



Media Statement

Thursday 20 October 2022

A major milestone achieved in the journey to Treaty

Today is an exciting milestone on Victoria's road to reparation with its First Peoples. As Traditional Owners, it is important that our ownership of Country is acknowledged and our truth heard. Today's signing of the Treaty Negotiation Framework and the Self-determination Fund will enable this.

We congratulate Ministers Brooks and Williams, the Andrews government, and the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria for their tireless work. We now have a Framework for negotiating Treaty/ies with Traditional Owners, developed by Traditional Owners with our own cultural values and systems of governance at its core.

The significance of bringing all Victorians on the journey cannot be underestimated but we must remember that this is a journey started long ago and continuing well into the future.

As we get closer to understanding the real meaning of self determination, the importance of supporting Traditional Owner created representative structures is brought to the fore. Through a difficult process of boundary discussions, respect for lore and generational commitment they have been created to enact self-determination and support collective cultural rights.

The long and hard road travelled to form a corporation is not walked easily. Victorian Traditional Owner communities are significantly impacted by the effects of colonisation; from dispossession of Country, violent disruption of family structures and removal of decision-making rights.

To maintain a connection to each other, to Country and to Culture despite this trauma is a testament to not only our Peoples strength but the strength and courage of those who have travelled before us.

It is essential that we respect those groups who have walked the difficult road to achieve formal recognition and that their Traditional Owner Corporations are celebrated as self-determined inclusive and representative structures.

As we continue the difficult work of realising Treaty/ies between First Nations Peoples and the Victorian Government, let's not ignore the work already undertaken by our People to achieve formal recognition.

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Quotes

Paul Paton, CEO, Federation of Victoria Traditional Owner Corporations

“Traditional Owner Corporations have already completed the difficult task of working together to identify boundaries and develop culturally appropriate governance structures. It’s important that we recognise and build on that work in our race towards Treaty/ies.”

About the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations is the Victorian state-wide body that convenes and advocates for the rights of Traditional Owners while progressing wider social, economic, environmental and cultural objectives. We support the progress of agreement-making and participation in decision-making to enhance the authority of Traditional Owner Corporations on behalf of their communities.

The Federation was established in 2013 by Traditional Owner Corporations who recognised that through a path of working together Traditional Owner Groups could be stronger and could advance their shared interests in policy engagement, and in creating economic opportunities and caring for Country.

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