

# Galk-galk Dhelkunya Fact Sheet

## An overview of Forest Gardening

### What is Galk-galk dhelkunya?

Galk-galk dhelkunya meaning to care and heal to trees and forests in Dja Dja Wurrung language is Djaara's contemporary philosophy and practice for managing Djandak's cultural landscapes.

*"Forest gardening is about getting Djaara back into landscapes. It heals us and it heals Country, and we lead the healing on our terms"*

excerpt from the Strategy

DJANDAK  
IS THRIVING

DJAARA  
ARE THRIVING

### BACKGROUND

Djaara biocultural knowledge, customs and practices are what informed our Martinga Guli (Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors) management and caring of Djandak for thousands of years.

Forest Gardening is Djaara's approach to healing the harm done to Country from colonisation and wrong land management practises.

Forest Gardening is developed from Djaara traditional knowledge and stories and is practiced in a contemporary context in response to threats such as land clearing, climate change, biodiversity loss and species extinctions.

The Forest Gardening Strategy 2022-2034 aligns with the timeline of the Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan and outlines a vision for healing Djaara's cultural landscapes.

### Vision for Forest Gardening

**Galk-galk Dhelkunya is Djaara's holistic cultural landscape management philosophy and practice. In implementing the Strategy, our vision is:**

Djandak's landscapes are healing through Forest Gardening, allowing for greater focus on interaction with Country in all its elements.

People living on Djandak are inspired to walk with Djaara to heal Country together, guided by Djaara custodial knowledge and Galk-galk Dhelkunya principles.

Djaara are empowered to practice and share culture with pride





## FOREST GARDENING IN PRACTICE

## Forest Gardening Practice & Cycle

### Principles

#### CULTURE

Cultural processes, cultural landscapes, traditional knowledge & Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)

#### COUNTRY

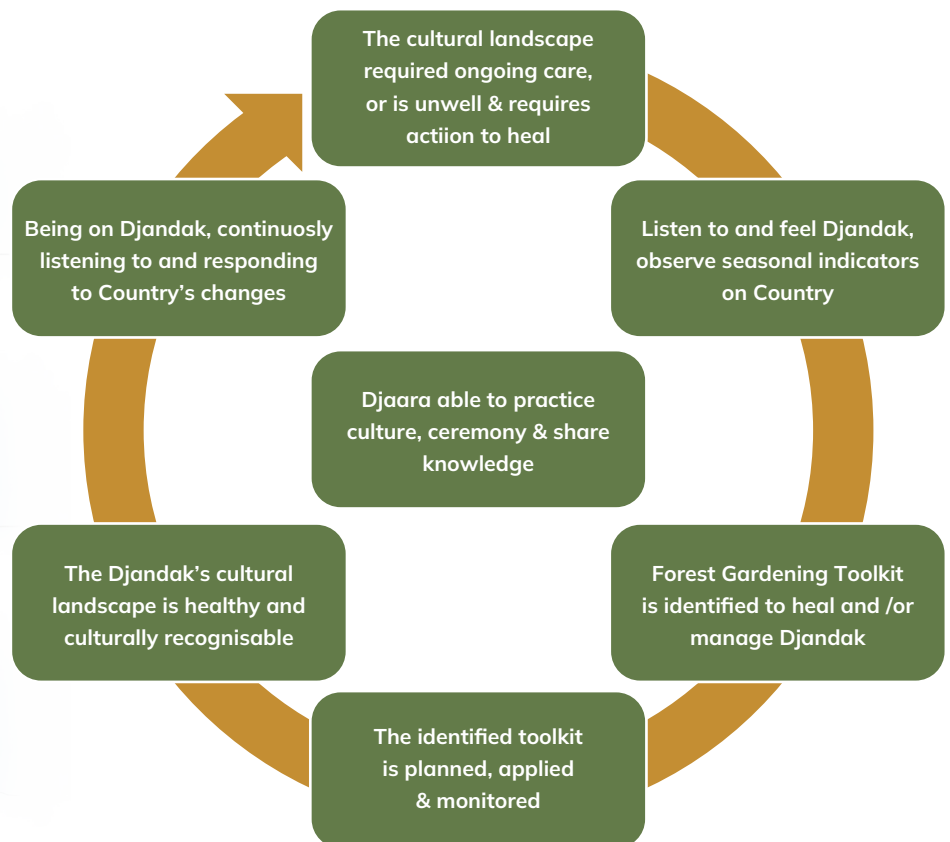
Managing Country in a contemporary setting, holistically and focused on healing

#### LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

Djaara leading management, Traditional Owner centered governance, agency partnership

#### ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Agency resourcing and economic development



## THE FOREST GARDENING CYCLE

## Forest Gardening Toolkit

CULTURAL THINNING	REVEGETATION & REHABILITATION	REGENERATIVE PRACTICE	DJANDAK WI (cultural burning)	GATJIN (water)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Increased space for older trees (galka)</li> <li>· Utilisation for tools &amp; artifacts</li> <li>· Restoring culturally recognisable structures to forests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Revegetation of trees, grasses</li> <li>· Create habitat</li> <li>· Improve soil health</li> <li>· Improved water retention</li> <li>· Enhanced biodiversity and variation in plants</li> </ul>	<p>Partnerships with private landholders</p> <p>More trees, food and fibre plants on Country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· increased tree cover</li> <li>· improved habitat</li> <li>· shared timber assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Cultural tool for ceremonial and landscape management</li> <li>· A low, cool fire applied in a mosaic</li> <li>· Improve the health of grassy understoreys and canopies</li> </ul>	<p>Holds culture through creation stories, trade routes, songlines and connection to cultural heritage</p> <p>Provides nutrients, vital aspect of habitat</p>

## Strategic Approach

DJAARA's Forest Gardening Strategy contains 33 objectives and 87 actions for its implementation, organised into the following themes:

<b>Djaara Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Djaara are leading land management across Djandak</li> </ul>
<b>Djaara Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Djaara walking together with partners and stakeholders to implement Forest Gardening and create benefits for Djaara and the wider community</li> </ul>
<b>Djaara Knowledge &amp; Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Djaara's knowledge system is restored and our organisations and community are capable, empowered and leading forest gardening</li> </ul>
<b>Djaara Economic Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Djaara delivers and benefit from economic outcomes, through delivery of Forest Gardening services, employment, and diversification of enterprise and forest-based industries</li> </ul>

## Forest Gardening Implementation

Implementation of the Strategy will be led by DJAARA members and Djaara biocultural knowledge. Over the next 3-5 years, a range of demonstration sites will trial Forest Gardening tools and activities across Djandak. This will build capacity, capability and provide evidence for longer implementation until 2034.

<b>Trial tools on parts of Country with different levels of health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Health determined through Djaara/Indigenous science, utilising both cultural and environmental indicators.</li> </ul>
<b>Trial tools across different land tenure arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· In Djaara Parks under joint management</li> <li>· On crown land managed by governments</li> <li>· On Djaara owned land</li> <li>· On private land through private sector partnerships, with NGOs (e.g. Trust for Nature) and/or private landholders</li> </ul>
<b>Trial tools on parts of Country with different levels of health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Health determined through both cultural indicators and environmental indicators through Djaara/Indigenous science</li> </ul>
<b>Trial tools in response to different threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· For example, threats from climate change (floods, storms, fires, droughts), up-side down Country from mining and land clearing</li> </ul>
<b>Apply combinations of tools, activities and interventions at the same site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Listen to Country – and where needed multiple interventions may be needed. For example, a site might start with cultural thinning to provide space for larger trees to develop, followed by cultural burning, then revegetation of any missing species, and then cultural water flows.</li> </ul>

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](http://djadjawurrung.com.au)

