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DJAARA commences housing program to improve Dja Dja Wurrung wellbeing

DJAARA, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, aims to help ease the housing crisis for Dja Dja Wurrung People (Djaara), with the launch today of its new entity MAYAM MAYAM, which means 'housing' in Dja Dja Wurrung language.

MAYAM MAYAM, which became registered as a housing provider in October, will focus primarily on social and affordable housing for Djaara, and support to enter the housing market.

Dja Dja Wurrung Group Interim CEO Cassandra Lewis said that safe, affordable and secure housing is fundamental for Djaara to achieve the state of health and economic wellbeing that every person should enjoy.

"Aboriginal Australians are less likely to have adequate housing – and are more likely to be homeless – than non-Indigenous Australians," Ms Lewis said.

"Unfortunately, government policies over many decades and entrenched prejudice have led to generations of trauma and disadvantage among First Nations People. This makes it challenging to secure appropriate housing.

"The situation became more urgent as post-Covid housing pressures started to bite in regional Victoria, and Djaara found existing services were not adequately meeting their needs. It became clear that we needed to support our People to find safe and secure housing.

"Through MAYAM MAYAM, we will develop housing programs that are culturally safe, trauma-informed and accessible to all Djaara.

"This will have flow-on benefits for the broader community: as Djaara find housing through MAYAM MAYAM, there will be fewer people in the market competing for other housing stock," Ms Lewis said.

DJAARA has developed a Mayam Mayam Strategy, also launched today, which will guide the new entity through a staged approach to becoming a fully-fledged housing provider.

"It will take time to build up housing stock, and to build MAYAM MAYAM's capacity. In keeping with DJAARA's philosophy of ngaldurrong yana (walking together), MAYAM MAYAM is seeking opportunities to partner with other housing services, as well as funding to deliver housing for Djaara," Ms Lewis said.

The MAYAM MAYAM launch comes a day after DJAARA and YWCA celebrated the topping out of Burnayi Lurnayi, a YWCA-led affordable housing development in Bendigo for women and families on the Victorian Housing Register.

DJAARA is a partner in Burnayi Lurnayi (which means 'young women' in Dja Dja Wurrung language), and First Nations women will be prioritised for half of the 35 homes in the development.

As a registered housing provider, MAYAM MAYAM has been awarded \$21.6M to build 34 homes in North Bendigo on the site of the former North Bendigo Primary School through the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build (Social Housing Growth Fund – Homes for Aboriginal Victorians round).

Building is scheduled to start in mid-2027, and homes are expected to be completed by the end of 2028. The 34 homes will include a combination of 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom and 5-bedroom dwellings, with capacity to house around 75 people.

"This funding is also a win for the local construction industry and the regional economy, as MAYAM MAYAM will prioritise local building contractors, where possible," Ms Lewis said.

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About DJAARA and MAYAM MAYAM

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation trading as DJAARA is the representative body for Dja Dja Wurrung People – the Traditional Owners of Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) in Central Victoria.

MAYAM MAYAM is DJAARA's housing entity, which is incorporated and registered as a Housing Provider.

Mayam Mayam – Lar Balaka (Homes for Mob) – [Dja Dja Wurrung Housing Strategy](#)

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