

Acknowledgement of Country

The people belonging to the Djandak, meaning Country, that we are on, through bloodline and kinship, are known as the “Djaara” or people of the area.

Over time, many Djaara have come to identify as “Dja Dja Wurrung” the collective language group. We recognise that the Dja Dja Wurrung People have a special relationship with their Djandak.

I would like to acknowledge and extend my appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are standing on today.

We recognise that the arrival of Europeans in Victoria caused a rupture in the spiritual, environmental, political and economic order of Dja Dja Wurrung People. Unrecorded numbers of Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors had their lives taken in their fight for Djandak and Martinga Kulinga Murrup (Ancestral Spirits). Other Dja Dja Wurrung were forced from their traditional Country. Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors struggled to maintain their way of life.

Today, we pay our respects to leaders and Elder’s past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

In a constructive step towards reconciliation, the State of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung People came together in good faith to reach a Recognition and Settlement Agreement in 2013 and to recognise the Traditional Owner rights under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010, as a means of settlement of the Dja Dja Wurrung native title claims.

It is a means by which Dja Dja Wurrung culture and traditional practices and the unique relationship of Djandak is recognised, strengthened, protected and promoted, for the benefit of all Victorians, now and into the future.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.