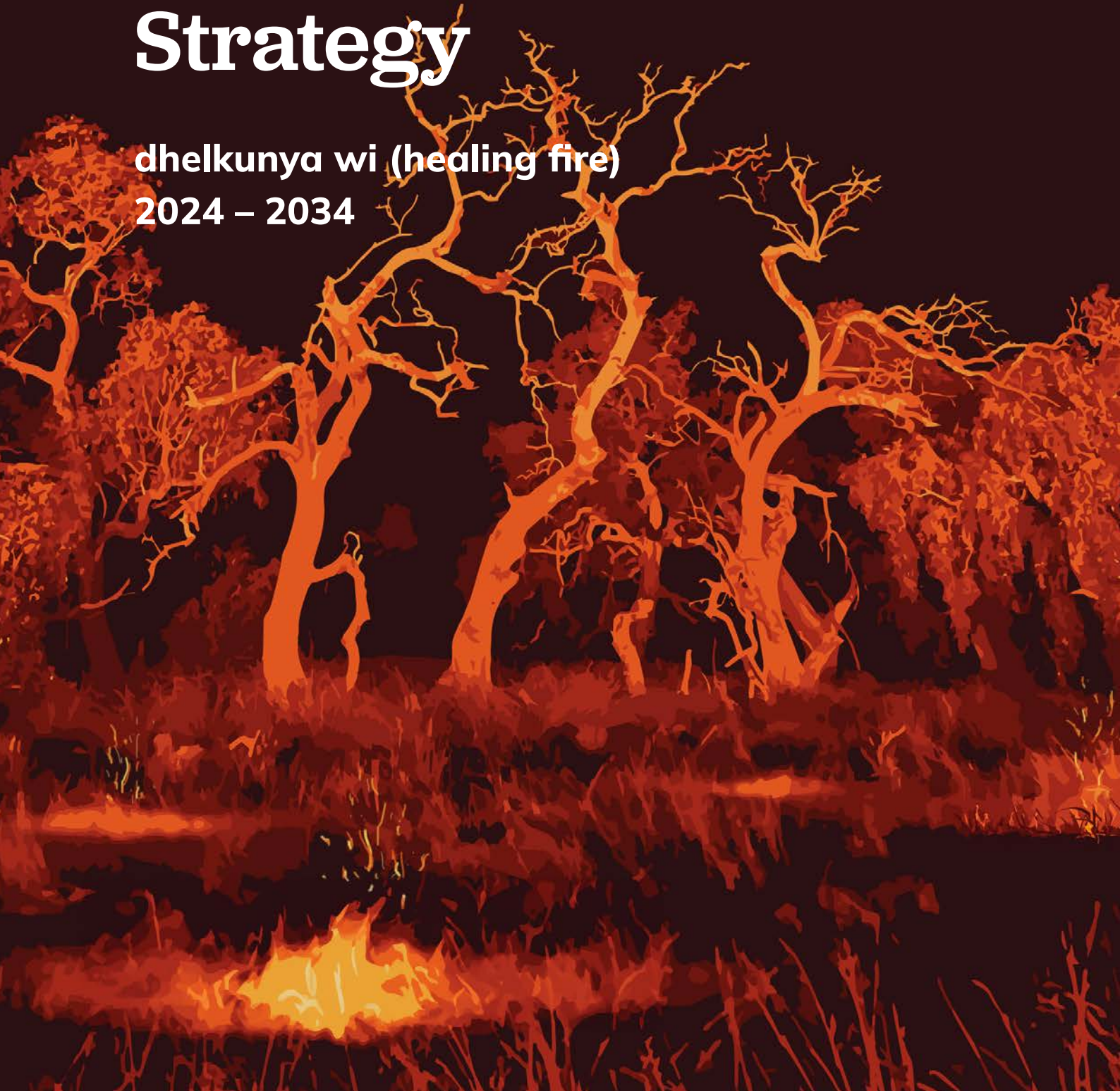


Djandak Wi (Country Fire) Strategy

dhelkunya wi (healing fire)

2024 – 2034





Artwork Acknowledgment

I would like to pay respect to my Elders past and present and acknowledge the hard work my People do for Country.

The trees in this artwork are from a special place on Djandak. The place where I first experienced Djandak Wi and a place where my People have been long before me.

Years later while burning at Tang Tang, these trees watching over us stood out more than even the flames in the night.

Levi Jessen Fennell

Proud Dja Dja Wurrung man & artist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANK YOU

This Strategy is a living document that has been woven by Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung People) and their diverse voices and experiences across Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). The Dja Dja Wurrung Group is indebted to the Djaara People who generously contributed their biocultural knowledge and guidance to the project team in the development of this Strategy. This Strategy reflects their expertise, passion, and commitment to the continuing practice of Djandak Wi. We thank all Djaara People, the project team, and staff across the Dja Dja Wurrung Group for their contribution to the development of the Strategy.

We thank the Dja Dja Wurrung Group executive management team and boards for their ongoing support and guidance.

DISCLAIMER

This Strategy was developed by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (trading as DJAARA). The timeline of this Strategy aligns with the Dhelkunya Dja Healthy Country Plan 2014 – 2034, however regular reviews of this Strategy will occur to grow with the Djandak Wi program. While the vision and framework of this Strategy will remain, the focus areas and associated activities will be reviewed every two years to assess progress, prioritise projects, and develop new initiatives where necessary.

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Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property expresses the tangible and intangible Cultural Heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional Cultural expressions held by individuals, families, kinships, and communities. As guided by the Dja Dja Wurrung Cultural Integrity Guidelines, we ask that you respect the Cultural expressions and knowledge shared by Djaara throughout this Strategy.

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WHO TO CONTACT

The Djandak Wi teams work across DJAARA and DJANDAK (a Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise). DJAARA concentrates on planning, strategy, policy, program development, partnerships, communications, and engagement, and can be contacted at djandakwi@djadjawurrung.com.au. DJANDAK concentrates on quoting, resourcing, burn preparation, delivery, and monitoring, and can be contacted at forestryandfire@djadjawurrung.com.au.

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“Growing up I’ve always been Culturally connected to Country, I’ve always seen how fire can benefit Country, and then to go out and actually practice fire meant a lot to me. It’s really healing to me and to Country. Every time we get to go out and do a burn, it resets my mind.”

Djaara djali

The repatriation of our djali (tongue/language) is essential to the foundation of our Culture. This Strategy provides a continuation of this custom.

DJA DJA WURRUNG	ENGLISH
Barramul	Emu (<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>)
Boort/burt	Smoke, smoke on hill
Buwatj	Kangaroo grass (<i>Themeda triandra</i>)
Dhelkunya dja	Healing/make good, land/Country
Dhurung wurkuk	Purple/black fruit. Includes pale flax lilies (<i>Dianella longifolia</i>) and spreading flax lilies (<i>Dianella revoluta</i>)
Djaara	Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples
Dja Dja Wurrung	Yes, yes, speaking lip/tongue
Djandak	Dja Dja Wurrung Country
Djandak Wi	Country fire
Gal gal	Dingo/domestic dog (<i>Canis lupus</i>)
Galk-galk Dhelkunya	To care for/to heal many trees
Gatjin	Water
Gitjawil matom	Having many tubers. Includes chocolate lilies (<i>Arthropodium strictum</i>) and vanilla lilies (<i>Arthropodium milleflorum</i>)
Martinga Guli	Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors
Murna	Yam daisy (<i>Microseris lanceolata</i>)
Murrun	Alive/living spirit
Ngaldurrong yana	Walk together
Nyerna	To hear, to listen, to understand, to know
Waa	Australian Raven (<i>Corvus coronoides</i>)
Wartaka	To meet and come together with purpose
Wi	Fire
Wi Murrup	Fire spirit
Witji	Basket grass (<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>)
Wurreka	To yarn, to talk
Yung	Spotted quoll (<i>Dasyurus maculatus</i>)



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“With fire knowledge, with language, it’s gifted to us from Country. The sounds, the experiences, what we mouth, it’s part of Country, and it’s part of us, and then we speak those words that are ancient, and I put those words in a thread, and now they’re a song.”



Our Country

“A healthy Country is a healthy mob.”

Djaara have lived and thrived on Djandak, our Country, for tens of thousands of years. To us, Djandak is a living entity, a unique Cultural landscape that has been shaped and nurtured by our Martinga Guli (Ancestors), spirituality, djali (language), Lore, and kin over millennia. Each place on our Djandak is known, valued, has a name, has a song, and is embedded with Murrup (spirit). Caring for Djandak is the living essence that is shared between People and place. We will always care for our Djandak.

“We think of Djandak as a living breathing being and that if you take one thing out of the environment it can alter the balance of biodiversity around you. We have a connection to all things on our Djandak be it the smallest insect playing its part in the ecosystem to a tree that has fallen, to a human being playing our role in the environment.”

Our Djandak Wi story

Djandak Wi means ‘Country fire’ in Dja Dja Wurrung language. Thousands of generations ago, Waa (the Australian Raven) spread wi far and wide across Djandak, creating ecosystem diversity, and teaching our Martinga Guli (Ancestors) about the importance of wi for Djandak. Ever since, we have followed in our Martinga Guli footprints, doing Djandak Wi in accordance with our Culture and Lore.

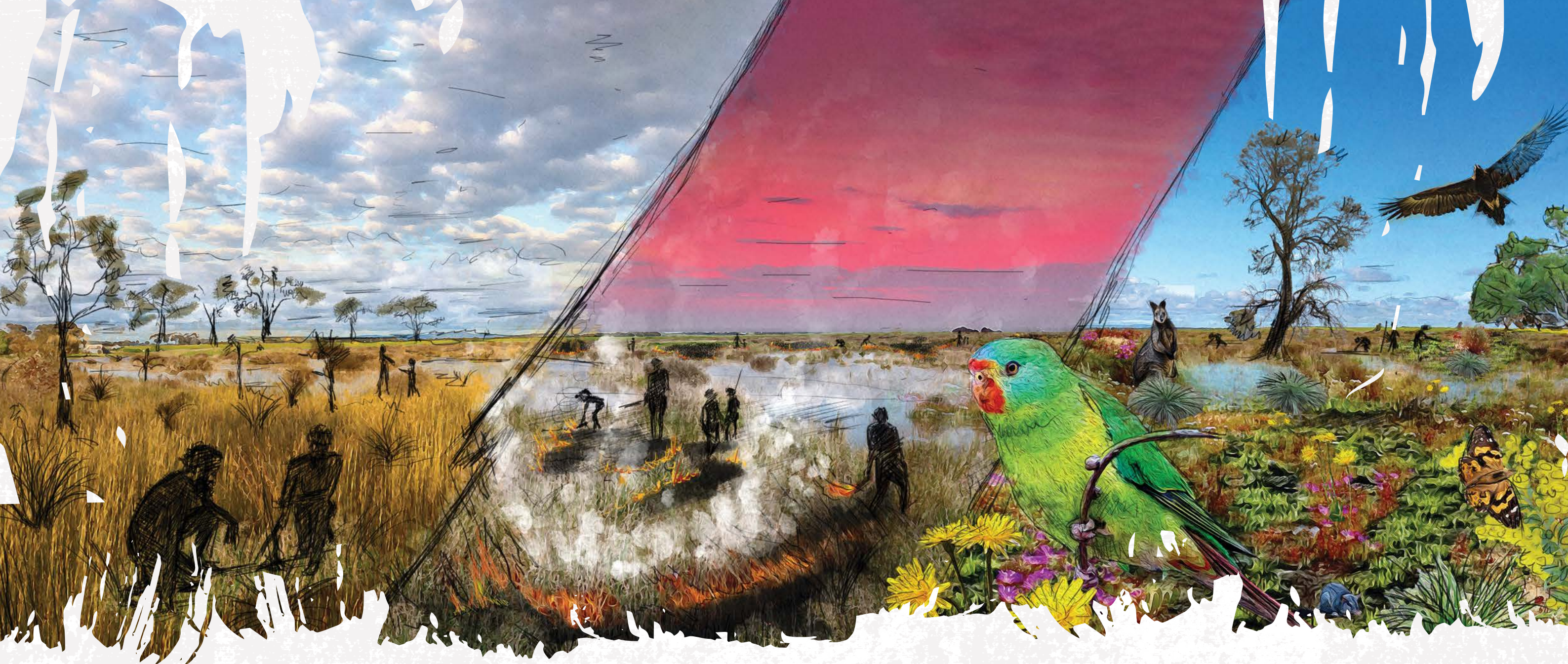
“Djandak Wi is an ancient tool that has been used since the beginning of time.”

Djaara know when Djandak is sick and needs Djandak Wi. Djandak Wi is a Cultural landscape management tool. Healthy Djandak needs Djaara and our custom of Djandak Wi to protect significant places, protect Malamiya (Cultural Heritage), and converse with Wi Murrup (fire spirit). Our plants need Djandak Wi for renewal, to re-set dominance, to prompt germination, and to break seed dormancy. Our animals and fungi need Djandak Wi to rearrange habitat and food, remove dead growth, and promote green growth for food. Djandak Wi is as important as sun and rain, and its exclusion has led to profound changes to our Djandak.

“Cultural fire is different from other styles of burning in that we are not just doing it for ecological or tangible reasons, there is also the intangible, there is the spirit meaning behind it, there is the healing of People.”

“It’s a real spiritual feeling, Djandak Wi. It brings mob together, puts mob back out on Country, Elders to young kids, young folks. So, it’s used for gathering, getting family groups together.”





Djandak is where our knowledge comes from, Djaara know how to nyerna (hear, listen, understand, know) to the unique place-specific biocultural indicators across Djandak to know when and how to conduct Djandak Wi.

Plants are important indicators, for example grass moisture, colour, flowering, and seeding, and animals, for example when Bardi or Witchetty grubs leave their nests and fly out of the ground. We also use astrological indicators, for example the shape of the dark emu tells us whether Country is ready for Djandak Wi.

Djandak Wi the right way often means burning in small patchy mosaic patterns. It means letting wi meander through the landscape and go where it wants to go.

When Djandak Wi is done the right way, all generations of Djaara are on Country strengthening our living Culture, sharing experience, laughter, food, story, and language. Right way Djandak Wi heals our spirit. It involves being on Djandak with our kids, teaching our kids how to put in flame.

Right way Djandak Wi evokes feelings of calm, happiness, positivity, and Cultural safety. It has soothing smells, calming crackling sounds, white smoke, and slow-moving knee-high flames. People can walk behind the wi. It also means that those who share Djandak Wi with us are walking beside us on Country yarning and sharing knowledge.

Djaara know when Djandak Wi is healing Djandak because we can see that the Murrup of Djandak is happy and that evokes feelings of happiness for Djaara.

Djaara know when Djandak is healing by reduced weeds, abundant medicine, ceremony, food, and fibre plants, vibrant colours, plentiful wildlife, orchestras of birds, frogs, and rustling animals, and high biodiversity.

In many places we have reintroduced Djandak Wi, such as at Gutjun Bulok (Tang Tang Swamp), we have already seen Country healing and the return of important species that have been missing from the landscape for many years. Djaara are proud to see the culmination of our actions healing Djandak. Healing Djandak is healing Djaara.

Key principles of Djandak Wi

- Djaara are leading all aspects of Djandak Wi.
- Djandak Wi is centred around intergenerational transfer of knowledge between Djaara Elders and young People on Djandak. Djaara of all ages are doing Djandak Wi.
- Djandak Wi is a site-specific, holistic, and bioculturally informed tool that sits in the Galk-galk Dhelkunya (forest gardening) toolkit. Djandak Wi heals Djaara and Djandak.
- The diverse ways that Djaara engage with Djandak Wi are celebrated and encouraged.
- Our Djandak Wi customs mirror our Martinga Guli (Ancestors), but we recognise that modern challenges can require adaptability and integrated solutions.
- Djandak is Djaara's teacher. Djaara have the generational skills and tools to nyerna (hear, listen, understand, know) what Djandak needs and how to reintroduce Djandak Wi.

Our rights to Djandak Wi

Djaara are represented by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, trading as DJAARA. In 2013, DJAARA entered into a historic Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) with the state of Victoria on behalf of all past, present, and future Djaara. The RSA legally recognises Djaara as the Traditional Owners of Djandak and secures our rights to do Djandak Wi through

- **Right A:** enjoying our Culture and identity.
- **Right B:** maintaining a distinctive spiritual, material, and economic relationship with Djandak and the natural resources on Djandak.
- **Right C:** accessing and remaining on Djandak.
- **Right E:** using and enjoying Djandak.
- **Right G:** conducting Cultural and spiritual activities on Djandak.
- **Right H:** protecting places and areas of importance on Djandak.

Our RSA includes a Land Use Activity Agreement, which outlines advisory rights, negotiation rights, veto rights, and community benefits for land use activities, such as burning activities, that occur on Djandak. Our RSA also includes a Natural Resource Agreement, which legally enshrines our rights to harvest agreed plant and animal species, water, and forest produce for agreed quantities and purposes on Djandak.

Our rights and Cultural obligations to do Djandak Wi are further secured and strengthened through the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006). This Act legally enshrines our Cultural rights to enjoy our identity and Culture, maintain and use our language, maintain our kinship ties, and maintain our distinctive spiritual, material, and economic relationship with our Djandak and its resources.

See the RSA for full details. This is a summary only, it is not intended to be used or relied on as legal advice, or as a comprehensive guide to the RSA.

Our vision for Djandak Wi

To see multiple plumes of **boort** (smoke) widely distributed across Djandak.

We are empowered to conduct Djandak Wi at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what Djandak needs.

"We have dreaming stories about it that make us love it and enjoy it, because we know that if we didn't get fire then we probably wouldn't be as advanced as what we are as humans. For me, I think it's an intrinsic part of evolution and society that fire is a tool that can be used – if it's used the right way, it can be used to help People."



Learn about our philosophy here
<https://vimeo.com/916993245/7b6a07ef5c>



YAPENYA – COMING TOGETHER AT A SPECIAL MEETING PLACE, A JOYFUL DAY OF DJANDAK WI

We had our Djandak Wi 2023 season launch event at Yapenya, Harcourt North, on a site owned by Dja Dja Wurrung in late April, and it was an amazing event with such good vibes.

It was a cooler day, very clear and still in the morning. It was an early start for staff supporting the event, getting the site ready for People to arrive, setting up marquees, and warming the urns for tea and coffee, so we could all feel warm and comfortable before sharing in ceremony and then Djandak Wi.

It was the first time a significant gathering had been held there for a while, after years of isolation living through the COVID-19 pandemic, and we were so happy to be coming together in this way to celebrate our successes and formally launch the Djandak Wi autumn burning season. We also acknowledged and paid our respects to the Ancestors, and the many Elders and Cultural fire leaders that had worked so hard paving the way for so many years before.

Some Djaara uncles welcomed us, and shared warm words of thanks, gratitude, and encouragement to us all, and talked a little about the history and Cultural significance of the area. Some of the Djaara mob were then engaged in focused attention and physical exertion, sharing turns twisting a drill stick quickly back and forth with their hands to generate embers from some grasses underneath, but it was still a bit damp and cool with not much wind, so they really had a task on their hands getting that flame to ignite that day.

It was a great group bonding activity. When the fire started after half an hour or so, everyone clapped and cheered with excitement. We cleansed ourselves in healing smoke, and shared in speaking some djali, Djaara language words together as a group, returning Murrin, and enjoying being together in that beautiful, sacred place. Then we went and cooked vegetables and meats on the fire pits and enjoyed our time relaxing at Yapenya.

It wasn't really the right weather to achieve much burning coverage or get much flame height at all really, but we decided to go ahead with the event anyway. Technical specifications didn't matter to us that day, what was important was that it would be a day for mob to get out and come together on Djandak,



to learn and practice Culture, and safe for families, and little ones to have a go at giving dhelkunya wi to Djandak, while being guided by the fire crew. There were so many faces alight with curiosity, joy, and excitement in experiencing this Djandak Wi and sounds of laughter and conversation meandering across the magnificent rocky outcrops and gullies of Yapenya.

It was an awe inspiring sight to see People bobbing wi across Djandak, with the thick, layered grey and white bubbly looking clouds in the distance that emerged in the late afternoon, and soft white smoke drifting across the way

Some fire crew camped the night, yarning around the campfire, and then got up, had some breaky and coffee, and carried on burning the next day, feeling peaceful and relaxed after a successful Djandak Wi event and experience of healing People, and healing Djandak.



Watch the video here
<https://vimeo.com/916964472/0a02978a73>

Djandak Wi seasonal calendar

Our Djandak Wi seasonal calendar differs between types of Country (such as grasslands and forests), species assemblages, and short and long weather and Country cycles (such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation). Our Djandak Wi seasons can change year to year as we nyerna to Djandak, weather, and biocultural indicators.



Djandak Wi time (roughly corresponds to autumn): warm to cool, rains starting, still.

Djandak Wi season begins after the first two or three rains following wildfire time when plants begin to green and grow, buwatj (kangaroo grass) seeds drop, temperatures decline, and dew point rises so that wi goes out at night. Djandak Wi at this time is important to reduce leaf litter and dead growth, and to promote the regrowth and germination of Culturally important plants, including our food, fibre, ceremony, and medicine species, in flowering time. This season is characterised by flowering

manna gums, wattles, banksias, and stringy barks; and emerging soft tree fern hearts. Fungi begins fruiting and ghost fungi glows at night. Cod are breeding; praying mantis are hatching; bardy grubs emerge from the ground leaving holes; brushtail possums, yung (quolls), and southern greater gliders begin breeding; wombats bask in sun; male lyrebirds perform courtship displays; moths emerge; birds feed on the abundant moths; kangaroos and wallabies feed on the green regrowth of plants; and gang gangs eat gum nuts. The Canopus star is almost due south at sunrise.

Cold and wet time (roughly corresponds to deep winter): cold, wet, frosty, still, cloudy, misty, foggy, short days, southerly winds.

The end of crayfish breeding indicates the end of box ironbark forest burning. Plants become too wet and too green to burn, and temperatures become too cold to ignite wi. This season is characterised by germinating murnongs; blooming flowers of early orchids and early nancy; vivid canopy colours reflecting high soil

moisture; and ripening quandong fruits. Fungi, mosses, and lichens are colourful and vivid. Bees and birds feed on the nectar of silver wattles and yellow boxes; brushtail phascogales and yung (quolls) breed; caterpillars of butterflies feed on grasses at night; koalas breed and bellow at night; birds begin nesting; and platypus lay eggs. The Arcturus star is on northwestern horizon at sunset and the Sagittarius constellation rises in the southeast after sunset to indicate the midpoint of the cold and wet time.



Djandak Wi time (roughly corresponds to late winter and early spring): wet but rains easing, and cool.

Opportunities to manage weeds with Djandak Wi, burn Djandak before flowers emerge, and burn patches of C4 grasses like buwatj (kangaroo grass) to promote renewal and seeding for harvest in hot wildfire time.

This season is characterised by the beginning of widespread plant germination and flowering following the cold and wet time. Pied currawongs call loud and often; frogs call and birth tadpoles; and young kangaroos venture out of pouches.



Germination, growth, and flowering time (roughly corresponds to deep spring and early summer): windy, warm, raining, storms.

Flowering/seeding murnong and gitjawil matom (chocolate lilies and vanilla lilies), and the end of crayfish breeding (and making holes) indicates the end of the Djandak Wi season. Djandak comes alive with colourful flower displays of murnong, lilies (including gitjawil matom – chocolate and vanilla lilies), witji (*Lomandras*), dhurung wurkuk (*Dianellas*), orchids, buwatj (kangaroo grass), and coranderrks; and fruits form on kangaroo apples and appleberry vines. Swift parrots migrate to feed on flowering red ironbark trees. Orchestras of animal calls, including pobblebonks and young birds, fill the air; pobblebonks start to nest; and blue wrens attack windows. The Orion constellation sets in the western sky at sunrise.



Wildfire time (roughly corresponds to summer): hot, stormy, dry, northerly winds, long days.

Cicadas singing, active reptiles, and cod fishing indicates that it's too hot for Djandak Wi and indicates the start of wild lightning fires. Most grasses begin browning and drying, apart from C4 grasses like buwatj which are actively growing, flowering, and seeding; tuber plants (including gitjawil matom) are entering dormancy; cherry ballarts, dhurung wurkuk (*Dianellas*), and elderberries are fruiting; and kangaroo apples and prickly currant fruits ripen. Bats are actively catching insects; eagles breed; snakes, lizards, and other reptiles are active; butterflies are abundant; and kangaroos breed. The Southern Cross is high in the sky.



Challenges to reintroducing Djandak Wi

Colonisation and the dispossession of our People from Djandak caused a devastating rupture in our custom of Djandak Wi, which led to large intense wrong way wi (fires), sick Djandak, and sick People. Wrong way wi is a significant threat to Djandak, Djaara, and the communities that share Djandak with us.

“Country is out of balance; it is upside down. Our Country bleeds, cries and it continues to suffer.”

The rupture in our custom of Djandak Wi has caused many of our Culturally important ceremony, food, fibre, and medicine species to decline or disappear from Djandak, such as murna (yam daisy), buwatj (kangaroo grass), witji (basket grass), dhurung wurkuk (pale flax lily and spreading flax lily), and gitjawil matom (chocolate lily and vanilla lily). Our totemic species, gal gal (dingo), barramul (emu), and yung (spotted quoll) are too absent from Djandak.

The extent of sick Djandak means that giving Djandak Wi is different from that of our Martinga Guli (Ancestors). Some areas of Djandak have not seen Djandak Wi for hundreds of years. Navigating these challenges is a slow and unpredictable process, but we know how to reintroduce Djandak Wi by nyerna (hear, listen, understand, know) Djandak from generations of Lore, song, dance, story, and observation.

Sick Country feels like “there’s something wrong. You walk out there, and you feel like the place is screaming out for help. You feel bad for the place.”

“Our Dreaming stories tell of how Murrup (spirit) creators made journeys across formless space, creating substance in land and sea, and settling to rest in important places. In certain places wi (fire) is felt strongly by Djaara and in others, colonial land management practices have impacted the spiritual connection to place, making places feel spiritually barren. Our Murrup continue to suffer trauma. For Wi Murrup (fire spirit) to be returned, Djaara need to care for Djandak. Applying wi is essential to restoring this balance. Country and Wi Murrup will not be happy and healthy until Djandak Wi is returned to Djandak by Djaara.”

“Djaara are the fire givers of Country.”

After many years of absence, Djandak Wi is making a resurgence on Djandak and with it an opportunity for Djandak, Djaara, and the communities who share Djandak with us, to heal.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Djaara have limited influence on the management of Djandak because of colonisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This Strategy provides clear guidance to land managers about Djaara’s rights and responsibilities to conduct Djandak Wi.
Djandak is sick because of mismanagement and wrong way wi (including Djandak Wi exclusion).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reintroducing Djandak Wi will begin the healing of Djandak and right way wi.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djandak Wi is in the holistic Galk-galk Dhelkunya (forest gardening) toolkit alongside Cultural thinning, revegetation, rehabilitation, and gatjin (water).
There are few examples of healthy Djandak to understand biocultural baselines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djaara have an opportunity to reimagine and recreate Cultural landscapes across Djandak.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djaara can develop baselines from story, song, and biocultural indicators.
Djandak Wi knowledge and customs were ruptured and stolen through colonisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of this Strategy involves the intergenerational transfer of Djandak Wi knowledge and customs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djandak Wi provides opportunity to hone skills to nyerna (hear, listen, understand, know) Djandak.
Young Djaara People do not know or have connection to their Djandak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of this Strategy provides outreach and employment opportunities for young Djaara People to connect with Djandak and Djandak Wi.
Many Djaara are absent from or disconnected from Djandak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of this Strategy will provide regular and diverse opportunities for Djaara to engage with Djandak Wi, including a tailored active engagement plan.
Climate change driven wi regimes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djandak Wi offers solutions to reduce wildfire risk, intensity, and spread.

“We cannot heal Country without wi.”



“Djandak Wi is about healing us socially, it’s having community out there, its education, and its building, it does a lot of things, fire, it builds a lot of bridges, it builds relationships.”



HEALING SICK DJANDAK AT BUCKRABANYULE

We did a Djandak Wi at Mount Buckrabanyule, northern Djandak, in May 2023 on property owned by Bush Heritage Australia who Dja Dja Wurrung Group partnered with on delivering the event.

The day started with a Djaara Cultural fire practitioner talking about healing and returning spirit to the place and sharing about its Cultural significance and features.

There was a discussion about the paradox of frustrations, challenges, and obstacles Djaara and other Traditional Owner mobs have in being supported and empowered to practice Culture through healing Djandak with wi, within post-colonial government and complex fire regulatory systems that can be hard to navigate.

We talked about our struggles to return Djandak Wi to the landscape after Djaara having been excluded for many years prior, and about our aspirations for self-determination. We don't always agree with each other on all the issues and their solutions, and things can get pretty lively in some of our yarns, but something that we do all share is a deep passion about caring for Djandak.

This Djandak Wi gave an opportunity to wear comfortable clothes rather than heavy duty fire equipment that is required for some kinds of burning, and where families and community could gather in the communal area to eat from a delicious food truck, play, share stories, and enjoy the day. Being later in autumn, it was a low intensity burn with some more wind pick up and intensity at the top of the hill later in the afternoon. Children, families, and newcomers could also get closer to the fire and explore it, accompanied by more experienced Cultural fire practitioners so they would be, and feel, safe being coached by their community.

The crew are always keeping an eye on us, making sure everyone is safe and things go smoothly, but ready to act where something needs to be managed to protect everyone.

Buckrabanyule is covered in invasive wheel cactus, which is a prickly problem that is extremely hard to deal with, all options are costly and with significant uncertainty around effectiveness, and it is a species that can spread prolifically through landscapes strangling biodiversity if left to dominate, as it has already done in a big way at this place. Djaara and Bush Heritage Australia are exploring and experimenting with a range of treatment options, including use of Cultural fire, with the hope to regenerate and restore native vegetation, and return good health and spirit to Djandak in the process, with Djaara in the landscape.

Managing this place brings huge challenges in what will be most effective to heal, promote biodiversity, and protect significant Cultural Heritage. It's an unfolding journey and we will do our best to heal Djandak with Galk-galk Dhelkunya (forest gardening) tools, carrying out our custodial responsibility to care for Djandak. Even though it is painful to see sick Djandak, we also feel proud in caring for it however we can, now and into the future. Since the Djandak Wi, the part we burnt on Djandak has really bounced back with bulbine lilies and a range of other native species returning.



Strategy focus areas

FOCUS 1

Djandak Wi centred in Djaara's Culture & Lore

FOCUS 2

Djaara in the landscape

FOCUS 3

Djandak Wi self-determination

FOCUS 4

Strong & diverse Djandak Wi economy

FOCUS 5


Normalise Djandak Wi & Cultural competency

FOCUS 6

Strong Traditional Owner partnerships

FOCUS 7

Cultural landscape approach - nourishing Murrumbidgee



Focus 1: Djandak Wi centred in Djaara's Culture & Lore

DJANDAK WI CENTRED IN DJAARA'S CULTURE & LORE

Focus 1 aim: we will centre Djandak Wi planning, strategic approach, practices, and operational decision making in Djaara's Culture and Lore.

Djandak Wi must be centred in Djaara's Culture and Lore to achieve our vision of conducting Djandak Wi at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what Djandak needs. Importantly, we must be able to have our young People practicing and learning about Djandak Wi, conducting Culture alongside Djandak Wi, and be responsive to Djandak.

“I'd like to be able to connect that practice and Culture.”

Currently on Crown Land (including on Aboriginal Title), we are required to navigate the complex burn planning and delivery process of government agencies. This process is arduous and Culturally inappropriate, confining our practice of Djandak Wi to government defined standards, requirements, and timeframes. These processes are risk-based and largely focus

on the protection of life and property. While these are very real and shared aspects of fire and emergency management for us all, they do not fully recognise the nuances or benefits of Djandak Wi. On private land, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group has not previously had the insurance, capability, or frameworks in place to conduct Djandak Wi independently.

“Ideally that's our end goal, where we come as families, we come as mob, pick an area, and go, right, that's ready, the indicators are right, we want to burn it tomorrow, and we have our family together, and then we can do it.”

ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Embed Djaara's Culture and Lore into Djandak Wi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Djaara's knowledge systems are strengthened. • Djaara feel empowered and autonomous. • Djaara and Djandak are healthy. • High Djaara involvement and leadership in wi management, planning, policy. • Djaara are the wi regulators on Djandak. • Djandak nourishes Djaara by providing food, fibre, and medicine. • Djandak W is consistent across all land tenure. • Djaara support and endorse the Djandak Wi process. • Partners endorse the Djandak Wi process across all land tenure. • Safe practice of Djandak Wi across all land tenure. • Djandak Wi is unhindered across all land tenure.
Share Cultural Heritage through doing Djandak Wi.	
Build capacity and capability to do Djandak Wi across different Djandak types.	
Reintroduce Djandak Wi to more areas of Djandak and heal more areas of Djandak.	
Promote the right species in the right places using Djandak Wi.	
Build responsiveness to Djandak.	
Explore private land opportunities for Djandak Wi.	
Develop and trial Djandak Wi methods, including doing Djandak Wi across more seasons.	
Build capacity and capability to doing Djandak Wi independently, including securing independent insurance and developing personalised protective equipment.	
Embed Djandak Wi into the Galk-galk Dhelkunya (forest gardening) toolkit.	
Develop a Djandak Wi leadership model (e.g., peer appointed).	
Identify and provide opportunities for key People, family groups, and/or representatives in Djandak Wi.	
Develop a Djaara led monitoring program that enhances Djaara's knowledge of Djandak Wi and Djandak.	
Continually improve our Standard Operating Procedure to ensure Djandak Wi reflects Djaara's Culture and Lore to the highest level within regulations.	

“I’d like each burn site we go on, either do a scar tree or we make tools at each site... then we get to learn a bit more about Culture and how to make tools.”



A photograph of three men in a natural, outdoor setting. One man on the left is wearing a light-colored shirt and is using a long stick to dig in the ground. Another man in the center is wearing a hat and sunglasses, looking down at the ground. A third man on the right is wearing a dark shirt and glasses, also looking down. The background shows some trees and a clear sky.

Focus 2: Djaara in the landscape

DJAARA IN THE LANDSCAPE

Focus 2 aim: we will provide tailored, diverse, and frequent opportunities for Djaara to engage with Djandak Wi and remove participation barriers.

Djandak Wi is about Djaara coming together on Djandak, sharing experiences and knowledge, and strengthening our living Culture. Djandak Wi creates relationships, builds bridges, and facilitates connection with ourselves, our communities, our Martinga Guli (Ancestors), and our Djandak. Djandak Wi is a soothing, calming, and healing sensory experience that provides an opportunity for Djaara to begin healing our spirit and to fulfil our Cultural obligation to Djandak.

*“You’re not only healing Country,
you’re healing yourself at the same time.”*

Djaara engagement with Djandak Wi has been sporadic and concentrated on a small (but growing) group of Djaara because of many Djaara living off Djandak, complexities in understanding and applying effective engagement approaches (within the context of highly personal, Culturally complex, and sensitive matters), regulatory barriers (e.g., vaccine mandates, minimum age requirements, and fitness requirements), disconnection from Culture and family, social barriers (e.g., transport, training that is not fit for purpose, and ineffective onboarding processes), health challenges, Djandak Wi planning complexities (e.g., live and changeable burn scheduling), fear or misunderstanding of Djandak Wi, and demanding work-life schedules. Djaara’s

participation and leadership in Djandak Wi is key to achieve the vision of conducting Djandak Wi at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what Djandak needs.

Some places on Djandak have specific Cultural protocols, rituals, and rites of passage for Djaara, which has implications for the types of Djandak Wi events we deliver at different locations, such as gender specific burns. We will explore how the program can better enable Djaara to adhere to Cultural protocols in Djandak Wi, guided by Djaara Elders and Cultural knowledge holders. In particular, we will focus on increasing engagement with Djaara and First Nations women in Djandak Wi, given their underrepresentation in the fire and emergency management sector (e.g., women represented less than 30% of employment in 2019).

*“What I see for our People
coming out on burns is about our
People coming together.”*

ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Host a diversity of Djandak Wi events throughout the year, including information sessions, workshops, festivals, and Cultural experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djaara feel good, empowered, and supported when they interact with Djandak Wi.• High Djaara engagement with the Djandak Wi program.• Involvement of all generations of Djaara, including Elders and young People, in Djandak Wi.• Intergenerational transfer of Djandak Wi knowledge.• Successful onboarding of Djaara into the Djandak Wi program.• Djaara support and endorse the Djandak Wi program.• High Djaara activity and presence on Djandak.
Provide opportunities for Djaara to attend and lead workshops and conferences.	
Provide fit for purpose and tailored training for Djaara to be involved in Djandak Wi, such as on Djandak training.	
Develop tailored, active, Culturally safe, and in-person engagement for Djaara.	
Engage with Djaara about Djandak Wi at broader Dja Dja Wurrung Group events.	
Identify and mobilise key community contacts to engage with Djaara.	
Provide transportation assistance for Djaara to attend Djandak Wi events.	
Communicate Djandak Wi process complexities to foster understanding from Djaara.	
Create different roles, experiences, and exposure to different parts of the Djandak Wi program for Djaara, including participation and observer positions.	
Provide incentives and opportunities for young People to engage with Djandak Wi.	
Create a casual onboarding process that is fit for purpose. Ensure career development and support is built in.	
Cultivate Djaara's Djandak Wi knowledge and leadership.	



“I’ve been really proud of seeing some of our young People step up and actually be a part of those roles and lead.”



Focus 3: Djandak Wi self-determination

DJANDAK WI SELF-DETERMINATION

Focus 3 aim: we will ensure Djaara are empowered to exercise our rights to conduct Djandak Wi across Djandak.

Self-determination is the fundamental right for us to make decisions about and shape our own lives. Djaara have an inalienable sovereign right and Cultural obligation to Djandak and Djandak Wi. Our rights to conduct Djandak Wi are legally enshrined in our Recognition and Settlement Agreement (2013) with the Victorian Government and the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006).

“It’s being able to accommodate different member experiences so that People can link together.”

Our Djandak Wi customs have never been ceded. Yet, compounding factors of colonisation have impacted our ability to freely practice Djandak Wi at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what Djandak needs. Current barriers include wi regulation, wi management zoning (e.g., Bushfire

Management Zones and Asset Protection Zones), wi law, wi policy, and a complexity of legal title and land tenure (Crown Land under joint management between DJAARA and the State, other Crown Land, Djaara owned freehold, and privately owned freehold).

“It’s just our mob being Djaara and going, well, I want to actually go out and burn today. That’s their right, that’s our human right.”

ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Engage with public interest legal organisations to develop a legal and regulatory strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal recognition and appointment of Djaara as land managers of Djandak. • Enabling legal and regulatory environment for Djaara to practice Djandak Wi unhindered. • Djaara's rights and interests are legally recognised and reflected in government legislation and policies. • Djaara are the wi regulators on Djandak. • Partner agencies actively support and endorse Djaara conducting Djandak Wi across Djandak.
Decolonise government wi structures and processes.	
Ensure Djaara are meaningfully involved as a partner in managing Djandak.	
Incorporate Djaara's Cultural priorities into wi management and decision making.	
Secure rights to effectively protect and manage Cultural landscapes and sites through Djandak Wi.	
Provide input into wi policy and governance.	
Provide input for legislation reform (e.g., the Forest Act 1958 and Bushfire Act 1954).	
Provide input for regulatory reform (e.g., DEECA Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land 2012).	
Ensure that Djaara are leading Djandak Wi on all Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Title land.	
Develop Djaara-led trial sites to evidence the benefits of Djandak Wi, including reducing wildfire risk.	
Advocate Djaara's rights as the rightful practitioners and decision makers of Djandak Wi on Djandak to all partners.	
Effectively implement Djaara's Recognition and Settlement Agreement (2013) and other relevant legislation.	

“Dja Dja Wurrung seek to be restored to their rightful place as the leading fire and land managers on Djandak and to transition all fire on Country to be the right fire for Country.”



Focus 4: Strong & diverse Djandak Wi economy

STRONG & DIVERSE DJANDAK WI ECONOMY

Focus 4 aim: we will ensure long-term sustainability and growth of the Djandak Wi program and become the leading wi practitioners on Djandak.

For Djaara to be empowered to conduct Djandak Wi at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what Djandak needs, we need long-term financial stability and economic viability into the future. Importantly, we need to build a strong and diverse economy in Djandak Wi that includes contract works outside funding agreements. We invite investors to wurreka (yarn/talk) and ngaldurrong yana (walk together) on Djandak with us to achieve our vision.

Djandak Wi “was a big process for a lot of our uncles and aunties and before them, fought for this, to keep on continuing to make it happen. That’s why it means a lot to me.”

For much of the Djandak Wi program’s history, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group has relied on a range of fixed term funding grants provided by government partners. This funding plays a vital role in developing and scaling up the program, but does not provide certainty for longer term planning and capacity/capability building to embed and restore Djaara as leaders in Djandak Wi on Djandak. Curious, respectful, and truthful conversations need to be forthcoming and ongoing about fair, practical actions that will

fully enable Djaara’s rights as land managers and custodians of Djandak. The task is to enable self-determination. The Yoorrook Justice Commission is investigating systemic abuses and disenfranchisement of Traditional Owners across a range of areas and treaty negotiations in Victoria must inform actions. We will exercise our right to freely pursue Djaara economic and social development, consistent with Schedule 15 Principles of Sustainability Provisions of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (2013) for the benefit of the Djaara community.

“As Traditional Owners, we have a right to manage Country in whatever way we see fit.”

ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Lobby the Victorian Government to legally recognise and appoint Djaara as land managers of Djandak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Djaara community benefits, such as health and wellbeing, from Djandak Wi economic outcomes.• Legal recognition and appointment of Djaara as land managers of Djandak.• Acquisition of sustainable and consistent economic streams.• Long-term sustainability of Djandak Wi program.• Continued growth of the Djandak Wi program.• Sufficient income to achieve vision and aspirations.• Reintroduction of Djandak Wi to more Cultural landscapes across Djandak.
Work with government to contract DJANDAK to reintroduce Djandak Wi into the State's burning regime.	
Secure means to effectively protect and manage Cultural landscapes and sites through Djandak Wi.	
Leverage significant human, financial, and information resources through the development of strategic partnerships and joint ventures in Djandak Wi.	
Establish a strong business development pipeline to secure new income opportunities.	
Strengthen Djaara's living Culture.	
Secure a percentage of the annual Victorian State Budget.	
Work with land managers to use Djandak Wi in biodiversity restoration.	
Strengthen Djaara's capacity to lead the healing of Djandak through Djandak Wi.	
Explore income streams, including carbon credits, green initiatives, ecological resilience schemes, climate resilience initiatives, direct community donations, philanthropic grants, and private investment.	
Develop Djandak Wi service offering for a range of different land tenures, including private land.	



“It’s important because it’s a very unique thing to be able to be Indigenous and burning on Country. You know, it’s taken a long time to even say things like that. It’s a good thing that we can have a program like this that allows us to have a say.”



Focus 5: Normalise Djandak Wi & Cultural competency

NORMALISE DJANDAK WI & CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Focus 5 aim: we will foster understanding and support of Djandak Wi and ensure Djaara's Cultural safety in Djandak Wi.

Djandak Wi has always been and will always be an integral part of our Culture and of healthy Djandak. While wrong way wi has instilled distrust, misconception, and fear into our communities, Djandak Wi provides an opportunity for People and communities to heal our relationship with wi and our relationships with each other.

“That’s the vision for us here, that when People in the future see multiple plumes of smoke, the right colour smoke from cooler burning, lower intensity burning, the People feel safe.”

In parallel, our partners (e.g., Forest Fire Management Victoria, Country Fire Authority, local councils, and environmental groups) have an obligation and responsibility to support our self-determination, to enable our rights to

conduct Djandak Wi, and to create Culturally safe environments for us. We will ensure the protection of Djaara’s Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property throughout the development and dissemination of educational tools.

“Cultural safety means having the ability to heal Country without judgement from outside organisations and feeling good about myself while doing it”; “the People I trust are leading the burn”; and “everyone understands the goals and is working together to achieve those goals”.

ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Develop learning modules on Djandak Wi that involve on Djandak learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Normalisation and high understanding of Djandak Wi from stakeholders, partners, and the wider community.• Normalisation and high understanding of Djaara's rights and obligations to do Djandak Wi from stakeholders, partners, and the wider community.• Djaara feel Culturally safe when doing Djandak Wi with partner organisations.• High Cultural competency of partner organisation staff.• Mandate of learning modules in partner organisations.• Recognition of Djandak Wi as a tool to heal Djandak, including reduce wildfire risk.
Collaborate with DUMAWAL in training and onboarding of partner organisation staff in Cultural competency.	
Develop promotional and educational pieces to educate stakeholders, partners, and the wider community about Djandak Wi.	
Embed learning modules into the onboarding and training of partner organisation staff.	
Provide educational opportunities, such as workshops and engagement areas at Djandak Wi events.	
Engage with researchers and scientists to evidence the benefits of Djandak Wi for Djandak and People.	
Ensure action and accountability from partner organisations in embedding the learning modules.	

“Out on Country is where those important yarns happen, it’s where the knowledge sharing happens. So, I invite everyone to come and walk beside Djaara as we burn Country, not only healing Country but healing our own spirit.”



“Djandak Wi is not something to be feared or something to be fought... it is quite healing and quite relaxing.”



Focus 6: Strong Traditional Owner partnerships

STRONG TRADITIONAL OWNER PARTNERSHIPS

Focus 6 aim: we will contribute to the momentum for all Traditional Owners to pursue their aspirations in Cultural burning.

Strong partnerships between Traditional Owners are important because they provide spaces of understanding, strength, and safety. Strong Traditional Owner partnerships provide important opportunities for People and communities to come together to strengthen Culture, to share challenges, solutions, knowledge, goals, perspectives, and experiences, and to minimise the duplication of our efforts in achieving our aspirations.

“Success would be all Aboriginals have the capacity to build fire teams, where we are the ones doing all the burning.”

Traditional Owners are diverse in their Cultures, aspirations, and customs, but face similar challenges in reintroducing Cultural burning across Australia, such as sick Country, wi regulation, wi zoning, wi law, wi policy, and complex legal title, and land tenure.

Walking together, sharing, and learning from each other is crucial to create an enabling and unhindered environment for all Traditional Owners to pursue their aspirations in returning Cultural burning to their Countries.

“To be able to walk on Country that a lot of the times we’ve never been allowed to walk on or never had access to walk on, so to be able to go to new places and to be able to walk on Countries our Ancestors have walked on for millennia, to play our role, our Cultural obligation to care for Country... it is powerful.”

ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Re-instate the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Leadership Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of Cultural wi knowledge and learning between Traditional Owners. • Momentum for all Traditional Owners to achieve their Cultural burning aspirations on their Countries. • Growth and development of Djandak Wi customs and knowledge.
Facilitate Djaara led regional Djandak Wi workshops and conferences.	
Provide opportunities for Djaara to attend workshops and conferences.	
Prioritise Traditional Owner People and resources for Djandak Wi.	
Provide opportunities for Cultural burning exchanges and mentorships.	
Share resources, solutions, and content (e.g., our Standard Operating Procedure) where there is interest.	

“In the future... we can just be on Country and do what we want to do as Traditional Owners, and other Traditional Owners too. We’re already inviting other groups to our burns and we’re already getting invited to their burns.”

“Future generations of Dja Dja Wurrung will grow-up to be observing their Elders leading the use of the right wi for Djandak. They will be trusted to know the special reasons why wi is used and how it brings health to the land and People. Their children and grandchildren will see Culturally valuable plants and animals return to Djandak and know their stories”.

RETURNING WI MURRUP AND SPECIES DOMINANCE RESET AT GUTJUN BULOK

Our first Djandak Wi of Autumn 2023 was in early April at Gutjun Bulok (Tang Tang Swamp), northern Djandak. It was a day of quiet but excited anticipation. Recently, the team working on program development and fire delivery had expanded, and we've all been working hard preparing to deliver dhelkunya wi (healing fire) to Djandak. Our Martinga Guli go with us in all that we do.

It was the first burn we had done for a while; we'd been training hard but were a little nervous, and lots of People from the Dja Dja Wurrung Group and partner agency staff from Forest Fire Management Victoria were new to meeting each other.

The hordes of blow flies all around in the hot afternoon sun reminded us we were surrounded by livestock farms, and about to deliver Djandak Wi at a place of great significance for what little remains of biodiversity amidst fundamentally altered landscapes and waterways diverted for mass irrigation.

Giving fire to Djandak was supposed to start during the day, but the Djaara mob had a sense that it wasn't the right time to burn. We needed



to wait until we could feel the temperature on our skin drop subtly, but sharply, as the sun got closer to sleeping.

After taking a few drives around the site, checking on wind speed, checks on vehicles and equipment, and clearing fuels around a few lone trees like bull oak and river red gums, we gathered everyone together. One of the young, emergent Djaara Cultural fire leaders gave us a briefing on the plan for the Djandak Wi and invited discussion about some key species and animals, including snakes, legless lizards, and turtles.

Djaara and other Traditional Owner mob there led the smoking ceremony for all present to participate in, to let our Martinga Guli know we were there, pay respects, and to cleanse and be in communal spirit together as we heal Djandak.

The fire moved at a slow easy pace for the most part, and some of the more experienced fire practitioners buddied up to teach, support and

share with others that were newer to Cultural fire. The day went smoothly, finishing around 9.30pm. There were a lot of positive responses, with some Djaara saying it was the best Djandak Wi experience they'd had yet.

While the burn was hotter than we might normally like, because it was primarily about resetting species dominance and thick, dry fuel loads, we hoped it cleansed so that when we return next time there will be more plant diversity and cool, slow, patchy burning can be done.

We shared dinner together and then continued working with the fire, with mob, aunties, uncles, and friends keeping an eye on the fire edges, Eucalypt branches gently flung over their backs so they could pat the fire out and not let it go too close to the swamp water area. People were cracking jokes and barreling over laughing occasionally at something amusing someone had said, in between marveling at the artistic, warm colors of brilliant reds, oranges, pinks, yellows, blues, and whites in Sky Djandak and against the wise old trees.



There are precious memories etched into the spirits of everyone there that special day. Our hearts were full with joy, pride, and gratitude as we left Gutjun Bulok, we knew we had returned some Wi Murrup there that night. A variety of Djaara priority plant species and native grasses returned in the months after the Djandak Wi.



Focus 7: Cultural landscape approach - nourishing Murrumbidgee

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE APPROACH - NOURISHING MURRUMBIDGEE

Focus 7 aim: we will link into, strengthen, and promote existing Djaara and Traditional Owner strategies.

Djaara and other Traditional Owners have developed several strategies that clearly articulate our visions for healing Country and healing People, including the reintroduction of Cultural burning, and clear pathways to achieve those visions. It is important that this Strategy is read in conjunction with and in the context of other Djaara and Traditional Owner authored strategies as a holistic, integrated approach to managing sick Country and to enable healing.

“It’s active management, it’s human interaction, it’s the involvement, it’s about making Country well.”

DHELKUNYA DJA PLAN

The Dheulkunya Dja (Healing Country) Plan (2014 – 2034) articulates Djaara’s vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Djaara and Djandak in alignment with this Strategy:



Goal 1 (Djaara): every Djaara person is happy, healthy, and secure in their identity, livelihood, and lifestyle.



Goal 2 (Cultural practices and customs): our customs and practices are alive and respected, keeping us connected to our past, our present, and our future.



Goal 3 (Cultural Heritage): our Malamiya (Cultural Heritage) is recognised and protected as a celebration of our identity and community.



Goal 4 (bush tucker and medicine): our Djandak continues to nourish us by providing bush tucker and medicine.



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 (mined) Djandak is healthy again.



Goal 7 (self-determination): we 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 to strengthen our living Culture.



Goal 9 (joint management): all Crown land on our Djandak is Aboriginal Title and we are the sole managers.

DHELKUNYA DJA LAND MANAGEMENT BOARD JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Through Djaara's Recognition and Settlement Agreement (2013), land was transferred to 'Aboriginal Title' for joint management by Djaara and the State of Victoria. Djandak Wi is key to healing Country and People in joint managed parks:

- Re-establish Djaara's seven-priority food and fibre plants through Djandak Wi.
- Manage animals (both invasive and native) through Djandak Wi.
- Evidence the benefits and savings of Djandak Wi.
- Ensure ongoing public access to information about Djandak Wi.

DJA DJA WURRUNG CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Dja Dja Wurrung Climate Change Strategy outlines Djaara's vision for creating a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future by empowering Djaara-led responses to climate change. Djandak Wi is a key climate change action area:

- Reduce fuels and wildfire risk through Djandak Wi.
- Regenerate unhealthy Djandak.
- Sequester carbon through Djandak Wi.
- Get Djaara out on Djandak practicing right way wi.
- Build institutional knowledge, understanding, and capacity in Djandak Wi.
- Provide community education about Djandak Wi and how it can be applied on private land to build community and landscape resilience.

DHELKUNYANGU GATJIN STRATEGY

The Dhehkunyang Gatin (Working Together to Heal Water) Strategy outlines Djaara's vision to heal the gatin that falls on and across Djandak and could align with this Strategy:

- Promote and protect healthy riparian ecosystems through Djandak Wi.
- Burn excessive build-up of vegetation and debris adjacent to waterways to prevent black water and unhealthy run off.
- Align water with Djandak Wi events adjacent to waterways.

GALK-GALK DHELKUNYA STRATEGY

The Galk-galk Dhehkunya (Forest Gardening) Strategy outlines Djaara's vision to heal Djandak where forests and woodlands currently are or were present on Djandak. Djandak Wi is a key Cultural tool in the Galk-galk Dhehkunya toolkit:

- Increase Djaara's involvement and leadership in wi planning, policy, and practice.
- Ensure that Djaara are engaged as partners in legislative and regulatory reform.
- Place Djaara at the forefront of decision making and input in land management.
- Ensure Djaara are considered first in land management decisions on Djandak.
- Increase the understanding and support of Djandak Wi across Djandak.

VICTORIAN TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL FIRE STRATEGY

In alignment with this Strategy, the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Fire Strategy (2019) articulates Victorian Traditional Owner's vision to reinvigorate Cultural burning:

- Develop operational pathways for Traditional Owners to lead Cultural burn planning and practice across all land tenures and Country types.
- Build Traditional Owner governance and capacity in Cultural wi knowledge and practice.
- Improve Country management, heal Country, and build resilience in People and landscapes through collaborative management.
- Develop and strengthen institutional frameworks to support Cultural wi practices.

WALKING TOGETHER – BALAK KALIK MANYA PLAN

The Walking Together – Balak Kalik Many Plan (2021 – 2026) articulates a vision to implement healthy Djandak plans for Wildflower Drive and Kalimna Park through collaboration, celebration of shared place, community connection, and improvement of biodiversity. Reintroducing Djandak Wi is a key objective:

- Work with Parks Victoria, the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action, and other organisations to re-establish Djandak Wi in Kalimna Park and Wildflower Drive to protect Malamiya (Cultural Heritage), Cultural practices, and species of conservation and Cultural importance.

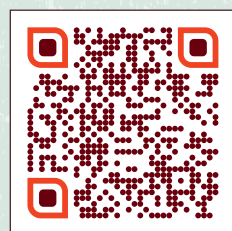
VICTORIAN TRADITIONAL OWNER CULTURAL LANDSCAPES STRATEGY

In alignment with this Strategy, the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscapes Strategy (2019) articulates Victorian Traditional Owner's vision to embed a "management paradigm that is underpinned by Cultural values, practices, interest, and knowledge" and "elevate Traditional Owner's roles in the policy, planning, and management of Country":

- Restore and protect Traditional Owner knowledge systems.
- Strengthen Traditional Owner nation resilience to enable delivery of our contemporary role as custodians of Country.
- Enable Traditional Owner Cultural landscapes planning.
- Embed Traditional Owner knowledge and practice into policy, planning, and the management of Country.
- Enable the application of Traditional Owner Cultural objectives, knowledge, and practice in the management of public land.

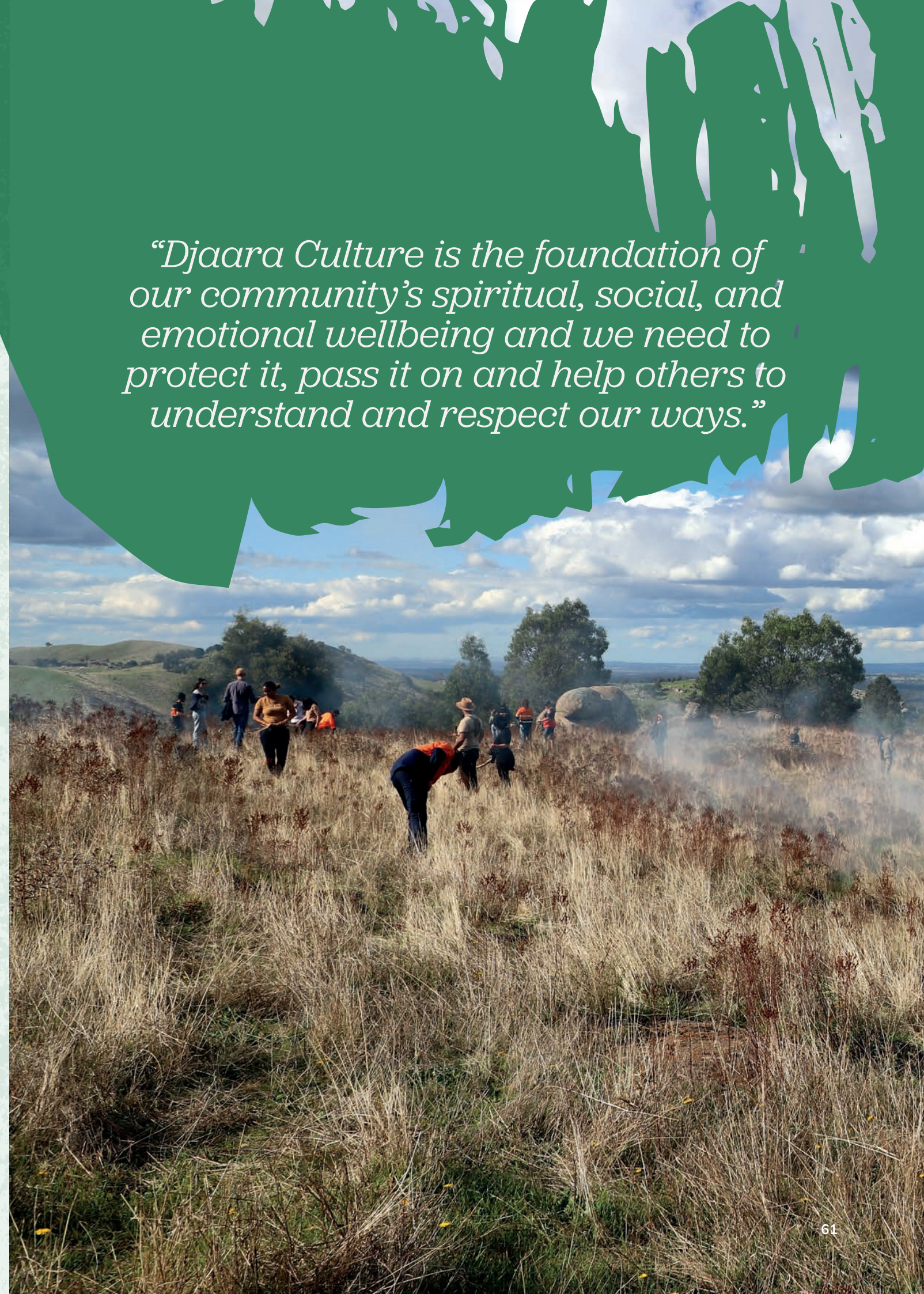
ACTIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
Develop solutions to heal Djandak that are holistic, whole of Djandak, and bioculturally informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Strategy links into, strengthens, and promotes strategies authored by Djaara and Traditional Owners. • This Strategy is read in conjunction with and in the context of strategies authored by Djaara and Traditional Owners.
Link Djandak Wi into existing Djaara and Traditional Owner Strategies.	
Use Galk-galk Dhelkunya (forest gardening) tools to combine with Djandak Wi to heal Djandak.	
Build strong communication and collaboration between Dja Dja Wurrung Group teams and projects (such as through Aboriginal Waterways Assessments and Cultural Values assessments).	

“It’s not just Cultural fire, it’s also helping protect Country. It always comes back to forest gardening. A lot of the burns need to be followed up with other tools, in a changed landscape especially. It shouldn’t just be about fire. It’s about healing Country, and fire’s a part of it.”



Benefits to Country. Watch here.
<https://vimeo.com/916984366/81e1dedd6e>

“Djaara 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.”



Destination

This Strategy articulates Djaara's vision for Djandak Wi — Djaara are empowered to conduct Djandak Wi at the right time, in the right way, and in the right place according to what Djandak needs — and the pathway to achieve our vision:

Focus 1: centre Djandak Wi planning, strategic approach, practices, and operational decision making in Djaara's Culture and Lore.

Focus 2: provide tailored, diverse, and frequent opportunities for Djaara to engage with Djandak Wi and remove participation barriers.

Focus 3: ensure Djaara are empowered to exercise our rights to do Djandak Wi across Djandak.

Focus 4: ensure long-term sustainability and growth of the Djandak Wi program and become the leading wi practitioners on Djandak.

Focus 5: foster understanding and support of Djandak Wi and ensure Djaara's Cultural safety in Djandak Wi.

Focus 6: contribute to the momentum for all Traditional Owners to pursue their aspirations in Cultural burning.

Focus 7: link into, strengthen, and promote existing Djaara and other Traditional Owner strategies.

We invite investors, and our stakeholders, partners, and the wider community to wurreka (yarn/talk) and ngaldurrong yana (walk together) on Djandak with us to achieve our vision, and to heal our People and our Djandak through Djandak Wi.

Success is "groups go out to a spot, and it's not just head out there for the day... but head out there for a week, protect the areas they want protected, conduct a burn, stay until it's finished, monitor it for a few days after, and then travel to the next spot."

Success is "mob can just be out on Country and go, 'right, we want to burn' and are able to do it, and we do it safely... burning every day if fuel is available, and seeing landscapes change over a period of time... seeing native species flourish from what we're doing, knowing that Country is getting healed and it's coming back to life again... and our mob are proud of what they're doing."



"There's no legislative process on top of it. So, if they feel it's the right time, right fire, that they do it. There's trust there, from community and from the government agencies."



Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
Trading as DJAARA
PO Box 1026 Bendigo VIC 3552

DJAARA: 13-15 Forest Street
Bendigo VIC 3550

DJANDAK: 3/204 Strickland Road
Strathdale VIC 3550

T: +61 (03) 5444 2888
F: +61 (03) 5441 6472

djadjawurrung.com.au