

Media Statement

16 October 2025

Victorian Opposition: Respect First Nations, support Treaty

Replacing Treaty with yet another government department that tells Aboriginal People what's best for us is a shameful and cowardly decision from the Victorian Liberal party that will only worsen Aboriginal life outcomes, says the statewide body advocating for Traditional Owner groups' rights and interests.

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations believes the Victorian Liberal party's decision to repeal Treaty if elected – replacing it with a government department that would be called First Nations Victoria – directly ignores and disrespects the very communities it claims to support.

"Victorian Traditional Owners have been calling for Treaty for generations, and are clear: we want Treaty, not more bureaucrats telling us how to live our lives," said Federation interim CEO Kaley Nicholson.

"If the Liberals are serious about Closing the Gap, they'll listen to the evidence and our experiences. You get better outcomes when Aboriginal communities are making decisions about our own lives. Treaty is a practical and effective way to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Victoria have access to the same chance as anyone else to live safe and healthy lives, and that's good for everyone."

In September, the Federation [welcomed](#) Treaty as a practical mechanism that will enable Traditional Owners and other First Peoples to make decisions about their lives, care for community and Country, and access the resources needed to provide for community and keep culture strong – closing stark life outcome gaps and improving service delivery efficiency.

Ms Nicholson said the Liberal Party's decision to repeal Treaty in its first 100 days of government, if elected next year, creates wasteful bureaucracy at the expense of First Peoples' rights and participation.

"The First Victorian Traditional Owners who called for Treaty weren't seen by the state as people, and were locked out of voting and participating in community life. It's monumental that today, we're on the floor of the Victorian Parliament, righting that wrong by creating new ways for our people to be involved in making decisions about our lives. The Liberals should be celebrating this rich democracy and positive progress, not boasting about its desire to undo Treaty."

The Federation supports First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria's call for the Victorian Liberal party to reverse its opposition to Treaty and commit immediately to supporting Treaty. The Federation strongly supports the self-determination of the Traditional Owner groups that comprise Victoria's First Nations, and believes Treaty is a model that can progress First Nations' rights and ensure lasting positive change for First Nations communities.

— 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.

Media enquiries – Sophie Raynor, 0434 578 933 or sophie.raynor@fvtoc.com.au