

MEDIA RELEASE



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DJAARA's Wildflower Drive visitor hub: improving amenity on Country – again

A new all-abilities visitor hub on Wildflower Drive in the Greater Bendigo National Park is designed to encourage community members to spend time on Country and connect with nature.

Designed and built by Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise DJANDAK in partnership with Parks Victoria, the visitor hub includes a new picnic shelter and toilets, and an all-abilities boardwalk around a dam.

DJAARA's Acting Manager Partnerships and Policy Harley Douglas hoped the works would encourage local community members to spend more time in the bush.

"This new visitor hub is one of the outcomes of DJAARA's Balak Kalik Many – Walking Together project. The project aimed to improve the amenity of the environment around an urban area to help foster connection with Country," Mr Douglas said.

"I'm really proud of the all-abilities access trail around the water: I think it's important that everyone has an opportunity to get out in the bush and connect with Country regardless of mobility levels.

"The hub is easily accessible from Strathfieldsaye Road and forms a gateway to the Wildflower Drive area of the Greater Bendigo National Park. The improved facilities will encourage locals to spend time in local bushland, whether that's walking, picnicking, or just soaking up the sounds and smells," Mr Douglas said.

Construction of the visitor hub follows the development of a Healthy Country Plan for the area in partnership with Parks Victoria and Conservation Management, and in consultation with the community.

The Greater Bendigo National Park is one of six Aboriginal-title parks that DJAARA manages jointly with Parks Victoria.

Parks Victoria Area Chief Ranger Karen Doyle said, "We're really excited people will get to enjoy this wonderful new facility as they explore the park. The success of this project reflects the strong partnership between Parks Victoria and DJAARA, managing country together and delivering for the local community and visitors."

The works were delivered as part of a \$2.04 million 4-year Victorian Government funding package.

The visitor hub on Wildflower Drive follows the recent opening of two other visitor facilities that DJAARA has delivered in partnership with Parks Victoria.

Larni Yirrip (Home of the Ironbark) Campground in the Bendigo Regional Park in Kangaroo Flat is infused with Dja Dja Wurrung art and Culture. Once a degraded area, the site has been remediated and transformed into a valuable community asset, which offers a unique camping experience.

DJAARA has also upgraded the Argyle Spring Walk in Hepburn Regional Park, incorporating an art and cultural trail, Nyerna Djayi Wurreka (which means 'Listening to Country speak' in Dja Dja Wurrung language). The trail features striking artworks and interpretive commentary, which encourage a deeper connection to the land and its stories.

Dja Dja Wurrung Group Interim CEO Cassandra Lewis is proud of the work DJAARA and its enterprises are doing to improve Country health and improve amenity.

"The work we're doing at sites like Larni Yirrip, Argyle Spring and Wildflower Drive is of benefit in so many ways: it's healing damage to Country, while making it easier and more enjoyable for everyone to get out and spend time in nature," Ms Lewis said.

"I hope that, by fostering greater connection with Country, we are also encouraging the wider community to help care for it," she added.

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