



Friday 16 June 2023

DIGGING STICK CEREMONY FOR NEW DJA DJA WURRUNG CENTRE

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA) held a traditional **garni** (digging stick) ceremony today to mark the start of construction of the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre on Hattam Street, Golden Square.

Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO Rodney Carter and DDWCAC Board Chair Trent Nelson were joined by Dja Dja Wurrung Elders, the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams and Deputy Premier, Member for Bendigo East Jacinta to celebrate the milestone.

“This year, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Recognition and Settlement Agreement. Today is a critical moment in our Dja Dja Wurrung history – the beginning of construction on our new corporate home,” Mr Carter said.

“It will be a place for us to work together to create a future for Central Victorians that would make all of our Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors proud.”

The Corporate and Community Centre, a long-standing dream of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA), will revitalise the site of the former Golden Square High School, which has lain bare since the school was demolished in 2009.

The centre will be the permanent base for the Dja Dja Wurrung Group’s corporate and business operations.

“Our corporate home will help us to realise economic opportunities and become self-sustaining,” Mr Carter said.

“It will honour the survival of the Dja Dja Wurrung People. Here, we will celebrate and share our culture, heal our people and improve community wellbeing.”

The centre will house a growing collection of cultural heritage artefacts, DJAARA’s emerging agriculture business, and the expansion of cultural and natural resource management services.

It will also be a venue for arts and cultural events, and a multi-purpose space that can be used by other businesses and the wider public.

Features will include a general-purpose laboratory, spaces for learning and

interaction, a theatrette, meeting areas, yarning and ceremonial spaces, and areas for reflection.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre will be built on land that the Victorian Government handed back to Dja Dja Wurrung People in February 2022. The government has also provided \$11.288 million to develop and construct the centre.

DJAARA is leading the project in partnership with the State Government, City of Greater Bendigo and The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

ENDS –

For more information, please contact:

Nicola Dunnicliff-Wells | Communications Officer |

| M: 0427 701 908 | E: communications@djadjawurrung.com.au