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FEDERATION PROFESSOR TO SHARE INDIGENOUS EXPERTISE AT ASEAN SUMMIT

Federation University Australia's Professor Emma Lee will share her expertise in Indigenous land and sea management on the international stage at the upcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit.

[Professor Lee](#), a *trawlwulwuy* woman and Professorial Research Fellow with Federation's [National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth, and Justice](#), has been invited to the Maritime Cooperation Forum during the [2024 ASEAN-Australia Special Summit](#) hosted in Naarm/Melbourne from March 4, 2024.

In what is the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Australian partnerships, Professor Lee will chair the conference session on the Blue Economy – economic activities associated with the oceans and seas – where officials and non-governmental experts will meet to enhance practical maritime cooperation in the region.

Indigenous representation at this level at ASEAN is a historic and significant moment, and Professor Lee's invitation provides an opportunity to promote the view that Indigenous rights are neither inconsistent nor contradictory with economic wealth-building, particularly in fisheries, marine education, biosecurity and biodiversity.

Professor Lee states that "Australia provides foreign aid and funding for numerous trade agreements and there is an obligation upon the Australian Government to ensure that Indigenous rights to economic inclusion are embedded within future agreements. Indigenous Peoples should have the right to trade as equal partners and our rights in Australia are a strong foundation to promote Indigenous-led development within the region".

Professor Lee's research proves that Indigenous Peoples and their knowledge are crucial for effective Maritime Cooperation, especially for climate change adaptation, biosecurity and monitoring of illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries for broader benefit-sharing. Professor Lee says that "the success of the Indigenous Protected Area scheme, especially Sea Country rangers, is a good example of how Indigenous Peoples can economically and environmentally participate in healthy state societies. ASEAN is the perfect avenue to promote Indigenous Australian innovation and care for marine environments."

In 2023 Professor Lee was the first Indigenous female to be awarded a [Pew Fellowship](#).

About Federation University Australia

With a history spanning over 150 years, Federation University Australia is Victoria's premier regional dual-sector university with campuses located in Ballarat, Berwick, Brisbane, Gippsland and Wimmera. From 2018-2022 Federation ranked first in Australia for first-generation student enrolments. In a first for Australia, the globally recognised co-operative education model will be embedded across all Federation programs from 2026.