

Statement from Board Chairperson

11 June 2025

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

I wish to inform you that Paul Paton has formally resigned from his role as chief executive officer of the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations.

The Federation extends its sincere thanks to Paul for his leadership and dedication and acknowledges his contributions to advancing the rights and voices of Traditional Owners across Victoria. Under Paul's leadership, the Federation has continued to achieve positive outcomes in a continually changing landscape, and he was a well-regarded member of the team.

Paul remains a strong supporter of the Federation and its objectives, and we thank him for his continued encouragement. We wish him all the very best in his future endeavours and express our appreciation for the legacy he leaves behind.

The Federation remains committed to its work in empowering Traditional Owners, and we look forward to continuing this important journey.

The board is pleased to welcome Kaley Nicholson as interim chief executive officer while the board undertakes an executive recruitment process. A proud Koori woman with family lines throughout the state, Kaley brings deep cultural knowledge and a strong strategic lens to this role. With a Master of Indigenous Business Leadership from Monash University and extensive experience across community, government, and advocacy sectors, she is committed to advancing Aboriginal self-determination, cultural integrity, and systemic change. Her leadership is grounded in cultural values, a deep commitment to justice and equity, and empowering Traditional Owners to lead decision-making about their country, people, and futures.

Under Kaley's interim leadership, the Federation looks forward to progressing the following opportunities on behalf of Traditional Owners across Victoria:

- Strengthening support for Traditional Owner Corporations to lead and grow economic development initiatives grounded in self-determination and cultural practice and driven by community priorities.
- Supporting coordinated planning and alignment across the sector as Traditional Owner groups prepare for individual Treaty negotiations.
- Continuing to support the Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus (TOCC) through our role as Secretariat, ensuring strong coordination, collective advocacy, and a united voice for Traditional Owners.

Please be assured that the Federation's core mission, values, and commitment to the community we serve remain steadfast and unchanged during this transition period.

We will keep all partners and stakeholders updated about our progress and next steps. Please join me in thanking Paul and warmly welcoming Kaley into the interim CEO role.

Yours sincerely,

Cassandra Lewis
Chairperson, Federation of Traditional Owner Corporations