

## Media Statement

6 December 2024

# Clean energy strategy investment respects Traditional Owners as partners and rights-holders

Traditional Owners will be supported to be critical partners in Australia's clean energy transition after unanimous government endorsement and \$70 million in funding for the landmark First Nations Clean Energy Strategy, says the state-wide body that advocates for the rights and interests of Victorian Traditional Owner groups.

Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations CEO Paul Paton welcomed today's endorsement of the Strategy by the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council – comprised of Commonwealth and state and territory energy ministers – with Commonwealth Government implementation funding as a significant step towards respecting Traditional Owner groups' rights and interests in the rapidly moving clean energy transition.

“Launching this Strategy is an impressive milestone that reflects years of dedicated effort and expertise from First Nations groups and individuals from all around Australia who contributed to its development, alongside industry and government leaders,” says Mr Paton.

“It sets out pathways to enabling Traditional Owners to access economic development opportunities presented by the renewable energy transition, while ensuring cultural landscapes can be protected.

“Endorsement and resourcing for this Strategy shows us that governments respect Traditional Owners as rights-holders and critical partners in the renewable energy transition.”

The Federation contributed to the Strategy as a member of First Nations Clean Energy Network's steering and policy working groups, elevating Victorian Traditional Owner perspectives in a state-specific stakeholder roundtable in November 2023.

Key issues in Victoria – including the need for free, prior and informed consent for renewables projects; the opportunity for Traditional Owner Corporations to become project proponents; the need to respect and protect cultural land and seascapes; and the importance of creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration and partnership, – were reflected in the final Strategy.

“The Federation was pleased to elevate the diverse and informed views of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations in the Strategy's consultation process, and is a proud member of the First Nations Clean Energy Network, which drove its development,” says Mr Paton.

Mr Paton says the Federation is ready to assist state and federal governments' engagement with Victorian Traditional Owner groups to implement the Strategy.

“We must uplift, resource and respect Victorian Traditional Owner groups as they pursue their own energy ambitions, care for Country, and set their own agendas for prosperous futures.”

– 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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