



# Dhelkunya Dja

Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan

2014-2034





Adnate mural Trentham



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*Aboriginal people should be aware that this document contains culturally sensitive material - including images and names of people who have since died.*



# Message From The Chair (2017)

*Womin-Dji-Ka*

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 and Box Ironbarks 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,**  
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, 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 2012-14 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 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 lead 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,**  
Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

## Executive Summary

Before European colonisation, the natural places within Dja Dja Wurrung Country were well known, had a name and 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 cultural heritage - our significant places and landscapes, our stories and language, our customs and practices and our responsibilities for looking after Country. It describes the pathway our community has determined it needs to take to rebuild and prosper.

The Plan is structured in four parts. The first is a brief background to our culture, Country and rights, which provides the context for the rest of the Plan. The second part describes our holistic Vision for Country and, goals, objectives and actions which was developed through a series of community workshops in 2014 and 2017.

Our Vision is for the health and wellbeing of our people to be strong, and underpinned by our living culture. Our Vision is for our lands and waters to be in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People. As this Country's First People 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.

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

1. Djaara (Our people)
2. Cultural Practices and Customs
3. Cultural Heritage
4. Bush Tucker (edible and medicinal plants and animals)
5. Rivers and Waterways
6. Land
7. Self-determination
8. Traditional Owner Economy
9. Joint Management





# Background

## Our Culture

Dja Dja Wurrung People have lived on our traditional lands and cared for our Country over many 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 stories of creation and histories that cannot be erased.

Our dreaming stories of Djandak (Country) explain the creation of our lands and how Dja Dja Wurrung people evolved. Bunjil (the Eagle Hawk) is our creator and helps us to understand our connections to each other through his law. Mindi, the giant serpent, is his enforcer implementing the laws and ceremonies that ensure the continuation of life.

Each place on our Country is known and valued, has a name and a song, and this is embedded in our landscape along with murrups (spirits) imprinted on the water, birds, plants, animals, rocks, mountains and ancestral spirits. We continue to perform ceremonies to honour each of the spirits and our traditional rites, our Welcome to Country being one example.

The spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past and our traditions, and our stories instil an on-going respect for our Country. Our songs and stories 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 ancestors looked after this Country and we are duty bound to look after it for the next generation.

We feel an affinity with the land when we're on Dja Dja Wurrung Country; the ancestor's spirit is in the rock, the tree, 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 physical relationship with Dja Dja Wurrung Country by continuing to access it, looking after it and by using its natural resources.

Caring for Country is the living essence that is shared between people and place. It is vital for maintaining our culture. The passing down of traditional knowledge is a seminal way in which we transmit Dja Dja Wurrung cultural heritage to the younger generations and it is how we have maintained our cultural identity over the passage of time. This practice is the primary responsibility of Dja Dja Wurrung men and women.

We teach stories of pre-contact origin, the correct way to engage with Country, the importance of revisiting places as a way of connecting with our spirituality and culture, and informing the decisions about the management of Aboriginal places and sites. Our present day ecological knowledge is derived from this direct experience with the natural world built up over many 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 medicinal plants, find 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 plants for medicinal purposes.

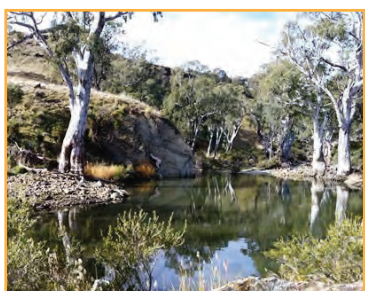
But over the years, our lands have been exploited and misused, and our people driven off the land and away from their Country.

Unsustainable development, changed 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 the Country suffers, we suffer.

We know the place where Mindi first emerged. It is still a sacred place, but sadly it is a desecrated space. We believe we are an integral part of the ecosystem and value the balance of natural resources. When the Country is sick, we are sick.

Not all Dja Dja Wurrung people are able to live on our traditional lands, but we have a totemic relationship with our Country which means we do not have to be physically on Country to feel connected and affected. However, the spiritual connection that we feel to the land is reinforced by our presence on Country and our desire to Care for Country will always remain strong.

## Our Country



Dja Dja Wurrung territory extends from Mount Franklin and the towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo in the east, Boort in the north, Donald in the northwest,

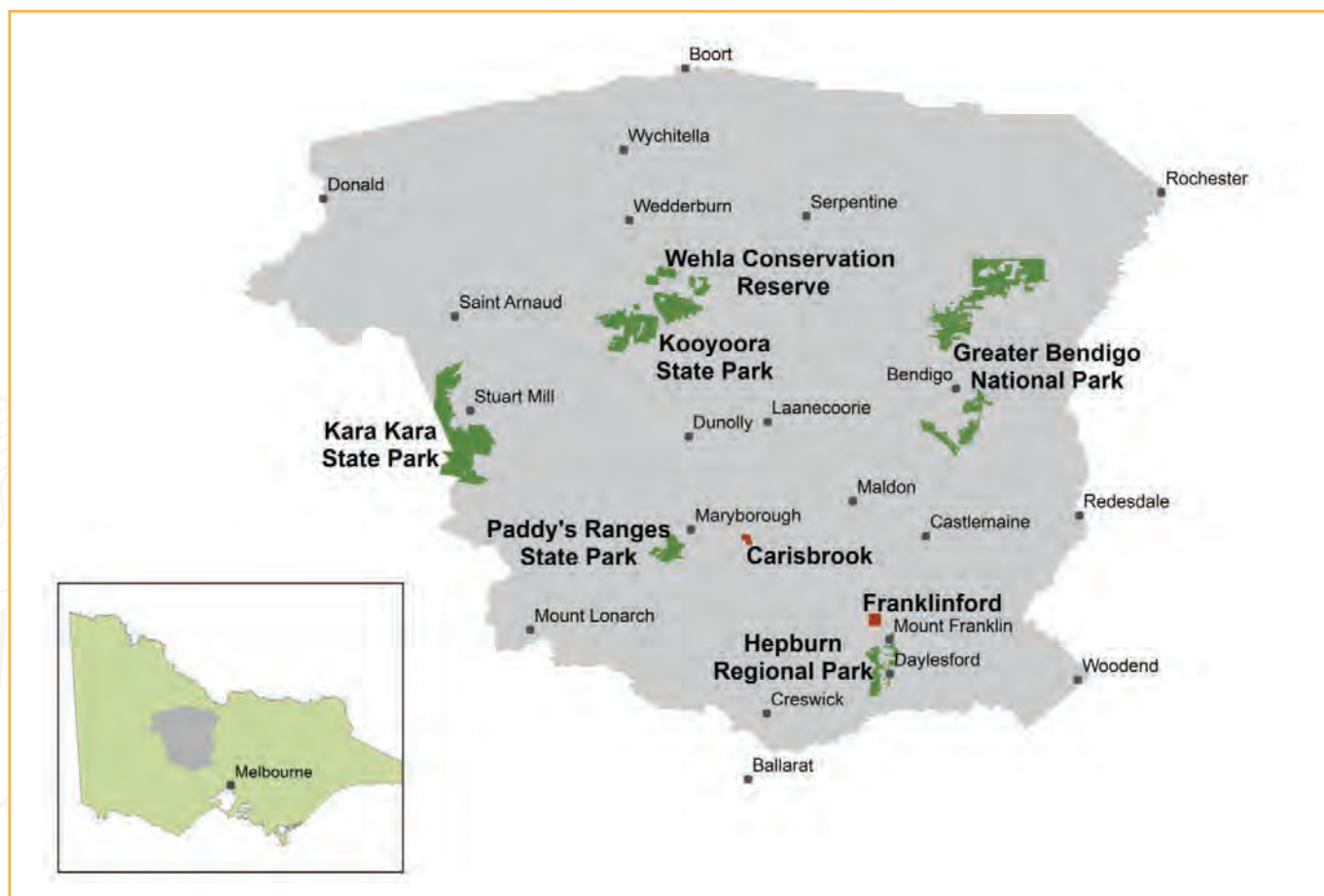
to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca marking the south west boundary. Our territory encompasses the Bendigo and Clunes goldfields and the Loddon and Avoca river watersheds.

Hundreds of years ago, our Country was mostly covered in open forests and woodlands, providing us with the plants and animals that we used for food, medicine, shelter and customary practices. Today, though our Country is vastly

changed, it still holds many important values.

Our Box Ironbark forests do not occur anywhere else. Important tucker and medicine species can still be found across our Country – eels, mussels, crays and fish like Murray Cod and yellow belly are in our rivers. Emu, goanna, possum, kangaroo and wallaby have been sustainably used on this Country for thousands of years and continue to be important to us. We use local plants like lomandra, saltbush, nardoo, cumbuji, wattle, red gum and chocolate lilies.

Our Country is now also valued by other people and cultures. 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 that are practiced today. Local industries, including beekeeping, forestry, agriculture and tourism, depend on the natural resources that our Country provides.







Dja Dja Wurrung Country is a popular place for people to live and work and some towns, including the major regional centre of Bendigo, 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 and mineral sands, renewable energy and nature-based and Indigenous tourism are seen to be providing new economic opportunities.

Eighty-seven per cent of Dja Dja Wurrung Country is privately owned, with sixty-five per cent 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 two freehold parcels granted under our Regional Settlement Agreement, a total of 2.8 per cent of Dja Dja Wurrung Country is owned by Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

The population of the Dja Dja Wurrung region has been estimated at 160,000 of which it is believed that the Indigenous population is approximately 1,300.

Dja Dja Wurrung Country is host to some of the most profoundly altered landscapes in Victoria. A long history of agricultural development, urban settlement and mining has left fragmented ecosystems and led to the loss of many species of plants and animals. Changed 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 animals and plants 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.



## Our Rights and Responsibilities

***In 2013, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation entered into an historic native title settlement with the State of Victoria on behalf of all past, current and future Djaara People. Under the agreements that make up this settlement, we have secured a range of rights that include:***

- 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
- The right to maintain our spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and its resources
- The right to harvest agreed plant and animal species, 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 develop a protocol for assisting 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 Franklinford
- 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 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 the 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.



## Our Aspirations

### Our Vision for Country is to ensure that:

The health and wellbeing of our people is strong, and underpinned by our living culture.

Our lands and waters are in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all 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.

### Principles

The principles below are critically important to Dja Dja Wurrung people as they collectively define our philosophy for how our land and natural resources should be 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 groups.

### 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.

### Partnerships

1. All lands, waters and living resources on our Country form traditional Aboriginal landscapes and are maintained by a range of natural resource managers, including Dja Dja Wurrung people. 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.

### Looking after Country

1. Our Country is managed in a contemporary context, to

generate benefits in circumstances where degradation or destruction can 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 medicinal and edible plants and 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.
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.

### Traditional knowledge

1. We will strive to maintain, control, protect and develop our traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions.

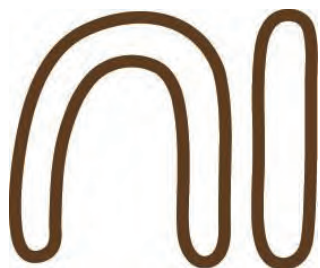
### Economic

1. We will exercise our right to freely pursue Dja Dja Wurrung economic and social development, the benefits of which will be shared equitably amongst Dja Dja Wurrung people, 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

**Every Dja Dja Wurrung 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 of the Clan groups who are descended from our Apical Ancestors. We have Ancestors tracing back thousands of years, and future generations yet to come.

Some of us are living on Country and some are living away. We are all Dja Dja Wurrung. We need to act now to ensure the spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing of our People, both current and future.

### Objectives

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- Be recognised as a sovereign Aboriginal nation and the Traditional Owners of Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- Reduce the major risk factors to our People and ensure there is access to appropriate health services and housing
- Have more Dja Dja Wurrung people working on Country and in stable employment
- Ensure our full range of rights and interests are legally recognised and reflected in the policies of government.

### 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 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.

### Achievements 2014 – 2017

- The Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) has been signed with the State, which recognises Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of their Country.
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) continue to represent the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner group's interests and rights, including:
  - Fulfilling its function as a Registered Aboriginal Party by providing expertise on Aboriginal cultural heritage and ensuring its protection
  - Advocating for the implementation of the RSA across government.
- DDWCAC have established a Community Support Program with a suite of targeted initiatives which aim to provide the opportunity for Dja Dja Wurrung people to increase their economic participation, and financial independence. These include support for:
  - Secondary Education
  - Tertiary Education
  - Micro Enterprise
  - Sorry Business
  - Driver's Licence
  - Elder Celebration
  - Moving Back to Country.

In addition, DDWCAC have been working with other health providers to support community wellbeing initiatives i.e, working with Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative on Wirama Shield and AFL Indigenous Round.

## Actions Going Forward

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

- Establish a mentoring and work experience program for high school aged Dja Dja Wurrung and other Aboriginal children with key government partners within the next two years
- Continue and expand our Community Support Program to provide targeted support to Dja Dja Wurrung people for economic wellbeing
- Partner with other key agencies to develop a social enterprise development initiative for Dja Dja Wurrung business
- Work with the wider community on Country to increase awareness and recognition of Dja Dja Wurrung people and history, such as the Wirama Shield
- Continue to develop our Cultural Awareness program with Local Governments, Government Departments and community organisations and engage experienced Dja Dja Wurrung people to deliver these programs
- Collect information on individual members' ceremony knowledge, skills and employment aspirations to ensure that we have a roster of those wishing to participate in Ceremony and paid employment
- Develop a member-only login system on our website where we will provide information about our programs and opportunities directly to Dja Dja Wurrung People.





## GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

**Dja Dja Wurrung 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 Dja Dja Wurrung Culture guide the way we behave and the decisions we make every day. We pass these on to our young ones through 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 Mindi, Bunjil 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 water, land, animals, spirits and people, calling our Ancestors to 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 use 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 aim to:

- Actively practice our ceremonies and teach our ways to our young ones
- Reclaim, revive and rejuvenate 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 stories, values and customs.

### Challenges

The demands of work and life make it difficult to find the time and means for Dja Dja Wurrung People to regularly practice

culture. Coupled with the past removal of our language and dispersal of our people, and the continued loss of knowledge as elders pass on, the task to revive and protect our culture is a challenging one.

### Achievements

- Over this time, Dja Dja Wurrung People and their families have participated in workshops and meetings to teach and learn how to make artefacts, performance, song or dance, as a way of sharing culture.
- Dja Dja Wurrung have participated in Tanderrum, the coming together of Kulin nation groups for ceremony.
- Language is being revived and used. The Language Sub-Committee of Dja Dja Wurrung Board meets quarterly and provides advice on language and pronunciation. A dictionary is being developed and there are plans to be speaking it and teaching it.
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation are capturing information about Dja Dja Wurrung People's use of Country and its resources, through the Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) Authorisation Orders.
- DDWCAC on behalf of Dja Dja Wurrung People have been engaging with the wider community through regular participation in events in order to promote awareness and appreciation of Dja Dja Wurrung culture, history, values and stories, and as part of advancing reconciliation.
- Research and Intellectual Property protocols are currently being developed by DDWCAC, to guide the collection of cultural knowledge and ensure that research is conducted appropriately on Country.
- We have explored opportunities to start capturing Traditional ecological knowledge, including developing or supporting the development of a number of research proposals.



### Actions Going Forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we wish to undertake the following actions:

- Manage project resource allocation.
- Provide opportunities for Dja Dja Wurrung women, men and families to come together on our Country including holding a Welcome to Country specifically for Dja Dja Wurrung babies and children.
- We will work with the government to reintroduce traditional burning practice into the State's planned burns regime and work to have Djandak contracted to undertake these burns.
- We will continue to keep a roster of Dja Dja Wurrung People to deliver Ceremony, Cultural Awareness and act as Cultural Heritage Field Representatives.
- In the next two years, we will set up a spatial information system that is owned and managed by DDWCAC, to capture and store knowledge about Culture and Country. This is an essential step in enabling us to document and preserve our culture, and to inform our partners of what is important to us in managing Country.
- To progress knowledge capture, we will develop a statement of Dja Dja Wurrung research priorities and explore opportunities to partner with researchers and research institutes to further these priorities.
- We will develop policies and implement procedures for ensuring that research ethics and Intellectual Property rights are respected by anyone collecting Cultural information from Dja Dja Wurrung People.
- In the next year, we want to establish programs of taking people out on Country, so that Dja Dja Wurrung People are getting out on Country and sharing and building knowledge.





## GOAL 3: Cultural Heritage

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

In addition to our customs and practices, our tangible cultural heritage is a core part of our identity and connection to Country. The mountains, rivers and trees that make up cultural landscapes are the foundations of our creation stories.

The sites that lie within these landscapes tell the stories of our history – both good and bad. Scar trees and birthing sites are some of the evidence that remain of the past practices of our people. Massacre and mission sites remind us of more recent influences on our people.

Aboriginal artefacts are scattered across our Country, telling of the rituals and practices of our ancestors. Some of the remains of our ancestors have been removed, and they will not be at rest until they are properly buried on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

### Objectives

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- Strengthen our understanding of what significant sites and artefacts exist on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- Secure the right and means to effectively protect and manage cultural landscapes and sites
- Ensure Dja Dja Wurrung ancestral remains, cultural objects and collections are returned to Country, and protected
- Make use of our cultural heritage to promote healing and reconciliation, teach Djaara people about their Country and laws, and raise cultural awareness among the broader community.

### Challenges

Many of our special places and objects are not secure. Through both accidental and wilful damage, our cultural heritage is gradually being 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, signage and protection of Aboriginal Places is inadequate. On a larger scale, compliance with cultural heritage legislation is not always strong, and cultural heritage can be lost through developments and land management practices. Our objects are collected by landholders and visitors who find them, and do not know or care to return them to us.

### Achievements

- We have secured freehold title to three significant sites – Yapenya (Mt Barker), Carisbrook and Franklinford
- We have been caring for and restoring these sites, including setting up a greenhouse to cultivate native plants for revegetation work at Yapenya
- A cultural heritage management plan is being developed for Lake Boort to manage heritage values of the site from the potential effects of environmental watering
- We have an active group of Dja Dja Wurrung People employed as Cultural Heritage Field representatives.

### Actions Going Forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we wish to:

- Review previous management plans for each of the three cultural properties at Franklinford, Carisbrook and Yapenya (Mt Barker) and update in line with current management practice
- Undertake a feasibility study into introducing commercial activity, such as tourism, to the Aboriginal places
- Ensure that Cultural Heritage Management Plans are put in place at all sites where environmental watering may impact on cultural heritage values.



## GOAL 4: Bushtucker and Medicine

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

Over 200 years ago, our Ancestors were the experts who managed this land. They were the first conservationists who respected the environment and had the right management in place. They knew of our Country's plants and animals, cycles and systems. They understood the role that 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.

We are gardeners of the environment. We care for the land and it provides for us. We use lomandra and matt rush to weave baskets. We hunt wallaby, emu and goanna. We eat the eels, mussels, crayfish and yellow belly from our streams. We gather bardi grubs and duck eggs, nardoo and yam daisies and wattle seeds for food and medicine. We use buloke and 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 aim to:

- Understand what plants and animals now exist on Country, and what condition they are in, so we can better define appropriate management regimes including an appropriate 'cultural take'
- Re-build the capacity of our community to care for Dja Dja Wurrung Country and the knowledge of our community of our Country and our species and ecosystems
- Actively manage our traditional lands and waters to protect the plants and animals that are important to us; and promote the right species in the right places, so they can provide for us in a sustainable way
- Get out on Country to hunt and gather as per our Authorisations Orders
- Work with relevant authorities to ensure our active participation in wildlife management and harvesting
- Ensure traditional ecological based burning regimes and practices are reintroduced across Country and work with land managers to carry out our role in fire 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, with a particular focus on our Aboriginal Title lands
- Have our cultural priorities incorporated into fire and biodiversity management decision-making
- Be accepted as legitimate users of natural resources.





## 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 fire regimes and overfishing are all upsetting the natural balance of our ecosystems. Pests and pathogens are displacing native species and infecting our plants and animals. In some cases, the shift in ecosystem composition is causing an over-abundance of native species like 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 Dja Dja Wurrung People 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 rarely included in the natural resource management decisions that are made on our Country.

Furthermore, a lack of documented information about our Peoples' 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. This will need to change if Country is to be healthy in the long term.

## Achievements

- We have had input into fire policy at a state and regional level and have a role in regional fire governance
- A Dja Dja Wurrung member is employed as a district burn planner and is working to incorporate cultural values into the risk assessment process to reduce threat to our cultural values
- Several of the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Natural Resource Management Team (Djandak) have been trained as general firefighters and participated in planned burns with DELWP, Bush Heritage and the CFA.

## Actions Going Forward

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

- Gain a formalised and meaningful role in ensuring that traditional ecological knowledge is being used to inform future policy, strategy and activities in fire and biodiversity management

- Continue to increase Dja Dja Wurrung involvement in regional governance arrangements for fire and biodiversity management
- Partner in the regional Threatened Species and Communities prioritisation process led by the Victorian Government, in order for strategic partnership opportunities be identified and pursued
- Continue to develop our plant propagation business activities, with the aim of reintroducing culturally important and threatened species into the environment to support population recovery
- Investigate, in collaboration with other land managers and researchers, the feasibility and impacts of reintroducing culturally significant apex predator species such as dingoes back into the landscape, with the view to eventually trialling these reintroductions on Aboriginal Title land as a restoration intervention
- Within the next 12 months, work with DELWP to identify better ways for Dja Dja Wurrung to participate in the development and implementation of fire management plans to ensure that fire operations appropriately consider impacts on Native Title Rights and Cultural Heritage, including clarify and formalise Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples' role in planned burn approval
- Within the next 12 months, have identified and pursued opportunities with DELWP (Grampians and Loddon Mallee regions) for Dja Dja Wurrung People to be involved in delivering on-ground works, participate in fire training, and have opportunities to be mentored in technical specialist roles within the Incident Management Team
- Within the next 12 months, identify opportunities for researching traditional fire management methods that can be implemented on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- Within the next three years, develop and trial cultural burning methodology on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- Improve DDWCAC's GIS capabilities to enable us to manage our own system for capturing traditional ecological knowledge as well as use existing systems effectively to inform our planning and decision-making about cultural harvest
- Work on the system to capture Dja Dja Wurrung members' use of the Natural Resource Authorisation Orders to improve its effectiveness in capturing data on Dja Dja



Wurrung harvest and use. In particular, establish an on-line portal and app where Dja Dja Wurrung members can log in and input information remotely

- Within the next 12 months, have a member of DDWCAC trained on the entry of species data into the Victorian Government's online 'Victorian Biodiversity Atlas' to enable recording of species in the settlement area
- Within the next 12 months, have a member of DDWCAC trained on the use of and input into DELWP's Spatial Temporal Activity Recorder tool
- Conduct feasibility studies on opportunities to participate in wildlife management such as kangaroo monitoring, culling and harvesting
- Within the next two years, have Dja Dja Wurrung People trained in the use of assessment methodologies including Habitat Hectares and Index of Wetland Condition monitoring.





## GOAL 5: Rivers and Waterways

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

Traditional Aboriginal culture revolved around relationships to the land and water; 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 development. Our rivers are the veins of Country, and provide food and medicine, and places to camp, hunt, fish, swim and hold ceremonies. They are places that are central to our creation stories, and many of our cultural heritage sites are associated with waterways – burial sites, birthing sites and middens.

Our waterways are places that we connect with our ancestors and pass traditional knowledge on to our children and grandchildren.

Rivers such as the Loddon, Coliban, Campaspe, Avoca and Avon; Lakes that include Boort, Eppalock and Laanecoorie; swamps and creeks – 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 aim to:

- Ensure all of our waterways are healthy, with the right water in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of the environment, Djaara People and the broader community
- Have a recognised and legitimate role in water governance, with genuine consultation in policy development to take part in decision-making about our waterways
- Secure adequate and equitable water rights that meet our social, cultural, spiritual, economic and environmental needs
- Share our creation stories to teach people how water works in the landscape.

### Challenges

Our rivers, lakes and swamps are sick. A legacy of past and current land management decisions has caused erosion, weed and pest issues, pollution from farm chemicals and mining contaminants throughout our Country. Water diversions and controlled flows mean that many of our rivers are getting water 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. To participate meaningfully in this framework, Dja Dja Wurrung People will need to be adequately resourced to develop the technical expertise and capacity required, and ensure human resources are available to engage with partners.

### Achievements

- Through our membership on the Murray and Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) and the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporation (FVTOC), we have participated in representing the rights of Traditional Owner groups in water policy and governance in Victoria and the Murray Darling Basin
- We have recently received funding to undertake a waterway health project on a Dja Dja Wurrung waterway in partnership with the North Central Catchment Management Authority
- We have negotiated an engagement plan for Dja Dja Wurrung involvement in environmental water planning and delivery with the North Central Catchment Management Authority
- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is currently being undertaken for Lake Boort to manage potential impacts of environmental watering actions.





### Actions Going Forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we wish to:

- Ensure that Dja Dja Wurrung People have a meaningful role in the development of the water policy framework in Victoria and Murry Darling Basin independently and as members of peak Traditional Owner bodies
- Establish a formal role in regional water management by participating in the development and implementation of Regional Water Management Strategies that apply to Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- Ensure DDWCAC receives ongoing resourcing to support wider Dja Dja Wurrung participation in water-related initiatives and develop capacity and technical expertise to fully participate in water policy, management, consultation and research
- In the next 12 months, secure funding to conduct a scoping study to identify the range of opportunities within the current water management framework for Dja Dja Wurrung to own water and influence water use on our Country, and to identify appropriate methodologies for documenting Dja Dja Wurrung water values
- In the next two years, conduct consultation and research using the identified methodology to define what 'Dja Dja Wurrung water' is and to determine Dja Dja Wurrung water needs, so that Dja Dja Wurrung People are able to say where they want water on Country and for what purposes
- Within the next three years, build a business case for cultural flows and other water rights based on the identification of specific Dja Dja Wurrung water needs.





## GOAL 6: Land

### Our upside-down country is healthy again

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 rivers and dug holes in the ground, pulling up large volumes of earth. Since that time, mining has been constant in Dja Dja Wurrung Country. This has left a legacy of soil erosion, salinity and toxicity from contaminants such as arsenic and mercury. The Country around the goldfields is very sick and a significant program of remediation is required. As custodians of all Dja Dja Wurrung land, we feel a deep responsibility to heal this Country so that it can be healthy and functioning once again.

#### Objectives

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- Understand the extent of damage to Dja Dja Wurrung Country caused by mining
- Be involved in the design and implementation of remediation works and restoration initiatives in upside-down Country
- Build our capacity to remediate toxic land
- Have areas of land handed back that are sick and not being healed and be effectively resourced to conduct the required remediation.

#### Challenges

Despite the environmental and social impacts of this legacy, no-one has taken responsibility for healing the areas that have been impacted by the mining. Reversing the damage to this land 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 work on our Country. We will need to develop strong partnerships if we are to overcome these significant challenges.

#### Achievements

- As a result of the LUAA, DDWCAC are now consulted on activities in this area when they occur
- For example, DDWCAC was consulted on a recent trial by Department of Environment Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) of a new model for government to deal with remediation of public land using a site on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- However, little action has happened in this area relative to Dja Dja Wurrung People's aspirations. This is because there is a lack of planning and action in general from government in this area.

#### Actions Going Forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we wish to:

- In the next 12 months and in partnership with Environment Protection Authority and other agencies, participate in the Marong Rd site remediation project to develop DDWCAC capacity to undertake land remediation works
- In the next two years, and through the Marong Rd remediation project, be involved in developing 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
- Develop a strategy for healing our Country that specifically addresses remediation and restoration, in partnership with other land managers
- Actively work with those that have harmed the land to develop and implement land remediation strategies.





*The impacts of mining on Dja Dja Wurrung Country – Boylan, Hepburn Estate*





## GOAL 7: Self-determination

**As our Country's first people, Jaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs**

Our Native Title Settlement Agreement was an important milestone for Dja Dja Wurrung People. The Victorian Government now recognises us as the Traditional Owners of this Country and acknowledges the history of dispersion and dispossession that has affected our people. The agreement allows for continued recognition, through protocols on acknowledgements and Welcomes to Country, and signage on 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 Dja Dja Wurrung, and we now need to build up the structures and processes that will enable us to make the most of these rights.

### Objectives

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- 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 interest of Dja Dja Wurrung People
- Effectively implement the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement
- Be meaningfully involved as a partner in managing Dja Dja Wurrung Country, and take the lead in managing Country where Dja Dja Wurrung People hold freehold and Aboriginal title
- Have an active and engaged community that participates in all aspects of society.

### 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. We remain under-represented in many decision-making forums and our voices as Traditional Owners are often not 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 debates.

### Achievements

- Through the Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State of Victoria, Dja Dja Wurrung People now have Aboriginal Title for six parks
- DDWCAC's membership base has grown to over 280 members
- The Traditional Owner Land Management Board has been established and is working to plan for and implement Joint Management
- There are now three Dja Dja Wurrung Parks Victoria Rangers working on Country
- DDWCAC deliver cultural awareness training for all Parks Victoria staff in the RSA area, and will deliver cultural heritage training to all North Central Catchment Management staff later in the year
- The LUAA means that Dja Dja Wurrung People have procedural rights over what happens on Crown Land.



### Actions Going Forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we wish to:

- 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 participate in other bodies such as Regional Development Victoria and the Game Management Authority

to progress the aspirations of all Dja Dja Wurrung People

- Negotiate MOUs with relevant bodies from local government to land management authorities
- Develop a language revival program for the revival and learning of Dja Dja Wurrung language.

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





## GOAL 8: Traditional Owner Economy

**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 resources. These open up opportunities in the natural resources sector – through use of assets and resources with enterprises such as seed collection, carbon farming, kangaroo culling and apiary, and through the provision of natural resource management services such as revegetation, fire management and pest control.

There is also interest in the tourism sector. Dja Dja Wurrung People are very passionate about culture and see tourism as a pathway to tell our stories and share places of cultural significance, while providing much-needed employment opportunities.

Through Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd (DDWE), we will pursue these opportunities to develop our individual and collective skills, and strengthen our ability to deliver on the aspirations of the Dja Dja Wurrung community without compromising culture or community cohesion.

### Objectives

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- Grow our asset base and use it wisely and sustainably to generate economic benefit for Dja Dja Wurrung People
- Attract and secure the professional expertise required to create and exploit economic development and employment opportunities
- To build a strong natural resource management service industry with a respected brand and a high level of client satisfaction
- Leverage significant human, financial and information resources through the development of strategic partnerships and joint ventures.

### Challenges

Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd, trading as Djandak, is working to develop partnerships and business opportunities for Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal Community, particularly on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

As the company develops, it will face a range of challenges that will need to be navigated. Systemic barriers such as weak commercial rights, unclear policy and legal frameworks, lack of cultural recognition and over allocation of natural resources create difficulties in developing natural resource-based enterprises.

The Natural Resources Management (NRM) industry in central Victoria is already very competitive, making it hard to make a profit as a new producer/provider. Historical inequities mean that capacity and knowledge within the Dja Dja Wurrung community needs further development if enterprises are to be significantly expanded. These challenges are not insurmountable and will be a key focus of our efforts.

### Achievements

- Dja Dja Wurrung people are employed in NRM, both at DDWE and through employment in government including Parks Victoria and DELWP
- Djandak has received grants to conduct NRM works (for example, Community Grants through DELWP Biodiversity)
- Djandak has secured a number of contracts for NRM works (for example, weed management works for VicRoads)
- Djandak and the North Central Catchment Management Authority have secured funding for a two year joint project on waterway health.

### Actions Going Forward

To achieve this goal and address these challenges, we wish to:

- Increase awareness of Community Support Program Small Enterprise grants



- Review the criteria of the Community Support Program Small Enterprise grants to ensure meaningful DDW business support
- Develop Cultural Heritage fee for Service business through due diligence, field work and ceremony
- Secure the ability for Djandak to access government funding as an NRM service delivery agency
- Promote the services offered by Djandak to ensure ongoing business development and raise awareness within agency partners of what Djandak can deliver
- In the next 12 months, start developing projects relating to women's business to incorporate into the Djandak Rangers Works Program
- Work with Parks Victoria to establish a DDW Women's Ranger team
- Seed Dja Dja Wurrung businesses through Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises.





## GOAL 9: Joint Management

**All Crown land on Dja Dja Wurrung Country is Aboriginal Title and we are the sole managers**

Across our Aboriginal Title land, our long-term goal is to ultimately become sole managers of these areas. This means that joint management needs to:

- Provide us with diverse opportunities to be involved in delivering land, water and natural and cultural resource management, at all levels
- Involve real sharing of power and responsibility, which requires trust and support from existing land managers
- Decolonialise existing governance structures and processes, which have historically excluded and marginalised us, and require transformation to be culturally appropriate and reflect true sharing and partnership.

### **Our Aboriginal Title land**

As part of the agreement we have made with the State of Victoria under the Traditional Owner Settlement Agreement, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of Dja Dja Wurrung People have been granted Aboriginal Title over six parks and reserves.

Aboriginal Title is part of recognising our rights as traditional owners to care for our Country and means that we will enter into joint management with existing land managers, Parks Victoria and the Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning.

### **Other areas on our Country**

Across the land and waters of our Country where we do not currently have Aboriginal Title, we will work in partnership with existing land managers to see our vision and aspirations for managing Country realised. This includes:

- Involvement in planning and strategic decision-making about management of land, water and other natural and cultural resources on our Country, with our vision and aspirations for managing Country as set out in this plan used to inform and guide activities in this area
- Involvement in determining and delivering projects to manage land, water and other natural and cultural resources

on our Country that reflect and support our aspirations and interests in managing Country

- A unique role as the providers of cultural and environmental management and support for the development of our business to manage Country and support young Dja Dja Wurrung People to have pathways to employment in caring for Country.

### **Principles of joint management**

#### **Respect for culture**

Agreements on the joint management of our Country should be based on the full respect for our rights as Traditional Owners and be based on recognition of our responsibilities to care for our Country. This means that we have a unique role to play in conserving and protecting our culture through caring for Country.

#### **Shared benefits**

As Traditional Owners, through the DDWCAC, Dja Dja Wurrung People should expect to share fully and equitably in the benefits associated with joint management. 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, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, and our wider community and Elders, are many and varied. Appropriate resourcing and support is required for us to participate in the joint management process.



**This Country Plan directly supports the DDWCAC in advancing the principle object of their 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 Participation Strategies, Schedule 16 of the RSA, 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 is undertaking a range of strategic, business and action planning which will align with the Vision and Goals of the Country Plan. Elements of these 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 2014-2034 Country Plan was developed through a participatory process and was open to all Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners – see **Appendix 1**. It is anticipated that 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.

In contrast, the planning undertaken by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) is more expert-driven and includes significant corporate governance obligations. The DDWCAC is guided by the Country Plan as a foundation document along with the Corporate Plan developed in 2010. The DDWCAC focus continues to be on getting the governance structures and processes right, building human resource capacity and developing business enterprises to ensure its subsidiaries (and itself) are on a sustainable footing. The aspiration in 2014 that DDWCAC will be able to develop a range of community programs that can accelerate delivery of our Country Plan goals has come to fruition.

### **Public policies, plans and programs**

As government policies and plans increasingly reflect and support our Vision and goals, we expect to be more heavily involved in the investment programs that implement them.

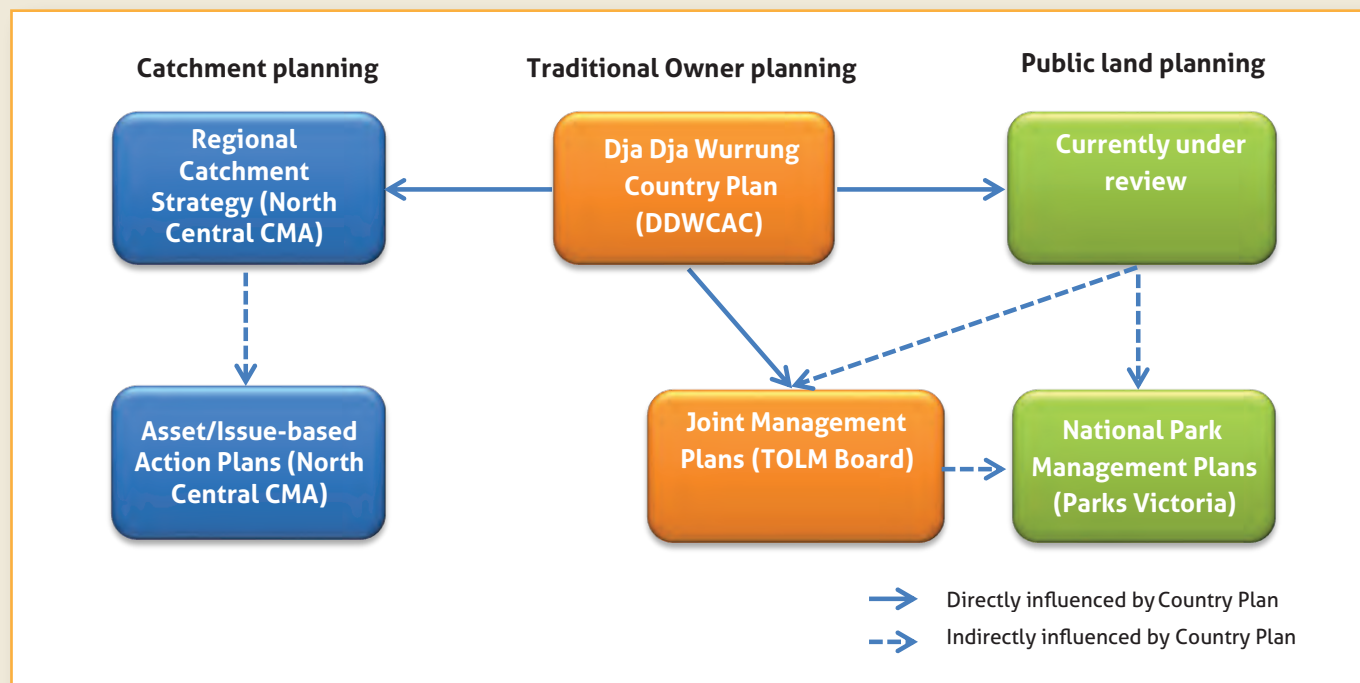
By clearly articulating our community's priorities, the Country Plan provides a strong platform for us to proactively engage with government on policy issues that are important to us, such as commercial use rights and resource rents for our People.

The Plan also supports more equitable representation and participation in the development and implementation of the government's key regional strategic plans, including the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy is relevant .



## Regional Growth Plans and Public Land Management Plans.

**Figure 1** Natural resource management planning frameworks in Victoria



### Partnership development

The Country Plan provides a key mechanism for building partnerships with others who have interests on our Country. In a business context, the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise is identifying specific opportunities for joint venture partnerships across a range of industries and markets. It is also increasing its capacity to deliver State Government contracts and facilitate external employment with private industry. The Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise also anticipates being able to support and partner with other Dja Dja Wurrung 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, implementing other elements of the Dja Dja Wurrung Economic Development Plan (and therefore contributing to the Country Plan Vision and goals) can be adaptable as opportunities for partnerships arise.

\*Photos from Yapenya November 2013.





# Appendix 1: Developing the Plan

## The Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan was developed between 2012-14 through a 2-step 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 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 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 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.

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 DDW people? What condition are they in, what is threatening them and what needs to be done to protect them or improve their condition?

The DDW 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 consulting with Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners (for incorporation into RSA and LUAA)



- 1) Where affected by a proposed measure, the objective of consultations should be to obtain the consent or agreement of the Dja Dja Wurrung community
- 2) In all cases, Government should engage in '[a] good faith effort towards consensual decision-making'. Consultation processes should therefore be framed 'in order to make every effort to build consensus on the part of all concerned'
- 3) Consultation processes should be products of consensus
- 4) The details of a specific consultation process should always take into account the nature of the proposed measure and the scope of its impact on the Dja Dja Wurrung community. A consultation process should itself be the product of consensus. This can help ensure that the process is effective
- 5) Consultations should be in the nature of negotiations
- 6) Governments need to do more than provide information about measures that they have developed on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung community and without their input. Further, consultations should not be limited to a discussion about the minor details of a policy when the broad policy direction has already been set
- 7) Governments need to be willing and flexible enough to accommodate the concerns of the Dja Dja Wurrung community, and work with them in good faith to reach agreement. Governments 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 Dja Dja Wurrung People, and that the affected Dja Dja Wurrung People do not agree to the measure
- 8) Consultations need to begin early and should, where necessary, be ongoing
- 9) Dja Dja Wurrung People affected by a law, policy or development process should be able to meaningfully participate in all stages of its design, implementation and evaluation
- 10) The Dja Dja Wurrung community must have access to financial, technical and other assistance
- 11) The capacity of the Dja Dja Wurrung community to engage in consultative processes can be hindered by their lack of resources. Even the most well-intentioned consultation procedure will fail if Dja Dja Wurrung People are not resourced to participate effectively. Without adequate resources to attend meetings, take proposals

back to their communities or access appropriate expert advice, the Dja Dja Wurrung community cannot possibly be expected to consent to or comment on any proposal in a fully informed manner

- 12) The Dja Dja Wurrung community must not be pressured into making a decision
- 13) The Dja Dja Wurrung community should be able to participate freely in consultation processes. Governments should not use coercion or manipulation to gain consent. In addition, the Dja Dja Wurrung community should not be pressured into decisions through the imposition of limited timeframes
- 14) Adequate timeframes should be built into the consultation process
- 15) Consultation timeframes need to allow the Dja Dja Wurrung community time to engage in their decision-making processes and cultural protocols. The Dja Dja Wurrung community need to be given adequate time to consider the impact that a proposed 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
- 16) Consultations should be coordinated across government departments
- 17) Governments should adopt a 'whole of government' approach to law and policy reform, pursuant to which consultation processes are coordinated across all relevant departments and agencies. This will assist to ease the burden upon the Dja Dja Wurrung community of responding to multiple discussion papers and reform proposals
- 18) Consultations need to reach the affected communities
- 19) Government consultation processes need to directly reach People 'on the ground'. Given the extreme resource constraints faced by many Dja Dja Wurrung People and their representative organisations, governments cannot simply expect communities to come to them
- 20) Governments need to be prepared to engage with the Dja Dja Wurrung community in the location that is most convenient for, and is chosen by, the community that will be affected by a proposed measure
- 21) Consultations need to respect representative structures and decision-making processes
- 22) Governments need to ensure that consultations follow appropriate community protocols, including representative and decision-making mechanisms. The best way to ensure this is for governments to engage with communities and their representatives at the earliest stages of law and policy processes, and to develop consultation processes in full partnership with them
- 23) Governments must provide all relevant information, and do so in an accessible way
- 24) To ensure that Dja Dja Wurrung People are able to exercise their rights to participate in decision-making in a fully informed way, governments must provide full and accurate information about the proposed measure and its potential impact. This information needs to be clear, accessible and easy to understand. Information should be provided in a plain-English format, and, where necessary, in language.











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