

Ms Lisa Chesters MP
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
via email: jsct@aph.gov.au

3 July 2026

Dear Ms Chesters,

Inquiry into WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge

The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (the Federation) welcomes the opportunity to make the below short submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' Inquiry into WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (WIPO Treaty).

About the Federation

The Federation is the state-wide body progressing the rights and interests of Victoria's 12 formally recognised Traditional Owner groups.¹ We work towards policy and regulatory settings that remove barriers to Traditional Owner groups exercising their rights, including contributing research and policy input on rights-based economic development for Traditional Owner groups, with a particular, but non-exclusive, focus on Victoria.

Endorsement of the National Native Title Council's submission

The Federation endorses in full the submission of the National Native Title Council (NNTC). We urge the Inquiry to adopt in its recommendations the NNTC's submission regarding the need for an effective benefit-sharing model, strong representation of Traditional Owners on decision-making panels, data sovereignty, and mechanisms for enforcement. The Federation also reiterates the important opportunity presented by the WIPO Treaty Inquiry to implement the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Australia. A 2024 inquiry by the JSCATSIA heard there was significant opportunity to embed UNDRIP in government policy, contracts and agreements, and Treaties; the uptake of this opportunity appears limited. Any response to the WIPO Treaty must at minimum align with UNDRIP. The Federation's submission to the Commonwealth Inquiry on UNDRIP can be found [here](#).

¹ Formal recognition is achieved through appointment as a Registered Aboriginal Party under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic); a positive native title determination under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth); or an agreement made with the State of Victoria under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic).

Significance of Traditional Owner Corporations in Protecting ICIP and GRATK

Traditional Owner Corporations hold the collective rights to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (GRATK) on behalf of their Nations. The protection of these rights is essential to the development of a First Nations rights-based economy in which Traditional Owners can re-establish intergenerational wealth and economic independence, based on their knowledge, rights and resources. The *Victorian Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy* (TONFABS) outlines the following key program areas and activities to facilitate this;

- **Provenance:** The recognition of the origin of native species and genetic resources that have been cultivated by Traditional Owners and Indigenous Knowledge systems
- **Market:** The pathway for Traditional Owners to be leaders of contemporary uses of biocultural species in national and international markets
- **Practice:** Embedding Indigenous Knowledge across supply chains and on-Country. This relies on support for innovation, partnership and Traditional Owner self-determination.

The Federation suggests the Inquiry include legislated mechanisms and policy focus that facilitates these program areas. For the full strategy please see:

- [Victorian Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy](#)

We would welcome the opportunity to speak more to this thinking and thank the Inquiry for the opportunity to contribute.

Yours sincerely,



Kaley Nicholson
Chief Executive Officer