

Friday, 22 November 2024

DJAARA CENTRE OPENS FOR COMMUNITY, CULTURE & COUNTRY

DJAARA celebrated the opening of its new corporate and community centre today, realising a long-held goal to have a Dja Dja Wurrung hub for the wellbeing of People and Country.

Named Larnangurrak, meaning 'our place' in Dja Dja Wurrung language, the building will be a place for Dja Dja Wurrung People to practice, strengthen and share Culture, and office space for around 100 staff.

"More than a building, more than a workplace, Larnangurrak is a special place that is designed by Dja Dja Wurrung for Dja Dja Wurrung and community," said Rodney Carter, Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO.

DJAARA received the official title to the land in Hattam Street, Golden Square, Bendigo in February 2022 and marked the start of construction in June 2023 with a garni (digging stick) ceremony.

A Wartaka (advisory group) informed Larnangurrak's architectural forms, design features and functions. "Every element has a purpose and has been carefully considered to create a welcoming and safe place," said Mr Carter.

The corporate centre features yarning and sand circles for ceremony, rammed-earth walls and extensive use of locally sourced materials like stones and timber. Landscaping reintroduces culturally important plants, which are watered by storm water. A 135kw solar-panel system and electric vehicle chargers support the Group's commitment to renewable energy.

Artwork, Dja Dja Wurrung artwork, is another important feature of the building, with around a dozen major site-specific works commissioned for the centre.

"Each piece represents and honours an important element of Culture. It is welcoming for Dja Dja Wurrung People and for all who visit Larnangurrak, too." said Mr Carter. "Collectively, these artworks are Djaara brilliance on show."

"Once we settle in, we look forward to welcoming the community, which may be through events, through spaces such as the theatre and conference room, and the open spaces that are part of the site." Mr Carter said.



Thanks to the Victorian Government for supporting this important project, providing generous funding for the build. Not only has it created the opportunity for DJAARA to have a corporate home, but it has also brought tangible benefits to the local community.

The build has brought significant renewal to the site – the former Golden Square High School, closed since 2008 – and created local jobs at all stages of the build and fitout, as well as ongoing servicing roles.

There are also plans to develop the site further, adding a depot to house the growing DJAARA land management enterprise, DJANDAK.

“Importantly, Larnangurrak provides spaces for learning and interaction. It’s an opportunity to share our Culture, and where we can make a positive contribution to healing People and Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), for the benefit of all who live on, work on and visit Djandak.”

“From Larnangurrak ‘our place’ we will work together to create a future for Central Victorians that would make all our Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors proud.”

About DJAARA

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, trading as DJAARA, actively works to progress the aspirations of the Dja Dja Wurrung community. It is incorporated under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act.

DJAARA is also the Registered Aboriginal Party and the sole owner of Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd. Our businesses include natural resource management, trading as DJANDAK, creative arts and cultural tourism social enterprise, DUMAWUL, and bush foods venture, DJAKITJ.

In 2013, the Dja Dja Wurrung People entered into a Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State of Victoria, which formally recognises Dja Dja Wurrung People (Djaara) as the Traditional Owners for part of Central Victoria. The Dja Dja Wurrung People nominated the Corporation as the ‘traditional owner group entity’ to hold and manage the settlement.

For more information, please contact: Nicola Dunnicliff-Wells | Communications Officer | M: 0427 701 908 | E: nicola.dunnicliff-wells@djadjawurrung.com.au