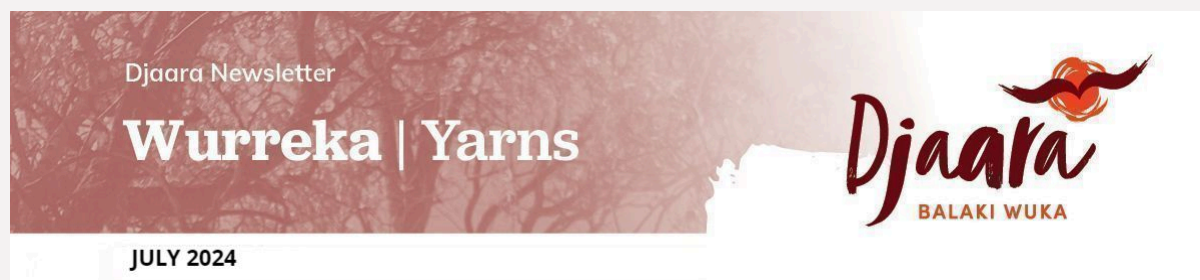


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NAIDOC WEEK - we are Blak, Loud and Proud!

Happy NAIDOC Week! This week marks celebration and recognition of our survival and the strength of Djaara and all Indigenous Peoples. We stand with our heads held high this week and our passion burns strong to make positive change in our communities.

Check out the Bendigo NAIDOC Week activities [here](#).

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Mining agreement: towards self-determination

Central Victoria is set to benefit from a historic agreement between DJAARA and Agnico Eagle Mines Limited (Agnico Eagle) operator of the Fosterville Gold Mine, signed in a ceremony at Rocky Crossing, Goornong, on 13 May.

The agreement, **Bakaru Wayaparrangu**, which means 'in the middle, we all meet' in Dja Dja Wurrung language, follows seven years of negotiations and represents the first agreement in Victoria between Traditional Owners and an active mining operation.



L-R: President & CEO Agnico Eagle Ammar Al-Joundi, DJAARA Chairperson Bec Phillips, DJAARA General Manager Cassandra Lewis & Vice President Australian Operations Agnico Eagle, Ion Hann.
Photos: Stuart Walmsley

Bakaru Wayaparrangu acknowledges Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Fosterville Gold Mine operates. It aims to build a harmonious, long-term relationship, and will provide opportunities to support the self-determination of Dja Dja Wurrung People.

The signing followed revelations at the State's [Yoorrook Justice Commission hearings](#) that Victoria's Aboriginal People have received virtually no benefit from the \$287.4b worth of gold mined from Aboriginal traditional lands since 1851.

Bakaru Wayaparrangu will enable DJAARA to have some influence in the environmental impact of the mine and remediation works after the mine closes. It will facilitate employment, training and business opportunities for Dja Dja Wurrung People. New jobs will be created to implement the agreement and financial contributions will also be made annually to DJAARA.





Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO Rodney Carter said Bakaru Wayaparrangu is a significant step towards the self-determination of DJAARA and Dja Dja Wurrung People.

“For the first time, the DJAARA Board – and not an external entity – can determine how that money can be best used to work towards the goals of our 20-year Country Plan, and meet the needs of Dja Dja Wurrung People,” Mr Carter said.

"But this is not just about DJAARA: this agreement will stimulate regional economic growth and could lead to hundreds of local jobs."

Read more about Bakaru Wayaparrangu:

[13 May Joint media release: Victorian first: mining agreement between DJAARA and Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd.](#)

[20 May DJAARA Media release: DJAARA forged benefit-sharing agreement despite exclusionary system](#)

Yaram Yaram Mirndayi comes to life

‘Yaram Yaram Mirndayi’ (Chain of Ponds Serpent), the striking forecourt design at the Bendigo Law Courts, was completed and brought to life in a Ceremony and dance led by artists Bec Phillips and Aunty Marilyne Nicholls in June.

Bec acknowledged Aunty Marilyne’s description of the process as three Message Sticks: the first Message Stick is the Vision, the second Message Stick is hunting and gathering (working with partners, gathering resources, testing ideas), and the third Message Stick is Song and Dance.

“While it looks finished, it’s not complete until we’ve done the song and dance,” Bec explained.

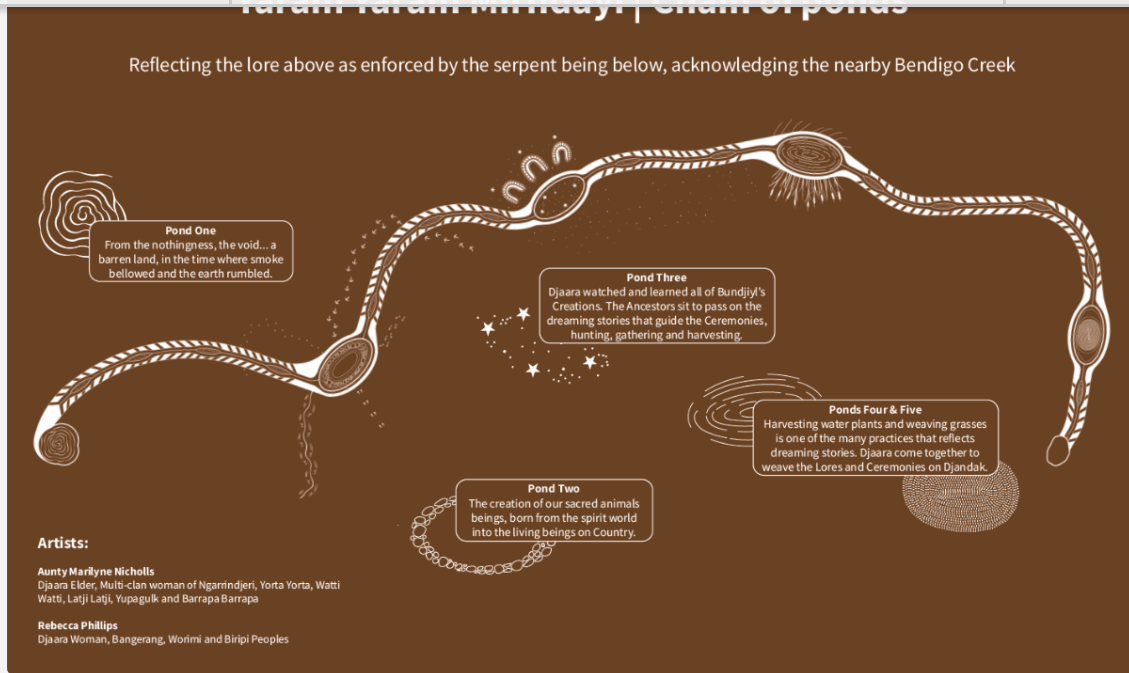
The story of Yaram Yaram Mirndayi and the collaborative process of how it came together, was told - first in words, then in dance by Bec, Aunty Ros, Aunty Sue Charles and Maurial Spearim, with Aunty Marilyne playing Traditional rhythm with clap sticks.



The ceremony began with a welcome from Aunty Ros Dodson, who congratulated the artists, builders, designers and architects on the award-winning collaboration. The story of Yaram Yaram Mirndayi was danced by Bec Phillips, Aunty Ros, Aunty Sue Charles and Maurial Spearim, with Aunty Marilyn Nicholls playing Traditional rhythm with clap sticks.

The five ponds represent fire, earth, air, water and spirit/community. They tell the story of creation from the barren nothingness, of Djaara watching and learning of Bundjiyl's creations, learning the Lores and how we interact with Country, and finally, weaving the dreaming stories, utilising the land and our knowledge, weaving our community together.

"Mirndayi is something our people were very cautious of and sometimes our people were even scared to say the name in fear of calling in the enforcer of Bundjiyl's Lore. And so the Yaram Yaram Mirndayi holds the essence of Mirndayi – it is discreet," Bec said.



"You can see the creek in its high form, and in the low form when it becomes a chain of ponds. It's also the ribs, the spine of the serpent, where the water flows in to make those channels." – Bec Phillips

Award-winning design, award-winning co-design process

The Bendigo Law Courts forecourt design - which includes Yaram Yaram Mirndayi by Aunty Marilyn Nicholls and Bec Phillips, along with other design elements - received the Award for Community Contribution recently at the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA) Victorian Chapter Awards.

The forecourt landscape was developed collaboratively by the Wartaka (Dja Dja Wurrung knowledge group), Dja Dja Wurrung artists, ASPECT Studios led by Anne-Marie Pisani, and supported by DJANDAK's Design Team.

Thanking Aunty Marilyn and acknowledging the work of DJANDAK's Design Team, Bec paid tribute to Anne-Marie.

"Anne-Marie really led the way in meaningful engagement that allowed us to keep the cultural integrity of this art. We're so happy with the result and the journey getting there," Bec said.



Djaara artists Aunty Marilynne Nicholls (L) and Bec Phillips (R) with ASPECT Studios' Anne-Marie Pisani.

Court Services Victoria's David Rolland also praised the collaboration.

"My only regret as project director was that we didn't start it [collaborating] early enough," David said.

DJANDAK project manager Nicky McNamara said The Bendigo Law Courts landscape is an example of best practice in co-design.

"ASPECT Studios engaged with Djaara artists in a genuine collaboration, providing their design expertise and opening the process up to embed cultural values, resulting in a world class design outcome with rich layers of cultural knowledge and meaning," Nicky said.

"The Wartaka set the cultural themes and aspirations for this project and the artists have developed these into beautiful, layered and integrated pieces."

Djandak Wi season wrap and Strategy launch

Dhelkunya Wi means 'healing fire' in our language.

Heal: to cause a wound or sickness to become healthy again.

When we think about healing sick Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), we might also ask: What is the nature of healing? Are we tending to all the parts? How does it feel?

How do people, organisations, and groups communicate and cooperate with each other in acts of healing?



DJAARA's Djandak Wi (Country fire) Strategy, Dhelkunya Wi 2024 – 2034 was launched in a ceremony at Gatjin Bulok (Tang Tang) Swamp near Dingee in May.

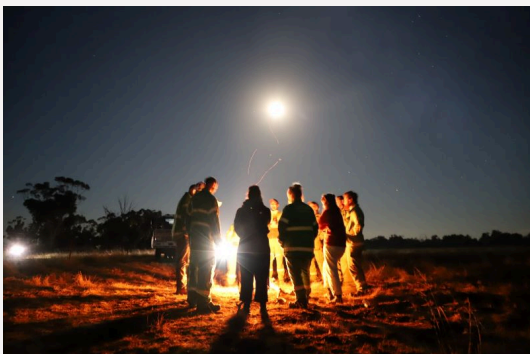
The Strategy outlines DJAARA's vision and aspirations for Djandak Wi, which holds spiritual, social, ceremonial, and ecological importance for Dja Dja Wurrung People, and is intended for the benefit of all who live on and enjoy Djandak.

It is one of the tools used to heal Country through Galk-galk Dhelkunya (Forest Gardening). How effective that tool can be depends on the spirit in which we use it, our people and systems, and teamwork.

Below, L-R: Kayla Baksh and Harley Dunolly-Lee dance while Bec Phillips sings at the Djandak Wi Strategy launch.



During Djandak Wi time, April to June 2024, we burnt 14 places on Dja Dja Wurrung Country – a total of 317 hectares over 22 burn ignition days. This spanned Box Ironbark Forest, Plains Grassland (EPBC listed as threatened), Herb-rich Foothill Forest, Grassy Woodland, Heathy Dry Forest, and storm damaged Country in the Wombat State Forest.



Congratulations to the delivery teams in DJAARA / DJANDAK for all your hard work and dedication on DJAARA's biggest ever burn season. Team members carry treasured experiences giving Dhelkunya Wi together.

Now it's winter, and a time for reflecting, learning, and integrating our experiences.

Djandak will speak its own story in the coming months and years, and we will watch with care, hope and clear intention to heal.



IN BRIEF

Marngrook



Plenty of mob showed up for the second annual game of Marngrook on Dja Dja Wurrung Country during Reconciliation Week, organised in partnership by DJAARA, Parks Victoria and DEECA.

Joint Management Program Manager Harley Douglas was triumphant that the Queen Elizabeth Oval (QEO) had been secured for the game.

"To play on 'the Queen's oval' was very fitting for Reconciliation Week," Harley said.

"It was great to have so many mob – including three Taungurung who came over for the day. We're looking forward to making it even bigger and better next year."



[Learn more about Marngrook](#)



There is a belief that it will take fifty years to heal country from the damage done by colonisation.

Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO Rodney Carter will join Bruce Pascoe, Lyn Harwood Mindy Woods and Neane Carter at the [Bendigo Writers Festival](#) to discuss the challenges, opportunities and possible solutions for healing country. The session, [An Edible Way to Heal Country](#), will run at 11am, Sunday 18 August.

Rodney's essay 'Djaara: The essential ingredient' features in [Meanjin 83.2 Winter 2024](#).

On the job with Mandy Saunders



Mandy Saunders, Joint Management Project Officer

Proud Dja Dja Wurrung and Yorta Yorta woman Mandy Saunders, 52, started a traineeship with DJANDAK in February 2023. In less than a year, she became a project officer working in Joint Management. She works three days a week.

Mandy first applied for work with the Dja Dja Wurrung Group after some relatives suggested she try for a job.

"I've worked here in Shepparton and Mooroopna since I was 16, in canneries, at Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative in Mooroopna, an RSL Club and at Kaela Arts in Shepparton – and then Covid hit and that was the end of that," Mandy said.

She wanted a change and decided to give DJAARA a try.

"I just kept ringing every week if there were any jobs available and Renee would run me through them. It helps to have someone like that on the other end of the phone for a

“Renee rang me and said, ‘would you be interested in these two jobs?’. I said, ‘Oh well, I can only try’. But I wondered if I wanted to be learning new things at my age.

“It was pretty daunting going through the position description and I nearly didn’t go through with it. But I’m glad I did. I don’t know whether they could simplify it – the big, long words you’ve never heard before (I done a lot of Googling).

“Renee was a big help – when I was reading the job descriptions, I thought ‘I wouldn’t be able to do that – you probably have to be trained and stuff’. But Renee said it won’t be like that.”

After being interviewed for the two jobs, Mandy started as a trainee with DJANDAK.

“Within less than a year, I went from being a trainee to being a project officer. And now we have lots of projects that we’re trying to get off the ground,” Mandy said.

“I’m in charge of signage. We’re in the process of getting signage fabricated and installed. I’ve never done this type of work before.

We have to go out on Country to survey where the signs will be installed, and I help organise Wartakas when needed. I really love it when we go out on Country.

“I’m learning lots, I don’t feel pressured. Jardi’s worked out to be a awesome boss. He’s always there for me. He’s only too happy to run through things with you. He might be young, but he’s got a lot of knowledge. And Mike and Harley, too. We’ve got a good little supportive crew there.”

DJAARA online shop NOW OPEN!

We are so excited to launch our online store with acknowledgement plaques and colouring books.

SHOP NOW

SHARING DJA DJA WURRUNG LANGUAGE

Our language connects us to water, land, animals, and People.

It calls us to ceremony and strengthens our identity.

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

Bakaru Wayaparrangu | in the middle, we all meet
Djaara | Dja Dja Wurrung People
Djandak | Country, Dja Dja Wurrung Country
Djandak Wi | Country fire
Dhelkunya Dja | healing Country
Dhelkunya Wi | healing fire
Galk-galk Dhelkunya | to care for/to heal, many trees
Gatjin | Water
Gatjin Bulok | Tang Tang Swamp
Marngrook | Traditional AFL football
Mirndayi | serpent
Wartaka | come with purpose
Wi | fire
Yaram Yaram | chain of ponds

Let us know what you think!

Do you like this newsletter?

What would you like to see more of?

We'd love to hear your feedback.

Get in touch



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