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Djaara Newsletter

Wurreka | Yarns

MAY 2023



LEARNING & SHARING ON COUNTRY

DJAARA to develop sustainable timber business

DJAARA has received a \$1.44 million federal government wood processing innovation grant to establish DJAARA Timbers, a Dja Dja Wurrung sustainable timber business.

The grant will help us move closer to our goal of self-determination by establishing a stronger and sustainable economic base, while pursuing our vision for healthy Country.



Mark Costello, Federal Member for Bendigo Lisa Chesters MP, Forest Gardening Project Manager
Oli Moraes

Under Dja Dja Wurrung Lore, we must continue to heal Country through active management of the forest while honouring the natural resources taken from Country.

DJAARA is exploring specialty timber markets such as musical instruments, high end architectural timbers and cultural timbers for Dja Dja Wurrung and the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the region, as well as local sustainable firewood that has low carbon miles and gets Djaara Rangers back on Country.



We will partner with our enterprise arm DJANDAK and local businesses to develop and test the DJAARA Timbers brand and products over the next 3-5 years.

The long-term vision is a sustainable DJAARA Enterprise that operates for the long term to heal Country and heal Dja Dja Wurrung People through forest-based industries.

[Read more](#)

Djaara women in Japan for knowledge exchange tour



Hiking to learn about the history of the temples and old growth trees in the mountains of Shinshiro.

Djaara women Sharlee Dunolly-Lee and Jacinta Douglas recently travelled to Japan to take part in a knowledge exchange tour organised by Global Landcare. They were joined by leaders in forestry and Landcare Rob Youl, Molly Marshall, Rowan Reid, Andrew Stewart, and Kazuki Kagohashi.

Over the two-week period the group travelled around central Honshu, meeting with a range of foresters, community groups, farmers and government officials, learning about and exchanging views on forest and landscape management.

Jacinta said that despite both land and cultural differences, it was incredible to establish connections with people based on our shared visions – to actively manage and care for lands, to create places in forests for people to enjoy, and connect land and community.

“I hope to continue thinking about how to better connect people on the basis of values and opportunities, to inspire people to reconnect with tending to lands.”



Sharlee and Jacinta with Miyabi and Molly Marshall in Shinshiro. Miyabi blends her own SpiceBush tea and has her own company. Together we discussed the significance of bush tukka and learnt about forest farming and local flora and fauna.



Left: Jacinta and Sharlee in the snow for the first time. They learnt about native Spicebush tea and meet with the Founders of the Gokayama Forestry College.

Sharlee said it had been a tremendous privilege to meet passionate organic tea growers, foresters, and knowledge holders and exchange information about bush tukka, sustainable land practices and youth entrepreneurship.

“There is a great opportunity to learn from the sustainable uses of Indigenous and deciduous trees,” Sharlee said.

“From harvesting sap water (aka the best maple syrup I’ve ever had) to shiitake mushrooms and other plants for incense and medicine use, there is an abundance of opportunity that not only benefits nature, but also communities and individual wellbeing.

“There are many opportunities to increase the connection that youth have to nature through such projects, for example, involving elementary school children in planting and immersion excursions.



Suzuki Sencha tea tasting at organic tea farm in Shinshiro City, Aichi Prefecture.

“As experienced in Japan, increasing youth connection to nature at a regional level will not only ensure communities are able to passionately continue to care for the land - but also restore balance in the complex and interconnected relationship between humans and nature,” Sharlee said.

Sharlee and Jacinta are very grateful to Global Landcare for the opportunity, and hope that their experiences encourage other Dja Dja Wurrung youth to pursue their passions and see continued Traditional Owner involvement in future global connections.

Djandak Wi - celebrating the official season launch



DJAARA's official Djandak Wi launch was a day to celebrate, learn about and share an important Cultural practice.

The private event for DJAARA Members and staff was held at our property Yapenya, in an area of special spiritual and Cultural significance on Djandak.

Yarning about the journey of bringing Cultural fire back to Djandak, DJAARA Board Chairperson Trent Nelson reflected on how far we've come since the discussions about re-establishing cultural fire began in 2015.

"We've got vehicles, equipment and we've got a deadly fire crew. We're becoming professional but we're also doing Djandak Wi on our Country and we'll continue to do that and get better and better at it, and we'll bring more people along with us," Mr Nelson said.



Left: Ceremony and yarning before the Djandak Wi. Right: Djandak Wi helps to control weeds and promote healthy vegetation.

Dja Dja Wurrung Cultural fire practitioner and Wartaka Member Andrew Saunders said that to come here and continue cultural practices means a lot to our mob.

"Today we had all our Djaara people on Djandak (Country), burning back to Djandak – stuff we weren't allowed to practice for a while and now we still continue what we used to do,"

we had kids putting in time. That's how we're supposed to do it – having our younger generation there learning out on site with their mob.

“It's not a scary thing. It's a very successful tool if it's used in the right way. It's healing,” Andrew said.



Manager Forestry & Fire Delivery Ashley Ryan guiding community members to put fire on Country. Andrew Saunders far left; Uncle Graham Atkinson and Trent Nelson, right.

Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board Chair Uncle Graham Atkinson congratulated DJAARA for organising the day and paid tribute to the Djandak Wi fire crew.

“They are a young group and I would like to encourage our younger membership to come out on Country and also make contact with our traditional burning team because they have so much knowledge that they are willing to pass on,” Uncle Graham said.

“A really important role for the Corporation [DJAARA] is encouraging our Dja Dja Wurrung Members and friends to connect with nature because nature has so much to offer our community. But you can only do that coming out on Country like today,” Uncle Graham said.

Djandak Wi means ‘Country fire’ in Dja Dja Wurrung language. It remains an important practice for Dja Dja Wurrung People today.

A Djandak Wi is a cooler, slower burn: it is less intense than, for example, a fuel management burn.

Using the principle of ‘right fire, right time, right place’, Djandak Wi promotes healthy Country. The practice also holds significant spiritual, social and ceremonial importance for Dja Dja Wurrung People.

Voice to Parliament - Dja!



The DJAARA Board has recommended that DJAARA publicly support the Voice to Parliament in the leadup to the national referendum.

A Voice to Parliament would not detract from or interfere with the rights of Dja Dja Wurrung People under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) with the State of Victoria.

DJAARA is working with Federal Member for Bendigo Lisa Chesters MP to support the Yes campaign.

[Learn more about the Voice & the Yes campaign](#)

Celebrating Easter, DJAARA-style



The hunt is on! Hundreds of eggs were discovered by the young (and young at heart...)

have a yarn, and proudly lead in the Bendigo Easter Parade.

Over 100 Members caught up at the Djaara Family Day on Easter Saturday where kids enjoyed deadly activities including facepainting, a climbing wall, jewellery making workshop, jumping castle, native animals - and a massive Easter egg hunt.

The day was held at the Bendigo Botanic Gardens' Garden for the Future, and organised by DJAARA Member Events team.

The Wednesday after Easter saw Members and staff head to the races in Charlton for the DJAARA Cup, an annual event at the Charlton Harness Racing Club, sponsored by DJAARA.





The Djaara Family Day was a chance to relax and reconnect.





DJAARA proudly led the Bendigo Easter Parade

The Wednesday after Easter saw Members and staff head to the races in Charlton for the DJAARA Cup, an annual event at the Charlton Harness Racing Club, sponsored by DJAARA.





Top: DJAARA Members and staff enjoy a day at the Charlton Harness Racing Club for the DJAARA Cup. Bottom left: The DJAARA Cup. Bottom right: DJAARA Cup winner Wuradjuri woman Amelia Wallace, with mum Jess Reid and Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO Rodney Carter.

Malamiya Mang Arts Festival review

Dumawal was delighted to receive the following letter from British woman Suzie Arnold who visited the Malamiya Mang Arts Festival last month.

Blown away. That's how I feel having spent time viewing the art of the Dja Dja Wurrung people and walking with them on their tour of Bendigo city.

As a British woman visiting Australia, I can honestly say that the Malamiya Mang Arts Festival has been possibly THE best experience of my two-month tour of Australia which has taken me from Darwin to Adelaide (on the Ghan train) to the Sunshine Coast and Tasmania.

Why should a smallish arts festival and a 90-minute tour have such a powerful effect? The art speaks for itself. Frequently using vibrant palettes and superb craftsmanship, the artists invite us to witness their deep connectedness to nature and to their kin. These people are establishing their well-deserved place within the art world, some of them finding their voice as newcomers in this space.



Kulaba Puthu Karomarna (Orchid time) by Timani Nicholls-Moore.

On the walking tour, artist and educator Racquel Kerr translated the language of her people into English for us. Her natural warmth and friendliness makes her a great communicator.

Another guide, Kyrun, took time to explain about things I was completely unfamiliar with, such as the function and significance of the scar trees at the entrance to the Ulumbarra Theatre. I learned about the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement and what that means for the Dja Dja Wurrung people.

Perhaps best of all was learning about the new Galkangu (GovHub) building. The willingness of DJAARA and the City of Greater Bendigo to collaborate was one of the most positive things I have learned during my travels in Australia.

Suzie Arnold, Wimbledon



Left: Artist Racquel Kerr and her representation of Bunjil on the new Bendigo Law Courts building.
Right: artist's impression of Galkangu, the Bendigo GovHub building with facade designed by Dja Dja Wurrung artist Natasha Carter.

~~SHARING OUR Dja Dja Wurrung Language~~

*Our language connects us to water, land, animals, and People.
It calls us to ceremony and strengthens our identity.*

We are making sure our language, Dja Dja Wurrung language, is increasingly spoken; we share it in song and ensure it is placed lovingly back to Djandak, where it belongs, by us. Those that live and visit here in Central Victoria more and more want to support Dja Dja Wurrung reclamation of our rights and support our continued presence here. We hope that those who travel across, visit and reside on Djandak recognise our unique language and distinct culture.

Dhelkunya Dja | Healing earth, healing Country

Dja | Yes

Djandak | Country, Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Djandak Wi | Country fire

Malamiya Mang | Long time ago, now (then and now)

Let us know what you think!

Do you like this newsletter?

What would you like to see more of?

We'd love to hear your feedback.

Get in touch



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9:00am - 5:00pm

Our mailing address is:

PO BOX 1026 Bendigo VIC 3552

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