




Dhelkunyangu Gatjin

Gatjin Strategy
Implementation Plan
2024 / 2025





The 2024-2025 Gatjin Strategy Implementation Plan describes the activities and initiatives determined by the Wanngal¹ Group to best progress the implementation of Dhelkunyangu Gatjin (The Gatjin Strategy).



¹Wanggal = A cluster of combungi (bullrush) working together to stabilise the bank. (Name given to the Gatjin Strategy Partners Implementation Control Group to signify the collaborative approach to delivering on the Strategy outcomes)

Gatjin Strategy implementation program framework

Vision | djaa ba gatjin dhelkunyangu, dhelk gatjini djuwenuwangu

	Djaara making decisions for Gatjin	Djaara making decisions for Gatjin
Strategic Outcomes	Djaara lore informs water management decisions	Djaara manage environmental water
Programs	Water Management	Environmental Water
Baring	<p>Djaara involvement in water management DEFINED</p> <p>Program for provision of advice AGREED</p> <p>Agreements with relevant authorities FORMALISED</p>	<p>Djaara input into environmental water planning</p> <p>Djaara lead environmental water planning</p> <p>Djaara manage environmental water</p>
Djimbunang Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners engage Djaara on the agreed water decisions. Djaara Knowledge informs water management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Djaara waterways assessments inform environmental watering decisions. Djaara determine the use of environmental water.

The Gatjin Strategy Implementation Program Logic provides an overview of how the barings (pathways) activities link the program of water related management activities and initiatives to the broader Strategic and Country Plan outcomes.

The Gatjin Strategy, Annual Implementation Plan and the proposed Water Agency Partnership Agreements/Arrangements provide a framework for water agencies to collaborate with the Dja Dja Wurrung Group, in fulfilling their commitments outlined in the State's 2013 Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) and the associated Natural Resource Agreement.

We are empowered as the Traditional custodians of this land to care for Country and apply Djaara knowledge to heal our waterways - returning good spirit to Gatjin.

Secure water rights and entitlements	Secure water rights and entitlements	A Djaara Gatjin Authority
Djaara have a legislated cultural water right	Djaara have growing water entitlements	Gatjin Authority managing Djaara's water interests
Cultural Water	Water Entitlements	Gatjin Authority
<div>Djaara Cultural water right DEFINED</div> <div>Cultural water right AGREED</div> <div>Cultural water right DEVELOPED</div>	<div>Djaara water prospectus DEVELOPED</div> <div>Water entitlements SECURED</div> <div>Mechanism for securing water entitlements AGREED</div>	<div>Authority Model DEFINED</div> <div>Gatjin Authority ESTABLISHED</div> <div>Gatjin Authority GROWING</div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Djaara watering Country. Right Water, Right Place, Right Time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water flows and uses across Djandak understood. Djaara water entitlements are increasing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structures are in place for Djaara to make informed decisions about water use. A Gatjin Authority is part of Victoria's water management framework.

Annual program planning and delivery cycle

Each year the Wanggal Group will develop a Gatjin Implementation Plan with the objective of progressing the Gatjin Strategy outcomes.

The Implementation Plan will inform Partners' business plans.

The Wanggal Group will use the plan to track and oversee delivery.

This diagram outlines the annual delivery cycle.



*Meaning: knowing water is Djaara's water knowledge group

2023/2024 Progress

23/24 Djimbunang Indicator Tracking (as per the 2023/24 Implementation Plan)

GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT	MAKE DECISIONS FOR GATJIN	MAKE DECISIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL WATER	SECURE CULTURAL WATER RIGHTS	SECURE WATER RIGHTS	ESTABLISH A GATJIN AUTHORITY
<p>Governance arrangements in place.</p> <p></p> <p>2024 / 2025 Implementation Plan approved.</p> <p></p>	<p>Dja Dja Wurrung have identified and communicated, with water agencies, our preference for involvement in water management.</p> <p></p>	<p>Dja Dja Wurrung environmental Seasonal Watering Proposal trial.</p> <p></p>	<p>Dja Dja Wurrung has defined a Djaara Cultural Water Right and developed principles for cultural water use.</p> <p></p>	<p>Water Accounts developed.</p> <p></p> <p>Water prospectus developed.</p> <p></p>	<p>Gatjin Water Authority Model agreed</p> <p></p>

 Delivered  Underway  Not Delivered

The first year of implementing the Gatjin Strategy has seen progress along each of the barings. Significant progress has been made establishing the governance arrangements and working with partners to implement the Gatjin Strategy objectives. The Wanggal Group has been established. The Wanggal Group endorsed the 2023/24 Implementation Plan, oversaw its implementation and have led the development of the 2024/25 Implementation Plan. The Wanggal Group have included Kapa Gatjin representatives into their meetings.

Dja Dja Wurrung have communicated directly with the Water Agencies Djaara's (Dja Dja Wurrung People's) ambitions to be involved in water management. This included presentations to all of the Boards and senior executive teams of the water agencies that operate on Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country).

The Gatjin Team has worked with DEECA to develop water accounts for Djandak and have developed an Environmental Contribution (EC6) bid for a trial to establish a Djaara Gatjin Authority, that describes the high-level model and seeks funding to develop a detailed business case and to establish an Authority.

A Djimbunang (milestone) indicator to define a Cultural Water Right has not progressed as further defining a Cultural Water Right beyond the Echuca Declaration 2007 definition was considered not required to be able to progress opportunities for Djaara owned and managed water rights. However, significant effort was dedicated to reviewing and improving the Aboriginal Waterway Assessment (AWA) process and undertaking AWAs, which is an important precursor for determining a Cultural Water Right.



2023/2024 Lessons

This 2024/25 year is the first opportunity for a co-developed implementation plan, where the priorities and Djimbunang indicators are set by the Wanggal Group and used by the DJANDAK Gatjin Team and Wanggal Group partner agencies to determine the 2024/25 actions and initiatives as part of their business planning processes.

It builds on the inaugural 2023/2024 Implementation Plan that was developed by the DJANDAK Gatjin Team and subsequently endorsed by the Wanggal Group. A co-developed plan leads to a more comprehensive plan but with realistic solutions and shared ownership of outcomes, ultimately enhancing implementation efficiency and effectiveness.

An end-of-year Wanggal Group review of the 2023/24 Implementation Plan identified that:

- The 2023/24 plan was overly ambitious, considering the available resources and the realistic timeframes for planning and delivering a coordinated approach to complex projects and transformational initiatives. This is compounded, as the Wanggal Group is charting a new collaborative approach which takes time to embed. Consistency of membership from agency representatives assists with embedding the collaboration and ways of working together.
- The implementation of key actions was overly and unnecessarily dependent on the DJANDAK Gatjin Team.
- Agency projects were not explicitly responding to the Gatjin Strategy objectives and outcomes.
- The original concept of a 3 year implementation plan, resulted in an implementation plan that incorporated many prospective projects that

would not commence in the focus year. This results in both a cluttered plan, but also effort to consider the prospective projects at the expense of existing projects. The intent in this plan is to focus on projects that are underway or will commence in 2024/2025.

- Separate tables for agency projects didn't enable full line of sight to the strategy outcomes. Alignment could be better displayed through integrating agency projects under each Baring. Applicability of the projects with multiple agencies can then be identified to foster collaboration and co-delivery of opportunities.

Kapa Gatjin (The Djaara Water Knowledge group) has assigned a representative to attend Wanggal meetings over 23/24. This will continue as a permanent arrangement in 24/25.

In response, the 2024/25 Implementation Plan aims to be more realistic, albeit still outlining an ambitious program to progress the Gatjin Strategy objectives. Wanggal Group partner agencies are being asked to better support and lead the delivery of actions and initiatives. The role of Djaara in each of the Djaara Centred Projects has been dropped from the 2024/25 tables with the expectation that each project will have its own project plan that puts Djaara at the center in a way that is appropriate for each project.

To better involve Kapa Gatjin members and to build members' understanding of Djaara the Wanggal meetings could be "Djaara-fied" to reflect Djaara ways of thinking and doing.

Image left: Representatives from each partner agency at the inaugural Wanggal get-together

Focus for 2024/2025

To deliver the Gatjin Strategy outcomes, the Wanggal Group has set the following focus areas for 2024/25:

- Establish a pilot Djaara Gatjin Authority to demonstrate proof of concept.
- Enhance Wanggal Group's co-delivery functions.
- Increase capability of DJANDAK Gatjin Team and Agency staff.
- Agree on Dja Dja Wurrung involvement in water agencies' decision-making processes.
- Establish effective arrangements for Kapa Gatjin guidance and input.
- Determine pathways for Dja Dja Wurrung to become Environmental Water Holders, waterway managers and hold cultural water entitlements.

- Continue to develop and grow the Djaara Cultural Water Knowledge hub to activate Djaara Cultural Water Rights.
- Formalise Dja Dja Wurrung water ownership through existing avenues and identify new opportunities.

The focus on governance and oversight and making decisions for water will continue throughout 24/25. There is a real need to continue this focus to establish the foundations for working together and developing the frameworks required to deliver the more complex initiatives to secure Culture Water and Water Entitlements that require changes to the current framework.

Wanggal Collaboration and Partnerships

In addition to the Wanggal partners there are other agencies and forums that perform a critical role in water management on Djandak. These agencies and forums will be engaged as required by the relevant Wanggal partner to support the delivery of Initiatives and Djaara Centred Projects.

Each year, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group, will convene a Natural Resources Agreement Forum with all of their partners' to discuss delivery of partners Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) commitments and how the application of Djaara Knowledge and Lore can improve natural resource management on Djandak.

PARTNER AGENCIES	PARTNER FORUMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental Protection Authority• Local Government councils• Parks Victoria• Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN)• Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations (FVTOC)• Traditional Owner Corporation Caucus (TOCC)• Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated Water Management Forums (Coliban, Central Highlands)• Dja Dja Wurrung Natural Resource Agreement (NRA) Forum• Water Sensitive Bendigo• North Central Catchment Partners Forum

Action Plan

Actions agreed by Wanggal partners are outlined for each of the five strategic Barings in this action plan plus an additional action area for governance and capability. The actions are organised under 'Initiatives' which are actions directly related to achieving the strategic outcomes for the Dhelkunyangu Gatjin Strategy; and 'Djaara Centred Projects' which are projects already underway or planned which with the direction of Dhelkunyangu Gatjin and

Wanggal partners will be delivered in a way that acknowledges and respects Djaara's role as rights holders of all water on Djandak.

Initiatives and Djaara Centred Projects are linked through the tables from the Baring milestone in the left-hand column - Initiatives and Djaara Centred Projects are not necessarily linked to each other.



Governance and oversight

Working together to heal water

The 2024/25 focus is to

- Enhance the Wanggal oversight and review processes to ensure that it is a learning group that provides direction based on insights on the impact of previous interventions, and
- Significantly increase efforts to build the capability of DDW Group and Agency staff to better support the Gatjin Strategy outcomes.

24/25 Djimbunang indicators

- Development of a Monitoring Evaluation Review Improvement (MERI), Plan to feed annual reviews.
- Review 24/25 implementation Plan Progress.

Capability

- Djaara employment and upskill supported and funded.
- Trial agency staff exchange.

2024/25 Initiatives and Djaara Centred projects

BARING	INITIATIVES	DJAARA CENTRED PROJECTS
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish DDW Group Strategy oversight in line with Country Plan Governance: Aug 2024.	
Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Gatjin Strategy MERI plan: Nov 2024	
Capability Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institute a staff exchange and mentoring program between DDW Group, Kapa Gatjin and Agencies: Mar 2024	

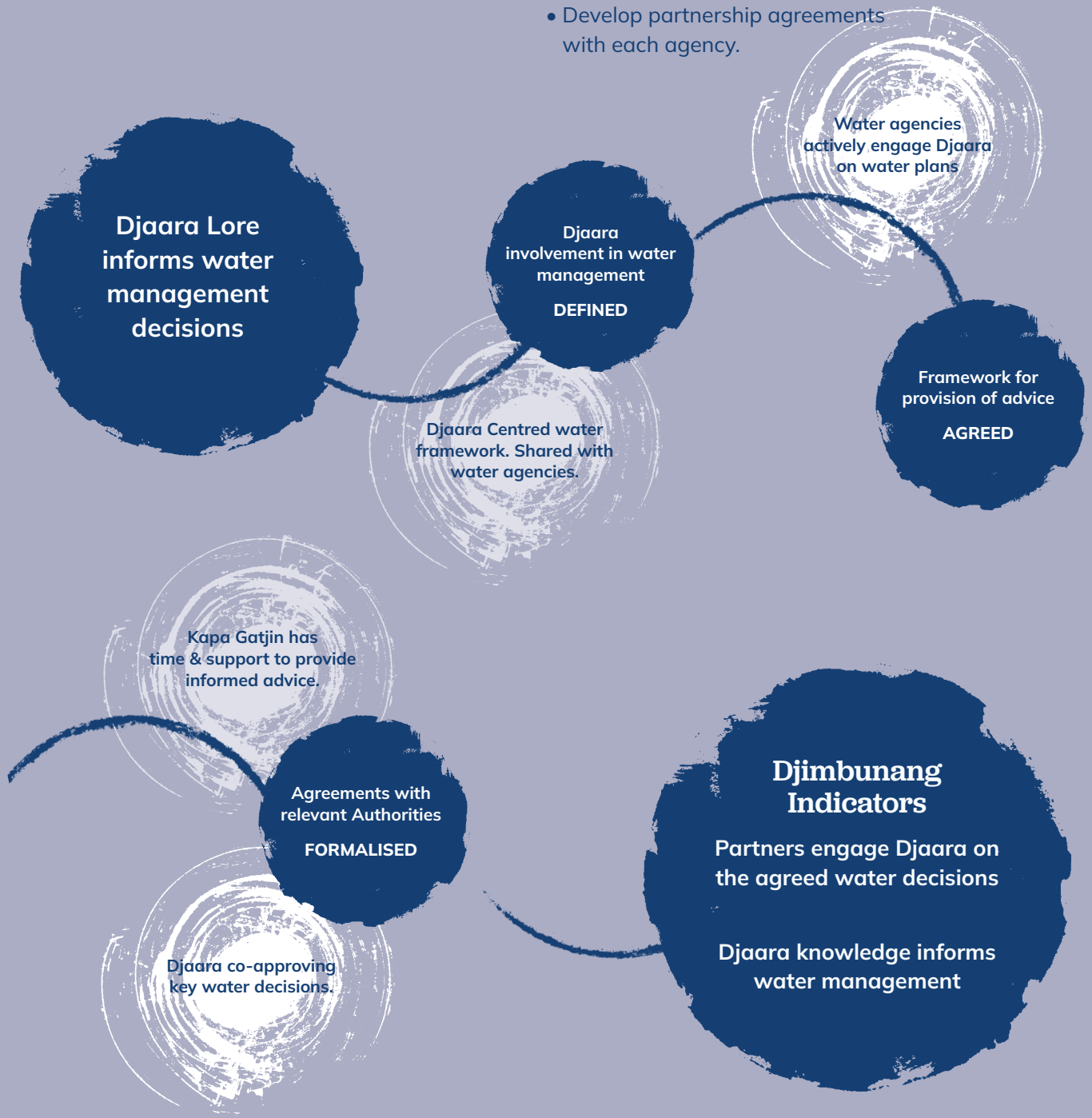
Make decisions for Gatjin

Baring for Djaara Lore to inform water management decisions

The **2024/25 focus** is to meaningfully involve Djaara in water agencies' decision-making.

24/25 Djimbunang indicators

- Djaara involvement, including Kapa Gatjin consultation in water management is agreed with Water Agencies.
- All projects delivered with a Djaara Centred approach, enabling Djaara to be decision makers.
- Develop partnership agreements with each agency.



2024/25 Initiatives and Djaara Centred projects

BARING	INITIATIVES	DJAARA CENTRED PROJECTS
Djaara's involvement in water management defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise agency function mapping and document proposed amendments to include Djaara: Feb 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoca Healthy Catchment Plan: July 2025 Macedon Ranges North Integrated Water Management Plan: Dec 2024 Mid Loddon Groundwater Management Plan: Dec 2025 Recreational management plans for recreational reservoirs: Dec 2025 Establish a recycled water working group under Wanggal, and continue partnership between Djandak, Greater Western Water (GWW), Central Highlands Water (CHW and Coliban: Dec 2025 Coliban's Recycled Water Strategy: Dec 2025 Castlemaine wastewater plant upgrade: Dec 2025 Epsom wastewater plant upgrade: Dec 2025 Woodend wastewater plant upgrade: TBC Shepherds Flat wastewater plant upgrade: TBC Coliban Rural Modernisation Business Case: Dec 2025 Healthy Coliban Catchment and AWA implementation: July 2028 Tullaroop Creek ICMP and AWA implementation: July 2028 Bendigo Creek restoration program (including flood resilience planning): July 2028
Framework for provision of advice agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a forum(s) for provision of technical and cultural advice from Kapa Gatjin: April 2025 Djaara Centred framework for urban water strategy development: Sept 2025 Scope Djaara Centred water management policies needed to contribute to water management (Ground Water Policy, Stormwater Policy etc): Nov 2024 VWMS development and associated guidelines to enable Djaara led regional strategy: July 2024 Develop co-delivery model for development of Regional Waterways Strategy: July 2024 	
Agreements with relevant authorities formalised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence development of partnership agreements with agencies: Mar 2025 	

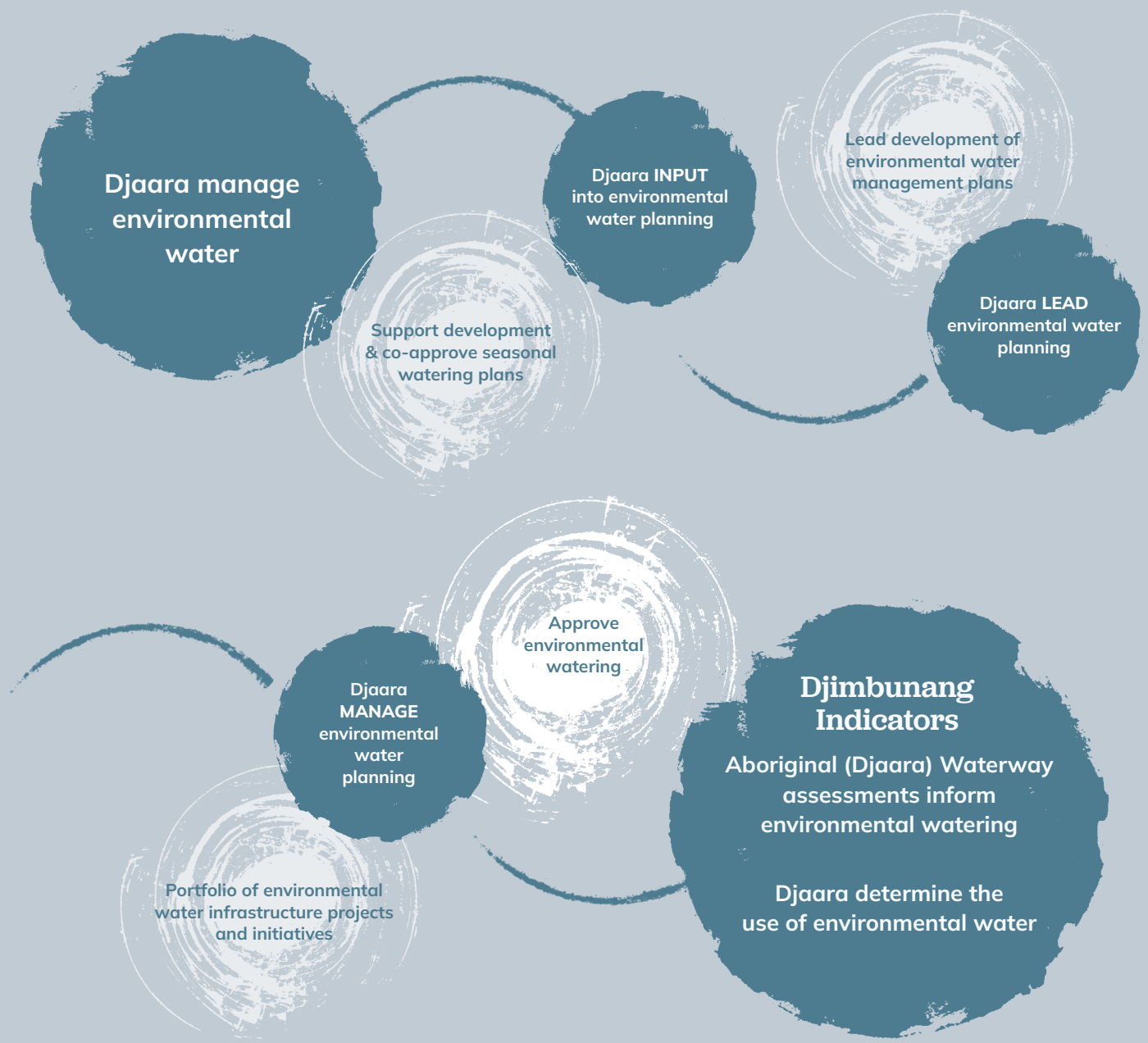
Make decisions for environmental water

Baring to make decisions for management and use of environmental water

The **2024/25 focus** is to trial and identify the frameworks and processes that need to be instituted to enable Djaara to become Environmental Water Holders and waterway managers (Outcomes 5 and 6 of Water is Life).

24/25 Djimbunang indicators

- Djaara endorsement of the 25/26 Seasonal Watering Plan and Seasonal Water Proposals relevant to Djandak.
- Djaara development of Cultural water management plan (CWMP).
- Agree on a process towards Djaara centred environmental water planning.



2024/25 Initiatives and Djaara Centred projects

BARING	INITIATIVES	DJAARA CENTRED PROJECTS
Djaara input into environmental water planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEECA to provide funds directly to DJAARA to support participation in annual environmental watering planning; level of involvement for each waterway to be self-determined by DJAARA: Sept 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a process and plan for watering Thunder Swamp: May 2025
Djaara lead environmental water planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a program for the development of CWMPs that will guide the use of environmental water on Djandak: June 2025 	
Djaara manage environmental water planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Djandak specific watering plan for DJAARA endorsement: April 2025 • Develop a Djaara centred seasonal watering process for Djandak with inclusion of CWMPs (or equivalent): Dec 2025 	

Secure cultural water rights

Baring to securing a legislated cultural water right

The 2024/25 focus is to identify the pathway to secure a legislated cultural water right and institute the foundations of a knowledge hub for managing traditional knowledge.

24/25 Djimbunang indicators

- Pilot the introduction of a Djaara cultural water right.
- Cultural Flows Management framework is developed.
- A Gatjin knowledge hub with associated AWA program is established.



2024/25 Initiatives and Djaara Centred projects

BARING	INITIATIVES	DJAARA CENTRED PROJECTS
Djaara cultural water right defined		
Cultural water knowledge hub established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop mapping tool and map cultural water needs on Djandak: June 2025 • Establish a cultural water management planning framework (enhancement/extension to AWAs): Mar 2025 • Establish R&D program including existing projects to partner on and identify future needs: Dec 2024 • Establish monitoring program incl. water quality, fish, EDNA (incl. EPA): April 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Djaara Centred fish strategy for Djandak as a component of the Statewide FVTOC strategy: as per broader FVTOC strategy timeline • Native fish recovery program - fish habitat, fish monitoring and relocation: TBC • On Country monitoring water quality, EDNA: Ongoing • Djaara led nature-based solutions development for flood/drought resilience: July 2025
Cultural water right agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a forum/working group with FVTOC and MLDRIN to monitor cultural water right establishment progress: Dec 2024 • Develop a proposed approach to establish an ongoing cultural water right: Dec 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Djaara led upper catchment drought refuge pools mapping: July 2024 • Pilot CWMP and water delivery from Newlyn reservoir: July 2025 • Develop a proposal to pilot the introduction of a cultural water right on Djandak: Feb 2025

Secure water rights

Baring to owning a growing water entitlement

The 2024/25 focus is to have secured and have a plan to use the existing entitlement opportunities and to also leverage a shared understanding of how Gatjin is allocated and managed on Djandak to identify and secure additional water entitlements.

24/25 Djimbunang indicators

- Current water entitlement opportunities are realised with an effective management process.
- Work with water agencies to identify water entitlements to re-allocate to Djaara.



2024/25 Initiatives and Djaara Centred projects

BARING	INITIATIVES	DJAARA CENTRED PROJECTS
Djaara water prospectus developed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress option for licensing of Loddon River entitlement (created through connections project, part of the 1.36GL) on Djandak to Djaara: July 2024 • Progress opportunities to license unallocated Groundwater to Djaara: Dec 2024 • Establish water needs for Djaara in the Southern Wimmera Northern Pyrenees Pipeline business case: Nov 2024 • Develop a proposed compensation process that considers water returns for water extraction licenses: June 2025 • Quantify opportunity to utilise 75GL in the Goulburn system owned by Melbourne metro water retailers: June 2025 • Western Sustainable Water Strategy review: June 2025
Water entitlements secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map pathways to access water entitlements through the \$100M (previously \$40M) on offer from the Federal Government for TOs to access water in the Murray Darling Basin: Dec 2024 • Map unused or unrequired water entitlements owned by water agencies for potential re-allocation: Oct 2024 • Map freehold and water agency Crown Land for potential joint management and water use: August 2024 	
Mechanism for securing water entitlements agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a review of the water sharing process for the Western SWS region, acknowledging Djaara as rights holders for water on Djandak: Sept 2025 	

Establish a Gatjin Authority

Baring to establish the Djaara Gatjin Authority

The 2024/25 focus is to undertake the groundwork to establish a successful Gatjin Authority that has understood functions, is appropriately funded and resourced.

24/25 Djimbunang indicators

- Complete feasibility and detailed business case for Gatjin Authority.



2024/25 Initiatives and Djaara Centred projects

BARING	INITIATIVES	DJAARA CENTRED PROJECTS
Authority model defined		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a business case for a pilot Gatjin Authority: Oct 2025 • Establish pilot Gatjin Authority: July 2026
Gatjin Authority established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify pathways for funding Gatjin Authority establishment: July 2024 	
Gatjin Authority growing		







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