

# MEDIA STATEMENT



9 June 2022

## We are Dja Dja Wurrung and we care for Country



*"In healing Country, we practice culture and we heal community. We are modern people. Living in a modern world. We practice our culture despite the many constraints imposed upon us and, at times, a sensible and efficient approach requires the use of modern equipment. Whilst audio recording and mixing of our music is accepted and mass reproduction of our art is commonplace, when we must make use of modern tools and scale in our forests, it is not as well understood.*

*We are strong enough in our culture to use the tools that, in our modern world, are appropriate. We are strong enough in our corporation to employ those whose help we need to heal Country. And, we are strong enough on Country to have our responsibility for Country acknowledged by landowners and managers."*

Rodney Carter, Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO

The inherited responsibility to heal Country is felt as strongly by Traditional Owners today as it has been for tens of thousands of years. As it always has been, safety is a priority on Country. In our ceremonies, we invite you to walk with safety on Country. It is the responsibility of Dja Dja Wurrung People to ensure this is possible.

As a Traditional Owner corporation, representative and inclusive of all Dja Dja Wurrung People, it is our right to self-determine and it is our responsibility to use that self-determination to heal Country.

It was essential that windthrown timber was cleared and safety restored for all those that live on Country. From apex predators through to lichen, Country cannot heal until the habitat and safety of all who traverse and live on Country is considered. That is our way and that is what we call Forest Gardening.

As with all work to be undertaken by the corporation, we look for those people with experience and expertise, coupled with respect for our responsibility to take care of Country. The provision of this, on such a scale, was limited and DJAARA was pleased to appoint VicForests to undertake making Country safe. We continue to protect Country through this process by embedding both Dja Dja Wurrung People and the principles of Forest Gardening within the VicForests team undertaking the work to make Country safe.

*"VicForests is proud to support the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Land Owners to restore their Country to health and self-determination in action."*

Monique Dawson, VicForests CEO

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