

# Dhelkunya Dja

Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan  
2014-2034



# Message from the Chair

The development of the Dja Dja Wurrung's first Country Plan coincided with the historic settlement of our native title claim with the Victorian Government. The settlement represented a once in a lifetime opportunity to achieve legal recognition of our connection to Country and our rights as Traditional Owners - including our access to, use and management of the natural and cultural resources on Country.



Our Recognition and Settlement Agreement, signed on 28 March 2013 also secured significant resources and opportunities for our community. These achievements can be seen as building blocks which directly affect the way we are able to practice our culture, strengthen our community and ultimately deliver on our Vision for Country.

This Country Plan was developed between 2012-14 during a period of transformation for our community. During this time the capacities of our People were continually stretched and the context for our planning constantly evolving.

The plan was developed in two key stages. While we had done some early aspirations work within the corporation and had had some past opportunities to talk about our personal hopes for the future with researchers and anthropologists, Dja Dja Wurrung People had not yet come together as a group to agree on a vision for the community. So as we were preparing to share our experience of history as our Country's First People and make lasting and binding decisions about our place in contemporary Victoria through native title settlement negotiations, it became the right time to develop a Country Plan.

Our native title negotiation team, which was representative of our Clan Groups and lead by myself as Chair of the Corporation, took on the task of leading the development of this Plan. The scope was determined to be broad and therefore reflective of the holistic way we see our Country and people. It was to include our aspirations for development as well as the preservation and revival of our cultural heritage, and was to be used to inform and guide our native title negotiations and to influence government strategic planning that was taking place at the time in our region.

The Country Plan will provide direction for the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Traditional Owner Land Management Board. It will be used to build partnerships with our key stakeholders and to increase the involvement of Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners in the effort to achieve our goals.

I commend the tireless work of the negotiation team and the participation of the broader community in so clearly articulating our pathway to a better future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Atkinson'.

**Graham Atkinson**

Chairperson, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

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# Executive summary

Before European colonisation, the natural places within Dja Dja Wurrung Country were well known, had a name and song and were celebrated as part of our culture. We had an economy, we had a political system and we had the resources and the means to take care of our community.

This Country Plan (the Plan) is about re-affirming our aspirations and describing the future of our people, the Traditional Owners of Dja Dja Wurrung Country. It recognises the importance of our cultural heritage – our significant places and landscapes, our stories and language, our customs and practices and our responsibilities for looking after Country. It describes the pathway our community has determined it needs to take to rebuild and prosper.

The Plan is structured in 4 parts. The first is a brief background to our culture, Country and rights, which provides the context for the rest of the Plan. The second part describes our holistic Vision for Country and a strategic framework of goals and objectives which was developed through a series of community workshops. More information on the process for developing the Plan is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

Our Vision is for the health and wellbeing of our people to be strong, and underpinned by our living culture. Our Vision is for our lands and waters to be in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People. As this Country's First People our vision includes being

politically empowered with an established place in society, and being capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse economic base.

The 8 goals of the Plan are framed around the following themes:

- ✧ Jaara (our people)
- ✧ Cultural Practices and Customs
- ✧ Cultural Heritage
- ✧ Bush Tucker (edible and medicinal plants and animals)
- ✧ Rivers and Waterways
- ✧ Land
- ✧ Self-determination
- ✧ Enterprises



The Dja Dja Wurrung philosophy for managing Country is then set out in a number of principles, which will be used to guide the interactions of all people with our traditional lands and waters. The right way for us to be consulted is outlined in an additional set of principles in **Appendix 2**.

The third part of the Plan goes on to outline the key natural resource management strategies that we can start working on now. Each of the following strategies are made up of priority actions for us to undertake as part of the effort to achieve our Vision:

- ☞ Water management
- ☞ Fire management
- ☞ Joint management
- ☞ Land remediation
- ☞ Natural resource management service delivery
- ☞ Resource rents
- ☞ Traditional ecological knowledge

The fourth part of the Plan explains how the Country Plan will be implemented more broadly. Particular reference is made to the Dja Dja Wurrung planning framework which incorporates other key strategies around economic development, cultural heritage management and workforce participation, along with the Corporation's priorities and obligations set out in corporate, business and action plans.

The Country Plan will also be implemented by delivering on our responsibilities under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement; by influencing public policies and plans and participating in programs; and through the development of strategic partnerships.

**Appendix 3** includes a summary of indicators we will use to track progress against our 8 goals and where we expect to access and collect the right data.





# Background

## Our Culture

Dja Dja Wurrung People have lived on our traditional lands and cared for our Country over many thousands of years. For us, Country is more than just the landscape, it is more than what is visible to the eye - it is a living entity, which holds the stories of creation and histories that cannot be erased.

Our dreaming stories of *Djandak* (Country) explain the creation of our lands and how Dja Dja Wurrung people evolved. Bunjil, the Eagle Hawk, is our creator and helps us to understand our connections to each other through his law. Mindi, the giant serpent, is his enforcer implementing the laws and ceremonies that ensure the continuation of life.

Each place on our Country is known and valued, has a name and a song, and this is embedded in our landscape along with murrups – spirits imprinted on the water, birds, plants, animals, rocks, mountains and ancestral spirits. We continue to perform ceremonies to honour each of the spirits and our traditional rites, our Welcome to Country being one example.

The spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past and our traditions, and our stories instil an on-going respect for our Country. Our songs and stories tell us of how the world was and how it should be, and we feel a moral responsibility to care for our Country as it binds us to the past, present and future. Our ancestors looked after this Country and we are duty bound to look after it for the next generation.

We feel an affinity with the land when we're on Dja Dja Wurrung Country; the ancestor's spirit is in the rock, the tree, within the earth and sometimes in the wind and rain clouds. There is an inner peace that runs through us, a feeling of recognition and belonging. We maintain this strong physical relationship with Dja Dja Wurrung Country by continuing to access it, looking after it and by using its natural resources.



Caring for Country is the living essence that is shared between people and place. It is vital for maintaining our culture. The passing down of traditional knowledge is a seminal way in which we transmit Dja Dja Wurrung cultural heritage to the younger generations and it is how we have maintained our cultural identity over the passage of time. This practice is the primary responsibility of Dja Dja Wurrung men and women. We teach stories of pre-contact origin, the correct way to engage with Country, the importance of revisiting places as a way of connecting with our spirituality and culture, and informing the decisions about the management of Aboriginal places and sites. Our present day ecological knowledge is derived from this direct experience with the natural world built up over many hundreds of generations.

We teach our young ones how to scar trees, take bark, carve and decorate. We take them camping and teach them about where and how to harvest medicinal plants, find grubs and the best places to go hunting and fishing. We only use the land in a way that will make provision for future needs. We use natural resources by making traditional objects and artefacts, fishing, hunting and gathering and using plants for medicinal purposes.

But over the years, our lands have been exploited and misused, and our people driven off the land and away from their Country.



Unsustainable development, changed fire regimes and mining have changed the nature of our Country and caused it harm. We have a duty to care for our Country and feel ashamed and sad that it is currently suffering. When the Country suffers we suffer.

We know the place where Mindi first emerged. It is still a sacred place, but sadly it is a desecrated space. We believe we are an integral part of the ecosystem and value the balance of natural resources. When the Country is sick, we are sick.

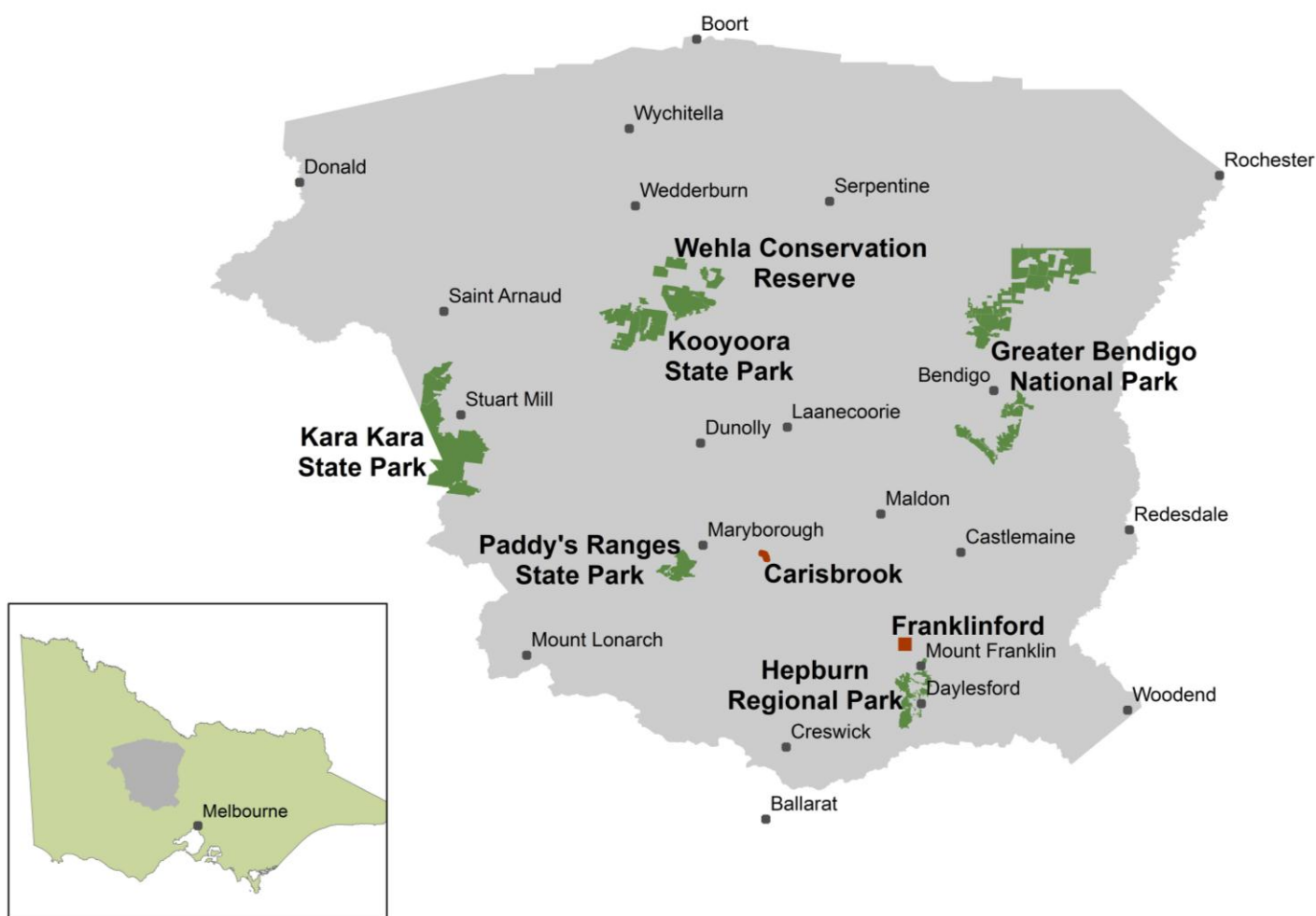
Not all Dja Dja Wurrung people are able to live on our traditional lands, but we have a totemic relationship with our Country which means we do not have to be physically on Country to feel connected and affected. However, the spiritual connection that we feel to the land is reinforced by our presence on Country and our desire to Care for Country will always remain strong.

## Our Country

Dja Dja Wurrung territory extends from Mount Franklin and the towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo in the east, Boort in the north, Donald in the northwest, to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca marking the south west boundary. Our territory encompasses the Bendigo and Clunes goldfields and the Loddon and Avoca river watersheds.

Hundreds of years ago, our Country was mostly covered in open forests and woodlands, providing us with the plants and animals that we used for food, medicine, shelter and customary

practices. Today, though our Country is vastly changed, it still holds many important values. Our Box Ironbark forests don't occur anywhere else. Important tucker and medicine species can still be found across our Country – eels, mussels, crays and fish like Murray Cod and yellow belly are in our rivers. Emu, goanna, possum, kangaroo, wallaby and rabbit have been sustainably used on this Country for thousands of years and continue to be important to us. We use local plants like lomandra, saltbush, nardoo, cumbuji, wattle, red gum and chocolate lilies.





Our Country is now also valued by other people and cultures. European and Asian cultural heritage is strong, particularly through the gold mining history of our region, which continues to influence the recreational pursuits of prospecting and fossicking that are practiced today. Local industries, including beekeeping, forestry, agriculture and tourism, depend on the natural resources that our Country provides.

Dja Dja Wurrung country is a popular place for people to live and work and some towns, including the major regional centre of Bendigo, are growing rapidly. In the southern areas, mining and manufacturing are the main industries, although business, information technology and health sectors are also growing. In the north, farming is a major economic activity and mineral sands, renewable energy and nature-based and Indigenous tourism are seen to be providing new economic opportunities.

Eighty-seven per cent of Dja Dja Wurrung country is privately owned, with sixty-five per cent of this used for agriculture. The rest of our Country is a combination of parks, forests and reserves, six of which are Aboriginal Title lands that have been leased back to the Victorian Government under Aboriginal joint management. Along with two freehold parcels granted under our Regional Settlement Agreement, a total of 2.8 per cent of Dja Dja Wurrung Country is owned by Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation.

The population of the Dja Dja Wurrung region has been estimated at 120,000 of which it is believed that the Indigenous population is approximately 1,300.

Dja Dja Wurrung Country is host to some of the most profoundly altered landscapes in Victoria. A long history of agricultural development, urban settlement and mining has left fragmented ecosystems and led to the loss of many species of plants and animals. Changed fire regimes have affected the cycling of nutrients and the composition of species, and led to increased fuel loads that pose dangers to people and ecosystems.

Widespread clearing has caused much of the productive topsoil to erode away and allowed the establishment of many pest animals and plants that are displacing and preying on our native species.

This transformation is continuing – driven by both natural and human-caused factors. Significant urban growth, the continued impact of salinity and increasing variability in rainfall and extreme weather events will continue to challenge the repair and ongoing management of Country. These are some of the challenges that we will need to address to heal our Country.



## Our Rights and Responsibilities

In 2013, the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation entered into an historic native title settlement with the State of Victoria on behalf of all past, current and future Jaara People. Under the agreements that make up this settlement, we have secured a range of rights that include:

- ✧ Recognition as the Traditional Owners of our Country and acknowledgement of the part government has played in dispossessing and dispersing our people
- ✧ The right to practice and enjoy culture
- ✧ The right to maintain our spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and its resources
- ✧ The right to harvest agreed plant and animal species, water and forest produce for personal, domestic or non-commercial use
- ✧ The right to harvest certain flora and forest produce for commercial purposes
- ✧ The right to camp on certain areas of public land without a permit
- ✧ Protocols for acknowledgements, and welcomes to Country
- ✧ Agreement by the State to develop a protocol for assisting the Corporation engage with local government in efforts to improve the economic, cultural and social standing of Dja Dja Wurrung people
- ✧ Advisory, negotiation and veto rights; and community benefits for certain land use activities that occur on public land within our boundaries

- ✧ Support for economic development activities, including seed funding for enterprise development
- ✧ Operational support for the Corporation
- ✧ Guaranteed contracts to a specified amount for works on public lands
- ✧ Freehold title of two culturally significant properties - Carisbrook and Franklinford
- ✧ Aboriginal title rights and joint management over six national parks and reserves, with the possibility of additional hand-backs in the future
- ✧ Freehold title to Mount Barker and abutting road reserves

With these rights come responsibilities:

- ✧ Work in partnership with government on a Traditional Owner Land Management Board to develop and implement joint management plans for our national parks
- ✧ Establish a viable organisation to effectively employ the settlement benefits for all Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners
- ✧ Ensure the Corporation is operating to support the economic development of the Dja Dja Wurrung people – through securing employment and improving living standards; being a focal point for cultural activities and language renewal; providing opportunities for participation in natural resource management and land use activities; and engaging with government and others about decisions related to our Country.

# Our Aspirations

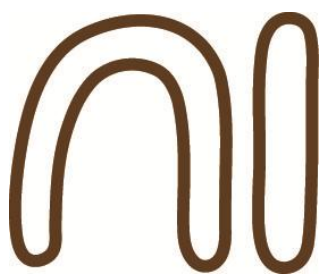
Our Vision for Country is to ensure that:

The health and wellbeing of our people is strong, and underpinned by our living culture.

Our lands and waters are in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.



As this Country's First People we are politically empowered with an established place in society and capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse economic base.



## GOAL 1: Jaara

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

Jaara, or Dja Dja Wurrung people are direct descendants of the First Peoples of this land - we recognise all of the Clan groups who are descended from our apical ancestors. We have ancestors tracing back thousands of years, and future generations yet to come. Some of us are living on Country and some are living away. We are all Dja Dja Wurrung. We need to act now to ensure the spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing of our People, both current and future.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- ✧ Be recognised as a sovereign Aboriginal nation and the Traditional Owners of Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- ✧ Reduce the major risk factors to our People and ensure there is access to appropriate health services and housing
- ✧ Have more Dja Dja Wurrung people working on Country and in stable employment
- ✧ Ensure our full range of rights and interests are legally recognised and reflected in the policies of government.

There are many challenges that we will face in working to meet these objectives. To begin with, we are not starting from a level playing field. Historical dispossession has left us with dispersed communities and a lack of community cohesion. Longstanding inequity in law, policy and governance has left Aboriginal people at a disadvantage in health, housing, employment and many of our other fundamental needs. Some government policies remain out-dated, failing to reflect the contemporary understanding of traditional laws, culture, property rights and human rights. Native Title recognition and settlement has helped to heal some of the scars of history, but we have a long way to go to build our capacity to participate fully in the social and economic fabric of the community.



Key indicators for measuring our progress towards this goal will be:

- ☞ The number of Dja Dja Wurrung people participating in formal training and completing higher education
- ☞ Life expectancy of Dja Dja Wurrung people
- ☞ The number and area of parcels of land, included National Parks, handed back to Dja Dja Wurrung
- ☞ The number of Welcomes to Country performed
- ☞ Number of signs recognising Dja Dja Wurrung
- ☞ The presence and size of ranger teams in place and working on Country





## GOAL 2: Customs and Practices

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

The laws, customs and stories that make up Dja Dja Wurrung culture guide the way we behave and the decisions we make every day. We pass these on to our young ones through song and dance, and through storytelling and walking Country, so that they can carry on our peoples' connection to Country. Our dreaming stories tell of Mindi, Bunjil and Waa, explaining the creation of our lands and the evolution of our people, and the right way for us to live. Our language connects us to water, land, animals, spirits and people, calling our ancestors to ceremony and strengthening our identity. Some of our customs and practices are men's business and some are women's business, and some are for use to share as a community. Dja Dja Wurrung culture is the foundation of our community's spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing, and we need to protect it, pass it on and help others to understand and respect our ways.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

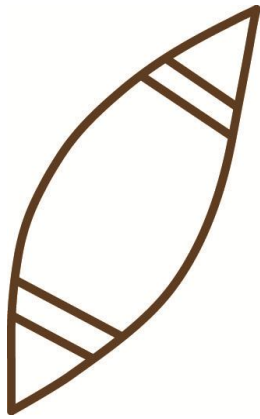
- ☞ Actively practice our ceremonies and teach our ways to our young ones
- ☞ Reclaim, revive and rejuvenate our language
- ☞ Consolidate and protect our traditional knowledge, using it to guide cultural practices and the way our Country is managed
- ☞ Advance reconciliation with the broader community by sharing our stories, values and customs.

The demands of work and life make it difficult to find the time and means for Dja Dja Wurrung people to regularly practice culture. Coupled with the past removal of our language and dispersal of our people, and the continued loss of knowledge as elders pass on, the task to revive and protect our culture is a challenging one.



We will use the following indicators to know if we are on track to achieving our goal:

- ☞ Levels of participation in ceremonial events
- ☞ Number of Dja Dja Wurrung people speaking language
- ☞ Fire stick farming methodologies being accepted and practiced
- ☞ Number of events, awareness raising activities and cultural materials produced that teach the broader community about who we are.



### GOAL 3: Cultural Heritage

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

In addition to our customs and practices, our tangible cultural heritage is a core part of our identity and connection to Country. The mountains, rivers and trees that make up cultural landscapes are the foundations of our creation stories. The sites that lie within these landscapes tell the stories of our history – both good and bad. Scar trees and birthing sites are some of the evidence that remain of the past practices of our people. Massacre and mission sites remind us of more recent influences on our people. Aboriginal artefacts are scattered across our Country, telling of the rituals and practices of our ancestors. Some of the remains of our ancestors have been removed, and they will not be at rest until they are properly buried on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- ✧ Strengthen our understanding of what significant sites and artefacts exist on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- ✧ Secure the right and means to effectively protect and manage cultural landscapes and sites
- ✧ Ensure Dja Dja Wurrung ancestral remains, cultural objects and collections are returned to Country, and protected
- ✧ Make use of our cultural heritage to promote healing and reconciliation, teach Jaara people about their Country and laws, and raise cultural awareness among the broader community

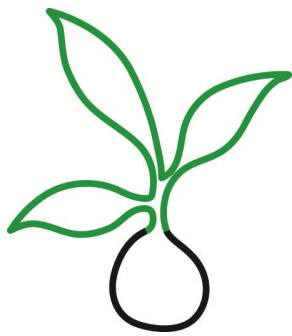
Many of our special places and artefacts are not secure. Through both accidental and wilful damage, our cultural heritage is gradually being destroyed. Vandalism and deliberate destruction of sites is sadly still an issue for us. Damage also occurs through the actions of tourists and visitors to our Country, where signage and protection of sites is not adequate. On a larger scale, compliance with cultural heritage legislation is not always strong, and sites can be lost through developments and land management practices. Our artefacts are collected by landholders and visitors who find them, and don't know or care to return them to us. We will need to consider all of these challenges when taking action to protect our cultural heritage.

We will measure our progress towards this goal by looking at:

- ✧ The number of cultural heritage sites identified, recorded and accessible to Dja Dja Wurrung people
- ✧ The number of cultural heritage officers working on Country
- ✧ The number of monuments at massacre sites
- ✧ The number of artefacts and ancestral remains returned to Dja Dja Wurrung
- ✧ The number of people visiting sites and keeping places for cultural education.







## GOAL 4: Bushtucker and Medicine

Our Country continues to nourish us by providing bush tucker and medicine

Over 200 years ago, our ancestors were the experts who managed this land. They were the first conservationists who respected the environment and had the right management in place. They knew of our Country's plants and animals, cycles and systems. They understood the role that fire plays in regeneration and in promoting the balance of species and ecosystems. This knowledge has been built up over generations of observation and management, and passed down.

We are gardeners of the environment. We care for the land and it provides for us. We use lomandra and matt rush to weave baskets. We hunt wallaby, emu and goanna. We eat the eels, mussels, crayfish and yellow belly from our streams. We gather bardi grubs and duck eggs, nardoo and yam daisies and wattle seeds for food and medicine. We use buloke and red gum timber for our tools and ceremonies. We need to manage our Country in the right way if we want it to continue to provide for our food and medicinal needs into the future.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- ✧ Understand what plants and animals now exist on Country, and what condition they are in, so we can better define an appropriate 'cultural take'
- ✧ Re-build the capacity of our community to care for Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- ✧ Actively manage our traditional lands and waters to protect the plants and animals that are important to us; and promote the right species in the right places, so they can provide for us in a sustainable way
- ✧ Get out on Country to hunt and gather.

Our Country is under threat. Many of the land management practices of modern times are not well suited to our environment – European farming techniques, inappropriate fire regimes and overfishing are all upsetting the natural balance of our ecosystems. Pests and pathogens are displacing native species and infecting our plants and animals. In some cases, the shift in ecosystem composition is causing an over-abundance of native species like kangaroo, which is increasing the demand on already limited food resources.

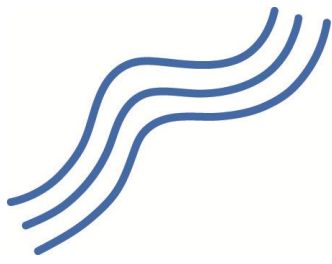


The changes that we are seeing in the climate are placing pressure on already fragile ecosystems, and we expect this impact to continue. Addressing these issues is difficult for Dja Dja Wurrung people as there are still institutional barriers to participating in the management of Country. While our relationship with government and other natural resource managers is improving, our knowledge is not often sought and we are still rarely included in the natural resource management decisions that are made on our Country. This will need to change if Country is to be healthy in the long term.



We will measure progress towards this goal by looking at:

- ☞ The availability of priority species of bush tucker and medicine plants
- ☞ The number of bush foods and medicinal species protected in seed banks
- ☞ The area of land actively managed by Dja Dja Wurrung people



## GOAL 5: Rivers and Waterways

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

Traditional Aboriginal culture revolved around relationships to the land and water – relationships that hold deep physical, social, environmental, spiritual and cultural significance. Today, the land and its waterways remain central to our cultural identity and aspirations for community and economic development. Our rivers are the veins of Country, and provide food and medicine, and places to camp, hunt, fish, swim and hold ceremonies. They are places that are central to our creation stories, and many of our cultural heritage sites are associated with waterways – burial sites, birthing sites and middens. Our waterways are places that we connect with our ancestors and pass traditional knowledge on to our children and grandchildren.

Rivers such as the Loddon, Coloban, Campaspe, Avoca and Avon; Lakes that include Boort, Eppalock and Laanecoorie; swamps and creeks – these are significant parts of our Country that link us to our past and will provide for our future.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

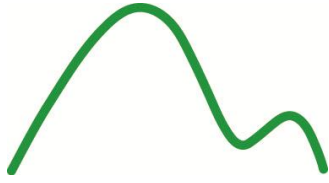
- ✧ Ensure all of our waterways are healthy, with the right water in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of the environment, Jaara people and the broader community
- ✧ Have a recognised and legitimate role in water governance, with genuine consultation in policy development and a part in decision-making about our waterways
- ✧ Secure adequate and equitable water rights that meet our social, cultural, spiritual, economic and environmental needs
- ✧ Share our creation stories to teach people of how water works in the landscape

Our rivers, lakes and swamps are sick. A legacy of past and current land management decisions have caused erosion, weed and pest issues and pollution from farm chemicals and mining contaminants throughout our Country. Water diversions and controlled flows mean that many of our rivers are getting water at the wrong time, or in the wrong volumes, and over-fishing is putting pressure on important species. It is a big task to heal our waterways so that they can continue to be the lifeblood of our Country.



We will measure progress towards healing our rivers by looking at:

- ☞ The condition of Dja Dja Wurrung priority rivers, using the Index of Stream Condition
- ☞ The presence of good fish and old man weed
- ☞ The number of rivers with appropriate water regimes
- ☞ The volume of Dja Dja Wurrung cultural water entitlements
- ☞ The number of water dependent sites of cultural significance that are actively managed by Dja Dja Wurrung
- ☞ The number of Dja Dja Wurrung people involved in waterway monitoring
- ☞ Appropriate planning and governance arrangements for Lake Boort reserve are in place



## GOAL 6: Upside-down Country

Our upside-down country is healthy again

In the mid-1800s, large deposits of gold were discovered in our Country, enticing flocks of people looking to make their fortune. The miners cut down trees for firewood and building, diverted creeks and rivers and dug holes in the ground, pulling up large volumes of earth. Since that time, mining has been constant in Dja Dja Wurrung Country. This has left a legacy of soil erosion, salinity and toxicity from contaminants such as arsenic and mercury. The country around the goldfields is very sick and a significant program of remediation is required. As custodians of all Dja Dja Wurrung land, we feel a deep responsibility to heal this Country so that it can be healthy and functioning once again.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- ✧ Understand the extent of damage to Dja Dja Wurrung Country caused by mining
- ✧ Be involved in the design and implementation of remediation works and restoration initiatives in upside-down country
- ✧ Build our capacity to remediate toxic land
- ✧ Have areas of land handed back that are sick and not being healed

Despite the environmental and social impacts of this legacy, no-one has taken responsibility for healing the areas that have been impacted by the mining. Reversing the damage to this land is not an attractive business proposition, so there are few remediation programs. On top of this, the risks and liabilities from the contamination that has occurred are largely unknown, and so governments have been reluctant to grant permission to work on this Country. We will need to develop strong partnerships if we are to overcome these significant challenges.



We will measure progress towards this goal by looking at:

- ☞ The number of partnerships and programs established to remediate upside-down country
- ☞ Number of Dja Dja Wurrung people trained in toxic land remediation
- ☞ Area of land handed back to Dja Dja Wurrung for remediation and subsequent use



The impacts of mining on Dja Dja Wurrung Country – Boylan, Hepburn Estate





## GOAL 7: Self-determination

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

Our Native Title Settlement Agreement was an important milestone for Dja Dja Wurrung people. The Victorian Government now recognises us as the Traditional Owners of this Country and acknowledges the history of dispersement and dispossession that has affected our people. The agreement allows for continued recognition, through protocols on acknowledgements and welcomes to country, and signage on Dja Dja Wurrung Country. It provides us with some legal rights – to practice culture and access and use our land and resources, to have some say in what happens on our Country. And it gives us title of some of our traditional lands, including the right to have an active role in managing Country. The settlement agreement is an important starting point for the self-determination of Dja Dja Wurrung, and we now need to build up the structures and processes that will enable us to make the most of these rights.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- ☞ Be a clearly identified group of people with well-defined goals and objectives, authority and leadership structures
- ☞ Have a strong, well-governed corporation that effectively represents the interest of Dja Dja Wurrung people
- ☞ Effectively implement the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement
- ☞ Secure Aboriginal title rights to all public lands in Dja Dja Wurrung Country
- ☞ Have an active and engaged community that participates in all aspects of society

We are on our way to achieving this goal of self-determination and leaving behind the mission mentality that has previously underpinned our relationship with government and the broader community. However, there are still challenges that we will need to overcome. We remain under-represented in many decision-making forums and our voices as Traditional Owners are often not heard. Access to resources and rights are much lower for us than many of those with competing interests, which continues to limit our ability to negotiate fairly and participate equally in priority-setting. By strengthening and unifying our organisation and community, we will be in a better position to improve our standing and representation in governance and policy debates.



We will measure progress towards this goal by looking at:

- ☞ The number of Dja Dja Wurrung representatives on decision-making boards and committees
- ☞ The number of regional and local planning documents that incorporate Dja Dja Wurrung goals and priorities
- ☞ The number of Memoranda of Understanding with government agencies and authorities
- ☞ The number and value of successful funding proposals
- ☞ The number of people employed by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation



## 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

Core to achieving our goals of self-determination and improved community wellbeing is the need to develop a sustainable economic base. Building on our strengths, we have competitive advantages through our culture, traditional knowledge of Country, asset base and rights to resources. These open up opportunities in the natural resources sector – through use of assets and resources with enterprises such as seed collection, carbon farming, kangaroo culling and apiary, and through the provision of natural resource management services such as revegetation, fire management and pest control. There is also interest in the tourism sector. Jaara people are very passionate about our culture and see tourism as a pathway to tell our stories and share places of cultural significance, while providing much-needed employment opportunities.

Through Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd, we will pursue these opportunities to develop our individual and collective skills, and strengthen our ability to deliver on the aspirations of the Dja Dja Wurrung community without compromising culture or community cohesion.

To achieve our goal, we aim to:

- ✧ Grow our asset base and use it wisely and sustainably to generate economic benefit for Dja Dja Wurrung people
- ✧ Attract and secure the professional expertise required to create and exploit economic development and employment opportunities
- ✧ To build a strong natural resource management service industry with a respected brand and a high level of client satisfaction
- ✧ Leverage significant human, financial and information resources through the development of strategic partnerships and joint ventures

Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd is working to develop partnerships and business opportunities for Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal Community, particularly on Dja Dja Wurrung Country. As the organisation develops, it will face a range of challenges that will need to be navigated. Systemic barriers such as weak commercial rights, unclear policy and legal frameworks, lack of cultural recognition and over allocation of natural resources create difficulties in developing natural resource-based enterprises. The NRM industry in central Victoria is already very competitive, making it hard to make a profit as a new producer/provider. Historical inequities mean that capacity and knowledge within the Dja Dja Wurrung community needs further development if enterprises are to be significantly expanded. These challenges are not insurmountable and will be a key focus of our efforts.



We will measure progress towards this goal by looking at:

- ✧ Additional rights and assets secured
- ✧ Number and value of joint ventures created
- ✧ Number and value of agreements to provide contract services
- ✧ Number and value of natural resource management business enterprises, including number of employees

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# Principles

The principles below are critically important to Dja Dja Wurrung people as they collectively define our philosophy for how our land and natural resources should be used and managed. They will inform the way we engage with others who share our Country and will be the foundation of our partnerships with government and non-government agencies, industry and community groups.

## Culture

1. We will strive to uphold our cultural obligations to look after Country for future generations; to practice and revitalize our cultural traditions and customs; and to develop the expression of these into the future. We are not frozen in time.

## Partnerships

2. All lands, waters and living resources on our Country form traditional Aboriginal landscapes and are maintained by a range of natural resource managers, including Dja Dja Wurrung people. Our partners must be clear and transparent about their rights and responsibilities in this regard
3. We are committed to working with our corporation and its members, Elders, young people, neighbours, agencies and the broader community in the effort to care for our Country
4. We will participate in the decisions that affect our rights; and will be cautious when considering proposals and options for using our Country and its resources in the absence of a full understanding of risks and consequences

## Looking after Country

5. Our Country is managed in a contemporary context, to generate benefits in circumstances where degradation or destruction can be avoided. Where damage has been done through past activities, a sustained effort will be made to heal our Country
6. Our use and management of medicinal and edible plants and animals remains a key element of our subsistence and development
7. The conservation and protection of the environment, in particular where our culturally significant places and sites are located is paramount
8. We will use both our traditions and the tools and practices available to us as citizens of contemporary Australia to sustainably manage our natural resources
9. Visitors will be welcome to respect and enjoy our Country



### Traditional knowledge

10. We will strive to maintain, control, protect and develop our traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions

### Economic

11. We will exercise our right to freely pursue Dja Dja Wurrung economic and social development, the benefits of which will be shared equitably amongst Dja Dja Wurrung people, other local Aboriginal people and the wider regional community
12. Infrastructure and enterprise development will be designed to minimise harmful impacts on our Country.



By effectively implementing these principles, both through our own efforts and by supporting those of others, it is anticipated that:

- ☞ We will be increasingly recognised as the original owners of this Country with ongoing rights and obligations, and seen not only as traditional custodians but also as contemporary and future managers
- ☞ We will have our intellectual and cultural property rights respected in all activities that relate to looking after Country
- ☞ Our partners and stakeholders will have a greater understanding and appreciation of our cultural values and responsibilities, and how supporting these can make a strong positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the broader community.

# Natural Resource Management strategies

The way we are able look after Country – how we use knowledge; how we understand the issues and workings of Country; what actions we take and how we partner with others; and how we are compensated and able to sustain ourselves in the effort to protect Country – is critical to delivering on and each and every one of our goals and achieving our Vision for Country.

This part of the Plan describes the natural resource management (NRM) strategies that we have identified and seek to undertake. Where their implementation makes a contribution to delivering on our goals, the relevant symbol (below) appears next to the title of that strategy on the following pages. Coloured symbols indicate goals that will be directly influenced by the strategy. Black and white symbols represent an indirect benefit.



Jaara (Dja Dja Wurrung people)



Cultural Practices and Customs



Cultural Heritage



Bush Tucker (edible and medicinal plants and animals)



Rivers and Waterways



Land



Self-determination



Enterprises

The tables that follow outline the key actions for each strategy. For each action, the following information is also provided:

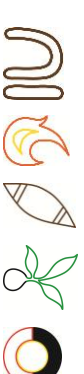
- Other plans (complete or in development) where the action is described/funded
- The level of resources required to implement them (Low = less than \$30K; Medium = between \$30K and \$100K; High = above \$100K)
- Who has primary responsibility for implementing the action
- The indicative timeframe for its delivery.

## Water management



Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Secure funding for cultural flow research (values and needs)	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2015-16
Work with the State and Murray Darling Basin Authority to secure a cultural flow right	Federation policy agenda	H	FVTOC	2014-19
Engage with Commonwealth and Victorian Environmental Water Holders to influence the use of surplus water	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Engage with the State to secure groundwater water allocations as they become available	Federation policy agenda	L	FVTOC	2014-15
Establish a formal role in regional water management by participating in the development and implementation of Regional Water Management Strategies that apply to Dja Dja Wurrung Country	Recognition & Settlement Agreement (RSA)	L	DDWCAC	2014
Work with the State to develop a plan of management and governance arrangements for the Lake Boort reserve	RSA	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Negotiate a cultural heritage agreement over Lake Boort	RSA	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Undertake a feasibility study of economic opportunities related to carp management	Country Plan	M	Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise	To Be Determined (TBD)
Participate in the development of a carp regional strategy	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	TBD

## Fire management



Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Work with government to effectively implement State Fire Code provisions that relate to Traditional Owner involvement in incident management	Country Plan	L	Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI)	2015-16
Secure Dja Dja Wurrung involvement in regional governance arrangements for fire management	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Participate in the development and implementation of fire management plans to ensure that fire operations appropriately consider impacts on native title rights and cultural heritage	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Develop and trial a methodology for cultural burning on Dja Dja Wurrung Country that reduced threats to our living resources	Country Plan	H	DDWCAC	2016-18
Increase the number of Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners employed as project fire-fighters	Dja Dja Wurrung Workforce Development Plan (WDP)	L	DDWCAC	2014-2018



## Joint management



Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Analyse existing park management plans and prepare Traditional Owner positions, approaches and principles to take into joint management planning processes	RSA	L	DDWCAC	2014
Prepare Traditional Owner nominees to fulfil their responsibilities as representatives on the Traditional Owner Land Management Board	RSA	L	DDWCAC	2014
Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to help demonstrate joint management success and to inform future negotiations for additional hand-backs of national parks and reserves	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2015
Secure funding to increase the number of Jaara people working as rangers in joint management parks and reserves	Country Plan	M	DDWCAC	2015-18
Recruit Dja Dja Wurrung members to joint management ranger teams	RSA	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Undertake training and skills development for ranger teams	RSA	L	Parks Victoria	2015-16
Conduct and participate in cultural awareness programs with Parks Victoria	RSA	L	DDWCAC	2015-16

## Land remediation



Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Map contaminated land on Dja Dja Wurrung Country and analyse existing information about that land	Country Plan	M	DDWCAC	2015
Identify strategic opportunities for land transfer where post-rehabilitation economic uses may be feasible	Country Plan	M	DDWCAC	2016
Develop Memoranda of Understanding with state and local governments to secure a long-term commitment to rehabilitate contaminated areas on Country	Country Plan	M	DDWCAC	2017
Identify opportunities for future service provision in land remediation	Country Plan	L	DDWE	2015-16
Develop Dja Dja Wurrung's capacity to undertake remediation works	Country Plan	H	DDWE	2015-16
Engage with the Central Victorian Biolink project to identify partnership and funding opportunities to tie in with land remediation activities	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2015
Identify strategic partnership opportunities with non-government and community-based organisations including Trust for Nature, Bush Heritage Australia, Conservation Management Networks and Landcare	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	Ongoing

## NRM service delivery



Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Deliver Department of Environment and Primary Industries guaranteed contracts as agreed in the Dja Dja Wurrung settlement agreement	RSA	L	DDWE	2014-17
Explore opportunities with VicTrack for weed management contracts	Country Plan	L	DDWE	2015-16
Explore opportunities with VicRoads for revegetation contracts	Country Plan	L	DDWE	2015
Develop the capacity and accreditation to undertake kangaroo culling	Country Plan	M	DDWE	2015-16
Explore opportunities with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries for kangaroo culling contracts	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2015-16
Explore opportunities with Catchment Management Authorities and local government for revegetation, weed and pest management and other NRM services	DDWE Business Plan	M	DDWE	2014-15
Explore opportunities with the Commonwealth Government to implement the 'Green Army' program	Country Plan	L	DDWE	2014
Support implementation of cultural burning methodology to generate payments for ecosystem services	Country Plan	H	DDWE	2018-



## Resource rents

Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Identify opportunities for economic development and resource security from Dja Dja Wurrung's assets	Economic Development Plan (EDP)	H	DDWCAC	2014-15
Undertake feasibility studies/business case development for the commercial use of water, carbon, timber and firewood resources on Country	EDP	H	DDWE	2014-16
Develop a case study of the Coca Cola enterprises on Dja Dja Wurrung Country and their access to mineral water resources on Native Title land	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2014
Prepare business case propositions for negotiating with government about extending Traditional Owner resource rights	EDP	L	FVTOC	2014-2016
Engage with Government about the equitable provision of resource rights, including water	Country Plan	L	FVTOC	2014-2016



# Traditional Knowledge



Action	Linkages	Resources	Responsibility	Timeframe
Plan and implement oral history project to capture Traditional Ecological Knowledge from Elders	Country Plan	M	DDWCAC	2015-16
Plan and implement programs of walking Country to build and share Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Cultural Heritage Management Strategy (CHMS)	H	DDWCAC	2016-18
Consolidate existing knowledge to inform species take and management as part of implementing Natural Resource Authorisation Orders	Country Plan	M	DDWCAC	2016-18
Translate existing knowledge into stories, songlines and other cultural expressions	CHMS	H	DDWCAC	2015-17
Develop a statement of Dja Dja Wurrung research priorities	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Develop research protocols to use as the basis for agreements with those undertaking research on Country	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2014-15
Engage with the University of Ballarat to explore partnership opportunities for a comprehensive Traditional Ecological Knowledge project	Country Plan	L	DDWCAC	2015
Develop a repository for Traditional Ecological Knowledge	Country Plan	H	DDWCAC	2016-2018

# Implementing the country plan

The Country Plan presented in the second part of this document represents our community's overarching Vision and roadmap for the future. Its purpose is to inform and guide our actions and the action of others – which will be described and resourced through a range of other strategies, plans and partnership agreements. It does not itself have a dedicated funding source.

The natural resource management strategies described in this Country Plan are however at the level of an action plan. The resources to implement these and other strategies and actions may already be secured, or may need to be generated in a number of ways, as follows:

## Recognition and Settlement Agreement (2013)

The Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement has provided a range of resources and opportunities that can be directly utilised or leveraged to deliver on a number of priority actions. Examples include resources to establish a Traditional Owner Land Management Board (TOLMB), to undertake joint management planning and to establish ranger teams to work on Country.

## Dja Dja Wurrung planning and enterprise development

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation is undertaking a range of

strategic, business and action planning which will align with the Vision and goals of the Country Plan - see **Figure 1** below. Elements of these plans may be funded directly through the corporate planning process or the plans may be used to either bring external resources into the organisation or influence the investment priorities of others to more strongly align with corporation and community goals.

The Country Plan was developed through a participatory process and was open to all Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners – see **Appendix 1**. It is anticipated that future reviews and updates of the Plan will continue to empower our people, build community cohesion and recruit greater participation in the realisation of our Vision. Depending on the approach taken by the future TOLMB, joint management planning may also be designed as a community-based process.

In contrast, the planning undertaken by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation is more expert-driven and includes significant corporate governance obligations. At least in the next few years, the corporation's major focus will be on getting the governance structures and processes right, building human resource capacity and developing business enterprises to ensure its subsidiaries (and itself) are on a sustainable footing. It is hoped that in future, the corporation will be able to develop a range of community programs that can accelerate delivery of our Country Plan goals.

This Country Plan directly supports the Corporation in advancing the principle object of their Constitution – supporting the health and wellbeing of our community, by helping ensure that

community and corporate priorities are aligned and activities can be implemented in an efficient and coordinated way.

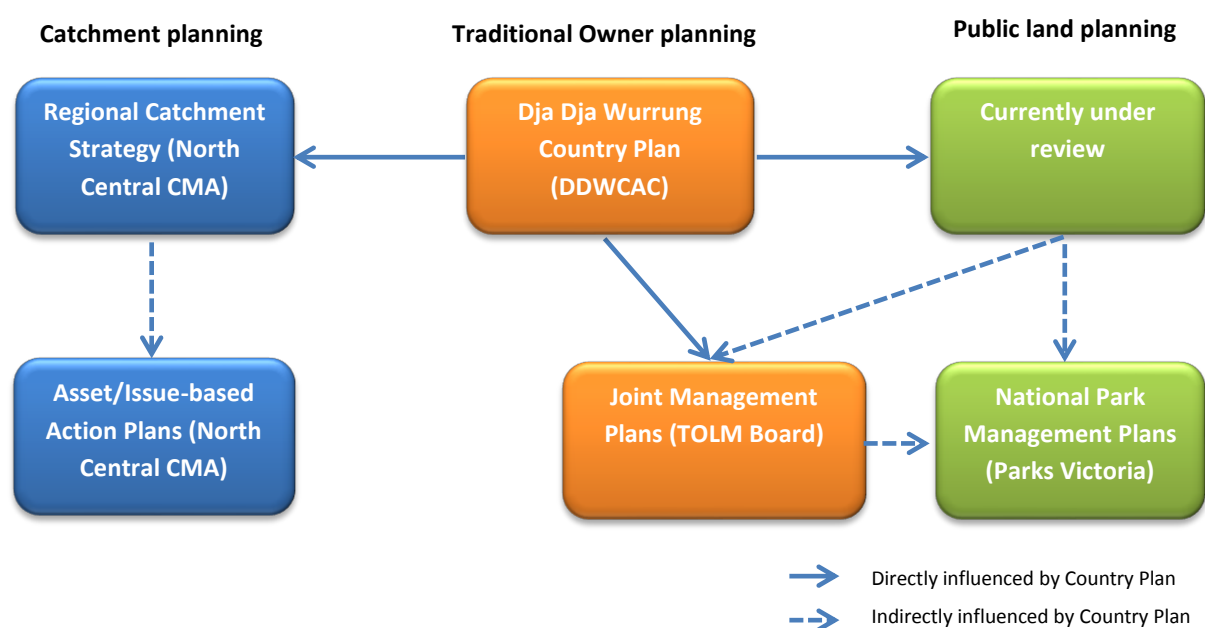
### Public policies, plans and programs

By clearly articulating our community's priorities, the Country Plan provides a strong platform for us to proactively engage with government on policy issues that are important to us, such as commercial use rights and resource rents for our People.

The Plan also supports more equitable representation and participation in the development and implementation of the government's key regional strategic

plans, including the North Central Regional Catchment Strategy, relevant Regional Growth Plans and Public Land Management Plans. **Figure 2** below helps illustrate the relationship between the key natural resource management planning frameworks in Victoria.

As government policies and plans increasingly reflect and support our Vision and goals, we expect to be more heavily involved in the investment programs that implement them.



**Figure 2:** Natural resource management planning frameworks in Victoria

### Partnership development

The Country Plan provides a key mechanism for building partnerships with others who have interests on our Country. In a business context, the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise is identifying specific opportunities for joint venture

partnerships across a range of industries and markets. It is also increasing its capacity to deliver State Government contracts and facilitate external employment with private industry. The Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprise also anticipates being able to support and

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partner with other Dja Dja Wurrung business initiatives within community, as well as with neighbouring Traditional Owner groups.

While some immediate opportunities such as Tourism are being actively

pursued as early priorities, implementing other elements of the Dja Dja Wurrung Economic Development Plan (and therefore contributing to the Country Plan Vision and goals) can be adaptable as opportunities for partnerships arise.



# Appendix 1: Developing the Plan

The Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan was developed between 2012-14 through a 2-step process.

## Stage 1

The project was designed and initiated by the Dja Dja Wurrung Negotiation Team. Once the scope and purpose was agreed, planning began for convening a community workshop in Bendigo in February 2012.

A community notice went out (below) together with information inviting all family/Clan Groups to participate and have input into this first Country Plan.

The community's views were sought on what our most important goals and priorities should be, and on a range of issues currently being debated such as our rights to access and use natural resources and to practice culture on Country.

The outcomes of the workshop were to be used to strengthen the native title negotiations with the State under the Traditional Owner Settlement Framework.

<b>A DJA DJA WURRUNG WORKSHOP FOR ALL FAMILY GROUPS/CLANS TO INFLUENCE THE FUTURE</b>
<b>SECURING OUR RIGHTS AND PRACTICING CULTURE ON COUNTRY</b> Native Title Claim VID6001/00
9:00am – 3:00pm
<b>A DJA DJA WURRUNG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR ALL FAMILY GROUPS/CLANS</b>
3-5:00pm
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2012
The Quality Resort All Seasons, Bendigo, Victoria 171-183 McIvor Road, Bendigo
Morning/Afternoon Teas and Lunch to be provided

These outcomes were to include a Vision for Country and aspirations for the following:

- ☞ The health and wellbeing of our community and the natural environment
- ☞ The practice, preservation and showcasing of our cultural heritage, traditions, customs, observances and beliefs
- ☞ The development of a culturally viable and relevant Traditional Owner-based economy
- ☞ The roles and responsibilities of the Family Groups/Clans to manage Country, underpinned by Customary and Native Title Law.

The workshop was well-attended and generated a strong sense of where the community's priorities lay. Along with a Dja Wurrung Vision for Country, a number of important products were subsequently generated, including a strategic framework and a comprehensive description of priority actions and emerging opportunities.

This work formed an important part of the instructions given by the community to the negotiation team and was used throughout 2012 to strengthen our negotiations.

## Stage 2

The Country Plan progressed slowly in 2012 due to the significant demands placed on the time of negotiation team members by the native title process, with an additional workshop deferred until after the Recognition and Settlement Agreement had been successfully negotiated.

Held in Bendigo in August 2013, the second workshop was designed to discuss and articulate the following:

- 1 The story of Dja Dja Wurrung Country – what do we mean by cultural landscapes, what are their key features and how are they connected? What parts or elements of Country are most valued by DDW people? What condition are they in, what is threatening them and what needs to be to protect them or improve their condition?
- 2 The DDW principles for managing Country – how do we expect all stakeholders who have responsibilities for managing our done traditional lands and waters to carry out their work?

The workshop also reviewed the scope and purpose of the Plan in the context of the post-settlement environment; tested the early content from the first workshop.

The outcomes of both workshops, and many other conversations we have had about our future over the past 2 years are now represented in this Plan. While future iterations of the Plan will progressively fill information gaps and engage more of our community members, it provides an important foundation and roadmap for our future.



## Appendix 2: Principles for consulting with Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owners

1. Where affected by a proposed measure, the objective of consultations should be to obtain the consent or agreement of the Dja Dja Wurrung community

In all cases, Government should engage in '[a] good faith effort towards consensual decision-making'. Consultation processes should therefore be framed 'in order to make every effort to build consensus on the part of all concerned'.

2. Consultation processes should be products of consensus

The details of a specific consultation process should always take into account the nature of the proposed measure and the scope of its impact on the Dja Dja Wurrung community. A consultation process should itself be the product of consensus. This can help ensure that the process is effective.

3. Consultations should be in the nature of negotiations

Governments need to do more than provide information about measures that they have developed on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung community and without their input. Further, consultations should not be limited to a discussion about the minor details of a policy when the broad policy direction has already been set.

Governments need to be willing and flexible enough to accommodate the concerns of the Dja Dja Wurrung community, and work with them in good faith to reach agreement. Governments need to be prepared to change their plans, or even abandon them, particularly when consultations reveal that a measure would have a significant impact on the rights of Dja Dja Wurrung people, and that the affected Dja Dja Wurrung people do not agree to the measure.

4. Consultations need to begin early and should, where necessary, be ongoing

Dja Dja Wurrung people affected by a law, policy or development process should be able to meaningfully participate in all stages of its design, implementation and evaluation.

5. The Dja Dja Wurrung community must have access to financial, technical and other assistance

The capacity of the Dja Dja Wurrung community to engage in consultative processes can be hindered by their lack of resources. Even the most well-intentioned consultation procedure will fail if Dja Dja Wurrung people are not resourced to

participate effectively. Without adequate resources to attend meetings, take proposals back to their communities or access appropriate expert advice, the Dja Dja Wurrung community cannot possibly be expected to consent to or comment on any proposal in a fully informed manner.

#### 6. The Dja Dja Wurrung community must not be pressured into making a decision

The Dja Dja Wurrung community should be able to participate freely in consultation processes. Governments should not use coercion or manipulation to gain consent. In addition, the Dja Dja Wurrung community should not be pressured into decisions through the imposition of limited timeframes.

#### 7. Adequate timeframes should be built into the consultation process

Consultation timeframes need to allow the Dja Dja Wurrung community time to engage in their decision-making processes and cultural protocols. The Dja Dja Wurrung community need to be given adequate time to consider the impact that a proposed law, policy or development may have on their rights. Otherwise, they may not be able to respond to such proposals in a fully informed manner.

#### 8. Consultations should be coordinated across government departments

Governments should adopt a ‘whole of government’ approach to law and policy reform, pursuant to which consultation processes are coordinated across all relevant departments and agencies. This will assist to ease the burden upon the Dja Dja Wurrung community of responding to multiple discussion papers and reform proposals.

#### 9. Consultations need to reach the affected communities

Government consultation processes need to directly reach people ‘on the ground’. Given the extreme resource constraints faced by many Dja Dja Wurrung people and their representative organisations, governments cannot simply expect communities to come to them.

Governments need to be prepared to engage with the Dja Dja Wurrung community in the location that is most convenient for, and is chosen by, the community that will be affected by a proposed measure.

#### 10. Consultations need to respect representative structures and decision-making processes

Governments need to ensure that consultations follow appropriate community protocols, including representative and decision-making mechanisms. The best way to ensure this is for governments to engage with communities and their representatives at the earliest stages of law and policy processes, and to develop consultation processes in full partnership with them.

#### 11. Governments must provide all relevant information, and do so in an accessible way

To ensure that Dja Dja Wurrung people are able to exercise their rights to participate in decision-making in a fully informed way, governments must provide full and accurate information about the proposed measure and its potential impact. This information needs to be clear, accessible and easy to understand. Information should be provided in a plain-English format, and, where necessary, in language.





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## Appendix 3: Measuring Progress

It is important that we are able to determine whether our strategies working and taking us closer to our Vision. The following table represents a draft monitoring and evaluation plan that maps the indicators identified in the workshops to our goals. It also identifies who will generate data against these indicators and how often. Data for some of these indicators is already being collected by other stakeholders, such as for the health and wellbeing indicators from the Closing the Gap program and the condition indicators for our rivers and living resources by the State. Other data will need to be collected by the Corporation and Registered Aboriginal Party, the Enterprise, the Land Management Board and others.

A set of draft key evaluation questions have been crafted that link the objectives set out within the goals. These should be used to help measure the impact of a broad range of strategies and actions, including but not limited to the natural resource management strategies identified in this document. The most appropriate time to consider these questions is during the Country Plan review and update process, which may occur every 5 years. An early process to establish baseline information is also required, so that longitudinal data and trends can be generated and detected.

The Table below summarises the indicators we will use to assess our progress on protecting and/or restoring each of our goals.

Goal	Key Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Data	Timeframe
Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle	🌀 To what extent are we becoming a sovereign Aboriginal Nation?	The number of Dja Dja Wurrung people participating in formal training and completing higher education	Aboriginal Inclusion Plan, DDW/CAC	3 years
	🌀 Is our health as a community improving?	Life expectancy of Dja Dja Wurrung people	Closing the Gap	5 years
	🌀 Are we becoming more connected to Country?	The number and area of parcels of land, included National Parks, handed back to Dja Dja Wurrung	DEPI	5 years
	🌀 To what extent are we being engaged on our Country as key stakeholders by government?	The number of Welcomes to Country performed	DDW/CAC	Annual
		Number of signs recognising Dja Dja Wurrung	DDW/CAC	Annual
		The presence and size of ranger teams in place and working on Country	Dja Dja Wurrung TOLMB	3 years
	🌀 How knowledgeable are our children about our cultural practices?	Levels of participation in ceremonial events	DDW/CAC	Annual
	🌀 How strong is our language as a body of knowledge and is it	Number of Dja Dja Wurrung people speaking language	DDW/CAC	5 years
		Fire stick farming methodologies being accepted and practiced	DDW/CAC	8 years
Dja Dja Wurrung customs and practices are alive and respected - keeping us connected to our past, our present and our future				

	accessible to members of our community?	Number of events, awareness training activities and materials produced that teach the broader community about our culture.	DDW/CAC	2 years
	🌀 How are we sharing our knowledge and using it to look after Country?			
	🌀 Is our engagement with the broader community making a difference?			
Our cultural heritage is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community	🌀 How complete is our knowledge of cultural heritage sites	The number of cultural heritage sites identified, recorded and accessible to Dja Dja Wurrung people	DDW/CAC	2 years
	🌀 How is the capacity to manage our cultural landscapes improving?	The number of cultural heritage officers working on Country	DDW/CAC	3 years
	🌀 To what extent are our ancestors being respected and returned to Country?	The number of monuments at massacre sites	DDW/CAC	2 years
		The number of artefacts and ancestral remains returned to Dja Dja Wurrung	DDW/CAC	Annual
	🌀 How has cultural awareness improved in the community?	The number of people visiting sites and keeping places for cultural education.	DDW/CAC	Annual

Our Country continues to nourish us by providing bush tucker and medicine	🌀 How healthy are our plant and animal communities and populations?	The availability of priority species of bush tucker and medicine plants	DEPI and DDWCAC	5 years	
	🌀 What are we doing, individually and collectively to help care for Country?	The number of bush foods and medicinal species protected in seed banks	DEPI and DDWCAC	5 years	
	🌀 To what extent is our management of Country having an impact?	The area of land actively managed by Dja Dja Wurrung people	DDWCAC	5 years	
	Our rivers and waterways are healthy and meet the needs of our people and land	🌀 Is our water nourishing Country and allowing our living resources to thrive?	The condition of Dja Dja Wurrung priority rivers, using the Index of Stream Condition	DEPI	5 years
			The presence of good fish and old man weed	DDWCAC and DDWE	3 years
🌀 To what extent are our knowledge and rights being valued by decision-makers?		The number of rivers with appropriate water regimes	DDWCAC	5 years	
🌀 To what extent to we control or influence the flows on Country?		The volume of Dja Dja Wurrung cultural water entitlements	DDWCAC	8 years	
		The number of water dependent sites of cultural significance that are actively managed by Dja Dja Wurrung	DDWCAC	5 years	

		The number of Dja Dja Wurrung people involved in waterway monitoring	DEPI and DDWCAC	2 years
		Appropriate planning and governance arrangements for Lake Boort reserve are in place	DDWCAC	2015
Our upside-down country is healthy again	🌀 To what extent do we understand the full impact of mining on our Country?	The number of partnerships and programs established to remediate upside-down country	DDWCAC	2 years
	🌀 Are we actively engaged in the process of healing Country?	Number of Dja Dja Wurrung people trained in toxic land remediation	DDWCAC	2 years
	🌀 Are our responsibilities for remediating sick lands increasing?	Area of land handed back to Dja Dja Wurrung for remediation and subsequent use	DDWCAC	5 years
	🌀 As our Country's first people, Jaara have an established place in society and are empowered to manage our own affairs	The number of Dja Dja Wurrung representatives on decision-making boards and committees	DDWCAC	Annual
		The number of regional and local planning documents that incorporate Dja Dja Wurrung goals and priorities	DDWCAC	3 years
		The number of Memoranda of Understanding with government	DDWCAC	2 years



We have a strong and diverse economic base to provide for our health and wellbeing, and strengthen our living culture	🌀 To what extent are we delivering on our native title responsibilities and implementation of our RSA?	agencies and authorities		
		The number and value of successful funding proposals	DDW/CAC	Annual
		The number of people employed by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation	DDW/CAC	Annual
	🌀 To what extent is our asset base generating community benefits?	Additional rights and assets secured	DDW/CAC	3 years
	🌀 Has our professional expertise been successful in creating new opportunities?	Number and value of joint ventures created	DDWE	3 years
🌀 What is our competitive advantage in NRM service delivery and is it resulting in market share?		Number and value of agreements to provide contract services	DDWE	2 years
		Number and value of natural resource management business enterprises, including number of employees	DDWE	2 years



Long Swamp, Moolort wetlands complex

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