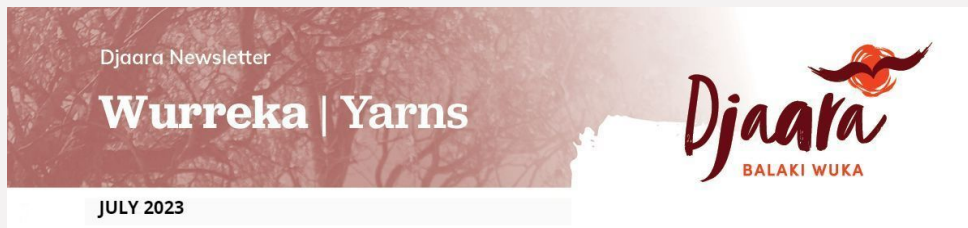


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NAIDOC WEEK & MORE...

We're building our corporate home

Construction of our long-awaited Dja Dja Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre is underway!

We were honoured to have some of our Elders and Members join our **garni** (digging stick) ceremony to celebrate the start of construction in June. We were also joined by the Victorian Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams, Deputy Premier, Member for Bendigo East Jacinta and other partners and allies.



L-R: Rodney Carter, Steve Jackson, Aunty Linda Ford, Mick Bourke, Peta Hudson, Uncle Graham Atkinson, Cassandra Lewis, Trent Nelson

Ten years after signing our Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State, this is another critical moment in our Dja Dja Wurrung history.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Corporate and Community Centre will be the permanent base for our corporate and business operations – helping us realise economic opportunities and become self-sustaining.

“It will be a place for us to work together to create a future for central Victorians that would make all of our Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors proud,” our CEO Rodney Carter said.



Top left: DDWCAC Board Chairperson Trent Nelson with our General Manager Cassandra Lewis.
Top right: Uncle Walter Harrison with Uncle Graham Atkinson.
Bottom left: Our CEO Rodney Carter speaks at the ceremony.
Bottom right: Dja Dja Wurrung dancers with Victorian Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams, DJAARA General Manager Cassandra Lewis, Aunty Linda Ford, Aunty Cecelia Taylor, and Deputy Premier & Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan.

The centre will house a growing collection of cultural heritage artefacts, as well as our enterprises - DJANDAK, DUMAWUL and DJAKITJ.

It will also be a venue for arts and cultural events, and a multi-purpose space that can be used by other businesses and the wider public.

Features will include a general-purpose laboratory, spaces for learning and interaction, a theatrette, meeting areas, yarning and ceremonial spaces, and areas for reflection.

Construction is expected to be completed by late 2024.

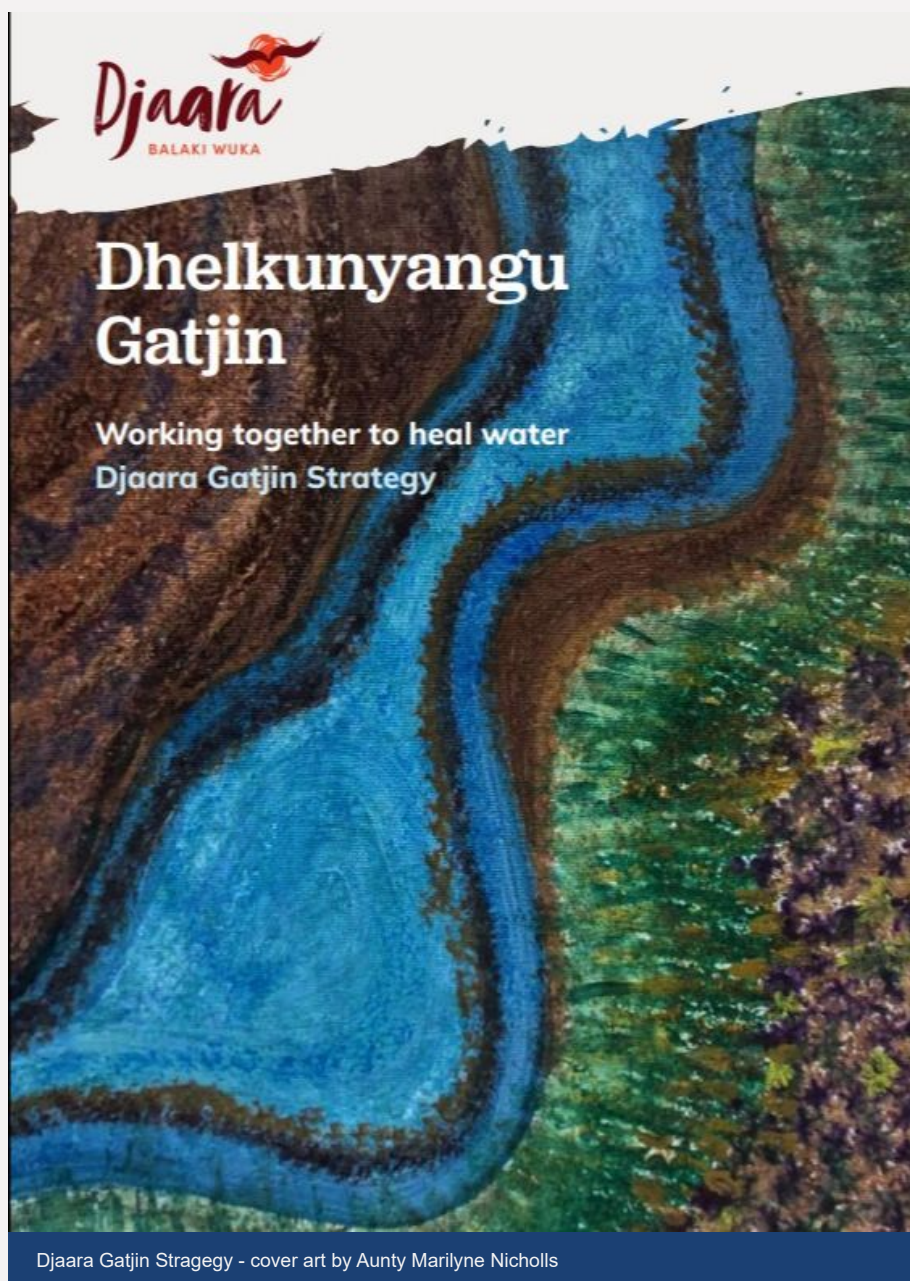
[Read full media release](#)

[Learn more about the Corporate & Community Centre](#)

Djaara Gatjin (water) Strategy calls for change

The Djaara Gatjin (Water) Strategy, *Dhelkunyangu Gatjin*, released in late June calls for Dja Dja Wurrung People to be involved in water management, and to have a share of water entitlements.

"Our Ancestors looked after this Country and we are duty-bound to look after it for the next generation – including the water that falls on and flows through Country." – Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO, Rodney Carter.



Since colonisation, we have been excluded from water management decisions, and access to water rights.

We have been unable to contribute our knowledge and lore to heal damage to our waterways. And we have been prevented from participating in the water economy.

This is despite our 2013 Recognition & Settlement Agreement, which acknowledges our right to be included in the management of natural resources, including water.



"This strategy sets a transformational direction toward water justice in central Victoria. Restoring Traditional Owner water rights is well overdue. We can find better ways to collectively heal Country and we will follow DJAARA's lead." - Coliban Water Managing Director Damian Wells (left, with Rodney Carter).

Dhelkunyaŋgu Gatjin provides a pathway for government water agencies to meet their obligations under the agreement. More importantly, it shows a pathway to improve water management and heal Country.

In the spirit of **ngaldurrong** (walking together) we're working closely with water authorities across djandak to implement the strategy.

Ultimately, our aim is to establish a Gatjin Authority to manage our water obligations, which would become an integral part of Victoria's water framework.

[Learn more & download the Strategy](#)

NAIDOC Week - For our Elders



Dja Dja Wurrung Elders with DJAARA Membership Team staff and Members

NAIDOC week was a special time to honour and celebrate our Dja Dja Wurrung Elders. The Member Engagement team took the opportunity to show our appreciation, with four days of activities and a little bit of spoiling!

Celebrations kicked off with BDAC's NAIDOC Ball, with a table reserved for our Djaara Elders. On Sunday was a bush medicine workshop with Peta Hudson, and a tour of Larni Garingilang – the Djaara-fied garden in Bendigo's Botanical Gardens precinct.

A pamper session on Monday included facials, massage and pedicures. After lunch, Elders had their portraits taken in a photoshoot at Wanyarra Dum (Frog Ponds), followed by dinner at Ms Batterhams.



Above: Dinner at Ms Batterhams.
Below: Elders photoshoot at Wanyarra Dum (Frog Ponds).



Aunty Di Travis



Aunty Linda Ford

"I wanted to say a big thank you for the weekend and retreat. It was such a great experience and I totally enjoyed spending time with everyone. I'm looking forward to it happening again. I am very appreciative of all the effort you put in to make it a lovely event for us all." - Aunty Vicky Murray

On Tuesday, our Welcome Baby to Country ceremony was held at Harry Trott pavilion, in collaboration with Bendigo Health. Uncle Walter Harrison and Aunty Ros Dodson welcomed all the babies, after a smoking ceremony led by Andrew Saunders.

Events Co-ordinator Hannah Dunolly-Lee felt honoured to host the Elders during NAIDOC week.

"It was so good to see our Elders being able to reconnect with each other at an event that was just for them," Hannah said.





Top: Uncle Walter Harrison and Aunty Ros Dodson welcomed the babies with blessings and ochre. Middle - left: Andrew Saunders conducted a smoking ceremony with help from his son Wanyarra; right L-R: Aunty Ros Dodson, Aunty Monica Phillips, Aunty Fay Carter, Aunty Cecelia Taylor, Aunty Linda Ford, Andrew Saunders. Bottom - left: L-R: Hannah, Caity, Thomas and Jackson Dunolly Lee; right: Shailyn Mason-Kerr with baby Zahli.

Boorp Boorp Boondyil recognised in awards

The Boorp Boorp Boondyil permanent exhibition in Castlemaine has been recognised in state and national awards.

Uncle Rick Nelson worked with Mount Alexander Shire, the Aboriginal-led SharingStories Foundation, and the local Aboriginal community and organisations to create Boorp Boorp Boondyil.

"I couldn't be more over the moon", said Mr Nelson.

"This is a project that was inspired by my father, Uncle Brien Nelson."

"He spent his life sharing cultural knowledge to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people."

"To be able to continue the work he started – and for it to be creating waves and winning awards – it is just amazing," said Mr Nelson.





The exhibition includes a large woven nest by Auntie Marilyne Nicholls (right) and Dja Dja Wurrung language and sound bites provided by Harley Dunolly-Lee.

Translated as "Passing Knowledge to our Children" Boorp Boorp Boondyil shares Jaara (Djaara) stories and teachings.

DJAARA's Nation Building Project Officer and former Project Co-ordinator of Boorp Boorp Boondyil, Donna Spiller described it as "a really self-determined project."

"The Council realised that they couldn't lead the project – to succeed, it needed to be First Nations led. So, they employed Uncle Rick two days a week to lead the project from within Council," Donna said.

Children and adults receive important messages about caring for Country, to take with them on their journeys across djandak.

The Exhibition has won two local government awards: a Reconciliation Victoria [Maggolee Award](#) and an [Indigenous Recognition Award](#) in the National Local Government Awards.



Uncle Rick and Donna with the awards

[Learn more](#)

Chris Boland - national boxing champion!



Congratulations to Chris Boland from Mooroopna - national boxing champion!

The Dja Dja Wurrung and Yorta Yorta fighter won a national title in the Youth Division as a Bantamweight at the 2023 Australian Schools Boxing Championships during NAIDOC Week.

Chris won three fights against top boxers in the Youth 54kg division to take out the title. Deadly!

DJAARA says 'dja!' to the Voice

DJAARA is advocating for a 'yes' vote in the Voice to Parliament referendum this year.

CEO Rodney Carter said the referendum is about making us better as people.

"In the past, we were left out of many conversations directly related to our wellbeing. We can be harsh and judge the people and structures created before us, but to make a difference for the next generations, what we can always do is improve. We can always do better for the people around us," Rodney said.

"We are strong believers in 'for Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung People), by Djaara' when it comes to issues that affect us.

"My People have persisted. We negotiated for 15 years to be recognised as Traditional Owners of djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), through the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) we signed with the State of Victoria in 2013.

"Through this process, we are proud and honoured to have built strong relationships with state and local government. We are in the conversations; we are at the table.

"The Voice to Parliament will bring attention to matters that are important to us – and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – at a Federal level.

"Dja Dja Wurrung are the yes, yes speaking People. Here in central Victoria, we can say 'dja' to the Voice – Yes," Rodney said.

[Read full media statement](#)

SHARING DJA DJA WURRUNG LANGUAGE

*Our language connects us to water, land, animals, and People.
It calls us to ceremony and strengthens our identity.*

We are making sure our language, Dja Dja Wurrung language, is increasingly spoken; we share it in song and ensure it is placed lovingly back to Djandak, where it belongs, by us. Those that live and visit here in Central Victoria more and more want to support Dja Dja Wurrung reclamation of our rights and support our continued presence here. We hope that those who travel across, visit and reside on Djandak recognise our unique language and distinct culture.

boorp boorp boondyil | passing knowledge to our children
dhehkunyang **gatjin** | working together to heal water
djandak | Country, Dja Dja Wurrung Country
djaara | Dja Dja Wurrung People
garni | digging stick
gatjin | water
ngaldurrong | together walk

Let us know what you think!

Do you like this newsletter?

What would you like to see more of?

We'd love to hear your feedback.

Get in touch



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Office Hours:

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