

Media Statement

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Victorian Government must protect and respect native dingoes, say Traditional Owner groups

The Victorian Government must protect dingoes state-wide and recognise them as a culturally significant native species for which Traditional Owner groups must make decisions, says the state-wide body that advocates for the rights and interests of Victorian Traditional Owner groups.

“The Victorian Government must urgently protect and respect dingoes and invite Traditional Owner groups to the decision-making table,” says Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations CEO Paul Paton.

Marking National Threatened Species Day – the same date in 1936 the Tasmanian tiger became extinct – the Federation is calling for the immediate, state-wide protection of dingoes, greater investment in non-lethal control options to assist affected landholders, and the immediate end of the incorrect term ‘wild dog’ to refer to dingoes in policies and regulations – warning the totem animal will otherwise follow the fate of the thylacine.

“Dingoes are a unique native wildlife species under threat of extinction. But their killing is permitted – and in fact rewarded by government – under outdated regulations based on old science that mistake native dingoes for feral dogs and persecute them as pests,” says Mr Paton.

“People and dingoes have peacefully co-existed for thousands of years, and it’s possible to protect livestock from predators using non-lethal methods. Farmers need alternative methods, so dingoes can continue to peacefully exist alongside people in the landscape, as we have together for millennia.”

Dingoes arrived in Australia over 5,000 years ago and are a native species, with deep cultural, spiritual and totemic significance to many Victorian Traditional Owner groups, as a relative and protector present alongside people in creation stories and ancient rock art.

“Traditional Owner groups must have a seat at the decision-making table regarding all culturally significant species, including the dingo, and a Victorian Government committed to our self-determination will heed that call,” says Mr Paton.

The exemption to the *Victorian Wildlife Act 1975* that permits dingo killing in most of Victoria may be renewed on 1 October, making swift action to bring Traditional Owner groups into decision-making and support affected landholders necessary to avoid further and more significant harm, says Mr Paton.

“Don’t wait until it’s too late and dingo becomes a character from history. We have the opportunity to protect our native wildlife forever and preserve this important part of Aboriginal living cultural heritage. What’s required is Traditional Owner decision-making and leadership that will invite us to the table.”

– 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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