

MEDIA STATEMENT

6 August 2021

Statement by Rodney Carter, DJAARA CEO, regarding the Dja Dja Wurrung birthing tree fire.

Last night, a 700-year-old Dja Dja Wurrung birthing tree was set on fire. The tree situated off a remote road north of Talbot has been confirmed by Victoria Police as being “set alight by unknown persons about 6pm” on Thursday.

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, trading as DJAARA, have been a part of the recovery operation to save the tree since reports of the fire began last night.

The birthing tree, a culturally significant site to Dja Dja Wurrung people, especially Dja Dja Wurrung women. It is a place that has delivered generations of Dja Dja Wurrung people to Djandak (Country). It is a location that holds cultural practices of ceremony, song, and stories that tie Dja Dja Wurrung people to this land, our culture, and our history.

We are saddened by the attempts made to damage such a significant tree to Dja Dja Wurrung people and our community. The harm to this tree, our malamiya (cultural heritage), is extremely disappointing.

At this time our thoughts remain with our Elders, our people and our community who may feel hurt by this matter and encourage people to seek help if needed.

DJAARA and Dja Dja Wurrung people are determined to do our best to ensure the survival of this old tree that holds so much history and who has witnessed so much. Currently, DJAARA Cultural Heritage Officers and an arborist are assessing the damage but strive to save the tree from further injury.

We say dumarr (thank you) to the Fagan family, Talbot community, CFA, DELWP, Central Goldfields Shire and Victoria Police for their diligent and prompt actions in this matter.

This afternoon, I will visit the site, assess the damage, and pay my respect to the 700-year-old tree. We will continue to fight to save the tree as Dja Dja Wurrung history and culture cannot and will not be erased by the actions of others.

End Statement

For interviews, contact: DJAARA Communications Relationship Manager
Email: communications@djadjawurrung.com.au **Mobile:** 0481 831 514