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UNDER EMBARGO until 3pm Thursday 6 August 2026

Cassandra Lewis appointed Group Chief Executive Officer of DJAARA

The Board of Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Cassandra Lewis as the organisation's Chief Executive Officer.

The appointment follows a comprehensive national recruitment process involving a strong field of internal and external candidates. Following careful consideration, the Board determined that Cassandra is the right leader to guide DJAARA and the broader Dja Dja Wurrung Group through its next chapter.

Board Chair Rebecca Phillips said the Board was confident in Cassandra's ability to lead the organisation into the future.

"Cassandra distinguished herself through her values-driven leadership, strong understanding of DJAARA and commitment to Dja Dja Wurrung People. With six years as General Manager and the past twelve months as Interim Chief Executive Officer, she has developed a clear understanding of our Members, our priorities and the work needed to strengthen the organisation for the future," Ms Phillips said.

"Throughout the recruitment process, Cassandra demonstrated a clear focus on responsible governance, cultural integrity and the future aspirations of Dja Dja Wurrung People.

"The Board noted her ability to lead through change, build partnerships, respond to community priorities, and strengthen organisational resilience.

"We are confident Cassandra will build on the foundations already in place and support the Dja Dja Wurrung Group's continued role as a leading Traditional Owner organisation, regional employer, and land manager," Ms Phillips said.

During her time with DJAARA, Cassandra has helped guide the organisation through a period of transition while maintaining a strong focus on culture, governance, community outcomes and long-term sustainability.

In accepting the appointment, Cassandra said it is a privilege to serve Dja Dja Wurrung People and to lead an organisation that plays such an important role in protecting Country, strengthening culture and creating opportunities for our community.

"I'm committed to empowering current and future generations of Dja Dja Wurrung People, through practical means and through strengthening culture and improving our Country's health. In delivering for Dja Dja Wurrung People, DJAARA will also deliver benefits to the region," Ms Lewis said.

"I am excited about the work ahead. Together with our Members, Board, Elders, staff and partners, we will continue advancing self-determination, growing our economy and ensuring our cultural responsibilities to Country remain at the centre of everything we do.

“There is much work still to do, and I am confident that by working together we can continue building a strong future for Dja Dja Wurrung People,” Ms Lewis said.

The Board thanks all applicants who participated in the recruitment process and acknowledges the high calibre of candidates considered.

This appointment marks an important step in DJAARA's ongoing journey to strengthen culture, care for Country, support community aspirations and build a sustainable future for Dja Dja Wurrung People.

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About Cassandra Lewis

Cassandra Lewis, a proud Dja Dja Wurrung and Wamba Wamba woman, has served DJAARA for six years as General Manager and the past twelve months as Interim Chief Executive Officer before being appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2026.

During her tenure, she has contributed to organisational development, sound governance practices, strategic partnerships and work to build the long-term resilience of the Dja Dja Wurrung Group. She has worked closely with Dja Dja Wurrung People, government, industry and community stakeholders to support Dja Dja Wurrung aspirations and the priorities set out in Dhelkunya Dja – Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Country Plan.

Cassandra is known for her collaborative leadership style, commitment to community-led outcomes and ability to balance cultural, community and organisational priorities in support of Dja Dja Wurrung aspirations.