

Media Statement

13 August 2024

Federation celebrates Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation's formal recognition

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations welcomes the formal recognition of Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation as Victoria's twelfth Registered Aboriginal Party as an important step towards upholding and activating Traditional Owner groups' inherent collective rights.

Federation CEO Paul Paton says the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council's decision on 7 August supports the authority of Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation as an inclusive and representative membership structure for Wamba Wemba peoples and Country in Victoria's north-west.

"This decision recognises the interconnected and inherent rights of Wamba Wemba Traditional Owners and acknowledges Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation as the representative body able to hold and activate those rights," he says.

"Traditional Owner groups across Victoria have inherent and enduring rights to Country. Formal recognition processes provide a useful mechanism for validating our rights under contemporary legal and social frameworks.

"Traditional Owners' rights to Country are collective – held by a group – and rooted in shared culture and history, which makes the Heritage Council's decision significant for Aboriginal land justice in Victoria, and an important step in further advancing Wamba Wemba's interests driving self-determination."

Mr Paton says Traditional Owner groups in Victoria face common systemic barriers and share similar priorities for their Nations, which the Federation aims to help realise by leading collective advocacy and action – including for better resourcing for Registered Aboriginal Parties to perform their statutory functions.

"Registered Aboriginal Parties play such an important role and need greater and more sustainable funding to ensure their work continues," says Mr Paton.

"The Federation's work to see self-determination for Traditional Owner groups is directed by its Traditional Owner Corporation member representatives. Standing together makes our voices louder and our Nations stronger."

– ENDS –

About the Federation

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. It was established in 2013 by Traditional Owner Corporations who recognised they could be stronger together in advancing shared interests in policy, economic opportunity and caring for Country.

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