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## NEW YEAR, NEW FACES, STILL DEADLY

### Meet Bec Phillips: DDWCAC Board Chair

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, trading as DJAARA is pleased to announced Rebecca 'Bec' Phillips as the incoming Chair of the Corporation's Board of Directors. Bec was elected to the role at the December Board meeting.

We thank outgoing Chair Trent Nelson for his significant contribution over many years as Chair of the Board. Trent remains on the Board, representing the Nelson Family Group alongside newly elected Deputy Chair Michael 'Mick' Bourke.



Incoming Chair of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation Board, Bec Phillips

Bec is a proud Djaara and B/Pangerang woman of Central and Northeast Victoria, with Macedonian and English/Australian Heritage.

She is passionate about walking her Culture and Country and respectfully sharing its wisdom appropriately. Bec realised that sharing stories was a key way to reach people when she shared her personal story with an organisation she worked for.

"Our people have been sharing stories for thousands of years. Stories are the best way to teach and reach people: they're easier to remember, there's lessons you can draw from. This is how we keep our voice true and share knowledge and insights," she says.

"Being a good listener and communicator continues to be my lifelong journey."

One of her proudest moments has been repatriating two Djaara Ancestors on Dja Dja

"It made me walk taller that day," Bec says.

Bec has previously been part of the Corporation Board and a member of the negotiation team working towards the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) with the State, which was signed in 2013.

She was an inaugural Director on the Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board, which oversaw the development of the Joint Management Plan for six Parks and Reserves that were handed back to Djaara as part of the RSA.

Bec has worked in a wide range of on-ground and strategic roles with both State Government and the Dja Dja Wurrung Group. Areas of work have included Traditional Ecological Knowledge, cultural education and tourism, and helping to navigate systemic hurdles to cultural practice.

As Board Chair, Bec says: "I am committed to furthering DJAARA's principal objective, being that the Djaara voice is strong, our People are happy and healthy, and our Country is well respected by all who call Djaara Country home".



Bec leads a cultural burn with her daughter in 2023.

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## Creating jobs for Dja Dja Wurrung

Creating employment opportunities for **Djaara** (Dja Dja Wurrung People) is a priority for the Dja Dja Wurrung Group.

Business Capability Manager Ann Lansbury supports Djaara to work in the Group's enterprises - [DJANDAK](#), [DUMAWUL](#) and [DJAKITJ](#).

"As the businesses are growing, opportunities are always opening up," Ann said. "We're always looking for ways to find the right role for Djaara who want to work with us. That might include support with on-the-job training or external training."

Siblings Jasmine and Zane Howell-Saunders started work as trainees in the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises (DDWE) in October last year.

Jas, 19, had previously worked at KFC and a gallery in Shepparton. Her role is Trainee



Jasmine Howell-Saunders, Trainee Office Coordinator in the DDWE Business Capability Team, pictured here at the Land of Plenty Festival.



Zane Howell-Saunders, Trainee with the DJANDAK works crew. He is also an artist - pictured here at the Shepparton Arts Festival.

"I like working in the office," Jas said. "I feel like I learn a lot. The only challenge was learning how much is in my role – there's a lot!"

The other challenge was travelling from Shepparton, but Jas and Zane are living in Bendigo now.

DDWE is supporting Jas to study a Certificate III in Business Administration as part of her role. Zane is also in discussions with DDWE about formal training.

"I've got a lot of opportunities here," Jas said. "Work has helped me get a bike for transport. They're also helping me get my licence and talking about getting me driving lessons, so they've been really helpful."

"It wasn't what I was expecting – I just thought it was another job. All my previous jobs have helped me, but I feel like there's that extra help here."

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## Djaara Creatives

There are many creatives among the Djaara community and, after a suggestion from one of our Elders, we're excited to share some of their stories.

We caught up with Auntie Cecelia Taylor and her daughters Stephanie, Melissa and Suzanne at the Yapenya Art Exhibition in November 2023.



L-R Suzanne, Melissa, Auntie Cecelia and Stephanie at the YAPENYA Art Exhibition

Weaving is a focus for this family. The four women had a joint exhibition 'Make Together, Weave Together, Connect to Country' at Bendigo's Living Arts Space in late 2022. They also sell their work through their own businesses (see links below).

For Stephanie, craft and art have been part of her life since she was a young girl. She now works in mediums including painting, screen printing, weaving and crochet. She is known for eco-printing and eco-dyeing using natural materials like eucalyptus leaves and bark.

"My non-Indigenous Nan taught me craft and crochet," Stephanie said.

"About five or six years ago, I guess I was in a bad place in my life and I started crocheting just to get through my depression and anxiety, and I've been doing art ever since.

"It gets me out of my head – it's art therapy, really. I want to eventually do my certificate in art therapy and run workshops."

Stephanie has a work in the [Djaa Djuwima Gallery's Surviving and Thriving exhibition](#), running from 9 February to 26 April in Bendigo, where she is also running weaving workshops.

Auntie Cecelia, a member of the stolen generation, also finds art relaxing.

"When I sit down and weave, I weave for hours," she said. She and Suzanne exhibited together in the Yapenya Exhibition, their colourful baskets and jewellery dyed with food dyes, turmeric and beetroot.

Melissa described making art as peaceful.

"I just let it come together itself, with no real end goal in mind. You just relax and create with your hands and have it take on a form of itself.

"I like to incorporate nature into my weaving as well, using emu feathers or quandong seeds or pieces of wood," Melissa said.





To see or purchase art/craft from this talented family, visit their social pages:

#### Stephanie

Instagram - [stephanie\\_taylor\\_weaving](#) and [stefybabii92art](#)

Facebook - [stephanie's art/craft](#)

#### Suzanne

Instagram - [weaves n beads](#)

Facebook - [Weaves N Beads](#)

#### Melissa

Instagram - [Melissa's Aboriginal Art](#)

Facebook - [Melissa Taylor's Aboriginal Artwork](#)

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