

Media Statement

28 November 2025

Federation welcomes new CEO

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations is delighted to announce the appointment of Kaley Nicholson as chief executive officer.

Ms Nicholson is a proud Koorie woman with family ties to Traditional Owner groups across the state, including Barapa Barapa, Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Latji Latji, Mutthi Mutthi, Taungurung, Wamba Wemba, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta.

She is Co-chair of Ngaweeyan Maar-oo, Chair of the Board of Taungurung Land and Waters Council, and the Taungurung reserved seat holder on the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. She holds a Master of Indigenous Business Leadership from Monash University, has completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors' renowned Company Directors' course, and has 15 years' professional and academic experience spanning governance, public policy, sociology and community development.

Ms Nicholson was a Federation Board member prior to being appointed interim CEO in June 2025, following the resignation of Paul Paton, who served as Federation CEO from April 2020.

Quotes attributable to Cassandra Lewis, Board Chairperson

"We're delighted to welcome Kaley to the ongoing CEO role. Over a short period of time, she's been a steady hand during transition, and demonstrated her sharp strategic thinking, results-driven leadership, and deep commitment to Traditional Owner groups statewide. The Federation is in excellent hands under her leadership, and I couldn't be happier for Kaley and the team."

Quotes attributable to Kaley Nicholson, CEO

"Everything I do is for my community, and working with the Federation is no exception. I'm excited and honoured to take up the challenge of leading the Federation into this exciting next phase, where we'll see Traditional Owner Treaty negotiations begin, an even stronger focus on Traditional Owners' economic rights and leadership, and fierce advocacy on the collective priorities of Victorian Traditional Owner groups."

— 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 – inclusive and representative family group-governed organisations with cultural authority to speak for Country and community – who recognised they could be stronger together in advancing shared interests in policy, economic opportunity and caring for Country.

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