

Media Statement

18 July 2025

Historic native title determination provides certainty and opportunity to First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations welcomes today's historic native title consent determination for the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee, which includes Latji Latji, Ngintait, and Nyeri Nyeri peoples with ancestral connections to north-west Victoria.

The Federal Court determination formally recognises the pre-colonial existence and continuing survival of their traditional laws, customs, and sovereignty over Country near Mildura, and comes after more than a decade of engagement with native title process by Traditional Owners.

Federation interim CEO Kaley Nicholson says the determination represents years of dedicated effort to legally establish an undeniable truth known to thousands of generations of Traditional Owners from the Millewa and Mallee regions, and over a decade of engagement with native title processes.

"This historic milestone marks what Traditional Owners have always known: that we know Country, we belong to Country, our traditions are strong and enduring, and historic and ongoing colonial efforts to eradicate our cultures and connection to Country have utterly failed," she says.

"I congratulate the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee on this proud and historic day. I acknowledge their Ancestors past and Elders today, and I pay my respects to the efforts of all those generations who came before, fought for our rights, and maintained the strength of our heritage and culture."

The Federation welcomes the determination – which covers Mildura and surrounding areas extending to the Murray River, as well as regions south and west of Mildura – as more than recognition of Traditional Owners' collective rights and interests: native title rights can create the economic independence to provide a solid and sustaining foundation for future generations, keep culture strong, and provide Traditional Owners with the authority and means to protect and manage Country.

"Native title means recognition of Traditional Owners' historic and ongoing role as custodians of Country, and it also means opportunities for the future," says Ms Nicholson.

"I hope many, many more generations of the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee can grow up connected to their culture, heritage and Country, and play their part in shaping First Peoples' future, on First Peoples' terms."

First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC) is the Prescribed Body Corporate for the determination and a Federation member, and we look forward to continuing to work together with FPMMAC as we progress Victorian Traditional Owner groups' shared rights and interests.

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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 Owner groups 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 and advance their shared interests in policy engagement, economic opportunity and caring for Country. Victoria has 12 formally recognised Traditional Owner Corporations, which are inclusive and representative bodies with cultural authority to speak for community and Country across most of Victoria.

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