

Djuwimitj Barpangu

(Leaders building together)

DJAARA YOUTH
PROGRAM

BRIEF



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Background

How the program came together: In August 2026, DDWCAC approved the idea and Balaki Wurrekang began shaping it into a real opportunity for Djaara young people. The goal was simple: create a program by Djaara, for Djaara—one that adds Culture, connection and practical life pathways beyond mainstream education and work programs. Funding from Yillinga Marna, Agnico Eagle and Optus negotiations created the foundation. The program then focused on bringing Dhelkunya Dja goals to life: 1. Djaara, 2. Gurang gungang, 3. Malamiya and 7. Gungilangurrak.

Young people helped shape what came next. The Djuwimitj Barpangu Survey showed what Djaara youth want from the program and provided clear measures for success. Young people also influenced the program's identity—including its name, mentor and participant roles, clothing and logo—so it feels familiar, connected and like a place where they belong.

About the artist: Cooper Craig-Peters is a proud Dja Dja Wurrung, Ngurai-illum Wurrung, Yorta Yorta, Wadi Wadi and Wemba Wemba man. His previous work includes the Western Bulldogs' 2018 Indigenous Round guernsey and an Aboriginal tie created for St Patrick's College in 2019, which students still wear today.

About the artwork: Cooper's artwork for the youth space features 18 circles representing the apical ancestors, arranged in the shape of Bunjil's wing. Colours connect the design to DUMAWUL, DJANDAK, DJAKITJ and DJAARA. Each circle is a meeting place, and its different size reflects the big and small decisions young people make. Straight and winding lines show that everyone's journey is different—and life does not always follow a straight path.



Contents

Background.....	2
Djuwimitj Barpangu: DJAARA Youth Program	4
Document Purpose	4
Program Summary.....	4
Vision.....	4
Why This Program Matters	4
Strategic Alignment.....	4
Objectives.....	4
What Young People Can Expect.....	4
Expected Outcomes	5
Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
Cultural Governance and Protocols	5
Safety, Wellbeing and Duty of Care.....	5
Program Delivery.....	5
Risk Management.....	5
Program Policy	7
Policy Statement	7
Scope.....	7
Policy Requirements	7
Review.....	7
Program Procedure	9
Step 1: Plan the Program.....	9
Step 2: Get Cultural Guidance.....	9
Step 3: Invite Young People.....	9
Step 4: Confirm Consent and Support Needs.....	9
Step 5: Welcome Participants and Set Goals	9
Step 6: Run the Activities	9
Step 7: Keep Everyone Safe	9
Step 8: Check In and Offer Support.....	9
Step 9: Listen and Learn	9
Step 10: Review and Improve.....	9



Djuwimitj Barpangu: DJAARA Youth Program

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Pilot Year: 2026

Responsible Area: Member Engagement

Primary Participants: Djaara young people aged 12–26 years

Document Purpose

This package provides a practical framework for approving, governing, delivering and reviewing the DJAARA Youth Program as a culturally safe, youth-centred and outcomes-focused pilot.

Program Summary

Djuwimitj Barpangu is a Culture-first program for Djaara young people. Through mentoring, on-Country experiences, practical workshops and youth-led activities, participants can build confidence, learn useful life skills, explore study and work pathways, and have a stronger voice in community decisions.

Vision

Djaara young people feel strong in who they are, connected to Country and Culture, confident to lead, and ready to take up future opportunities.

Why This Program Matters

Young people have said they want culturally safe opportunities to build life skills, strengthen identity, explore career pathways and get support beyond mainstream education. This program responds with strong relationships, practical learning, Culture and genuine youth voice.

Strategic Alignment

The program aligns with DJAARA's commitment to self-determination, cultural strength, caring for Country, community wellbeing and future generations. It supports the intent of Dhelkunya Dja by strengthening Djaara people, cultural heritage, leadership, wellbeing, learning and the ongoing relationship between young people and Djandak.

Objectives

- Strengthen cultural identity, pride, belonging and connection to Country.
- Support young people to build confidence, leadership capability and youth voice.
- Provide practical life-skills learning, including financial literacy, housing readiness, digital confidence and wellbeing knowledge.
- Expose participants to education, training, employment and enterprise pathways.
- Create opportunities for mentoring, peer leadership and future youth-led governance.
- Support participants to develop individual goals and identify steps toward future aspirations.

What Young People Can Expect

- Program implementation plan and annual activity calendar.
- Participant expression of interest, referral and onboarding process.



- Induction workshop and individual goal plans for participants.
- Regular youth hub sessions, workshops and mentoring activities.
- On-Country learning days and two to three camps during the pilot year.
- Partnerships with Elders, Traditional Owners, Cultural knowledge holders, mentors, facilitators, employers and training providers.
- Evaluation tools, participant feedback, youth voice activities and end-of-pilot review.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the pilot, participants should feel more connected to Culture, Country and community; more confident as leaders; and better prepared for everyday life, education and work. DJAARA will also have clear evidence to improve and grow the program.

Roles and Responsibilities

Member Engagement: coordinates the program, supports participants, keeps records, organises facilitators and communications, and makes sure delivery follows this policy.

Elders, Traditional Owners and Cultural knowledge holders: guide cultural learning, on-Country experiences, mentoring and cultural protocols.

Facilitators, mentors and external providers: deliver safe, respectful, culturally appropriate and youth-friendly activities. They must meet all screening, safety and conduct requirements before working with participants.

Participants: help create a respectful and safe space, take part in activities and goal-setting, and share feedback to improve the program.

Cultural Governance and Protocols

Program activities must respect Dja Dja Wurrung cultural authority, cultural knowledge, intellectual property and community protocols. Cultural content must be guided by appropriate Elders, Traditional Owners or recognised Cultural knowledge holders. Program staff must seek cultural guidance before delivering activities involving cultural knowledge, language, ceremony, story, cultural heritage, significant sites or on-Country learning.

Safety, Wellbeing and Duty of Care

Every activity must protect the safety, wellbeing and dignity of young people. Staff, mentors, facilitators and volunteers working directly with participants must hold current Working with Children Checks and follow child-safe, supervision, incident-reporting and risk-management requirements.

Planning must cover age, access needs, transport, consent, emergency contacts, supervision, cultural obligations, health needs, food requirements, privacy and any extra support a participant needs.

Program Delivery

Activities may include workshops, mentoring, cultural learning, on-Country days, camps, education support, life-skills sessions, work exposure and youth-led decision-making. Delivery should stay flexible so it can respond to young people, cultural guidance, community priorities and available resources.

Risk Management

Risk assessments must be completed for program activities where required, including camps, transport, on-Country activities, use of external providers and activities involving specialised equipment or environments. Identified risks must be managed through appropriate supervision, planning, consent, communication, emergency procedures and cultural advice.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose: The Terms of Reference set out the governance, membership, responsibilities and decision-making arrangements for the planning and delivery of the DJAARA Youth Program pilot.

Governance Group: A Youth Program Working Group will guide the pilot, support culturally safe delivery, monitor risks and ensure the program remains aligned with DJAARA priorities and the needs of Djaara young people.

Membership may include:

- Member Engagement representative or Program Lead.
- Relevant DJAARA staff involved in youth, culture, engagement, education, employment or community programs.
- Elders, Traditional Owners or Cultural knowledge holders providing cultural guidance.
- Youth representatives or peer leaders, where appropriate and supported.
- Partner organisations, facilitators or subject matter experts by invitation.

Responsibilities:

- Provide oversight of program planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Ensure cultural governance, cultural safety and cultural protocols are embedded.
- Support recruitment, onboarding and participant engagement processes.
- Review program risks, safeguarding considerations and duty of care requirements.
- Support partnerships, workshop planning, camps and on-Country activities.
- Consider participant feedback and youth voice when shaping the program.
- Provide recommendations for continuation, expansion or improvement after the pilot.

Meetings: The Working Group will meet monthly during establishment and early delivery, then at least quarterly once the program is operating. Additional meetings may be called to address urgent safety, cultural, operational or delivery matters.

Decision-Making: Decisions should be made through respectful discussion, cultural guidance and consensus where possible. Matters involving cultural knowledge, cultural authority, significant sites, ceremony or cultural protocol must be guided by appropriate Elders, Traditional Owners or recognised Cultural knowledge holders.

Reporting: The Program Lead will provide updates on participation, activities, risks, feedback, outcomes and resource needs. A pilot review report will be prepared at the end of the pilot year.





Program Policy

Policy Statement

DJAARA is committed to delivering the Youth Program in a way that is culturally safe, youth-centred, strengths-based, child-safe and accountable. The program will centre Dja Dja Wurrung Culture, Country, language, Lore, values, cultural authority and youth voice while supporting participants to build confidence, life skills, leadership and future pathways.

Scope

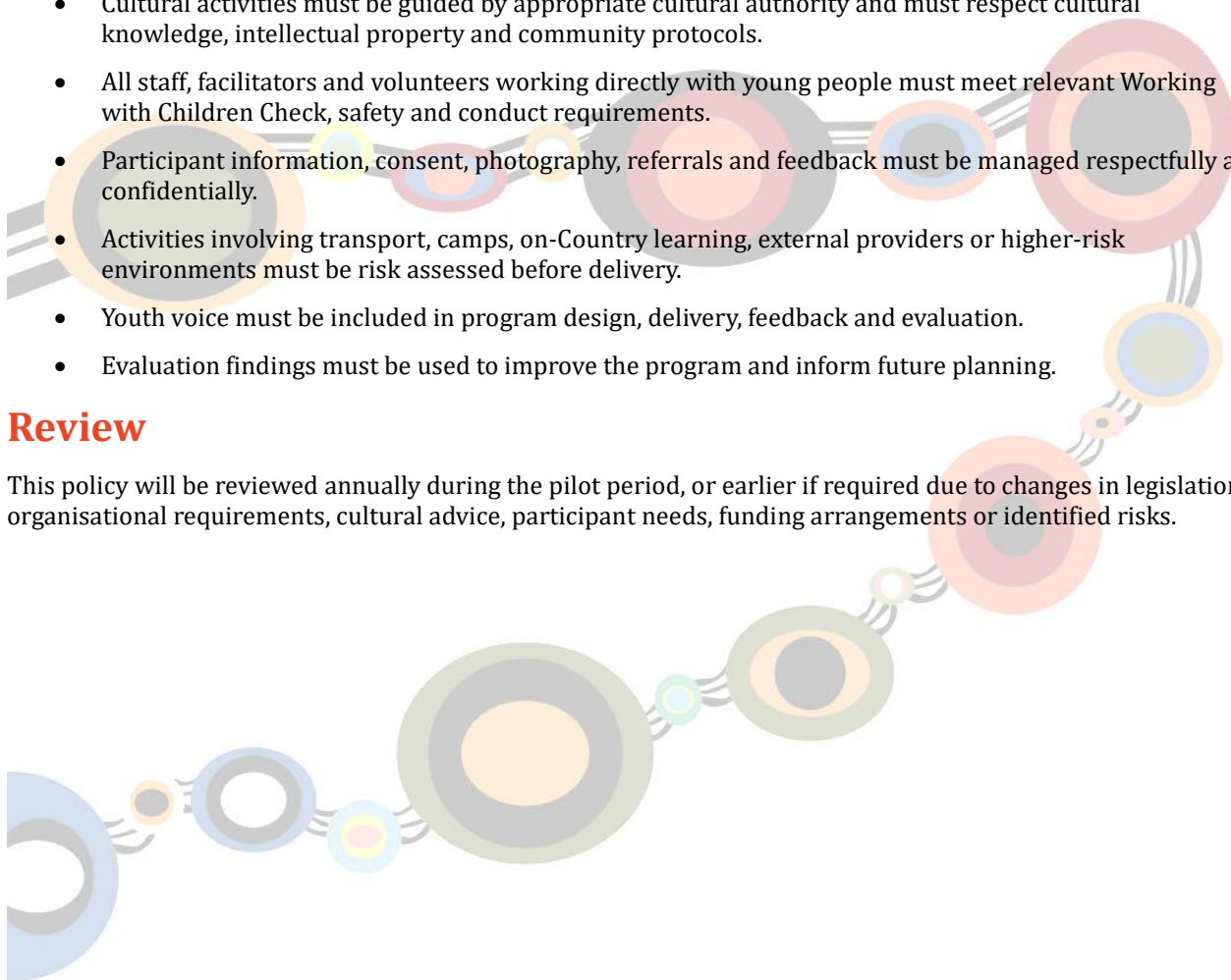
This policy applies to all DJAARA staff, facilitators, mentors, volunteers, partners and external providers involved in planning, coordinating, delivering, supporting or evaluating the DJAARA Youth Program.

Policy Requirements

- Program delivery must be culturally safe, trauma-informed, youth-centred and strengths-based.
- Cultural activities must be guided by appropriate cultural authority and must respect cultural knowledge, intellectual property and community protocols.
- All staff, facilitators and volunteers working directly with young people must meet relevant Working with Children Check, safety and conduct requirements.
- Participant information, consent, photography, referrals and feedback must be managed respectfully and confidentially.
- Activities involving transport, camps, on-Country learning, external providers or higher-risk environments must be risk assessed before delivery.
- Youth voice must be included in program design, delivery, feedback and evaluation.
- Evaluation findings must be used to improve the program and inform future planning.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually during the pilot period, or earlier if required due to changes in legislation, organisational requirements, cultural advice, participant needs, funding arrangements or identified risks.





Exciting New Workshops Are Coming!

Get ready to learn new skills, connect with Culture, meet other Djaara young people and explore what your future could look like.

The Djuwimitj Barpangu program is planning a fresh series of practical, creative and Culture-first workshops shaped around the interests and goals of Djaara young people aged 12–26.

What You Can Look Forward To

- **Culture and Country** — learn with Elders, Traditional Owners and Cultural knowledge holders through cultural activities and on-Country experiences.
- **Money and Life Skills** — build confidence with budgeting, banking, saving, housing readiness and everyday decision-making.
- **Study, Training and Work** — explore different careers, meet employers and training providers, and learn how to take your next step.
- **Leadership and Youth Voice** — grow your confidence, share your ideas and help shape activities and decisions that affect young people.
- **Digital and Creative Skills** — try practical digital, media, design and creative activities in a supportive environment.
- **Health and Wellbeing** — learn useful tools for looking after yourself, managing challenges and supporting your wellbeing.
- **Mentoring and Goal-Setting** — connect with mentors and turn your ideas into achievable personal, cultural, education or work goals.
- **Camps and On-Country Days** — take part in cultural learning, team activities, connection and new experiences.

Made With Young People, For Young People

The workshops will be welcoming, flexible and hands-on. You will have opportunities to suggest topics, choose activities, share feedback and help improve the program.

No two journeys are the same. Whether you want to strengthen your connection to Culture, learn practical skills, explore work or study, meet new people, or simply try something new, there will be opportunities for you.

Watch This Space

Workshop topics, dates, locations, transport arrangements and registration details will be confirmed through DJAARA and community channels.

Come along, have a yarn, build your skills and be part of something created for Djaara young people.



Program Procedure

Step 1: Plan the Program

Confirm the aims, pilot timeline, participant numbers, budget, locations, activities, cultural guidance, partners, transport, safety requirements and evaluation approach. Create an annual calendar for youth hub sessions, workshops, mentoring, on-Country days and camps.

Step 2: Get Cultural Guidance

Ask Elders, Traditional Owners and Cultural knowledge holders for guidance before cultural activities, on-Country learning, camps, language, ceremony, stories, heritage content or visits to significant places.

Step 3: Invite Young People

Promote the program through DJAARA and community channels. Use an Expression of Interest, nomination or referral process, then have a culturally safe yarn to understand each young person's interests, goals, support needs and readiness.

Step 4: Confirm Consent and Support Needs

Collect emergency contacts, health and access information, consent forms, media permissions and transport permissions. Give young people and their families or carers clear information about activities, expectations, safety, contacts and ways to give feedback.

Step 5: Welcome Participants and Set Goals

Run an induction covering Culture, safety, expectations, youth voice, wellbeing support, transport, privacy and feedback. Help each participant set goals linked to Culture, education, work, life skills and personal aspirations.

Step 6: Run the Activities

Deliver workshops, mentoring, practical life skills, cultural learning, education support, work exposure, on-Country experiences and camps. Keep activities flexible and responsive to participants and cultural guidance.

Step 7: Keep Everyone Safe

Complete risk assessments where needed, including for camps, transport, on-Country activities, external providers and higher-risk settings. Confirm supervision, first aid, emergency contacts, communication, transport, food, access needs and incident-reporting arrangements.

Step 8: Check In and Offer Support

Track attendance, participation, wellbeing, goals, feedback and new support needs. Offer follow-up, referrals or mentoring, and escalate safety or safeguarding concerns through DJAARA processes.

Step 9: Listen and Learn

Gather feedback through surveys, yarning circles, check-ins and activity reviews. Look at attendance, goal progress, cultural learning, education and work pathways, and feedback from participants, facilitators and partners.

Step 10: Review and Improve

At the end of the pilot, summarise what worked, what was challenging, what young people said, key risks, partnerships and resource needs. Use the findings to improve the program and guide future funding, staffing and delivery.



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