



Dhelkunya Dja

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Country Plan
2014–2034



Acknowledgement and thank you

We sincerely thank Dja Dja Wurrung Members for their passion and commitment to the development of, and updates to, this document. Their knowledge, cultural guidance and contributions are the foundation of this document and demonstrate their resilience, strength and visionary approach. We would also like to acknowledge and thank all staff at DJAARA who contributed to the review of this document in 2024 and 2025.

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Bundjiyl artwork by Racquel Kerr

Racquel Kerr is a proud Dja Dja Wurrung and Boonwurrung woman.

Racquel creates the most vibrant, detailed, mix of colours and symbolism through her work.

From canvases to digital art to the built environment, Racquel takes her vision to any canvas and produces stunning results, telling stories of the land and of connection.

Artist statement

Bundjiyl, known as the Djaara creator spirit, upholds the continuation of morals, principles and lore of Djaara, and caring for Djandak.


Bundjiyl's wingspan contains significant meeting places and areas from the floodplains in the north, to the volcanics in the south. Djaara are created from Country, so our intrinsic connection lies beyond physical and spiritual – where we are one.

Goal icons by Drew Berick

Drew Berick is a proud Dja Dja Wurrung and Yorta Yorta man, descendant of Henry 'Harmony' Nelson.

Drew is a recognised artist and has produced many works locally and nationally.

There are many notable artists within his family that have inspired Drew to practice Culture through creating art.





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Published by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, trading as DJAARA (ICN: 4421)
PO Box 1026, Bendigo, Dja Dja Wurrung Country, Victoria, 3552
info@djadjawurrung.com.au | djadjawurrung.com.au

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware that this document may contain images or names of People who have since passed away.



Our Ngurar Balak (Ancestors)

Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung People) are the direct descendants of the First Peoples of **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). We are made up of many clan groups who descend from our 18 **Ngurar Balak**.

Stories from the mission period recount **Djaara** being punished for using our language and customs. Our **Ngurar Balak** remained determined to keep our Culture alive.

When the practice and survival of our cultural traditions were gravely threatened, our **Ngurar Balak** persevered.

Whether they lived on **Djandak** or elsewhere, our **Ngurar Balak** sought to maintain our cultural obligations and relations to remain connected to **Djandak**. The strength and resilience of our **Ngurar Balak** to continue on when things get hard.

Today, we are duty bound to look after **Djandak** for the future generations. Because of our **Ngurar Balak**, **Djaara** are a stronger People.

Every day we acknowledge our **Ngurar Balak**:

Tommy Avoca

John Charles

Emma Curr

Alfred Davis

Thomas Dunolly

Tommy Farmer

King Girribong, Lerimburneen, Walpanumin

David Harrison

Finemore Jackson

Leonard Kerr

Samuel Kinnear

Caroline Malcolm

Henry Harmony Nelson

Catherine Robinson

Martin Simpson

John Terrick

William Parker

Charlotte Williams

Djaara djali (language)

Our language is important to us in so many ways.

Language keeps us connected to Country, People and community through speaking Culture. **Djali** (Dja Dja Wurrung language) is our foundation. We are renaming Country as we are bayikina (reawakening) **djali**. We share **djali** to instil it across Country and as our inherent identity and connection to Country. The **djali** on this page is a reference to the **djali** that appears throughout this Plan. We continue to use these words to further instil their cultural significance and importance to **Djaara**.

Visit our website for information about how to pronounce **djali**



LANGUAGE TERM	MEANING
Bakaru wayaparrangu	In the middle, we all meet. Name of DJAARA's agreement with Agnico Eagle
Bandjal	Murray cod
Banyul / gauwa	Mountains
Barramal	Emu
Bayikina	Reawaken
Biyal	Red gum
Bulatjal Yaluk	Loddon River
Bundjiyl	The Ancestral being who takes the form of a wedge-tailed eagle / creator / big wisdom
Bunyart	Eel
Dhelkunya Dja	Healing / make good, land / Country
Dhelk djakitj	Nourish food
Dhelkunyangu gatjin	Working together to heal water. Name of the Djaara Gatjin Strategy
Dhelkunyap	Medicinal plants
Dindilong Yaluk	Coliban River
Djaa mutjang dhelkayang	Holding Country good way
Djaara	Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples
Dja Dja Wurrung	Yes, yes speaking
Djali	Tongue / language
Djali Balak	Language people / Djaara Language subcommittee
Djalup	Mussels
Djandak	Djaara People's Country
Djandak wi	Country Fire / healing fire / cultural burning. Djandak 'Our Country', wi 'fire'
Djinbongurri	Wallaby
Djuliyn	Lace monitor / tree goanna
Galkangu	We all build / make together. Name of Bendigo GovHub
Galk-galk	Trees / forests
Galk-galk Dhelkunya	To care for / heal many trees. Name of DJAARA's Forest Gardening strategy
Galk-galk djaa	Many trees / forest Country including box-ironbark forests
Gariyn	Grubs
Garni	Digging stick

LANGUAGE TERM	MEANING
Gatjin	Water
Gayap	One / next ones coming
Giranal	Yellow belly
Girrkij	Saltbush
Gitjawil matom	Many tubers, vanilla / chocolate lilies
Giyakiki	Stories
Gungilangurrak	Our doing
Gurang gungang	Being and doing
Gurraku biyal	Red Gum in the sands / Avon River
Gurri	Eastern grey kangaroo
Gurri Wanyarra	Kangaroo waterhole. Name of the Kangaroo Flat Leisure Centre
Kapa Gatjin	To know water
La Larr Ba Gauwa	Stones and mountain. Name of Harcourt mountain bike park
Lalgambuk	Mount Franklin
Larnangurrak	Our place. Name of Dja Dja Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre
Larni Barramal Yaluk	Home or habitat of the emu creek
Larni Gurris	Laanecoorie, dreaming place of the eastern grey kangaroo
Larr	Rock
Liyanganyuk Banyul	Mount Alexander
Malak	Plants
Malamiya	Long time ago / Cultural Heritage
Mirndayi	Ancestral being, giant serpent upholding lore
Murna	Yam daisy
Murrun djaa	Living Country, all living things on Country / animals
Murrun	Spirit
Murrunayang	We all live, thrive
Murrun dhelk	Living and being healthy
Ngarri	Buloke
Ngaldurrong yana	Walk together
Ngurar balak	Ancestors
Waa	Ancestral being who takes the form of a raven; also a creator.

LANGUAGE TERM	MEANING
Wanggal	A cluster of cumbungi stabilising the bank. Name of the Djaara-led water partnership group
Wanyarra dum	Frog ponds, frog waterhole. Name of frog ponds in White Hills near Bendigo Creek
Wararak	Wattle
Wartaka	Come with purpose
Watja	Goanna / sand monitor
Wayaparrangu	We all meet together
Wi	Fire
Wila	Possum
Wirrap	Fish, cod
Witji	Lomandra / mat rush / strappy leaf grass used for weaving

LANGUAGE TERM	MEANING
Witjili bar	Grass used for weaving, creek / Avoca River
Womin-Dji-Ka	Formal welcome
Wuktjarra	Exchange, trade
Wuktjarrang	Trading our way. Name of DJAARA's Economic Strategy
Wura-wura-yi dja	Sky Country
Yaluk	Flowing rivers, creeks, streams
Yapenya	Ceremony / dance
Yapitj	Cray
Yapuka	Bird
Yilingga Marna	Shake hands. Name of DJAARA's Agreement with the City of Greater Bendigo
Ying ying / woyiwoyip	Song

The following words also hold cultural significance and importance to Dja Dja Wurrung and First Nations Peoples. Aboriginal, Ancestor, Ancestral Remains, Caring for Country, Country, Culture, Cultural Heritage, **Ngurar Balak**, **Malamiya**, Elders, First Nations, People and Traditional Owners are capitalised to signify their importance.

Other key terms and definitions

TERMS, ACRONYMS, AND ABBREVIATIONS	MEANING
Aboriginal Title	Land that is jointly managed, granted to Dja Dja Wurrung through our Recognition and Settlement Agreement
DJANDAK	A Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise, committed to restoring Djandak's health through design, resource management, waterways, forestry, fire, bio-culture and land care. Djandak means Country
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	Djaara People are represented by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, trading as DJAARA
Dja Dja Wurrung Group	The Dja Dja Wurrung Group comprises the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA) and its enterprises: DJANDAK, DUMAWUL and DJAKITJ
DJAARA	The trading name for Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
DJAKITJ	A Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise, committed to producing traditional foods locally using Djaara cultural knowledge. Djakitj means to eat / food
DUMAWUL	A Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise, committed to celebrating the richness of Djaara Culture through tours, education and creative opportunities. Dumawul means thank you between two people; the giver and receiver of Culture, in good murrin (spirit).
LUAA	Land Use Activity Agreement, as specified in our Recognition and Settlement Agreement
RSA	Recognition and Settlement Agreement between the State of Victoria and Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



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Message from the Chair (2025)

Dhelkunya Dja – healing Country, to make good Country. Our Country Plan is one of the most important documents we have. It symbolises our **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) voices, collectively capturing our vision and aspirations for healthy Country, and our goals as the path to achieving them. It walked alongside the Recognition Settlement Agreement with the State. It represents our belonging to our Country and our People resuming and reclaiming our place in returning it to good health.

We are mid-way into our 20-year plan and celebrate achieving many objectives in an everchanging environment. I'd like to acknowledge all our **Djaara** People and Elders who contributed to laying the foundations of the plan from 2012 to 2014 and pay respect to many who are no longer with us. This Country Plan echoes the longstanding foundation and legacy of a healthy Country and is designed to meet the realities of today while embracing the opportunities of tomorrow.

Djaara People, and our employees, partners and community allies have drawn upon **Dhelkunya Dja** to guide the integration of **Djaara** rights and responsibilities into established systems of ownership and land management on our Country that we share.

We have been forthcoming with our goals for **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) and **Djaara**. We have offered our cultural values and knowledge of Country to work well with (and as) decision makers, planners and workers who uphold responsibilities to Country and obligations of the State in our Recognition and Settlement Agreement.

This refreshed version honours our **djali** (language), enriching the document with deeper cultural meaning. It acknowledges our vision of renewal and adaption to the needs of Country and our community. We recalibrate our direction forward on the journey of furthering our goals and aspirations for healthy Country and healthy community.

We continue to drive *Self-determination* of healing our *Rivers and Waterways*, so one day our great grandchildren may drink from them safely again. We continue our revival of *Cultural Practices and Customs* to protect our ancient and living *Cultural Heritage*. We face the challenges ahead in returning good health to our *Land* – the upside-down Country. We grow our partnerships in *Joint Management* and our *Traditional Owner Economy* through well informed strategies that enable **Djaara** ways of doing, being and sharing. We believe that when all this comes together smoothly we will have healthy and abundant *Bushtucker and Medicine* to enhance and ensure all **Djaara** can be happy, healthy and secure in their identity and livelihood.

This ongoing work is driven by our cultural responsibilities with the integrity, resilience and adaptability of our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors). We do this for our next ones coming and all who call **Djaara** Country their home.

This journey is healing for all of us, all who live and *will live* on **Djaara Djandak**. Come and walk with us on the path of **Dhelkunya Dja**.

Bec Phillips, Chairperson, 2023 – current

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



Message from the Chair (2017)

Womin-Dji-Ka (Welcome)

On behalf of my Ancestors I am honoured to provide this update for the Dja Dja Wurrung Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan. Across our Country we would have been surrounded by box-ironbark woodland. In looking after our families, Dja Dja Wurrung People knew how to get the best from these hardy trees. We made a sweet drink from the blossoms, used the thick bark for making shelters and coolamon dishes. We climbed the trees to watch for visitors and to find food, and even for pegging out possum skins to dry and make into beautiful warm cloaks for our families. We could easily visit the Campaspe River and meet up with other mobs to carry out the business of life through holding ceremonies, exchanging knowledge and to trade stone axes, spears, possum skins and ochre – in caring for each other and sharing our resources.

Life here in this area provided a place for Dja Dja Wurrung families and Elders to teach their children about how to survive, hand down and share stories, celebrate and live on Country.

Long after the frenzy of the gold rush had faded away, several large river red gums, box and ironbark trees remained dotted across the landscape for many years, resistant to the determined changes wrought by non-Aboriginal people. The young saplings still spring up and grow along the waterways and in the bush – very much echoing our own families' survival, through maintaining our Culture, our lore and our spirit, respecting our Ancestors and retaining our strong connection to Country.

Dja Dja Wurrung People learned much from the land and shared their knowledge, traded resources and exchanged gifts with neighbouring clans and mobs during times of ceremony and gathering together to mark special times.

Dja Dja Wurrung Country is a cultural landscape that is more than just tangible objects. Imprinted on it are the dreaming stories, law, totemic relationships, songs, ceremonies and ancestral spirits, which give it life and hold significant value to Dja Dja Wurrung People. We see our Country, People and creatures in a holistic way which survives and thrives through connection with each other. Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples see all the land and its creatures in a holistic way that is interconnected with each other and with the People.

This Plan lays out the Dja Dja Wurrung aspirations for our Country and People over the next 20 years. For this update our eight goals became nine with the inclusion of Joint Management.

This review and update has been undertaken to ensure that we capture the activities so far undertaken in achieving our aspirations. We will develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) Plan specifically for this plan which will then become part of the annual review of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement. It's important that this is a living document and our work does not get lost over the life of the Plan.

I am proud to be the Chairperson of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and to present this updated plan to the Dja Dja Wurrung and wider community.

Trent Nelson, Chairperson, 2014 – 2023

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



Message from the Chair (2014)

The development of the Dja Dja Wurrung's first Country Plan coincided with the historic settlement of our native title claim with the Victorian Government. The settlement represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to achieve legal recognition of our connection to Country and our rights as Traditional Owners – including our access to, and use and management of, the natural and cultural resources on Country.

Our Recognition and Settlement Agreement, signed on 28 March 2013, also secured significant resources and opportunities for our community. These achievements can be seen as building blocks which directly affect the way we are able to practice our Culture, strengthen our community and ultimately deliver on our vision for Country.

This Country Plan was developed between 2012 and 2014 during a period of transformation for our community. During this time, the capacities of our People were continually stretched and the context for our planning constantly evolving.

The Plan was developed in two key stages. While we had done some early aspirations work within the Corporation and had some past opportunities to talk about our personal hopes for the future with researchers and anthropologists, Dja Dja Wurrung People had not yet come together as a group to agree on a vision for the community. So, as we were preparing to share our experience of history as our Country's First People and make lasting and binding decisions about our place in contemporary Victoria through native title settlement negotiations, it became the right time to develop a Country Plan.

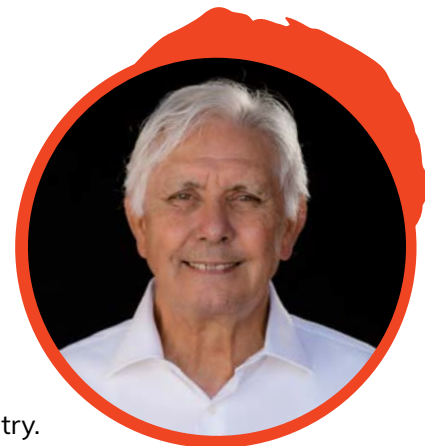
Our native title negotiation team, which was representative of our Clan Groups and led by myself as Chair of the Corporation, took on the task of leading the development of this plan. The scope was determined to be broad and therefore reflective of the holistic way we see our Country and People. It was to include our aspirations for development as well as the preservation and revival of our Cultural Heritage, and was to be used to inform and guide our native title negotiations and to influence government strategic planning that was taking place at the time in our region.

The Country Plan will provide direction for the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Traditional Owner Land Management Board. It will be used to build partnerships with our key stakeholders and to increase the involvement of Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners in the effort to achieve our goals.

I commend the tireless work of the negotiation team and the participation of the broader community in so clearly articulating our pathway to a better future.

Graham Atkinson, Chairperson, 2004 – 2014

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



Executive summary

Before European colonisation, the natural places within **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) were well known, had a name and **ying ying** (song) and were celebrated as part of our Culture. We had an economy, we had a political system and we had the resources and the means to take care of our community.

This Country Plan (the Plan) is about re-affirming our aspirations and describing the future of our People, the Traditional Owners of Dja Dja Wurrung Country. It recognises the importance of our **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage) – our significant places and landscapes, our **giyakiki** (stories) and **djali** (language), our customs and practices and our responsibilities for healing Country. It describes the pathway our community has determined it needs to take to rebuild and prosper.

The Plan is structured in four parts. This first section provides context for the document, which is followed by a brief background to our Culture, Country and rights. The main part outlines nine goals, which

describe our aspirations and holistic vision for Country – our goals, objectives and actions – which were developed through a series of community workshops before 2014 and refreshed in 2017 and 2025. And the final part provides guidance on the implementation of the Plan.

Our vision is for the health and wellbeing of our People to be strong, and underpinned by our living Culture. Our vision is for **Djandak** to be in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, Culture and rights of all **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People). As this Country's First Peoples our vision includes being politically empowered with an established place in society, and being capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse economic base.

Our vision, as first detailed in 2014, remains as strong and relevant today.

The nine goals of the Plan are framed around the following themes:



1. Djaara
(Our People)



2. Gurang gungang
(Being and doing)



3. Malamiya
(Cultural Heritage)



4. Dhelk djakitj
(Nourish food)



5. Gatjin
(Water)



6. Djandak
(Dja Dja Wurrung Country)



7. Gungilangurrak
(Our doing)



8. Murrunayangu
(We all live, thrive)



**9. Djaa mutjang
dhelkayang**
(Holding Country good way)



Background

Our Culture

Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung People) have kept, re-established and grown our connection with our Country for thousands of generations. We are the First Peoples of **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) and we have actively cared for it for thousands of years. For us, Country is more than just the landscape, it is more than what is visible to the eye – it is a living entity, which holds the **giyakiki** (stories) of creation and memories embedded of our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors) and cultural relationship with it.

Our dreaming stories of **Djandak** explain the creation of our lands and how **Djaara** evolved with Country. **Bundjiyl** – taking the form of the wedge-tailed eagle – is known as our creator, helping us understand our connections to each other and our responsibilities to Country through the lore bestowed. **Mirndayi**, the giant serpent, is known to uphold and enforce **Bundjiyl's** lore and ceremonies that ensure the continuation of life.

Each place within **Djandak** is known, valued and respected. Each has a name, a story and a **ying ying** (song) that is embedded in the spirit of Country. We continue to hold ceremonies to honour the **gatjin** (water), **yapuka** (birds), **malak** (plants), **murrun djaa** (animals), **rocks** (larr), **banyul** (mountains) and **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors).

Our **murrun** (spirit) links us back to our **Ngurar Balak** in a continuing connection with our past and our living Culture, and our **giyakiki** instil an ongoing respect for our Country. Our **ying ying** and **giyakiki** tell us of how the world was and how it should be, and we feel a moral responsibility to care for our Country as it binds us to the past, present and future. Our **Ngurar Balak** looked after this Country and we are duty bound to look after it for the next generations.

Our connection to **Djandak** is embedded: the **Ngurar Balak** spirit is in the rock, the **galk-galk** (trees), within the earth and sometimes in the wind and rain clouds. There is an inner peace that runs through us, a feeling of recognition and belonging. We maintain this strong relationship with **Djandak** by continuing to access it, by looking after it and by using its natural resources. We look after Country; and Country looks after us.

Caring for Country is the living essence that is shared between people and place. It is vital for maintaining our Culture. We pass down our traditional knowledge of Dja Dja Wurrung **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage) with our younger generations. This is how we have maintained our cultural identity through the passage of time. This practice is the primary responsibility of **Djaara**.

We teach **giyakiki** of pre-contact origin, the right way to engage with Country, the importance of revisiting places as a way of reconnecting with Country, and informing the decisions about the management of **Djaara** places and sites. Our present-day knowledge of Country is the ancient and ongoing experience, cyclic and seasonal observations and interactions carefully understood in relationship with the natural world, accumulated over hundreds of generations.

We teach our young ones how to scar trees, take bark, carve and decorate. We take them camping and teach them about where and how to harvest **dhelkunyap** (medicinal plants), find **gariyn** (grubs) and the best places to go hunting and fishing. We only use the land in a way that will make provision for future needs. We use natural resources by making traditional objects and artefacts, fishing, hunting and gathering and using **dhelkunyap**.

But over the years, our lands have been exploited and misused, and our People driven off the land and away from their Country.

Unsustainable development, changed **wi** (fire) regimes and mining have changed the nature of our Country and caused it harm. We have a duty to care for our Country and feel ashamed and sad that it is currently suffering. When Country suffers, we suffer.

The dispossession of **Djaara** and **Ngurar Balak** from our traditional Country prevented us from maintaining our wellbeing and intergenerational wealth from our Country. There is now an opportunity and obligation to share in the wealth and make good on the harm that was caused and is still experienced today.

We know the place where **Mirndayi** rests. It is still a sacred place and, today, we are actively seeking to return it to good health. We are an integral part of the ecosystem and our lore ensures the balance of natural resources is maintained. When the Country is sick, we are sick.

Not all **Djaara** are able to live on our traditional lands, but we do not have to be physically on Country to feel connected and affected. However, the spiritual connection that we feel is reinforced by our presence and our desire to Care for Country will always remain strong.



Our Country

In a time when the landscape was bare and featureless, the Ancestral Spirits shaped the Earth with **Bundjiyl**. Creating songlines, carving out rivers, raising trees out of the soil, and making places of power where an object was left behind, where a spirit had entered the earth, or where a journey was complete and that being became the land. Once the **malak** (plants), the **murrund jaa** (animals) and then **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) were created, **Bundjiyl** taught the People how to behave on Earth and the lores to uphold. Part of these lessons were lores of responsible harvest – **wuktjarra** (give and take) – and how to conduct the ceremonies that would ensure that balance be maintained.

Djandak is made up of various significant Country types, extending from Mallee Country and red dirt Country in the northwest, to the high-rain tall-forest Country in the south along the border of the Great Dividing Range. It includes significant grasslands, stony mountains Country and volcanic plains, sacred mineral springs Country, rivers, creeks, significant lakes and swamplands.

Our Country is home to the largest area of box-ironbark **galk-galk dja** (forest). This significant ecosystem is found in few places outside our Country. Culturally important food and medicinal species are still found and utilised by us across our Country. We use local **malak** like **witji** (lomandra), **girrkij** (saltbush), nardoo, cumbungi, **wararak** (wattle), **biyal** (red gum) and **gitjawil matom** (chocolate lillies).

Today, our Country is valued by many. European and Asian cultural heritage is strong, particularly through the gold mining history of our region, which continues to influence the recreational pursuits of prospecting and fossicking today. Local industries, including beekeeping, forestry, agriculture and tourism, depend on the natural resources that our Country provides.

Djandak is host to many towns in Central Victoria, which are growing rapidly. In the southern areas, mining and manufacturing are the main industries, although business, information technology and health sectors are also growing. In the north, farming is a major economic activity, along with mineral sands and renewable energy. Across the region, agriculture and food product manufacturing, the tourism sector, especially nature-based and Indigenous tourism, are known to be providing new economic opportunities.



Much of **Djandak** is privately owned, with the majority of this used for agriculture. The rest of our Country is a combination of parks, forests and reserves, six of which are Aboriginal Title lands that have been leased back to the Victorian Government under Aboriginal joint management. Along with freehold parcels granted under our Recognition and Settlement Agreement, a small percentage of **Djandak** is owned by Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

The population of the region has been estimated at just over 200,000 – of which it is believed the Indigenous population is approximately 4,700.

Djandak has some of the most profoundly altered landscapes in Victoria. A long history of agricultural development, urban growth and mining has left fragmented ecosystems and led to the loss of many species of **malak** and **murrund jaa**. Changed **wi** (fire) regimes have affected the cycling of nutrients and the composition of species, and led to increased fire fuel loads that pose dangers to people and ecosystems.

Widespread clearing has caused much of the productive topsoil to erode away and allowed the establishment of many pest **murrund jaa** and **malak** that are displacing and preying on our native species.

This transformation is continuing – driven by both natural and human-caused factors. Significant urban growth, the continued impact of salinity and increasing variability in rainfall and extreme weather events will continue to challenge the repair and ongoing management of Country. These are some of the challenges that we will need to address to heal our Country.



Map of Djandak



Our rights and responsibilities

In 2013, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation entered into a historic native title settlement with the State of Victoria on behalf of all past, current and future **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People). Under this Recognition and Settlement Agreement, we secured a range of rights:

- Recognition as the Traditional Owners of our Country and acknowledgement of the part government has played in dispossessing and dispersing our People.
- The right to practice and enjoy Culture and language.
- The right to maintain our spiritual, physical and economic relationship with the land and its resources.
- The right to harvest agreed **malak** (plant) and **murrun djaa** (animal) species, **gatjin** (water) and forest produce for personal, domestic or non-commercial use.
- The right to harvest certain flora and forest produce for commercial purposes.
- The right to camp on certain areas of public land without a permit.
- Protocols for acknowledgements, and welcomes to Country.
- Agreement by the State to assist the Corporation to engage with local government in efforts to improve the economic, cultural and social standing of Dja Dja Wurrung People.
- Advisory, negotiation and veto rights; and community benefits for certain land use activities that occur on public land within our boundaries.
- Support for economic development activities, including seed funding for enterprise development.
- Operational support for the Corporation.
- Guaranteed contracts to a specified amount for works on public lands.
- Freehold title of two culturally significant properties – Carisbrook and Franklindford.
- Aboriginal Title rights and joint management over six national parks and reserves, with the possibility of additional hand-backs in the future.
- Freehold title to Yapenya (Mount Barker) and abutting road reserves.

With these rights come responsibilities:

- Work in partnership with government on a Traditional Owner Land Management Board to develop and implement joint management plans for our national parks.
- Establish a viable organisation to effectively employ the settlement benefits for all Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners.
- Ensure the Corporation is operating to support the economic development of Dja Dja Wurrung People – through securing employment and improving living standards; being a focal point for cultural activities and language renewal; providing opportunities for participation in natural resource management and land use activities; and engaging with government and others about decisions related to our Country.

‘This Recognition and Settlement Agreement binds the State of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung People to a meaningful partnership founded on mutual respect. It is a means by which Dja Dja Wurrung Culture and traditional practices and the unique relationship of Dja Dja Wurrung People to their traditional Country are recognised, strengthened, protected and promoted, for the benefit of all Victorians, now and into the future.’

Excerpt from the Recognition Statement – part of the 2013 Recognition and Settlement Agreement between the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the State of Victoria.





Our vision

Our vision for Country is to ensure that:

- the health and wellbeing of our People is strong, and underpinned by our living Culture
- **Djandak** (our Country) and **gatjin** (waters) are in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, Culture and rights of all **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People)
- as this Country's First People we are politically empowered with an established place in society and capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse economic base.

Our principles

The principles below are critically important to **Djaara** as we collectively define our philosophy for how **Djandak** (our Country) should be healed, and natural resources used and managed. They will inform the way we engage with others who share our Country and will be the foundation of our partnerships with government and non-government agencies, industry and community.

Culture

1. We will strive to uphold our cultural obligations to look after Country for future generations; to practice and revitalise our cultural traditions and customs; and to develop the expression of these into the future. We are not frozen in time. We are ancient in our history, and contemporary in the application of our wisdom.
4. We will use both our traditions and the tools and practices available to us as citizens of contemporary Australia to sustainably manage our natural resources.
5. Visitors will be welcome to respect and enjoy our Country.

Partnerships

1. All lands, **gatjin** and living resources on our Country form traditional Aboriginal landscapes and are maintained by a range of natural resource managers, including **Djaara**. Our partners must be clear and transparent about their rights and responsibilities in this regard.
2. We are committed to working with our Corporation and its Members, Elders, young people, neighbours, agencies and the broader community in the effort to care for our Country.
3. We will participate in the decisions that affect our rights; and will be cautious when considering proposals and options for using our Country and its resources in the absence of a full understanding of risks and consequences.
4. We seek to walk together in a modern world with those who share responsibility for **Djandak**.

Looking after Country

1. Our Country is managed in a contemporary context, to generate net benefits in circumstances where degradation or destruction cannot be avoided. Where damage has been done through past activities, a sustained effort will be made to heal our Country.
2. Our use and management of **dhelkunyap** (medicinal plants) and edible **malak** (plants) and **murrin djaa** (animals) remains a key element of our subsistence and development.
3. The conservation and protection of the environment, in particular where our culturally significant places and sites are located, is paramount.

Traditional knowledge

1. We will strive to maintain, control, protect and develop our traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. We will apply what has long been known and felt to our contemporary context.

Economic

1. We will exercise our right to freely pursue Dja Dja Wurrung economic prosperity and social development, the benefits of which will be shared equitably amongst **Djaara**, other local Aboriginal People and the wider regional community.
2. Infrastructure and enterprise development will be designed to minimise harmful impacts on our Country.

By effectively implementing these principles, both through our own efforts and by supporting those of others, it is anticipated that:

- we will be increasingly recognised as the original owners of this Country with ongoing rights and obligations, and seen not only as traditional custodians but also as contemporary and future managers
- we will have our intellectual and cultural property rights respected in all activities that relate to looking after Country
- our partners and stakeholders will have a greater understanding and appreciation of our cultural values and responsibilities, and how supporting these can make a strong positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the broader community.



GOAL 1: Djaara (Our People)

Every **Djaara** person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

Djaara, or Dja Dja Wurrung People, are direct descendants of the First Peoples of this land – we recognise all the clan groups who are descended from our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors). Our **Ngurar Balak** have always been here and we will remain for generations to come.

Some of us are living on **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) and some are living away. We are all **Djaara**. We need to act now to ensure **murrin dhelk** (living and being healthy) – the spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing of our People, both current and future.

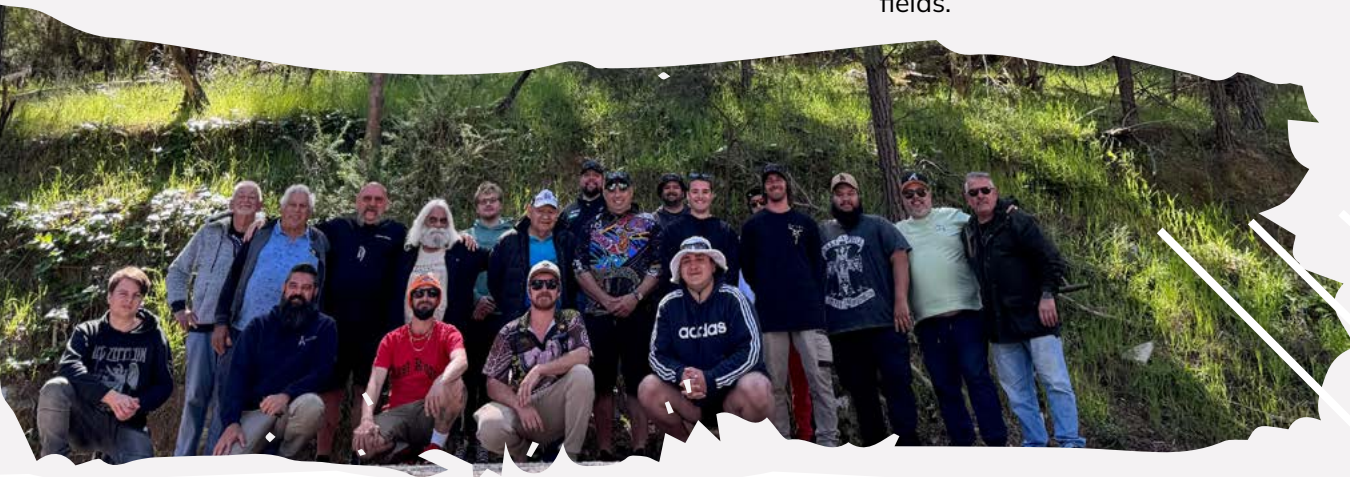
Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- be recognised as a sovereign Aboriginal nation and the Traditional Owners of Djandak
- reduce the major risk factors to our People and ensure there is access to appropriate education, health services and housing
- have more Djaara living on Country and in stable employment
- ensure our full range of rights and interests are legally recognised and reflected in the policies and actions of government.

Achievements

- The Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State signed in 2013, which recognises **Djaara** as the Traditional Owners of our Country, continues to be asserted and renegotiated.
- The Dja Dja Wurrung Group continues to represent the interests of Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners and activate their rights. The Group has grown enormously, now employing over 200 staff including many **Djaara**. We are a key part of the economy on **Djandak**.
- Opportunities for young **Djaara** to expand their skills and knowledge, and gain work experience have increased. They include traineeships, apprenticeships and professional development towards management roles via the Dja Dja Wurrung Group and our partners.
- An annual calendar of events for **Djaara** has been established and continues to grow year-on-year.
- Individual **Djaara** are achieving extraordinary things in self-determined ways across a range of fields.





Challenges

There are many challenges that we will face in working to meet these objectives. To begin with, we are not starting from a level playing field. Historical dispossession has left us with dispersed communities and a lack of community cohesion. Longstanding inequity in law, policy and governance has left Aboriginal People at a disadvantage in health, housing, employment and many of our other fundamental needs. Some government policies remain outdated, failing to reflect the contemporary understanding of traditional lore, laws, Culture, property rights and human rights. Native title recognition and settlement has helped to heal some of the scars of history, but we have a long way to go to build our capacity to participate fully in the social and economic fabric of the community.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we will:

- increase and expand **Djaara's** rights within, and beyond, the Recognition and Settlement Agreement
- deliver an in-house mentoring and work-experience program at DJAARA, while strengthening partners' programs for **Djaara** and other Aboriginal young People
- develop a workforce strategy for the Dja Dja Wurrung Group which delivers meaningful improvements for recruiting, retaining, upskilling, and advancing the working lives of **Djaara**, including succession planning
- increase the number and proportion of **Djaara** working across the Dja Dja Wurrung Group, including in leadership and ongoing roles
- build on the current events calendar for Members, to include more cultural events on Country
- expand, and increase access to, our Community Support Program to provide targeted support for **Djaara** social and economic wellbeing
- continue to identify opportunities and to partner with agencies for enabling and advancing **Djaara** business
- work with the wider community on Country to increase awareness and recognition of **Djaara** Culture and history, through events such as the Wirama Shield and Marngrook
- gather information on individual Members' **yapenya** (ceremony) knowledge, skills and employment aspirations to ensure that we have a roster of those wishing to participate in **yapenya** and paid employment
- increase the use of, and access to, the Member-only login system on our website where information about our programs and opportunities is available
- support **Djaara** to improve individual and family livelihoods, by making connections with service providers where **Djaara** live, and by advocating for meaningful and culturally safe service delivery
- increase the potential for **Djaara** to return to **Djandak** through initiating and supporting accessible and affordable housing projects on Country.



GOAL 2: Gurang gungang (Being and doing)

Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung People's) customs and practices are alive and respected – keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

The laws, customs and stories that make up **Djaara** Culture guide the way we behave and the decisions we make every day. We pass these on to our young ones through **ying ying** (song) and dance, and through storytelling and walking Country, so that they can carry on our Peoples' connection to Country.

Our dreaming stories tell of **Bundjiyl**, **Mirndayi** and **Waa**, explaining the creation of our lands and the evolution of our People, and the right way for us to live. Our language connects us to **gatjin** (water), **Djandak** (land), **murrundjaa** (animals), spirits and People, calling our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors) to **yapenya** (ceremony) and strengthening our identity. Some of our customs and practices are men's business and some are women's business, and some are for us to share as a community.

Dja Dja Wurrung Culture is the foundation of our community's spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing, and we need to protect it, pass it on and help others to understand and respect our ways.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- actively practice our ceremonies and teach our ways to our young ones
- continue to **bayikina djali** – reawaken our language
- consolidate and protect our traditional knowledge, using it to guide cultural practices and the way our Country is managed
- advance reconciliation with the broader community by sharing our **giyakiki** (stories), values and customs.

Achievements

- We have launched the DUMAWUL enterprise, which has delivered the **Djaara** Cultural Competency Program to a range of partners and community, building awareness and respect for **Djaara's** rich **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage) and living history.
- Cultural Integrity Guidelines have been created to guide the appropriate use of **Djaara** Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- **Yapenya** celebrations commemorated the five- and ten-year anniversaries of the signing of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement, providing opportunity to come together and celebrate our many achievements for our People and our Country.
- The renaming of **Larni Barramal Yaluk** and naming of buildings such as **Galkangu** and **Gurri Wanyarra** has put **Djaara** and **djali** back in the landscape, playing an important part in healing our Country and our People.
- Welcome Baby to Country ceremonies are now delivered bi-annually in partnership with Bendigo Health for **Djaara** and the broader community.





Challenges

It is a constant juggle for **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) to find the time and means to regularly practice Culture with the demands of work and life. Our cultural load, stemming from the removal of our people, the restriction of our culture and language, and the associated health issues, coupled with the continued loss of knowledge as Elders pass on, brings sensitive challenges for reviving and protecting our living Culture.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- increase places and opportunities for **Djaara** to get out on Country and share and build knowledge
- create a sustainable program to conduct **Djandak wi** (Country fire) at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what **Djandak** needs
- remove barriers to participation in **Djandak wi** for our mob, and empower **Djaara** to independently apply **Djandak wi** to all parts of **Djandak**
- develop educational resources to teach young people about **Djaara's** history, customs and Culture
- maintain and continue to develop a roster of **Djaara** to deliver **yapenya**, cultural awareness training and act as **Malamiya** field representatives
- develop a **Djandak** 'encyclopaedia', belonging to and managed by **DJAARA**, to capture and store spatial and other knowledge about Culture and Country. Ensure **Djaara** can log in, view and input information remotely
- develop a statement of **Djaara** research priorities and explore opportunities to partner with researchers and research institutes to further these priorities to capture our knowledge
- develop a **Djaara** knowledge book and other resources which respond to the needs of **Djaara**, in reawakening **djali** and strengthening connection to and knowledge of Culture
- work with those who are respectfully collecting cultural information and undertaking research; who are complying with the Cultural Integrity Guidelines and the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- build policies and processes to underpin the Cultural Integrity Guidelines, and strengthen protection for **Djaara's** traditional knowledge and practice
- capture **giyakiki** (stories), especially from Elders, to celebrate our histories; ensure they are available to **Djaara** where appropriate
- support members to practice **yapenya** and heal Country, including identifying locations that are **Djaara**-owned or accessible to **Djaara**.



GOAL 3: Malamiya (Cultural Heritage)

Our **Malamiya** is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

In addition to our customs and practices, our tangible and intangible **Malamiya** is a core part of our identity and connection to **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). The **banyul** (mountains), **yaluk** (rivers) and **galk-galk** (trees) that make up cultural landscapes are the foundations of our creation stories.

The sites that lie within these landscapes tell the **giyakiki** (stories) of our history. Scarred, modified trees, artefact scatters and stone arrangements are some of the physical evidence of the practices of our People. Massacre and mission sites remind us of more recent displacement and disruptive influences on the lifeways of our People. Heritage lives on through our practices, connecting our expressions of contemporary Culture and place.

Aboriginal places are present across our Country, revealing and telling the journey of the rituals and practices of our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors). This is why protection of our heritage is important. Some of our **Ngurar Balak** Remains have been removed, and they will not be at rest until they are properly repatriated to **Djandak**.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- strengthen our understanding of cultural places and connections on **Djandak**
- secure and realise the right and means to effectively protect and manage cultural landscapes and places
- ensure Ancestral Remains, cultural objects and collections of **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) are repatriated and protected
- apply our **Malamiya** to promote healing, and teach **Djaara** about Country, lore and laws
- raise and promote public awareness, education and respect for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and living culture, to contribute to ongoing reconciliation.

Achievements

- Ongoing building of knowledge has strengthened protection of culturally significant landscapes on **Djandak**.
- Projects like **Galkangu**, the Bendigo Law Courts and the Bendigo TAFE buildings celebrate and share our modern **Malamiya** within the built environment.
- **Djaara** have been employed as site leaders and field representatives in Malamiya work. Some have been trained up by Elders, and completed Certificate IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management.
- We have prepared cultural values assessments on Country and developed strong relationships with multiple stakeholders involved in preparing for the Goldfields World Heritage Bid.
- Repatriation of **Djaara** artefact collections.
- The Aboriginal Heritage Officer role carries out compliance and enforcement activities associated with development activities.





Challenges

Many of our special places and objects need identification and protection. Harm to places, through natural, accidental and wilful damage, means our **Malamiya** is gradually being eroded and destroyed. Vandalism and deliberate destruction of Aboriginal Places is sadly still an issue for us. Damage also occurs through the actions of tourists and visitors to our Country, where land management and protection measures for Aboriginal Places are inadequate. Heritage legislation can enable the loss of **Malamiya** through development and land management practices. People continue to collect our objects and should leave them on **Djandak**, report discovery, or return them to us.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- increase our knowledge of natural, cultural and intangible heritage values on Country by carrying out Traditional Owner-led heritage assessments and protection measures
- secure resourcing to self-determine areas of **Djandak** to assess for **Malamiya**, investigate preliminary reports of discovery of **Malamiya** on **Djandak**, and identify special places for protection works
- repatriate artefacts and bring our Ancestral Remains back to Country
- strengthen relationships with government and stakeholders to promote and raise awareness of **Djaara Malamiya** and develop appropriate agreements to protect and manage our heritage values on Country
- for each of the **Djaara** properties, develop and implement management plans for each of the **Djaara** properties, to guide future protection and management actions
- embed knowledge transfer within DJAARA operations, to ensure generational transfer of cultural knowledge, and open pathways for **Djaara** to complete training such as Certificate IV in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management
- work collaboratively with neighbouring Traditional Owners to increase knowledge and protection of shared **Malamiya**
- promote **Djaara's** cultural rights as protected by provisions in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, including Cultural Heritage permits and intangible **Malamiya**
- actively contribute to government planning instruments such as strategic planning scheme reviews and precinct structure plans to protect and promote **Djaara's** unique **Malamiya**
- continue to embed **Djaara** values and aspirations into the environment and infrastructure, and create modern **Malamiya**
- grow and diversify DUMAWUL's tourism and educational services to provide employment for **Djaara** facilitators, and to strengthen cultural awareness across the broader community. In particular, develop tours to represent all family groups across **Djandak**.



GOAL 4: Dhelk djakitj (Nourish food)

Our Country continues to nourish us by providing bush tucker and medicine

Over 200 years ago, our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors) were the experts who managed this land, keeping Country in good health by adjusting to seasons, lifecycles and systems. They knew of our Country's **malak** (plants) and **murrundjaa** (animals), cycles and systems. They understood the role that **wi** (fire) plays in regeneration and in promoting the balance of species and ecosystems. This knowledge has been built up over generations of observation and management, and passed down. The values in the environment that others seek to protect aren't here by chance. They are here because of careful tending of Country by **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) throughout history.

We care for the land and it provides for us. We use **witji** (lomandra or mat rush) to weave baskets. We hunt **djinbongurri** (wallaby), **barramal** (emu) and **djuliyn** (goanna). We eat the **bunyart** (eels), **djalup** (mussels), **yapitj** (crayfish) and **giranal** (yellow belly) from our streams. We gather **gariyn** (bardi grubs), duck eggs, nardoo, **murna** (yam daisies) and **wararak** (wattle) seeds for food and medicine. We use **ngarri** (buloke) and **biyal** (red gum) timber for our tools and ceremonies.

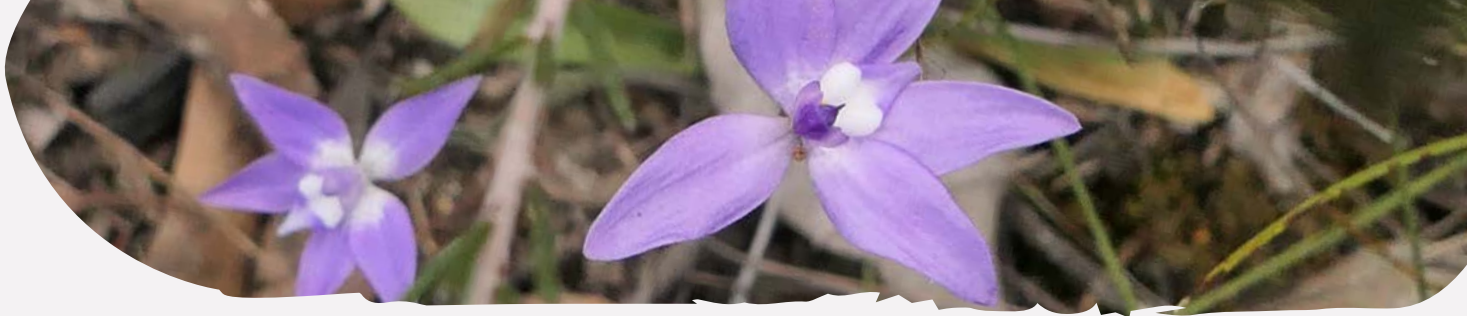
We need to manage our Country in the right way if we want it to continue to provide for our food and medicinal needs into the future.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- understand what **malak** and **murrundjaa** now exist on **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), and what condition they are in, so we can better define appropriate regimes including assessing 'cultural take', to ensure these species thrive
- re-build the capacity of our community to care for **Djandak**, and the knowledge of our community of our Country and our species and ecosystems
- actively manage our traditional lands and **gatjin** (waters) to protect the **malak** and **murrundjaa** that are important to us; and promote the right species in the right places so they can provide for us in a sustainable way
- work with relevant authorities to ensure our active participation in all natural resource management initiatives on **Djandak**, including wildlife management and harvesting
- continue to reintroduce traditional burning regimes and practices across Country and work with land managers to carry out our role in **wi** management to support restoration of biodiversity, including species and ecosystems of cultural and customary importance
- lead the way in active restoration interventions to restore and protect biodiversity
- have our cultural priorities incorporated into **wi** and biodiversity management decision-making
- ensure all **Djaara** understand and are free to exercise our Traditional Owner Rights to use our natural resources.





Achievements

- The Dja Dja Wurrung Group has established the DJAKITJ enterprise, which will research, develop and grow traditional native ingredients that have cultural importance to **Djaara**.
- We have rapidly developed our capacity and capability in conducting **Djandak wi** (Country fire), including an increase in the number of burns year-on-year and maintaining a fully functional forestry and fire crew, equipped with vehicles and equipment.
- We have informed **wi** policy at a state and regional level and have a role in regional **wi** governance.

Challenges

Our Country is under threat. Many of the land management practices of modern times are not well suited to our environment – European farming techniques, inappropriate **wi** regimes and overfishing are all upsetting the natural balance of our ecosystems. Pests and pathogens are displacing native species and infecting our **malak** and **murrundjaa**. In some cases, the shift in ecosystem composition is causing an over-abundance of native species like **gurri** (kangaroo), which is increasing the demand on already limited food resources.

The changes that we are seeing in the climate are placing pressure on already fragile ecosystems, and we expect this impact to continue. Addressing these issues is difficult for **Djaara** as there are still institutional barriers to participating in the management of Country. While our relationship with government and other natural resource managers is improving, our knowledge is not often sought and we are still not included in all the natural resource management decisions that are made on our Country, despite the rights provided for us under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement.

Furthermore, a lack of documented information about our People's traditional ecological knowledge as well as our use of Country and its resources limits our ability to advocate for our rights and interests in this regard, and limits our ability to provide input into how these resources are managed by our partners. It also compromises our ability to re-establish knowledge about what practices and time will be appropriate in such a heavily modified environment. This will need to change if **Djandak** is to be healthy in the long term.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- build skills and enable **Djaara** to get out on Country to hunt and gather as per our Natural Resource Agreement
- support native **malak** propagation activities, with the aim of increasing culturally important and threatened species across **Djandak** to support population recovery. Ensure these species are available to **Djaara**
- investigate, in collaboration with other land managers and researchers, the feasibility and impacts of reintroducing culturally significant species to Country, with the view to eventually trialling these reintroductions on Aboriginal Title land as a restoration intervention. Species will be selected in response to the needs of Country on a site-by-site basis
- gain a formalised and meaningful role in ensuring that our biocultural knowledge is being used to inform future policy, strategy and activities in **wi** and biodiversity management
- continue to insert **Djaara** perspectives and leadership within regional governance arrangements for **wi** and biodiversity management
- continue to embed **Djaara's** participation in state government forestry and fire activities to ensure that operations appropriately consider impacts on the Recognition and Settlement Agreement and **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage). Have **Djaara's** authority endorsed for management activities on **Djandak**
- ensure **Djaara** perspectives are incorporated and elevated across all elements of state government forestry and fire including emergency response, and that state agencies continue to support our capacity and capability
- continue to partner with state government agencies to ensure **Djaara** are involved in delivering on-ground works and co-creating culturally appropriate fire training, and have opportunities for growth and development
- conduct feasibility studies on opportunities to participate in wildlife management such as the monitoring, culling and harvesting of **gurri** and introduced species. Where culling occurs, **Djaara** should be prioritised for the distribution of meat
- use the spirit of culturally significant species to guide decisions about healing and managing Country.



GOAL 5: Gatjin (Water)

Our rivers and waterways are healthy and meet the needs of our People and land

Traditional Aboriginal Culture revolved around relationships to **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) and **gatjin**; relationships that hold deep physical, social, environmental, spiritual and cultural significance.

Today, the land and its waterways remain central to our cultural identity and aspirations for community and economic prosperity. Our **yaluk** (rivers) are the veins of **Djandak**, and provide food and medicine, and places to camp, hunt, fish, swim and hold **yapenya** (ceremonies). They are places that are central to our creation stories, and many of our **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage) sites are associated with waterways – burial sites, birthing sites and middens.

Our waterways are places that we connect with our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors) and pass traditional knowledge on to our children and grandchildren.

Yaluk such as **Bulatjal Yaluk** (Loddon), **Dindilong Yaluk**, (Coliban), Campaspe **Yaluk**, **Witjili bar** (Avoca) and **Gurraku biyal** (Avon); lakes that include Boort, Eppalock and **Larni Gurris** (Laanecoorie); swamps, creeks and wetlands – these are significant parts of our Country that link us to our past and will provide for our future.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- ensure all of our waterways are healthy, with the right **gatjin** in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of the environment, **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) and the broader community
- have the **Gatjin** Authority recognised as a leader in **gatjin** governance, which genuinely contributes to decision-making about waterways and catchments on **Djandak**
- secure adequate and equitable **gatjin** rights that meet our social, cultural, spiritual, economic and environmental needs
- share our creation stories to teach people how **gatjin** works in the landscape.

Achievements

- The role of key advisory group **Kapa Gatjin** (to know water) has been strengthened. **Kapa Gatjin** provides guidance to the Dja Dja Wurrung Group and our **gatjin** partners to ensure all **gatjin** business on **Djandak** is aligned with **Djaara's** way of managing **gatjin**.
- We published our **Gatjin** Strategy **Dhelkunyangu Gatjin** (working together to heal water) and established the **Djaara**-led partnership group **Wanggal** (whose name means 'a cluster of cumbungi stabilising the bank') to implement the strategy. The strategy provides a pathway for **Djaara** to lead water management on **Djandak** and guides water agencies on **Djaara** vision for water and how to apply Dja Dja Wurrung traditional knowledge to better manage water on **Djandak**.
- We have partnered with water agencies to plan and implement catchment restoration programs and projects for key waterways on **Djandak**, including the Upper Coliban River, Tullaroop Creek, Bendigo Creek and the Upper Avoca River. **Djaara's** voice and cultural practice is being brought into these programs to deliver optimal outcomes for Country and **Djaara**.





- We have facilitated the environmental watering of Lake Boort and Birch's Creek, determining water delivery requirements and delivering water as required.
- Through our membership on the Murray and Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations, the Aboriginal Water Officer Network, and the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, we have participated in representing the rights of Traditional Owner groups in **gatjin** policy and governance in Victoria and the Murray–Darling Basin.

Challenges

Our **yaluk**, lakes and swamps are sick. A legacy of past land management decisions has caused erosion, weed and pest issues, pollution from farm chemicals and mining contaminants throughout our Country and in our waterways. Many of these harms remain ongoing. **Gatjin** diversions and controlled flows mean that many of our **yaluk** are getting **gatjin** at the wrong time, or in the wrong volumes, and over-fishing is putting pressure on important species. It is a big task to heal our waterways so that they can continue to be the lifeblood of our Country.

The waterway management and policy framework in Victoria is complex and multi-faceted. Within the current context and controls, **Djaara** cannot meet their obligations to Care for Country and **gatjin**. To participate meaningfully in this framework, **Djaara** will need to be adequately resourced to develop the technical expertise and capacity required, to be on Country, and be self-determined in engaging with partners and managing **gatjin**.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- ensure that **Djaara** have a meaningful role in the development of **gatjin** legislation, strategy and planning in Victoria and the Murray–Darling Basin: independently, and as members of peak Traditional Owner bodies
- lead the development and implementation of **gatjin** management processes that apply to all waterways and catchments on **Djandak**, incorporating **Djaara** knowledge, practices and tools
- ensure **DJAARA** receives ongoing resourcing to support how we wish to be engaged in matters that affect **gatjin** on **Djandak**, and to deliver our aspirations outlined in our **Dhelkunyangu Gatjin** strategy
- continue to build and strengthen partnerships to heal **gatjin**
- determine **gatjin** needs across all of Country, so **Djaara** can voice where **gatjin** belongs on Country and for what purposes
- participate in the **gatjin** market, to oversee the return of the right **gatjin** to the right place at the right time.



GOAL 6: Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country)

Our Country is healthy again

All layers of our Country, including the land, waterways, and **wura-wura-yi djaa** (sky Country), around the goldfields are sick and a significant program of remediation is required. In the mid-1800s, large deposits of gold were discovered in our Country, enticing flocks of people looking to make their fortune. The miners cut down trees for firewood and building, diverted creeks and **yaluk** (rivers) and dug holes in the ground, pulling up large volumes of earth. This has left a legacy of soil erosion, salinity and toxicity from contaminants such as arsenic and mercury. Additional colonial impacts such as grazing, cropping and land clearing have harmed **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). Contemporary issues such as climate change pose a threat to the resilience of **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) and **Djandak**. As custodians of all of **Djandak**, we feel a deep responsibility to heal this Country, regardless of current legal tenure, so that it can be healthy and functioning once again.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- increase land returned for **Djaara** to Care for Country, to realise our vision and aspirations for managing and healing **Djandak**
- have **Djaara's** leadership empowered in all aspects of climate action and the transition to a clean energy economy
- be involved in the design and implementation of remediation works and restoration initiatives in upside-down Country
- build our capability, and be appropriately resourced, to remediate and heal toxic land.

Achievements

- We have secured a number of land parcels, including at Hattam St, Golden Square, where we have proudly built **Larnangurrak** (our place), the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre. The Centre is our home which proudly represents us. It accommodates most of our staff, and provides a meaningful place for us to do business across the community.
- A range of strategies outlining our vision and strategy for **Djandak** and healing **Djaara** have been published to embed **Djaara's** principles and priorities in the work of others, and show how we can work together to enact change.
- In line with principles outlined in **Galk-galk Dhelkunya** (Forest Gardening Strategy), our holistic cultural landscape management philosophy and practice, we are working in partnership with others to heal Country, heal **Djaara**. Through our partnership with Bush Heritage Australia, we have published **Wurreka Galkangu**, a strategy for managing Country together, specifically for land privately owned by Bush Heritage.
- We have negotiated a historic agreement, **Bakaru Wayaparrangu** (In the middle, we all meet), with Agnico Eagle, the operator of the Fosterville Gold Mine. **Bakaru Wayaparrangu** recognises the continued impact of mining on **Djandak** and **Djaara**. The objective is to ensure fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of resources and enable **Djaara** to help guide remediation and environmental management of the mine site.





Challenges

Despite the environmental and social impacts of the gold rush legacy, no-one has taken responsibility for healing the areas that have been impacted by the mining. Reversing the damage to this land and **gatjin** (water) is not an attractive business proposition, so there are few available remediation programs. On top of this, the risks and liabilities from the contamination that has occurred are largely unknown, and so governments have been reluctant to grant permission to heal and manage our Country. We will need to develop strong partnerships if we are to overcome these significant challenges.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we will:

- develop a strategy for how to increase the land available for Caring for Country activities, ensuring that any land available meets the needs of **Djaara**, while not taking on others' liabilities
- identify and progress opportunities for **Djaara**-led renewable energy projects
- prioritise sites on **Djandak** to trial cultural landscape management, supporting **Djaara** practices and knowledge sharing to heal Country
- in partnership with environmental protection and land management agencies, develop a multi-agency assessment matrix that will be used to prioritise known contaminated land, and be involved in baseline condition assessments of public land requiring remediation
- actively work with those that have harmed the land and other land holders to develop and implement land remediation strategies, while strengthening Dja Dja Wurrung Group capacity and resourcing to undertake the land remediation works.



GOAL 7: Gungilangurrak (Our doing)

As our Country's first people, **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs

Our Recognition and Settlement Agreement was an important milestone for **Djaara**. The Victorian Government now recognises us as the Traditional Owners of this Country and acknowledges the history of dispossession, dispersion and exclusion that has affected our People. The agreement allows for continued recognition, through protocols on acknowledgements and Welcomes to Country, and signage on **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). It provides us with some legal rights – to practice Culture and access and use our land and resources, to have some say in what happens on our Country. It gives us title to some of our traditional lands, including the right to have an active role in managing Country (see Goal 9). The Settlement Agreement is an important starting point for the self-determination of **Djaara**, and we need to continue to build up the structures and processes that will enable us to make the most of, and strengthen, our rights as a sovereign nation.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- be a clearly identified group of people with well-defined goals and objectives, authority and leadership structures
- have a strong, well-governed corporation that effectively represents the interests of **Djaara**
- effectively implement the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement
- be meaningfully involved as a partner in managing **Djandak**, and take the lead in managing Country where **Djaara** hold freehold and Aboriginal Title
- have an active and engaged community that participates in all aspects of society.

Achievements

- We have published a range of strategies that outline our vision and strategy for healing **Djandak**, healing **Djaara**. The strategies, which have been developed via Member-led **wartaka** (come with purpose), assert our expectations to our partners and the community.
- We have successfully negotiated historic agreements such as **Yilingga Marna** (shake hands) with the City of Greater Bendigo, and **Bakaru Wayaparrangu** (in the middle, we all meet) with Agnico Eagle, to formalise opportunities for **Djaara** and **Djandak**.
- **Djali Balak**, our Language Committee, has provided **djali** (Dja Dja Wurrung Language) for (re)naming parts of Country, buildings, projects and documents, and worked hard to continue to **bayikina** (reawaken) our language.
- Our membership has grown significantly, and we continue to welcome more descendants of our **Ngurar Balak** (Ancestors) and activate their rights as Traditional Owners.
- We have successfully achieved quality employment, cultural and economic outcomes for our Members through Land Use Activity Agreement negotiations, many outcomes being beyond minimum mandated requirements.



Challenges

We are on our way to achieving this goal of self-determination and leaving behind the mission mentality that has previously underpinned our relationship with government and the broader community. However, there are still challenges that we will need to overcome. Even with agreed rights, we remain under-represented in many decision-making forums and our voices as Traditional Owners are often not sought or heard.

Access to resources and rights are much lower for us than many of those with competing interests, which continues to limit our ability to negotiate fairly and participate equally in priority-setting. By strengthening and unifying our organisation and community, we will be in a better position to improve our standing and representation in governance and policy.

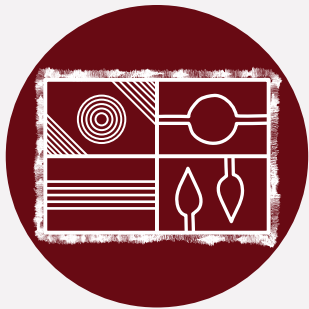


Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- pursue rights recognition and opportunities for **Djaara** and **Djandak** through statewide and local Treaty processes
- explore and develop decision-making and prioritisation processes to help us make collective decisions about the work we do on Country and how we want Country to be managed by others
- actively work with other bodies such as Regional Development Victoria and the Game Management Authority to progress the aspirations of all **Djaara**
- negotiate agreements with relevant bodies from local government to land management authorities
- continue our language revival program for the reawakening and learning of **djali**
- pursue opportunities through the Land Use Activity Agreement process to further realise **Djaara's** rights, and strengthen outcomes for healing **Djandak**, healing **Djaara**
- increase the amount of **Djaara**-owned land, both via fee-simple handbacks and purchases, to enable us to heal Country on our own terms, while making landscapes available to **Djaara**.

Note: Many of the actions identified in the eight other goals will directly result in self-determination.



GOAL 8: Murrunayangu (We all live, thrive)

We have a strong and diverse economic base to provide for our health and wellbeing, and strengthen our living culture

Core to achieving our goals of self-determination and improved community wellbeing is the need to develop a sustainable economic base. Building on our strengths, we have competitive advantages through our Culture, traditional knowledge of Country, asset base and rights to our resources. Our strengths and advantages offer opportunity across a variety of sectors, such as: natural resource management and services relating to revegetation, species harvesting, **wi** (fire) management, pest control, and through tourism, creatives and education. We wish to use these advantages to participate in the economy for cultural and economic benefit, where reciprocity and exchange deliver benefits for **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) and the broader community.

To assist in achieving our goal, we established Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises (which includes DJANDAK, DUMAWUL and DJAKITJ) as an arm of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA). Further, we will keep pursuing opportunities to develop our individual and collective skills, and strengthen our ability to deliver on the aspirations of the **Djaara** community whilst strengthening Culture and community cohesion.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- grow our asset base and use it wisely and sustainably to generate economic benefit for **Djaara**
- attract and secure the professional expertise required to create and leverage economic development and employment opportunities
- continue to build strong enterprises with respected brands and a high level of client satisfaction
- leverage significant human, financial and information resources through the development of strategic partnerships and joint ventures
- seed, support and strengthen **Djaara** business
- utilise **Djaara's** strategic resources in supporting economic self-determination.

Achievements

- DJANDAK is a successful and sustainable business which has delivered significant work to heal Country and leads the way in applying **Djaara** knowledges. The enterprise has created employment opportunities and strengthened connection with **Djandak** for many **Djaara**; it has delivered economic benefits for the **Djaara** and broader communities.
- Through the work of DJANDAK, many new cultural places have been created and shared across communities, such as **Wanyarra Dum** (Frog Ponds near Bendigo Creek), **La Larr Ba Gauwa** Mountain Bike Park in Harcourt, and visitor spaces at **Liyanganyuk Banyul** (Mount Alexander) and **Lalgambuk** (Mount Franklin).
- We have established DUMAWUL as an enterprise, which provides creative, artistic and economic opportunities for **Djaara**, while delivering education and tourism opportunities for the broader community. It also plays an important role in supporting **Djaara** small business: more than 40 **Djaara** have graduated from DUMAWUL's Accelerator program.
- We are establishing the DJAKITJ and DJAARA Timbers businesses. DJAKITJ, a bush foods business, will produce traditional foods using **Djaara** knowledges. And DJAARA Timbers will heal Country and honour the natural resources removed from Country, through forest-based industries and processing.





Challenges

Dja Dja Wurrung enterprises are developing business opportunities that support capacity building, economic development and employment opportunities for **Djaara**, whether they live on **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) or elsewhere, and the broader Aboriginal community, particularly on **Djandak**.

As our enterprises expand, they face a range of systemic barriers such as weak commercial rights, unclear policy and legal frameworks, lack of cultural recognition and the limited access to natural resources. These each create difficulties in developing cultural and natural resource-based enterprises.

Historical inequities mean that capacity and knowledge within the **Djaara** community needs further development and investment if our enterprises are to be significantly expanded. These challenges are not insurmountable and will be a key focus of our efforts.

While local and state government procurement targets exist, they have not yet been realised, leaving much unrealised opportunity. We continue to advocate for and demonstrate the benefits of procuring our services and protecting our rights.



Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- increase awareness of, and align the criteria for, the Community Support Program Small Enterprise Grants, to ensure meaningful, ongoing **Djaara** business support
- seed and support **Djaara** businesses through Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises
- continue to develop **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage) fee-for-service business through due diligence, field work and **yapenya** (ceremony)
- secure access to government funding for enabling **Djaara** business delivery
- promote the services offered by our enterprises to ensure ongoing business development opportunities and promote capability within agency partners
- secure ongoing commitment for a Dja Dja Wurrung women's ranger team and explore the feasibility of the team operating from within the Dja Dja Wurrung Group. Ensure team members have opportunities for career progression and upskilling
- support our new and emerging businesses (DUMAWUL, DJAKITJ, DJAARA Timbers) to operate sustainably to support the Corporation in meeting its objectives.



GOAL 9: Djaa mutjang dhelkayang (Holding Country good way)

All crown land on **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) is Aboriginal Title and we are the primary managers

As part of the agreement we have made with the State of Victoria under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act, DJAARA on behalf of **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) have been granted Aboriginal Title over a number of parks and reserves.

Across current and future Aboriginal Title land, our long-term goal is to become primary managers of these areas. Legislative reform and governance structures need to involve real sharing and devolving of power and responsibility, based on mutual trust and the valuing of shared approaches. Across all land and **gatjin** (water) of our **Djandak**, we will work with other land managers to see our visions, aspirations, and expectations for managing **Djandak** realised. We aspire toward complete management.

What **Djaara** bring to management of Country is a multi-faceted understanding that encompasses cultural, spiritual, social and emotional values overlaying the physical health of Country.

Objectives

To achieve our goal, we will:

- self-determine opportunities to lead and be involved in delivering land, **gatjin** and natural and cultural resource management, at all levels
- expect real sharing of power and responsibility, which requires trust and support from existing land managers
- decolonise existing legislation, governance structures and processes, which have historically excluded and marginalised us, and require transformation to be culturally appropriate and reflect true sharing and partnership.

Achievements

- DJAARA is a proven land manager and trusted partner.
- We have developed a Joint Management Plan and delivery of the Plan is well underway.
- DJANDAK has designed, built and installed signage and furniture, and completed landscaping in all joint managed parks across **Djandak**.

Challenges

Current legislation does not acknowledge the unique partnership DJAARA has with the State. We can only progress so far in good faith, and often hit major challenges when partners don't recognise our rights and principles outlined in the Recognition and Settlement Agreement.





Expectations for partners

Respect for Culture

Agreements regarding **Djaara** leading the management of our Country should be based on the full respect for our rights as Traditional Owners and be based on recognition of our inherent responsibilities to care for our Country. This means that we have a unique role to play in enabling and protecting our Culture through Caring for Country.

Shared benefits

As Traditional Owners, through the Dja Dja Wurrung Group, **Djaara** should expect to share fully and equitably in the benefits associated with joint management and **Djaara**-led management activities. This includes the sharing of power and authority in decision-making and meaningful access to the benefits accruing from land management activities.

Equal partnerships

Involvement from the start of planning processes as an equal partner is essential to ensuring that the partnership is respectful and beneficial to all parties. This includes the ability to have a determining say in the structures and processes for negotiation and decision-making around joint management planning itself.

Appropriate resourcing

The demands on our representative body, **DJAARA**, and our wider community and Elders, are many and varied. Appropriate resourcing and support are required for us to participate in and lead management processes for our Country.

Actions going forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges we will:

- for each part of **Djandak** granted under Aboriginal Title, understand what the optimum conditions for **Djaara**-led land management would be and work in partnership with other land managers to enact this, with equity in decision-making processes that prioritise self-determination
- increase **Djaara's** responsibility to care for **Djandak**, with more available Crown Land transferred to Aboriginal Title
- continue to deliver the Joint Management Plan.





This Country Plan directly supports the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation in advancing the principal object of the Constitution – supporting the health and wellbeing of our community, by helping ensure that community and corporate priorities are aligned, and activities can be implemented in an efficient and coordinated way.

Implementing the Country Plan

The Country Plan represents our community's overarching vision and roadmap for the future.

Its purpose is to inform and guide our actions and the actions of others – which will be described and resourced through a range of other strategies, plans and partnership agreements. It does not in itself have a dedicated funding source.

The natural resource management strategies described in the 2014 version of the Country Plan are now integrated under each of the goals. The resources to implement these and other strategies and actions may already be secured, or may need to be generated in a number of ways, as follows:

Recognition and Settlement Agreement (2013)

The Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement has provided a range of resources and opportunities that can be directly utilised or leveraged to deliver on a number of priority actions. Examples include the Partnership Forum Principles and Participation Strategy Principles, Schedule 3 of the Natural Resource Agreement, the establishment of the Traditional Owner Land Management Board (TOLMB) to undertake joint management planning and also funds for the employment of the Dja Dja Wurrung Ranger team.

Dja Dja Wurrung planning and enterprise development

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) has undertaken a range of strategic, business and action planning which aligns with the vision and goals of the Country Plan. Elements of these strategies and plans may be funded directly through the corporate planning process or the plans may be used to either bring external resources into the organisation or influence the investment priorities of others to more strongly align with corporation and community goals.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Group (DJAARA and its enterprises) is guided by the Country Plan as a foundation document. Each entity regularly submits a business plan to the DDWCAC Board for approval. These plans help to prioritise the implementation of objectives in the Country Plan. There is also a three- to five-year plan under development to enable planning and budgeting in the medium term.

The 2014–2034 Country Plan was developed through a participatory process and was open to all Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners – see Appendix 1. It was then similarly refreshed in 2017 and 2025. It is anticipated that all future reviews and updates of the Plan will continue to empower our People, build community cohesion and recruit greater participation in the realisation of our vision.

Depending on the approach taken by the future TOLMB, joint management planning may also be designed as a community-based process.



DJAARA documents strengthening implementation of Dhelkunya Dja

Public policies, plans and programs

By clearly articulating our community's priorities, the Country Plan provides a strong platform for us to proactively engage with government and others on legal and policy issues that are important to us, such as commercial use rights and benefit-sharing for our People.

The Plan also supports more equitable representation and participation in the development and implementation of strategic plans and frameworks that present opportunities or barriers to achieving the vision of this Country Plan.

We expect all policies, plans and decision-making processes that impact our rights and aspirations to reflect and support our vision and goals. We also expect to be more heavily involved in the investment programs that enable their implementation.

All policies, practices, and decision-making processes should consider identified enablers of self-determination, such as transfer of power and resources; prioritisation of Culture; and addressing racism and promoting cultural safety. Through our active participation, they should also identify and address other systemic barriers that need to shift to enable our vision for Country to be achieved.

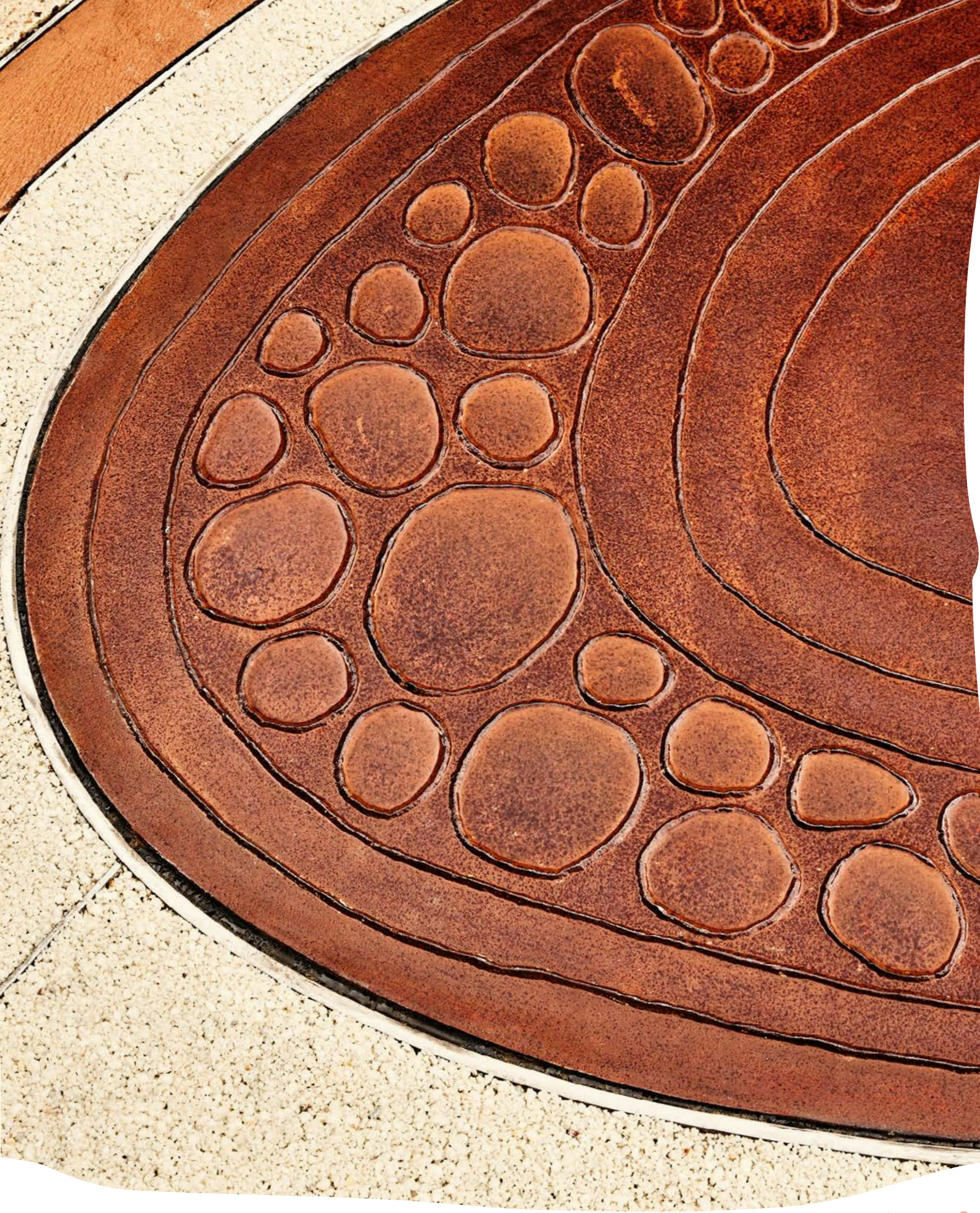
Partnership development

The Country Plan provides a key mechanism for building partnerships with others who have interests on our Country. In a business context, Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises specific opportunities for joint venture partnerships across a range of industries and markets. The Enterprise arm has demonstrated its capacity to deliver state government contracts and facilitate external employment with private industry. Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises also anticipates being able to support and partner with other **Djaara** business initiatives within community, as well as with neighbouring Traditional Owner groups.

While some immediate opportunities such as tourism are being actively pursued as early priorities, other elements of the **Djaara** Economic Strategy can be adapted as opportunities for partnerships arise.







Appendix 1: Developing the Plan

The Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan was developed between 2012 and 2014 through a two-stage process

Stage 1

The project was designed and initiated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Negotiation Team. Once the scope and purpose was agreed, planning began for convening a community workshop in Bendigo in February 2012.

A community notice went out together with information inviting all family/clan groups to participate and have input into this first Country Plan.

The community's views were sought on what our most important goals and priorities should be, and on a range of issues currently being debated such as our rights to access and use natural resources and to practice Culture on Country.

The outcomes of the workshop were to be used to strengthen the Native Title negotiations with the State under the Traditional Owner Settlement Framework.

These outcomes were to include a vision for Country and aspirations for the following:

- The health and wellbeing of our community and the natural environment.
- The practice, preservation and showcasing of our **Malamiya** (Cultural Heritage), traditions, customs, observances and beliefs.
- The development of a culturally viable and relevant Traditional Owner-based economy.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Family Groups/Clans to manage Country, underpinned by Customary and Native Title Law.

The workshop was well-attended and generated a strong sense of where the community's priorities lay. Along with a Dja Dja Wurrung vision for Country, a number of important products were subsequently generated, including a strategic framework and a comprehensive description of priority actions and emerging opportunities.

This work formed an important part of the instructions given by the community to the negotiation team and was used throughout 2012 to strengthen our negotiations.

Stage 2

The Country Plan progressed slowly in 2012 due to the significant demands placed on the time of negotiation team members by the Native Title process, with an additional workshop deferred until after the Recognition and Settlement Agreement had been successfully negotiated.

These outcomes were to include a vision for Country and aspirations for the following:

- The health and wellbeing of our community and the natural environment.
- The practice, preservation and showcasing of our **Malamiya**, traditions, customs, observances and beliefs.
- The development of a culturally viable and relevant Traditional Owner-based economy.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Family Groups/Clans to manage Country, underpinned by Customary and Native Title Law.

Held in Bendigo in August 2013, the second workshop was designed to discuss and articulate the following: The story of Dja Dja Wurrung Country – what do we mean by cultural landscapes, what are their key features and how are they connected? What parts or elements of Country are most valued by **Djaara**? What condition are they in, what is threatening them and what needs to be done to protect them or improve their condition?

The **Djaara** principles for managing Country – how do we expect all stakeholders who have responsibilities for managing our traditional lands and waters to carry out their work?

The workshop also reviewed the scope and purpose of the Plan in the context of the post-settlement environment; and tested the early content from the first workshop.

The outcomes of both workshops, and many other conversations we have had about our future over the past two years are now represented in this Plan. While future iterations of the Plan will progressively fill information gaps and engage more of our community members, it provides an important foundation and roadmap for our future.

Appendix 2: Principles for participation of Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners

As Traditional Owners for **Djandak**, we have inherent and fundamental decision-making rights in relation to the use and development of land or natural resources on Country. We seek to **ngaldurrong yana** (walk together) in good **murrun** (spirit) to create a better future for **Djandak**, and all who live on and visit **Djandak**.

These are our expectations when working with partners on matters on and affecting **Djandak** and **Djaara**:

1. Understanding **DJAARA** and **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) is showing respect. We approach all discussions from a position of mutual respect, and it is an expectation that you have read and understood our rights, our Cultural Integrity Guidelines and strategy documents before making contact with us to show us the same respect.
2. Where affected by a proposed measure, the objective of working with **Djaara** should be to uphold **Djaara's** sovereignty and rights. Partners should consider how **Djaara** can lead and how decision-making power can be transferred to **Djaara**.
3. In all cases where **Djaara** is not the ultimate decision-maker, stakeholders, partners and government should engage in a good faith effort towards consensual decision making. Engagement processes should therefore be framed as making every effort. Tick-box and tokenistic approaches don't meet this standard.
4. The details of a specific process should always take into account the nature of the proposed measure and the scope of its impact on the **Djaara** community. An engagement process should itself be the product of consensus and negotiation. This can help ensure that the process is effective.
5. **Djaara** affected by a decision, law, policy or development process should be able to meaningfully participate in all stages of its design, implementation and evaluation.
6. Discussions need to begin early and should, where necessary, be ongoing.
7. Partners need to be willing and flexible enough to accommodate the concerns of **Djaara**, and work with them in good faith to reach agreement. Partners need to be prepared to change their plans, or even abandon them, particularly when consultations reveal that a measure would have a significant impact on the rights of **Djaara**, and that **Djaara** do not agree to the measure.
8. **Djaara** must be able to equitably participate in discussions and may require financial, technical and other resourcing. Without adequate resources to attend meetings, take proposals back to their communities or access appropriate expert advice, **Djaara** cannot possibly be expected to consent to or comment on any proposal in a fully informed manner.
9. **Djaara** will participate freely in engagement processes. Coercion or manipulation will not be used to gain consent.
10. **Djaara** will not be pressured into decisions through the imposition of limited timeframes. Adequate and flexible timeframes should be built into the discussion process to allow cultural protocol and the priorities of **Djaara** to lead progress.
11. Timeframes need to allow **Djaara** time to engage in necessary decision-making processes and cultural protocols. **Djaara** needs to be given adequate time to consider the impact that a proposed decision, law, policy or development may have on their rights. Otherwise, they may not be able to respond to such proposals in a fully informed manner.

Governments

12. Engagements should be coordinated across government departments.
13. Governments should adopt a 'whole of Country' approach to law and policy reform, pursuant to which engagement processes are coordinated across all relevant departments and agencies and informed by our existing suite of policy documents. This will assist in easing the burden upon **Djaara** of participating in multiple discussion papers and reform proposals.
14. Governments need to do more than provide information about measures that they have developed on behalf of **Djaara** and without our input. Further, participation should not be limited to a discussion about the minor details of a policy when the broad policy direction has already been set.

Wayaparrangu (we all meet together) is the collaborative process in which DJAARA, Djaara and our partners come together to deliver a shared vision for Country

These principles are the evolution of the assertions by **Djaara in the lead up to the Recognition and Settlement Agreement negotiations. We extend deep gratitude to the original authors for their determination and advocacy.*

Photo descriptions

- p 8 – Country in our hands, Recognition and Settlement Agreement Signing Ceremony, 2013.
- p 17 – Amos Atkinson, Uncle Rick Nelson, Lewis Brown and Sharnie Hamilton on Country.
- p 21 – **Djaara** leading the Bendigo Easter Parade with Hannah Dunolly-Lee, Sharlee Dunolly-Lee, Narelle Kerr and Liam Dunolly-Lee holding the Welcome to Country sign.
- p 22 – Uncle Rick Nelson looking across **Djandak**.
- p 24 – A **Djaara** men's weekend out on Country: (standing) Mark Little, Ray Kneebone, Mick Harding, Uncle Tommy Baksh, Caleb Dunolly-Lee, Alex Cooper, Josh Berick, David Nelson, Kolby Kerr, Loclan O'Brien, Jordan Taylor, Zac Gilbert, Kyrun Kerr, Drew Berick, Uncle Rodney Carter, (kneeling) Jackson Dunolly-Lee, Trent Nelson, Andrew Saunders, Ryan Gilbert and Zayne Gilbert.
- p 24–25 – Uncle Walter Harrison and Aunty Roslyn Dodson with Caity, Thomas and Jackson Dunolly-Lee following Thomas's Welcome Baby to Country ceremony.
- p 26 – **Djaara** dancers at Yapenya celebrations in Rosalind Park – (top row) Aunty Roslyn Dodson, Louise Barty, Danielle Davis, Suzanne Taylor, Kayla Baksh, Nathan Bourke, Chris Boland, Mel Peters, Bec Phillips (bottom row) Allira Dryden, Merinda Dryden, Jacinta Douglas, Evie Davis, Nyalu Boney, Mya Saunders, Shamana Baksh-Maher, Wanyarra Saunders and Lilymae Maher-Baksh.
- p 27 – Andrew Saunders healing our **Yapenya** property with **wi** (fire).
- p 29 – Aunty Marilyne Nicholls, Aunty Monica Phillips, Bec Phillips and Tash Charles planting **murna** (yam daisy) with **garni** (digging sticks).
- p 30 – Uncle Rodney Carter holding a yabby at the DJAKITJ farm.
- p 33 – Members of **Kapa Gatjin**, Djaara's water knowledge group, at launch of **Dhelkunyangu Gatjin** (Djaara Gatjin Strategy): (standing) Deb Dunolly, Aunty Marilyne Nicholls, Aunty Kathy Nicholls, Amos Atkinson, Uncle Graham Atkinson, Uncle Tommy Baksh, Suzanne Taylor, Mick Bourke, Nathan Bourke, Zac Gilbert, Sharlee Dunolly-Lee, Narkita Kerr, (sitting) Caitlin Dunolly-Lee and Andrew Saunders.
- p 35 – Bec Phillips and Uncle Rodney Carter signing **Bakaru Wayaparangu** with Agnico Eagle executives.
- p 37 – Uncle Rodney Carter, Steve Jackson, Aunty Linda Ford, Mick Bourke, Peta Hudson, Uncle Graham Atkinson, Cassandra Lewis and Trent Nelson at the **garni** (digging stick) ceremony for **Larnangurrak**.
- p 37- Uncle Rick conducting a smoking ceremony on Country.
- p 39 – Kerri Douglas leading a walking tour at **Lalgambuk**.
- p 40 – Aunty Kathy Nicholls, Aunty Marilyne Nicholls, Aunty Mandy Saunders and Aunty Vicki Murray enjoying the jointly managed Hepburn Regional Park.
- p 44 – Amos Atkinson sharing culture with a young person.
- p 44–45 – Sharnie Hamilton and Lewis Brown leading a walking tour at Kooyoora State Park.
- p 45 – Ava Bourke and Kayla Baksh modelling **Djaara**-designed fashion garments.
- p 50–51 – **Djaara** dancers performing at the opening ceremony of **Larnangurrak** (our place).







Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
Trading as DJAARA

PO Box 1026 Bendigo VIC 3552

Larnangurrak (our place)
43 Hattam Street
Dja Dja Wurrung Country
Golden Square VIC 3555

T: +61 (03) 5444 2888

djadjawurrung.com.au

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