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VOTE YES! + DJAARA NEWS

Aboriginal People should be aware that this newsletter contains images and names of People who have passed away.

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DJAARA hosts Minister Linda Burney in Bendigo



Minister Linda Burney with DJAARA Board Members, Dja Dja Wurrung Group leaders, BDAC staff and Member for Bendigo Lisa Chesters

DJAARA and Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC) welcomed Minister for Indigenous Australians Linda Burney to Bendigo in a private gathering at Wanyarra Dum (Frog Ponds) on 27 September, ahead of the Minister's Show of Support event.

Thanking the Minister for her work promoting the Voice to Parliament, DJAARA Board Members Trent Nelson and Kerri Douglas acknowledged her role in their own decisions to

Drawing parallels with the proposed Voice to Parliament, Trent highlighted the benefits that have flowed to Dja Dja Wurrung People and the wider community through DJAARA's philosophy of **ngaldurrong yana** (walking together) and working together with government.



Left: Our CEO Rodney Carter welcomed Minister Burney and shared some of DJAARA's work.
Right: Minister Burney addresses the media at the Show of Support event.

Linda Burney Show of Support for Yes

Yes supporters turned out in force to hear Linda Burney speak at the Show of Support in Rosalind Park. Passionately putting the case for voting yes, the Minister did not disappoint.

"There aren't many opportunities when we all get to put our shoulder to the anvil of history and give it a shove. And that's what we've got in front of us – an amazing opportunity." Minister Burney said.

Noting that the Dja Dja Wurrung People have been in central Victoria for tens of thousands of generations, Minister Burney said isn't about time that we as a nation recognised that in our constitution.

"The choice is clear," Ms Burney said. "No has no solution. Yes has solutions. No means more of the same old policy failures. Yes means better outcomes. No means more arguments. Yes means a better future for all Australians.

"It is absolutely about listening, it's about better outcomes, it's about moving this country forwards.

"The SA Premier put it really clearly. He said our great grandparents said yes to migration. Our parents said yes to land rights, and surely we can say yes to an advisory committee in 2023.



“This request has not come from politicians. It has come from First Nations People.

“One of the issues that has been raised by people of goodwill is this: people come to me and say I am confused. There are some Aboriginal People saying yes and some Aboriginal People saying no.

“And my answer to is that it is not about what other people are saying. It is what is in your hearts. It is what you believe is the right thing for this country. It is what you know will move the dial.

“And yes, the pressure is on. Yes, People are saying this has been a difficult discussion. Change is hard. Change is never easy.

“But this referendum is about fixing the approach, fixing the mess that we have in Aboriginal affairs.

“When you go into that ballot box, it’s about what you think and feel. It’s about your conscience and what’s in your heart. And it’s my great belief that we as a country will vote yes. Yes for a better future for all Australians.

“Let’s get this done together and do this country proud.



Aunty Di Travis - campaigning in 1967 and 2023

Dja Dja Wurrung Elder Aunty Di Travis describes herself as a private person, generally. But, in the lead up to the referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, she has been out and about telling her story.

"I could see the conversations, negative and positive, around the yes and no votes and I thought I've got to put myself out there to try and help," Aunty Di said.



Aunty Di with Minister Linda Burney in Bendigo

People in the Constitution, Aunty Di went to Canberra with her Grandfather Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls.

In 2019, she was awarded a medal of the Order of Australia for service to the Indigenous community, particularly to the 1967 referendum campaign.

"It was a wonderful journey, and I am very grateful. I knew it was important at the time, even though I was young – I was 19 years old," she said.

"1967 was a different time. Now we have so much social media – and the media as well. It's been bringing out some of the worst in people. Issues and conversations that are not true."



Left: Aunty Di has fond memories of the 1967 referendum. Right: Diana Murray (Aunty Di, far right) with other Yes campaigners (Esmal Jackomos, Alick Jackomos, Bert Groves, Joyce (Mercy) Clause and Laurie Moffatt) outside Parliament House in 1967.

Her hope is that a Voice to Parliament would ensure that issues important to Aboriginal communities are prioritised – issues including health, housing, incarceration, youth, children, the Stolen Generation, and domestic violence.

"These issues have always been dealt with very slowly – or not at – by governments. Closing the Gap has basically failed. With the Voice to Parliament, hopefully the issues will be prioritised and acted upon - fast tracked.

"I hope the outcome of the referendum is yes but, if it's no, I still feel we'd have won in the sense that there are many good people in the world: all the good people out there that voted yes, that voted with their conscience and their heart and all the campaigners for yes, who have done a wonderful job, putting themselves out there as volunteers," Aunty Di said.

Read more about Aunty Di in [this Guardian article](#).

If you're not sure, learn more

Among all the noise and misinformation, we've found some informed and impassioned perspectives on the Voice to Parliament from people whose wisdom is born out of decades of experience. It's worth making time for these.



Passionate, poetic and powerful, Noel Pearson's address to the National Press Club began and ended with love.

"It is the love of our country that joins us all as Australians... We need to recognise our mutually shared love for the land," Mr Pearson said.

It was about listening: "When we listen to each other, outcomes improve," he said.

"I've learned the hard way — over a lifetime of community work, day after day, year after year, decade after decade, that listening makes it possible.

"I have observed both the fundamental power of listening and the devastating consequences of wilful deafness.

"If we vote Yes, we're voting Yes to orientate the relationship between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians down a safe and responsible middle path.

"Voting No is not a neutral choice. Voting No is an active choice to take us nowhere.

"Voting No leaves us suspended in the neverland that exists when two peoples love the same homeland, but have not yet learned to love each other.

"We can do this for the love of our country. The love of Australia. My land. Your land. Our land."



Jill Gallagher, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

"80% of all Aboriginal People want the Voice

"80% of all health workers want the Voice - because they believe it will improve health outcomes.

"I hope 80% of Australians support the Voice and will vote Yes."



In this Four Corners, the ABC's Voice Correspondent, Dan Bouchier, explores what self-determination looks like in different parts of the country.

Dan finds communities ready and willing to vote Yes to the Voice, and others who are concerned it will divide the country.

Did you know?

When the Australian Constitution was written in the 1890s, social Darwinism was at its height.

Edmund Barton, who would become Australia's first Prime Minister, insisted that the Constitution include a race clause to make special laws for certain races "to control inferior peoples and coloured peoples".

Rev Tim Costello, in Bendigo for a public discussion with our CEO Rodney Carter in September, explained that the Australian Constitution is the only constitution that contains a race clause - and why a Voice is needed for Indigenous Peoples.

ring on the ladder of humanity – barely on it,” Mr Costello explained. “That’s why they’re not even mentioned in our Constitution.

“The race power hasn’t applied to Irish Australians like me. It’s hasn’t, for the last 50 years, been applied to the Chinese.

“In the Northern Territory Intervention, the military wasn’t looking at white men who might be risks to their children – only blacks, suspending the racial discrimination act. The race power has been used negatively only on one group: Indigenous.

“The race power is in the Constitution. All the Voice asks is: since the laws are only ever made to affect us, can we have a voice.

“Imagine this. Say, when the Constitution was about to be voted on, a delegation of Indigenous people went to Edmund Barton and they said: ‘You’re about to vote on the Constitution. We’re not in it. The massacres have been going on, we’ve lost our lands, we’ve lost our culture, we’re losing language. We want a settlement in this new constitution.’

“And Imagine Edmund Barton said, ‘Alright, alright, what do you want?’

And imagine if they said, Well, we want to be just recognised as the First Peoples in the Constitution and we’d like a voice on those laws you’re going to make that are going to affect us.’

“I reckon Barton would have said that’s a good deal! It is so little,” Mr Costello said.



Watch the full [discussion with Rodney Carter and Rev. Tim Costello](#).

The discussion was hosted by Mayor Andrea Metcalf and recorded by St Paul's Anglican Cathedral Bendigo on 26 September.

(Event starts 5 minutes into the recording; discussion starts around 14 minutes).

Watch the discussion with Rodney Carter and Tim Costello

Stone tool making with Caleb Dunolly-Lee

Djaara man Caleb Dunolly-Lee has always had an interest in Malamiya (Cultural Heritage). But since he's been part of DJAARA's Malamiya (Cultural Heritage) team, he has been taking it to a new level, learning more about stone tool making.

Caleb shared his knowledge at a recent DJAARA staff day, demonstrating minerals from Djandak and further afield, as well as different sorts of stone tools and tool-making techniques.

He invited staff to try their hand at knapping. This ancient technique involves hitting an anvil stone against a rock, such as quartz, to produce flakes with sharp edges, which can be used for cutting or scraping, or further worked to produce spear tips.



Caleb helps staff members hone their knapping technique.

While beginners knapped quartz, Caleb demonstrated knapping tachylite – a mineral prized for its sharpness.

According to Caleb, flakes of tachylite can cut through leather gloves. “I started working with quartz and moved too quickly to knapping tachylite,” Caleb said. “A rookie mistake - I didn’t realise how sharp it was!”

Dja Dja Wurrung People traded tachylite from quarries found near Trentham and Malmsbury.

Caleb also shared stone tool artefacts that have been found on Dja Dja Wurrung Country, including axe heads, spear tips and grinding stones.

His advice to anyone who finds possible Cultural Heritage artifacts to leave it in place, take a photograph, record the geolocation and contact DJAARA immediately. The only reason to move artifacts from their location would be if they are in imminent danger (e.g. an area is being graded for a road). In this case, call DJAARA if possible, for advice on how to remove the artifact.

YAPENYA: Celebrating 10 years of our RSA!



**YAPENYA (to dance, to sing, ceremony)
10-18 November**

This November, we celebrate 10 years since the signing of our Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) with the State of Victoria.

The RSA has been an important stepping stone in Dja Dja Wurrung self-determination. We're enormously proud of all that has been achieved since signing this milestone Agreement.

We celebrate these deadly achievements for our Ancestors, our Elders, and our future generations.

Public events during YAPENYA will include an art exhibition and a night market.

Listen out - more information coming soon!

Dja Dja Wurrung exhibition wins award

Congratulations to Dja Dja Wurrung Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Daylesford and District Historical Society, who have won the 2023 First Nations Project of the Year Award for their exhibition Coranderrk Portraits, which showed earlier this year.

The exhibition featured portraits of Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors from circa 1866 and a narrated film by Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Professor Barry Golding, taking visitors on a truth-seeking journey across significant sites.



'We're getting our voice back' is a narrated short film, with Djaara Elder Uncle Rick Nelson and Professor Barry Golding AM. Produced by Daylesford Museum in partnership with Djaara Elder,

The exhibition offered a rare opportunity to reflect on the impact of colonisation and forced removal on the Dja Dja Wurrung people and their communities.

The judges noted that this project showcased impactful local collaboration and dialogue led by Elders and First Peoples, bridging cultural divides, decolonising spaces, and reconnecting Djaara Ancestors with their community through powerful ancestral portraits. Involving young children in interpreting the artwork added an inter-generational dimension to this small-scale initiative with a strong community spirit.

[Learn more about the exhibition](#)

SHARING 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.

Djandak | Country, Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Djaara | People, Dja Dja Wurrung People

Ngaldurrong yana | walk together

Yapenya | to dance, to sing, ceremony

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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