



Hepburn Shire Council Cultural Values Assessment Wartaka Recommendations

Djaara
BALAKI WUKA

DJANDAK

DJAA WALATJALANG



Introduction

Project background

Hepburn Shire Council (HSC) is currently developing structure plans for the towns and villages in the shire. HSC has engaged DJANDAK to develop a Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) and a public recommendations report that covers but is not limited to the townships. Twelve DJAARA members were involved in 6 days on-Country as part of this CVA process as a Wartaka.

DJANDAK would like to commend HSC for this positive and proactive response to the structure planning process. The planning process began in Hepburn Shire in the 1830s, when teams of Government Surveyors recorded the land, pre settlement, describing qualities that would appeal to pastoralists to drive colonisation of this Country. HSC has proactively requested the input of DJAARA members to decolonise the future structure plans. This is a significant act of reconciliation and truth telling.

Wartaka involvement in the project

A Wartaka is a group of DJAARA Members selected to form an advisory group that sets the vision for projects and outcomes, while representing all Djaara People. They make an outstanding contribution to embedding cultural values and knowledge into project outcomes. During the project Wartaka meeting a group of 12 DJAARA members spent 6 days on Country, accompanied by design and heritage experts. This document is the outcome of the Wartaka advice. It is a collective cultural vision that represents Djaara values in this report.

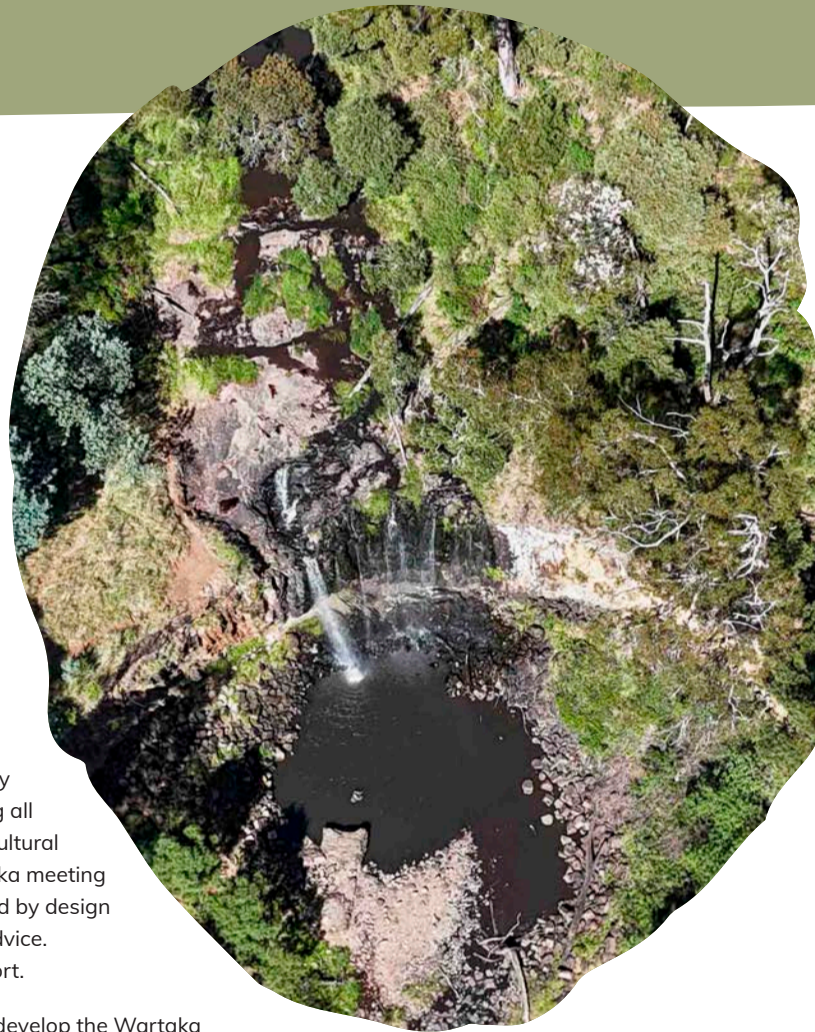
Wartaka is Dja Dja Wurrung in language for 'Come with purpose'. We develop the Wartaka based on specific project needs and aim for a group that has representation across family groups, and diversity of ages and genders. Consistent with its meaning the proposed Wartaka will be convened with a clear purpose and scope.

In line with "Goal 7: Self-determination" of the Dja Dja Wurrung Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan, a Wartaka involvement in this project has provided Djaara voices a forum to be respectfully involved and give advice on the direction of the project as it develops. Wartaka members on design projects are cultural experts that provide project specific advice. Their contribution represents their own cultural connections to the project and ensures that Djaara voices are making a significant contribution. They are paid a professional consultant rate for their Cultural guidance. They are strongly connected to their culture and come with specific expertise that cannot be found anywhere else.

Report structure

The Wartaka members have recommended that HSC think of the entire LGA as Djandak (Country), not just the natural / undeveloped spaces but the towns and villages as well. They recommend that the Shire sees the whole cultural landscape rather than breaking the space using the settler narrative of towns vs farmland vs natural spaces. The LGA is a part of Djandak. Historically an invisible colonial barrier was created separating the towns and Djandak. This is fundamental to the history of colonisation and dispossession and is a shared history. To this day the invisible barrier is still there and needs to be dismantled to heal Country and Djaara people. All disturbed places should be healed, strengthening connections between Djandak and Djaara. This is an important act of reconciliation, truth telling, and enables Djaara self-determination. The first step has begun with this report.

For the reasons above, this report is not structured by town or region, instead it is by key objectives that apply to all of Djandak in the Hepburn LGA. We have used the objective headings from the structure plans so they can be read together as a conversation.



Shire statistics

The 2021 Census found that in Hepburn Shire LGA the general population is 16,604 people, however, only has 180 people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (1.11%). This is slightly below the state average of 1.2%. The general median age of Hepburn Shire residents is 52 years old, but the median age of people who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander was 25 years old. The general household has an average of 2.2 people, while the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has on average 2.8 people. We note that the Census was undertaken during the covid pandemic, and that some community members prefer not to identify on government documents leading to potential inaccuracy in the data. Refer to <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA22910> <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/IQSLGA22910>

The statistics show a dramatic difference in age in the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community to the general population. It is important that the structure plans support the whole community and take in to account the diversity in the population.


How to use this report

This document is only permitted to be used for the development of the Hepburn Shire Structure Plans and therefore can be shared with contractors involved in this work. This includes the document's public exhibition as part of the community consultation phase. Following the final approval and conclusion of the structure plan phase, the document can also be used to inform the development of the Planning Scheme Amendment relating only to these structure plan. There is information contained within this report cannot be reproduced in any form by the Sponsor or any other party including members of the community or specialist advisors. The recommendations and CVA represents the views of a specific group of Djaara people. The outcomes of this recommendations report and CVA therefore do not and cannot apply to any other project.

It is noteworthy however that while these recommendations for the inclusion of Djaara values into the townships of Hepburn Shire Council, any actions at the Planning Scheme

Amendment stage must be in consultation with DJAARA (as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) and Traditional Owner Group Entity (TOGE)) and not DJANDAK. The below recommendations can be used to incorporate Dja Dja Wurrung values into the structure plans (purpose of CVA) and to support DJAARA at the Planning Scheme Amendment consultation stage with the Hepburn Shire Council.

All activities (small and large) that occur on Djangak have the potential to impact on cultural heritage, and Djaara's Traditional Owner Rights. Irrespective of whether they trigger an action in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)* and/or the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic)* ('Settlement Act') activities should only be undertaken after early, prior consultation with DJAARA.



“We don’t want a hand out. We want a hand up. We want to be lifted up, showing our beautiful culture being one of the longest living cultures in the world to be able to have them be proud of us, and them living on Djangak, you know, just coming together and walking beside us.

Coming to a happy place for everybody.”

Wartaka Member

Decolonising structure planning and the statutory planning processes

The Dja Dja Wurrung People (Djaara) are the recognised Traditional Owners in Central Victoria. Djaara (represented by DJAARA) signed a Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) with the State of Victoria in 2013. Details of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement are available at: <https://www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/dja-dja-wurrung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>. Djaara have governed the region for thousands of generations through a complex system of Lore that began thousands of generations before the introduction of European laws. The Recognition and Settlement Agreement binds the State of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung People to a meaningful partnership founded on mutual respect. It is a means by which Dja Dja Wurrung culture and traditional practices and the unique relationship of Dja Dja Wurrung People to their traditional country are recognised, strengthened, protected and promoted, for the benefit of all Victorians, now and into the future.

As discussed above the shared history of colonisation is embedded in the planning processes for over 180 years. Changes to schemes and policies at a state level are required to decolonise the process. However, there are actions that HSC can take to ensure Djaara play a self-determining role in the planning process.

“Dja Dja Wurrung country is a cultural landscape that is more than just tangible objects; imprinted in it are the dreaming stories, Law, totemic relationships, songs, ceremonies and ancestral spirits, which give it life and significant value to Dja Dja Wurrung People. The values Dja Dja Wurrung People hold for their country are shaped from their belief systems that all things have a murrup (spirit) – water, birds, plants, animals, rocks and mountains. Dja Dja Wurrung People see all the land and its creatures in a holistic way, interconnected with each other and with the people. Prior to European colonisation, all natural places within Dja Dja Wurrung country were well known, had a name and song and were celebrated as a part of country and culture.

The State recognises that the arrival of Europeans in Victoria caused a rupture in the spiritual, environmental, political and economic order of Dja Dja Wurrung People. Unrecorded numbers of Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors had their lives taken in their fight for Djandak and Martinga Kulinga Murrup (Ancestral Spirits). Other Dja Dja Wurrung were forced from their traditional country. Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors struggled to maintain their way of life. Their food and water sources and many important cultural sites and places were destroyed or damaged by European land uses, including the introduction of exotic flora and fauna. European explorers and colonialists renamed many Dja Dja Wurrung places and landscape features using foreign names. The practice and survival of cultural tradition was gravely threatened.”

Recognition and Settlement Agreement - Volume 1 of 2 Recognition Statement

Seeing all of Djandak

The context of the greater landscape should inform any future development of the LGA and will need the on-going advice of DJAARA members to ensure that new works heals Country. The natural context is a deep time history of these spaces and needs to be prioritised over more recent colonial settler history.

Loosely, there are 3 main regions to Djandak in the Hepburn LGA.

1. The tall forests on tectonic landforms

Disturbed by logging and towns like Trentham and Glenlyon

2. The New Volcanic Precinct

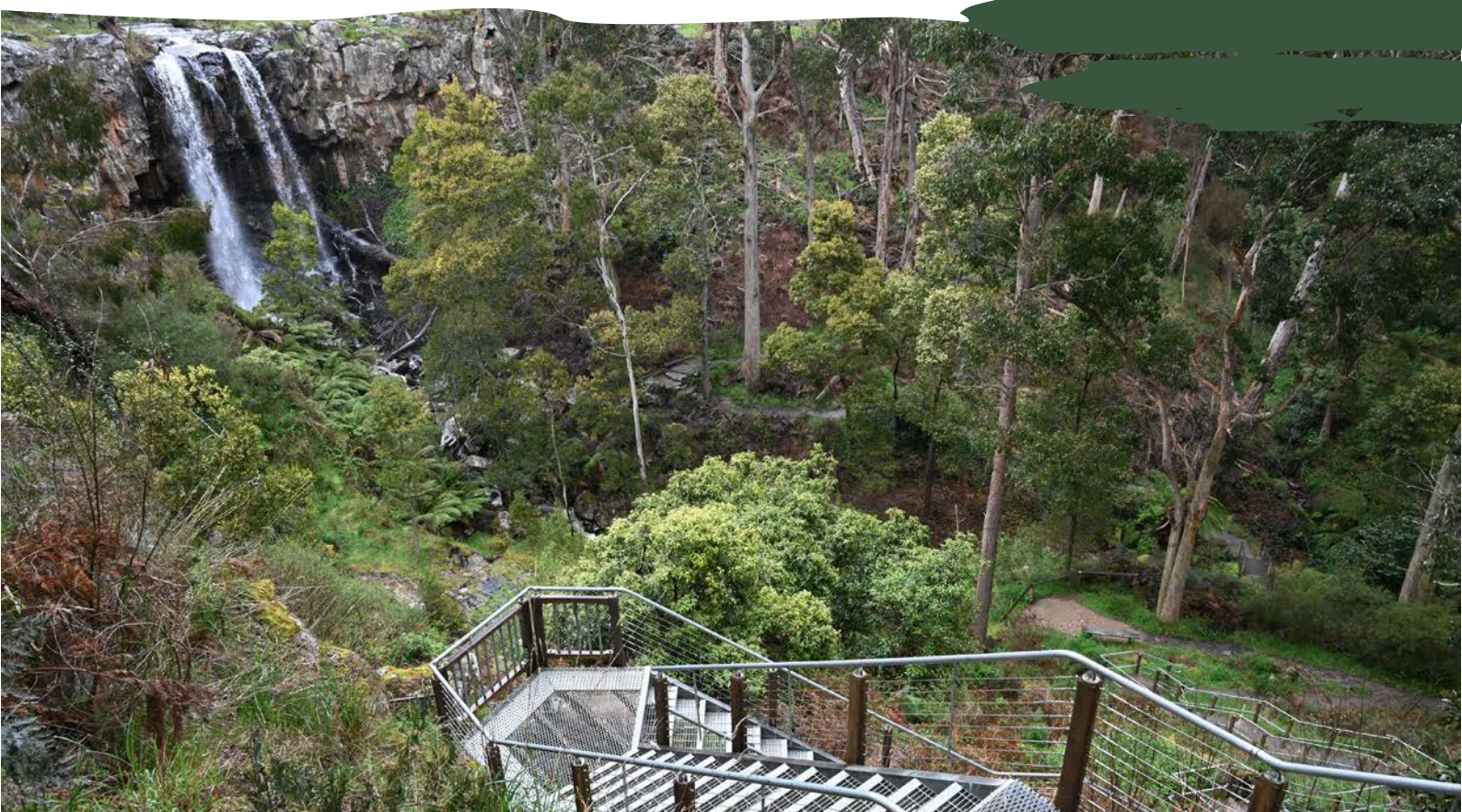
Disturbed by gold mining, broad acre farming, land clearing and towns like Clunes and Creswick

3. Mineral spring country with gullies and rocky outcrops

Disturbed with pipes and pumps, formalised lakes, towns like Hepburn Springs and Daylesford.

Important qualities that should be protected, promoted and celebrated:

- High points or viewpoints, including but not restricted to, mountains, volcanos (cones and surrounding landforms), ridges, saddles and rises, volcanic plains. These rises are likely to be culturally important and any consideration to further develop of these places should be undertaken in partnership with DJAARA including the Malamiya team.
- Waterways including but not restricted to, floodplains, rivers, creeks, gullies, gorges, chains of pools, riffles and riverine terraces, springs, aquifer recharge points, waterfalls, rifles and cascades, lakes, swamps, waterholes, and waterbodies. All water environments are important to Djaara people and development should be done in partnership with them. In addition, all gazetted waterways require an Aboriginal Waterway Assessment (AWA) to be undertaken in conjunction with development.
- All areas of existing indigenous local endemic vegetation, wildlife and habitat. Areas of high biodiversity are likely to be culturally important and should be protected from development.
- The rocks, soil, clay and sand of Djandak are important to Djaara culture. The use of them should be done carefully, consider the materials end of use plan to ensure that these significant components of Country are repatriated to Djandak.



Cultural overlay recommendation

The Wartaka has recommended that HSC protect and enhance all areas of Cultural Significance by creating a cultural overlay across Hepburn Shire. This overlay should not include the locations or details of cultural sites, but is intended as a mapping tool that triggers the need to consult further with DJAARA. It will protect intangible heritage and sacred sites from development at a landscape scale.

Recommended Actions:

- Scope, plan, fund and develop a GIS mapping of significant landscapes in collaboration with DJAARA. The mapping is to highlight waterways, creeks, springs, swamps, lakes and waterbodies, aquifer recharge points, gullies, caves, waterfalls, rifles and cascades, ridges, mountains, volcanoes (cones and surrounds), saddles and other areas that have a high potential for cultural sensitivity. Volcanoes (cone and surrounds), mountains and high points including saddles are to be treated as areas of potential high sensitivity, in a similar way to the 200m buffer along gazetted waterways. The result will be similar to the ACRIS free mapping with additional zones shown.
- Establish an agreed protocol with DJAARA about how developments in these zones will be addressed. Ensure this protocol is embedded into Council processes. Council is to engage with DJAARA early, so that we can undertake early and specific assessment. Council is to provide a forward plan of assessment, so that DJAARA can resource, prioritise and plan.
- Ensure no more houses on Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin) or other culturally significant sites. Allow for the consideration of view lines from areas of cultural sensitivity before approving developments – for example the view from Franklinford Mission to Lalgambuk. Council should require developers to pay for and produce viewline study(ies) for developments in culturally sensitive areas, with input from DJAARA.
- All planners are to have an induction with DJAARA that is specific to planning issues.

The Recognition and Settlement Agreement and the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 to inform planning recommendation

The Wartaka has suggested that HSC:

- Improve their understanding of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and how it informs planning. Undertake a workshop with DJAARA focusing on the sections that are relevant.
- Ensure they are fully aware of and comply with their obligations under the RSA and the Land Use Activity Agreement ('LUAA').
- The Wartaka has suggested that HSC:
- Improve their understanding of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and how it informs planning. Undertake a workshop with DJAARA focusing on the sections that are relevant.
- Ensure they are fully aware of and comply with their obligations under the RSA and the Land Use Activity Agreement ('LUAA').

Recommended Actions:

- For all cultural heritage statutory issues Hepburn Shire should contact the Malamiya team (RAP arm of DJAARA) directly.
- Ensure all obligations and requirements set out in the RSA documents are complied with for developments.
- Hepburn Shire should approach DJAARA early in project development to discuss with the Dja Dja Wurrekatjalangu Team (RSA Implementation Team) how the LUAA may apply and should direct private developers to do the same.
- HSC should engage with DJAARA through the Dja Dja Wurrekatjalangu Team to develop in partnership an efficient process for LUAA matters (both HSC and private activities) that:
 - Facilitates early agreement on categorisation of activities;
 - Ensures proponents of land use activities are aware of the requirements under the LUAA and Settlement Act and potential for Community Benefits arising from their proposed activity at the earliest opportunity to facilitate informed decision-making;
 - Ensures LUAA notifications are issued to DJAARA at the appropriate stage; and
 - Limits risks of activities commencing prior to the necessary notification to, comment from, and agreement with DJAARA (as the case may be), as required by the Settlement Act.

Involve DJAARA in Planning Recommendation

Djaara people to be included in major decisions before planning goes ahead.

Recommended Actions:

- Engage with DJAARA in the early stages of project planning and be flexible to accommodate DJAARA's feedback, such as being able to relocate to protect spaces as required by DJAARA, to avoid community concerns and potential delays in the later stages of a project.
- Undertake Cultural Values Assessments (CVA) for developments to ensure protection of Djaara cultural values in future developments. This should include, but not be limited to, any new greenfield residential development sites or new inclusions within the town core boundary proposed under Structure Plans or related Council Strategic work.

Hepburn Shire Council should:

- Involve Djaara people in more stages of their processes.
- Establish agreements with DJAARA.
- Create a partnership with DJAARA for strategic developments.
- Build an ongoing working relationship with Djaara people into all projects and policies.
- Engage DJAARA to provide HSC with training on how to use the Dhelkunya Dja - Country Plan.
- Read, understand and adopt the Dhelkunya Dja – Dja Dja Wurrung County Plan and all DJAARA strategies.
- Liaise with DJAARA to set priorities as part of Council's planning process.
- Involve DJAARA in how rate expenditure is prioritised.
- Create projects with adequate funding to produce meaningful and legacy outcomes for Djaara people and accommodate for implications under the LUAA.



Objectives - Housing

Housing to support Djaara to live and work on Djandak recommendation

It is important that Council actively supports the Djaara community to spend time on Country and build connections to Country. A key issue is housing and Australia is in the middle of a housing crisis.

Aboriginal Australians, including Djaara, are hit first and hardest by the consequences of this crisis.

One Central Victorian LGA on Djandak (the City of Greater Bendigo) has expressed its concern for housing issues affecting its residents and developed an Affordable Housing Action Plan in 2020 which set the challenging target of increasing the supply of social housing from 4.6% of housing stock to 10% by 2036.

DJAARA consulted members about housing issues in late 2023. Members painted a picture of great difficulty for many community members to find housing that is affordable and meets their needs. Many talked of periods of homelessness for themselves and families 'living in tents' and the 'shame' they felt using mainstream services. Overcrowding and couch surfing were common.

Mainstream services that are theoretically available are not really available to them - particularly the private rental market because of poverty, institutional racism, Aboriginal invisibility and lack of political influence and insensitivity towards particular Djaara circumstances.

Members described challenges with the current programs/services, and the pressure of Aboriginal kinship and cultural overload when other family members need to support them due to lack of access to housing.

Members stated they try to do their best however helping family and friends adds additional pressure on them and their finances whilst dealing with their own issues.

Many members lack the financial capacity to be able to afford the bare necessities including communication tools such as basic IT and telephone credit.

Many members talked about how they had experienced periods of homelessness as had their family members but struggled to find the support they needed to find a permanent home or even just get short term help into a motel or transitional housing.

DJAARA members reported that getting accommodation through the private rental market is mostly out of reach due to the general demand in housing across the region. This demand is similar across Victoria and on a nation-wide scale. Some experiences shared were once the real estate managers identified them as being an Aboriginal applicant they felt they were "put at the end of the line". Members identified racism as a factor and were treated differently to the broader community. Other reasons for an inability to access private housing is the low income and employment of Djaara due to the high Aboriginal unemployment/underemployment rate as well as an inability to be able to afford bond and rent in advance which drove them out of the market.

DJAARA members reported that access to social housing through the various social housing service providers was also challenging and did not feel confident in any of the social housing providers because of the demand and long waiting periods.

DJAARA expects to release its own Housing Strategy in the next few months.



Objectives - Housing

Recommended actions:

Actively support Djaara people to live on Country by:

- Reading and understanding the DJAARA's Housing Strategy
- Collaborating with DJAARA to achieve that Strategy's goals
- Partnering with DJAARA to identify and develop housing opportunities within the shire for the area's original inhabitants and their descendants.

Refer to the following documents for supporting DJAARA policy and strategy:

Dhelkunya Dja- Country Plan 2014-2034

GOAL 1: Djaara

Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

GOAL 7: Self-determination

As our Country's first people, Djaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs.

In addition to DJAARA policy and strategy it is recommended that the council engage with Aboriginal Housing Victoria Limited to develop housing strategies. The following documents should be considered for all housing policy and strategy in the shire.

- Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system in Victoria by Aboriginal Housing Victoria Limited <https://vahhf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Blueprint.pdf>
- The Community Housing Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework
"The Community Housing Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework is a practical tool designed to assist community housing organisations to reflect on their practices and adopt strategies and actions to improve the way they engage with and address the housing needs of Aboriginal Victorians. This tool takes a 'rights based' approach, which places Aboriginal Victorians and their communities firmly at the centre of community housing policies and practices." <https://chiavic.com.au/resources/aboriginal-cultural-safety-framework/>
- Kids under cover <https://www.kuc.org.au/>



“I think it’s about reconciliation and everybody coming together and working for the same goal, and how we can start to build better relationships with shires and the community as a whole, because I feel that there’s a lot of disconnect between Aboriginal people and, communities, on our Country.

So I think that it’s just a good way to start that relationship.”

Wartaka Member

Objectives - Urban design

The urban spaces in Hepburn Shire are a part of Djandak. The urban fabric has disrupted culturally significant places and landscapes. The current character of the towns and villages imposes a Eurocentric aesthetic over the top of Country.

Recommended actions:

- Develop Neighbourhood Character Studies for all towns in collaboration with DJAARA to promote the cultural qualities of Djandak and heal the disturbance of colonisation.
- Planning of the urban fabric should ensure excellent access to old walking tracks and culturally significant sites
- Developments are to be planned to limit regrading for road corridors, housing, buildings or other reasons.
- Developments should be designed to protect large established trees, nesting trees, trees with hollows and areas of indigenous vegetation.
- Require all new developments to have significant sized green spaces and wide road corridors with indigenous vegetation. Ensure that these spaces can provide quality green spaces with pedestrian and cyclist links for commuter connections and recreation.
- Council to undertake studies to understand the landscape in the areas to be developed and keep it in its most natural state.
- Ensure natural water is present in the public open spaces to provide a spiritual connection to heal Country and Djaara.
- Require all new subdivisions to protect waterways by creating public open space with an adequate corridor to allow for DJAARA land management to be implemented.
- Require all new subdivisions to protect and establish wildlife corridors to connect to waterways.
- Require all new road networks to include Water Sensitive Urban Design principles to provide a natural stormwater treatment before entering waterways including ephemeral waterways. This should allow for all pollutants and contaminants to be removed or isolated during an emergency.
- Develop a tree strategy (e.g. an urban forest strategy) in collaboration with DJAARA to increase endemic planting. The strategy should seek to create diverse plantings that increase biodiversity, respond to climate change and support Djaara to have access to plants for Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).
- Plan for urban spaces that incorporate landscaping of culturally significant species

Refer to the following documents for supporting DJAARA policy and strategy:

Dhelkunya Dja- Country Plan 2014-2034

GOAL 1: Djaara

Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

GOAL 4: Bushtucker and Medicine

Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

GOAL 5: Rivers and Waterways

Our rivers and waterways are healthy and meet the needs of our people and land

GOAL 6: Land

Our upside-down country is healthy again

GOAL 7: Self-determination

As our Country's first people, Djaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs.

Objectives - Business and Economy

The 2021 Census showed that less Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people reported being in the labour force than the general Hepburn population. There are significant barriers to be overcome to support a higher employment status of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders in the LGA.

Recommended actions:

Council should actively create Djaara jobs by:

- Foster Djaara businesses to support the Djaara community to live and work in the LGA.
- Actively plan for industry that provides Djaara jobs in Hepburn Shire.
- Actively plan for tourism that includes Djaara within the landscape and provides Djaara perspectives and jobs.
- Develop an inclusive workplace strategy that actively create a culturally safe work environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Attract and recruit Djaara people by having a culturally appropriate and flexible recruitment and selection process. Ensure this workplace strategy is well resourced to ensure its sustainability and success.
- Seek ongoing funding and make investments into DJAARA for local government liaison (or other) roles that can lead and link with local government; for local government themselves to embed DJAARA policy and strategy into their own business and organisational structures.
- Council to develop a Cultural Competency Framework and action plan reviewed annually with DJAARA.
- Councillors undertake DJAARA cultural immersion training
- HSC to make stronger approaches to DJAARA input into governance
- Create a procurement system that support Djaara businesses to provide goods and services to HSC.
- Connect Djaara people to business support programs / grants to help the development of Djaara businesses and employers.

Refer to the following documents for supporting Djaara policy and strategy:

Dhelkunya Dja- Country Plan 2014-2034

GOAL 1: Djaara

Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

GOAL 7: Self-determination

As our Country's first people, Djaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs.

GOAL 8: Traditional Owner Economy

We have a strong and diverse economic base to provide for our health and wellbeing, and strengthen our living culture

Recognition and Settlement Agreement- Attachment 3 Local Government Engagement Strategy

- Recognise that Traditional Owner businesses can make valuable and unique contributions to local economies and communities: driving innovation, providing access to new markets, creating new jobs and attracting tourists.
- (b) Establish a preferential contracting and procurement process under which councils agree to preferentially source goods and services from the Corporation or other Dja Dja Wurrung entities or businesses, including in relation to:
 - (i) natural resources management;
 - (ii) cultural awareness training;
 - (iii) equipment or machinery hire; and
 - (iv) other goods or services for which the Corporation and/or its subsidiaries or members have relevant supply capability or expertise.
- (c) Commit to notifying the Corporation of any local business and economic development programs and grants.
- (d) Put in place a structure to ensure that councils preferentially source biodiversity and carbon offsets, and other environmental market services and products, from the Corporation or other Dja Dja Wurrung entities or businesses.
- (e) Formally adopt the Preferential Procurement Strategy for Natural Resource Management contained in the Natural Resource Agreement.



“Why would you want to go somewhere you feel uncomfortable, you know, or looked upon or, you know, whatever it is, it’s just a lack of knowledge. I feel like there’s no (Djaara) storytelling knowledge in them places.”

Wartaka Member

Objectives - Movement and access

Access to cultural sites and culturally sensitive places is important to Djaara culture. There are significant landscapes and sites that are either on private land or can only be accessed via private land.

Movement and access around the Hepburn Shire is significantly limited via public transport system, and the off-road pedestrian/cyclist network. It is important to provide diverse transport options.

Recommended actions:

To support the Djaara community to have access to culturally significant places Council should:

- Ensure new developments provide access for Djaara people to cultural sites.
- Support the Djaara community to negotiate for access to cultural sites / landscapes on private land, or via private property.
- Develop walking track upgrades in collaboration with DJAARA and DJANDAK along waterways and in other cultural landscapes.

Provide diverse transport options by:

- Funding, planning and building off road tracks and trails that connect towns and villages with input from DJAARA and DJANDAK.
- Developing walking / cycling strategies for all towns and villages. Ensure that people with disabilities and the elderly are supported to move around the town centre.
- Partnering with public transport to improve accessibility to the region.

Refer to the following documents for supporting DJAARA policy and strategy:

Dhelkunya Dja- Country Plan 2014-2034

GOAL 1: Djaara

Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

GOAL 3: Cultural Heritage

Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

Turning 'wrong way' climate, 'right way' Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy 2023-2034 Objective: Djaara are healthy & resilient to climate change through connection to Country

Objectives - Environment and Heritage

The history of Djaara Ancestors is acknowledged, celebrated, and recognised throughout the Hepburn Shire.

Recommended actions:

Fund, plan and build:

- Acknowledgement and recognition of Djaara people in all towns, and at public spaces such as tourism areas, sports and recreation areas, community gathering spaces/ hubs, and railway stations.
- Dual signage at sites identified in collaboration with DJAARA.
- Djaara street names for new developments.
- Undertake an audit and rename streets and places with culturally insensitive names e.g. Boundary Road, Breakneck Creek.
- Engage in a cultural audit to ensure that their townships are culturally welcoming places.
- Aboriginal flag flying in all towns in community spaces.
- Interpretive signage by DJAARA at sites identified by DJAARA and DJANDAK.
- More memorials / Avenues of Honour to recognise and acknowledge Djaara Ancestors, truth telling, and the Frontier Wars events. This is to be led by DJAARA and DJANDAK and is intended as a reconciliation project for all.

DJAARA land management

Traditional land management to inform developments and embed Djaara cultural practices into the urban environment.

- Utilising Galk Galk Dhelkunya as the primary strategic plan for land management
- Hepburn Shire should acknowledge DJAARA's aspiration to become the land manager for more Public Land and actively seek and support opportunities to transfer management of reserve land to DJAARA.
- Opportunities for DJAARA to take ownership of freehold land should be sought and facilitated, including through a right of first refusal where surplus Council owned land is to be sold.
- Manage the land with Djandak Wi at the right time with Djaara Mob
- All new developments to be planned to be managed with cultural burns (Wi) by Djaara people. New subdivisions are to consider the need for easy burn management, cultural burn safety, plantings to suit management types, consider prevailing winds, provide strategic fuel breaks and hard edges.
- Weed Control should be undertaken in partnership with Djaara people. There is the need to address broad scale weed infestations in the shire. Some weeds such as blackberries have insensitive cultural connotations and should be removed for reconciliation reasons.
- Proposed open spaces and road corridors are designed to include priority plants for Djaara people to harvest bush tucker. This may include resources such as weaving grasses or trees for making tools or medicine plants.
- Undertake targeted programs to return important animals to this landscape e.g. koalas



Objectives - Environment and Heritage

Materials of Djandak

The materials of Djandak are precious and need to be protected.

Building materials

- Require future housing (including landscaping) to utilise all natural resources.
- Any material from Djandak should be planned to be reuse on site or nearby.
- Any Djandak stone or other building materials should be repatriated when decommissioned. They should not end up in landfill.

Contamination

- Contamination from industrial / farming activities is to be addressed to prevent any impact on indigenous plants and animals.
- Ensure that all landfill sites address seepage, weeds, methane and chemicals.
- Improve education to improve use of landfill and recycling across all sectors.

Mining and quarries

- Mining has turned Djandak upside down. Any proposed future mining, energy projects, or quarries on Country should be discussed with DJAARA prior to permits being issued.
- Council should negotiate with mining companies to repair historic damage including the removal of contaminants from waterways.
- Within the terms of the existing legislative framework regulating the earth resources industries, HSC should acknowledge the need, importance and desirability of the ongoing orderly development of resources within the shire. These include stone, timber, water minerals and forest gardening.
- In addition, on Public Land these activities are subject to the RSA, and in particular, the LUAA.
- The planning and licensing of any such development should involve consultation with DJAARA to ensure such activity takes place in a culturally appropriate manner and that locations and items which are of cultural significance to Djaara are not adversely impacted by such development.
- Economic gain derived from the development of these resources should shared with DJAARA.



Objectives - Environment and Heritage

Healthy waterways

Habitat is very important for animals to live and survive. We need healthy waterways.

- Undertake Aboriginal Waterway Assessment (AWA) for all named and ephemeral waterways in the shire.
- In collaboration with DJAARA and Water Authorities make a plan for capping water used for recreation and irrigation.
- In collaboration with Kapa Gatjin (DJAARA advisory group on waterways) develop and restore the existing creeks and waterways to return water to the right location in the landscape. Develop urban stormwater water management that enhances the natural environment, holds water up in the landscape and improved water quality before making its way to the waterways.
- Protect waterways at all stages of the development process.
- Survey, monitor and protect all waterways before, during and post-construction (ongoing) to prevent sedimentation / contamination of waterways.
- Require livestock to be fenced out of waterways / waterbodies including ephemeral waterways

Open spaces

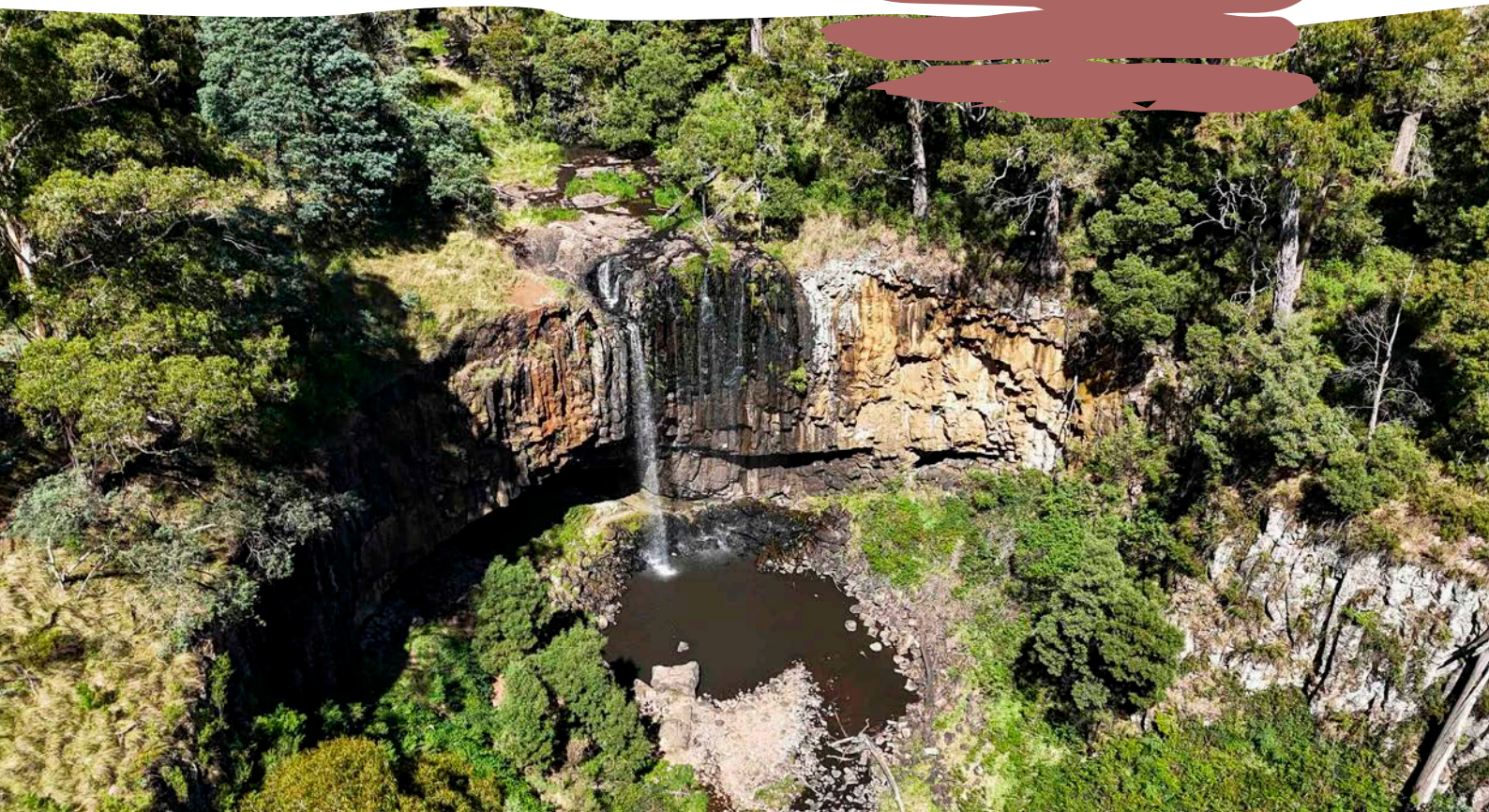
Council should invest in significant open spaces that celebrate and support Djaara culture throughout the shire in town.

- Work with DJAARA (e.g. NRM, DJANDAK Wi, DJANDAK Design team and DJAARA) to assist with land rehabilitation, weed control, monitoring programs, water testing.

Decolonise Hepburn Shire with revegetation

Decolonise Hepburn Shire by planting endemic plants and healing Country

- Plant local endemic Djaara Plants known to the Country instead of plants from other places. HSC to prioritise the inclusion of Djaara significant species.
- Actively create more areas of native revegetation around all the townships.
- Create a succession planting plan to remove non-native trees and replace with endemic trees. The shire should prioritise indigenous planting over exotic plants (from other parts of Australia and the world)



Objectives - Environment and Heritage

Djandak (Land)

- Djaara-led land management practices to enhance biodiversity & build resilience through more layered, functional and connected habitats
- Focus revegetation efforts across djandak on providing shade, shelter & cooling for people and wildlife
- Renewable energy projects & activities on djandak such as wind & solar are more sustainable and inclusive when Djaara are involved

Gatjin (Water)

- Focus water restoration efforts on species that support carbon storage and water retention, and are resilient to drought and fluctuating water levels
- Where Councils are looking to build flood mitigation infrastructure, Djaara biocultural knowledge should inform nature-based alternatives such as wetlands, chains of ponds & permanent pools which provide wildlife refuge, amenity & urban cooling

Wi (fire)

- Djandak wi can help to reduce emissions, store carbon in the landscape, enhance biodiversity and reduce climate risk and vulnerabilities posed by extreme bushfires
- Transition from hazard reduction burns to djandak wi to reduce fuel loads while healing Country

Refer to the following documents for supporting Djaara policy and strategy:

Dhelkunya Dja- Country Plan 2014-2034

GOAL 1: Djaara

Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

GOAL 3: Cultural Heritage

Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

GOAL 4: Bushtucker and Medicine

Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

GOAL 5: Rivers and Waterways

Our rivers and waterways are healthy and meet the needs of our people and land

GOAL 6: Land

Our upside-down country is healthy again

GOAL 7: Self-determination

As our Country's first people, Djaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs.

GOAL 8: Traditional Owner Economy

We have a strong and diverse economic base to provide for our health and wellbeing, and strengthen our living culture

Turning 'Wrong Way' Climate 'Right Way'
Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy
2023-2034

"Djaara climate action is based on the principle of People-Country- Climate connected through Spirit and is focused on healing People, healing Country and healing climate."

Dja Dja Wurrung's vision is a sustainable, resilient and equitable future where past injustices of colonialism, mining and pollution are addressed by empowering Djaara-led responses to climate change on Djandak through self-determination, justice and biocultural knowledge."

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy

"To reinvigorate cultural fire through Traditional Owner led practices across all types of Country and land tenure; enabling Traditional Owners to heal Country and fulfil their rights and obligations to care for Country."

Galk-galk Dhelkunya
Forest Gardening Strategy 2022 -2034

It is the vision of Galk-galk Dhelkunya to holistically connect landscapes and tenures for the benefit of Djaara, Djandak, private landholders and the wider community.

"Forest Gardening Toolkit:

- Cultural thinning
- Revegetation and rehabilitation
- Regenerative practice
- Djandak Wi (cultural burning)
- Gatjin (water)"

Objectives - Community and Cultural Infrastructure

There is currently very limited Community or Cultural Infrastructure for Djaara people in the Hepburn LGA. This is a significant barrier to Djaara people, choosing to spend time, visit and live in the LGA. Increasing the offering of Community or Cultural Infrastructure for Djaara people will have a direct impact on this. This should be factored into Development Contributions, Open Space Contributions, Council budgeting and grant processes, Investment prospectuses, and other relevant processes.

The following projects have been identified as high impact projects to support the Djaara community:

- The township of Franklinford has significant cultural values for all Djaara people, this is a shared history and is an important part of our history that should be protected, known and the strength and resilience of the Djaara community celebrated in this landscape. The township should have a heritage study that confirms tangible and intangible Cultural Heritage and shared history. Based on this study, develop a masterplan in collaboration with DJAARA and HSC. The scope should include:
 - A plan for future development that considers the cultural landscape, viewlines and physical connections to Lalgambuk and other mountains in the region
 - A DUMAWUL business plan for any tourism opportunities should be developed.
 - How to revegetate and heal this cultural landscape including the volcanic cone, creek and roadsides.
 - How to acknowledge the Djaara Ancestors and the shared history of this place
 - Dual naming of features of Franklinford town area.
- In collaboration with DJAARA plan, fund and build a Djaara community hub in the LGA to support DJAARA members to connect, mentor and build their community. This may include a tourism hub, provide a place provide cultural competency training with a Hepburn focus and provide indigenous youth services.
- In collaboration with DJAARA redevelop natural spaces including Loddon Falls, Sailors Falls, Trentham Falls, all mineral springs, lakes including Daylesford, Calembreen, and St George. The designs should feature Djaara designs and are likely to include dual naming, Djaara artwork, DJAARA shelter, DJAARA interpretive signs, and include spaces specific to Djaara cultural needs.
- In partnership with DJAARA plan, fund and build works hub for DJANDAK to allow DJAARA to undertake cultural management of the landscape including Galk Galk Dhelkunya, Forest Gardening, Wii (cultural burns) joint management of natural spaces, Gatjin (waterway management) and etc.
- In partnership with DJAARA protect the River Red Gums and the mineral spring at Glenlyon Recreation Reserve. The designs should feature Djaara designs and are likely to include dual naming, Djaara artwork, DJAARA interpretive signs and include space specific to Djaara cultural needs.
- In partnership with DJAARA plan, fund and plant display gardens of indigenous endemic planting at Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens.
- Actively promote the development of culturally welcoming public facilities including, Council offices, medical clinics, education facilities, libraries, and other institutions. Work in collaboration with DJAARA to improve these facilities.
- In partnership with DJAARA plan, fund and install additional DJAARA signage at the Clunes Creek Walk to include Djaara perspectives and voices.
- In partnership with DJAARA plan, fund and install additional DJAARA signage at the Daylesford Lake to include Djaara perspectives and voices.

Objectives - Community and Cultural Infrastructure

Refer to the following documents for supporting Djaara policy and strategy:

Dhelkunya Dja - Country Plan 2014-2034

GOAL 1: Djaara

Eery Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle

GOAL 2: Cultural Practices and Customs

Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future

GOAL 3: Cultural Heritage

Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

GOAL 4: Bushtucker and Medicine

Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community

GOAL 5: Rivers and Waterways

Our rivers and waterways are healthy and meet the needs of our people and land

GOAL 6: Land

Our upside-down country is healthy again

GOAL 7: Self-determination

As our Country's first people, Djaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs.

GOAL 8: Traditional Owner Economy

We have a strong and diverse economic base to provide for our health and wellbeing, and strengthen our living culture

Turning 'Wrong Way' Climate 'Right Way'

Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy 2023-2034

"Djaara climate action is based on the principle of People-Country- Climate connected through Spirit and is focused on healing People, healing Country and healing climate.

Dja Dja Wurrung's vision is a sustainable, resilient and equitable future where past injustices of colonialism, mining and pollution are addressed by empowering Djaara-led responses to climate change on Djandak through self-determination, justice and biocultural knowledge."

The Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy

"To reinvigorate cultural fire through Traditional Owner led practices across all types of Country and land tenure; enabling Traditional Owners to heal Country and fulfil their rights and obligations to care for Country."

Galk-galk Dhelkunya

Forest Gardening Strategy 2022 -2034

"Forest Gardening Toolkit:

- Cultural thinning
- Revegetation and rehabilitation
- Regenerative practice
- Djandak Wi (cultural burning)
- Gatjin (water)"



“So during the CVA, we’d been to the towns in Hepburn Shire a number of times, and this last time just felt so different, just to be able to walk around the towns, meet people. Yesterday when we were walking through Country, it was just such an enjoyable walk because I was walking by myself and I could hear people in front of me from our group walking and talking, and it just made me think of how our ancestors would have done the same thing, you know? They would have walked that way talking and pointing things out, sharing information with each other, I also had little native bees buzzing around me. So I felt like I was part of the environment and have just really enjoyed this last part of the CVA and really look forward to working with, everybody in the future and making really good decisions and getting great outcomes.”

Wartaka Member

Attachments

- Attachment 3 Local Government Engagement Strategy from Recognition and Settlement Agreement

djaa walatjalang | love of Country
T: (03) 5444 2888 F: (03) 5441 6472
E: djandak@djadjawurrung.com.au
P.O Box 1026 Bendigo VIC 3552
djandak.com.au

DJA DJA WURRUNG ENTERPRISES PTY LTD TRADING AS DJANDAK
ACN: 147 842 895



Attachment 3 Local Government Engagement Strategy

1. Local governments have the means to offer significant on-ground and practical opportunities by which to improve the economic and social standing of Aboriginal people and communities within their municipal boundaries.
2. The State must facilitate the development of relationships, both formal and informal, between local governments (**councils**) and Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (**Corporation**), on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung People. At the time of the fourth variation of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement, the State department with primary responsibility for traditional owner settlements is the Department of Justice and Community Safety (**DJCS**).
3. The Dja Dja Wurrung People Recognition and Settlement Agreement area (**Agreement Area**) encompasses parts of twelve different council areas. Where the Corporation seeks to engage with any or all of those councils, the State must facilitate initiating contact and the development of a relationship.
4. After commencement of the fourth variation to the Recognition and Settlement Agreement, at a time that is reasonably acceptable to DJCS and the Corporation (but within six months of the Amendment Date), representatives of the Corporation and DJCS (and any other relevant departments, which may include DJPR) will meet to commence discussions for the development of a plan for the State, where reasonably practicable to facilitate the fostering and strengthening of the relationship between the Corporation and local councils whose boundaries fall within the Agreement Area, and peak bodies (such as the Municipal Association of Victoria and Victorian Local Governance Association), for the purposes of discussing the actions listed in the table in this Local Government Engagement Strategy.
5. After the Amendment Date, the Attorney-General will write to the Minister for Local Government to notify the Minister of the renewed partnership under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the Corporation with details of the Minister's role within that partnership.

A. Recognition

- (a) Renew acknowledgement of the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of their traditional lands and waters.
- (b) Acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung People in official documents and websites.
- (c) Conduct Welcomes to Country for council events, in accordance with the Protocol on Acknowledgements and Welcomes to Country contained in the Recognition and Settlement Agreement.
- (d) Engage the Corporation to recommend Dja Dja Wurrung names for:
 - (i) new local roads, bridges and public spaces in the Agreement Area;
 - (ii) existing local roads, bridges and public spaces in the Agreement Area, with particular priority given to those local roads, bridges and public spaces that cause hurt or offence to the Dja Dja Wurrung People; and
 - (iii) establish a process for implementation of paragraphs (i) and (ii), including payment of fees to the Corporation for providing this service, and councils to agree not to make requests to the Corporation to endorse traditional names proposed by councils.
- (e) Install further signage, keeping places and interpretive information in agreed locations to acknowledge and recognise the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners for the Agreement Area following consultation between the Corporation and relevant councils.
- (f) Work with the Corporation to develop a protocol for flying the Aboriginal flag on council buildings (for those councils where this is not already in place).
- (g) Work with the Corporation to attach plaques to council buildings and infrastructure that acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners for the Agreement Area (where this has not already been done).

B. Education and relationship building

- (a) Build partnerships between key State and Corporation representatives to facilitate implementation of this strategy, including in relation to the management and protection of Dja Dja Wurrung sites of cultural significance on council land.
- (b) Engage the Corporation to develop education and training programs for councillors, council staff and the broader community to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Dja Dja Wurrung People and their lands, lore, customs, languages, spirituality and history as the Traditional Owners for the Agreement Area and the role of the Corporation as the Traditional Owner Group Entity and Registered Aboriginal Party under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)* for the Agreement Area.
- (c) Hold regular Corporation/council planning and information days, inviting CEOs and mayors (and other staff as appropriate) of all local governments in the Agreement Area.

C. Engagement in strategic planning

- (a) Incorporate and apply self-determination principles from the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework into council planning and decision-making processes.
- (b) Where not already in place, work with the Corporation to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan with the assistance of Reconciliation Australia, with a specific section that deals solely with reconciliation between the Dja Dja Wurrung People and councils.
- (c) Where already in place, work with the Corporation to review any existing Reconciliation Action Plans to ensure they are consistent with the rights and interests of the Dja Dja Wurrung People, with a specific section that deals solely with reconciliation between the Dja Dja Wurrung People and councils.
- (d) Partner with the Corporation to implement the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan.
- (e) Partner with the Corporation to ensure that Dja Dja Wurrung People's rights, aspirations, and perspectives are incorporated into all Community Visions and Council Plans prepared under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic), and partner with the Corporation in the preparation of these documents as a key partner and landowner.
- (f) Partner with the Corporation in the preparation of any new or updated plans, policies or strategies relating to water management for which councils have responsibility.
- (g) Partner with the Corporation in preparation of any new or updated plans, policies or strategies relating to roads and roadsides, including Road Management Plans under the *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic). Such partnership is to focus on Dja Dja Wurrung People's rights and interests in and adjacent to roads, road reserves and road infrastructure, particularly in relation to protection of places of cultural significance.
- (h) Partner with the Corporation in preparation of any new or updated firewood plan, policy or strategy.
- (i) Partner with the Corporation to co-design and deliver health and wellbeing programs and services, including in production of Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plans under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Vic).
- (j) Partner with the Corporation to co-design and deliver a mental wellbeing program to improve mental health issues impacting on Aboriginal people under the *Balit Murrup: Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027*, with Aboriginal self-determination embedded as a core principle.
- (k) Partner with the Corporation when preparing Municipal Early Years Plans, with a view to improving health outcome for local Aboriginal children and/or deepening the broader community's knowledge and awareness of Dja Dja Wurrung culture.
- (l) Partner with the Corporation in preparation of fire management plans, policies or strategies, including any new or updated Municipal Fire Management Plan.

- (m) Partner with the Corporation in preparation of any new rating policy or strategy and commit to working with the Corporation to minimise rates and levies charged to the Corporation or other entities wholly owned or controlled by Dja Dja Wurrung People.
- (n) Conduct periodic reviews of local laws, in partnership with the Corporation, to ensure appropriate alignment with Dja Dja Wurrung People's rights, interests and aspirations.
- (o) Put in place procedures to engage with the Corporation in preparation of the above plans, policies, strategies and local laws early in the development and planning process so that Dja Dja Wurrung input is meaningful and useful.
- (p) Seek and secure funding to implement the above strategies. Where no other funding arrangement is in place, any work or consultation with the Corporation should be conducted on a fee for service basis.

D. Business Support

- (a) Recognise that Traditional Owner businesses can make valuable and unique contributions to local economies and communities: driving innovation, providing access to new markets, creating new jobs and attracting tourists.
- (b) Establish a preferential contracting and procurement process under which councils agree to preferentially source goods and services from the Corporation or other Dja Dja Wurrung entities or businesses, including in relation to:
 - (i) natural resources management;
 - (ii) cultural awareness training;
 - (iii) equipment or machinery hire; and
 - (iv) other goods or services for which the Corporation and/or its subsidiaries or members have relevant supply capability or expertise.
- (c) Commit to notifying the Corporation of any local business and economic development programs and grants.
- (d) Put in place a structure to ensure that councils preferentially source biodiversity and carbon offsets, and other environmental market services and products, from the Corporation or other Dja Dja Wurrung entities or businesses.
- (e) Formally adopt the Preferential Procurement Strategy for Natural Resource Management contained in the Natural Resource Agreement.

E. Employment

Commit to preferentially employ appropriately skilled Dja Dja Wurrung People and to employ Dja Dja Wurrung People and provide upskilling through on-the-job training.

<p>F. Management of council owned or controlled land</p>
<p>Develop a framework for involvement of the Corporation in management of council-controlled lands and waters. Recognition of the aspiration of Dja Dja Wurrung People to be sole managers of their lands and waters should be a cornerstone of any such framework.</p>
<p>G. Participation in planning scheme processes</p>
<p>(a) Develop a framework for ensuring alignment of each planning scheme (including the location of relevant zones and overlays) with Dja Dja Wurrung People's rights, interests and aspirations, including identifying, assessing and documenting places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance for inclusion in the planning scheme (in accordance with <i>Victorian Planning Provision 15.03-2S</i>), including by way of Heritage Overlay (in accordance with <i>Victorian Planning Provision 43.01</i>).</p> <p>(b) Develop a process to partner with the Corporation in relation to planning permit applications and planning scheme amendments that affect the Dja Dja Wurrung People.</p> <p>(c) Corporation engagement with the planning process should be funded or be undertaken on a fee for service basis.</p>
<p>H. Funding</p>
<p>Partner with the Corporation to secure funding to implement this strategy, including to employ a Local Government Engagement Strategy Implementation Manager and Implementation Officer.</p>