



DJAARA Right of Reply

There has always been push-back when Traditional Owners exercise their rights to Country and Culture but, after so many generations of this experience, it should no longer be such a point of conflict. Our collective Dja Dja Wurrung voices should be heard in the commentary and reporting on our work to return the Wombat State Forest to health. Instead, it seems that our voice is diminished and those of individuals and naysayers are dialled up to 11.

We are self-determining

As in any community, there are those who will be active members and those who will not. Some people are comfortable embracing the opportunity to work together to achieve common goals whilst others prefer to take their own path. However, it is only through active involvement at a decision-making level, accepting the associated responsibilities of Directorship, that members can be leaders. It is only in this way that they can affect real impact for the community's shared benefit.

To suggest that a collective organisation with respected governance processes has the capacity to perpetrate cultural genocide on its own represented members is as distressing as it is wrong.

We are independent

To say that Corporations 'can also operate as a state instrument' is to say that government contract or grant recipients, like Beyond Blue or your local football and netball club, are being manipulated to become a voice of the state.

We are the voice of Country

Forest Gardening is a combination of familiar, sensible terms. Gardens invoke emotion, exhibit beauty, exist dynamically and require humans' enduring interaction, adaptation and care.

To Dja Dja Wurrung people, Country is our garden and we are gardeners of the environment. Forest Gardening is our dialogue with Country.

We believe it is essential that the potential for devastating fire damage be significantly decreased.

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