Federation and Traditional Owners, part of a $5.3 million commitment to the sector.

The plan and its specific funding for Traditional Owners acknowledges the ongoing role Traditional Owners play in hunting and managing Country as part of their enduring connection to Country and culture. It will enable Traditional Owners to reinstate cultural management of Country through a collaborative approach with state government agencies across state game reserves.

Under the principles of self-determination, Traditional Owners will be empowered to realise employment and economic opportunities at the same time as they promote greater recognition and respect for Country and their cultural and natural heritage values to hunters.

This plan follows the 2016-2020 SHAP which saw a $5.3 million investment in the game hunting industry across Victoria.

**ENDS**

**QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO:**

**Paul Paton, CEO, Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations:**

“This funding is acknowledgement and recognition that Traditional Owners have an enduring connection to Country that includes hunting as well as preserving cultural heritage and strengthening kinship and community bonds.”

“We thank the Minister for once again showing her faith in the ability of Traditional Owners to self-determine how sustainable hunting practices can co-exist with Indigenous Knowledge.”

**Rodney Carter, Chairman, Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations and CEO Djaara:**

“As a Traditional Owner I learned from Elders the necessity of sustainable hunting to protect, preserve and heal Country.”

“Knowing that the next generations will be given the opportunity to also learn these skills builds on the hard-won rights of Elders and Ancestors.”