

Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Appointed Land



The Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board is developing the Joint Management Plan for six parks that make up the Dja Dja Wurrung Appointed Land held under Aboriginal Title by Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung People.

This Paper summarises knowledge from Dja Dja Wurrung People, science and local communities, about the natural and cultural assets in the six parks, and the landscapes around them.

Nine groups of assets are considered:

1. Peoples of the Parks and Surrounding Landscapes
2. Recreation, Cultural Practices and Customs
3. Cultural Heritage
4. Plants and Animals
5. Rivers and Waterways
6. Land and Climate
7. Self-determination of Dja Dja Wurrung People
8. Enterprises
9. Joint Management



PEOPLE OF THE PARKS AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPES

The six parks have a role in the life of many people including Dja Dja Wurrung People, communities located in Dja Dja Wurrung Country, and others interested in the area. Dja Dja Wurrung People have occupied these landscapes for time immemorial.

Dja Dja Wurrung People are descended from 18 individuals known as “Apical Ancestors”¹. Family connections forge linkages with Country:

We are not the owners of this land but the custodians of it—we have inherited rights and responsibilities through our bloodlines to care for it as we do for our family ... on behalf of our extended family over generations—for our ancestors and for the unborn family yet to come. Rebecca Phillips, p. 102, Dja Dja Wurrung (2014)¹.

The parks connect Dja Dja Wurrung history with the recent history of pastoralism, mining, agriculture and timber production across the Goldfields Region of Central Victoria. All the nearby towns, including Bendigo, Daylesford, Maryborough, Avoca, St Arnaud, and Inglewood, were established in the gold rushes of the 19th Century. Hepburn Regional Park, for example, is currently named after Captain John Hepburn, a pioneer pastoralist who became first chairman of the Creswick District Roads Board.

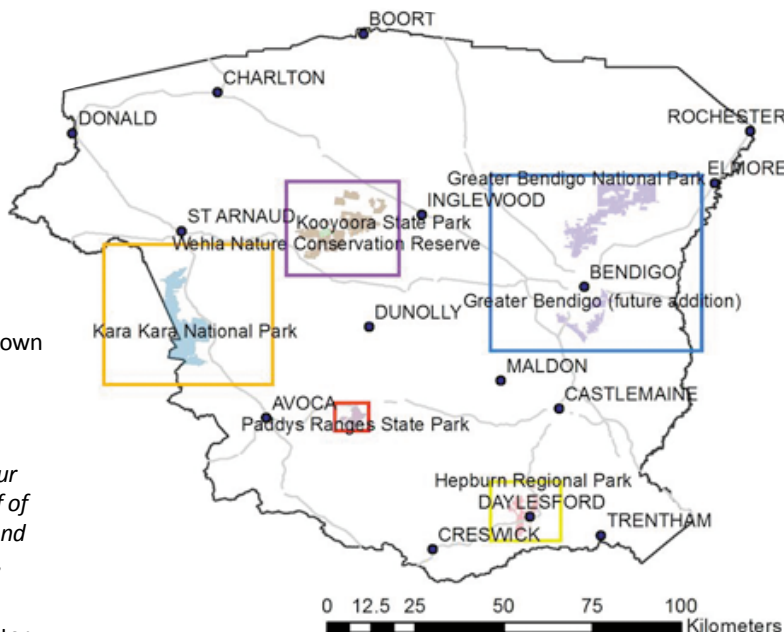
Shared history, economies, recreational activities and other shared interests link the residents with one another, the Dja Dja Wurrung People and the parks. Many others come to the parks for activities like walking, bird watching and prospecting.

RECREATION, CULTURAL PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS

Dja Dja Wurrung People link with the parks through many cultural practices including:

- language
- spiritual customs and practices
- traditional harvesting and weaving
- art
- story-telling
- sitting and walking
- ceremonies.

¹ <http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au/jaara-people/>. Accessed 31 July 2017



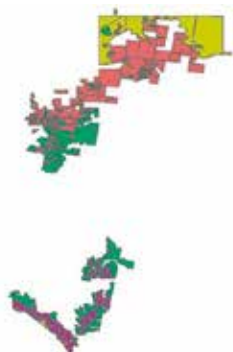
Dja Dja Wurrung People have gained recognition by the State of Victoria of their rights to gather resources in the parks for their cultural practices, including: grasses and rushes to weave baskets and belts; branches and leaves for smoking ceremonies; and timber to carve clap sticks, and boomerangs.

Cultural repatriation and reinterment form the vital links between Dja Dja Wurrung healing and restoring connection to Country and management of the parks.

Dja Dja Wurrung People express their links through stories and art:

Expressing my stories through art has brought me much joy and passion for telling stories that are a tradition for keeping my heritage alive. To celebrate the formal acknowledgement of Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of our Lands, I painted ‘The Descendants’, depicting Dja Dja Wurrung families with Bunjil and Waa watching over us. Aunty Roslyn Dodson, p. 93, Dja Dja Wurrung (2014)².

Prospecting for gold and minerals continues in the parks, often using lightweight metal detectors. Prospecting can generate a strong connection between contemporary prospectors and the historical heritage of the region.





The parks provide for many recreational activities including:

- Bird watching
- Bushwalking
- Cycling
- Camping
- Car rallies
- Dog walking
- Educational/guided activities
- Fishing
- Fossicking
- Four wheel drive touring
- Horse riding
- Nature photography and painting
- Orienteering and rock-climbing
- Picnicking
- Rock climbing and abseiling
- Sightseeing
- Trail bike riding.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Many registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites are found in the parks, including artefact scatters, stone arrangements, scarred trees, quarries, rock art, rockwells and historical places. Granite shelters abound with evidence of occupation. Kooyoora State Park is particularly rich as a cultural landscape with much evidence of occupation and continued cultural use today. The cultural sites connect Dja Dja Wurrung People with their Country:

When you go to a site, you feel proud knowing that your ancestors—your mob—were there. I get that strong feeling when I go to the site at Rocky Crossing where the grinding grooves are... there are scar trees and hoop trees and artefact scatters and mounds. You can feel that it was a very significant place. Wendy Berick, p. 109 (Dja Dja Wurrung 2014)².

The parks abound with heritage from the recent eras of gold mining, charcoal production, eucalyptus oil distillation, water storage and distribution, and forestry. Mining heritage includes registered historic places such as Rostrons Puddlers, Victoria Gully Puddlers and Grumbers Gully in Kara Kara National Park.

² Dja Dja Wurrung. 2014. Djuwima Djarra Dja Dja Wurrung:Kiakiki Wangendak Families of Dja Dja Wurrung with Jessica Hodgens. Bendigo, Australia. Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC).

Foundations and huts associated with Hamilton’s eucalyptus distillery in Greater Bendigo National Park link to the significance of this product. An old coach-route can be seen in Kooyoora, where remains of a rare Chilean Mill, used for commercial ochre crushing, is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

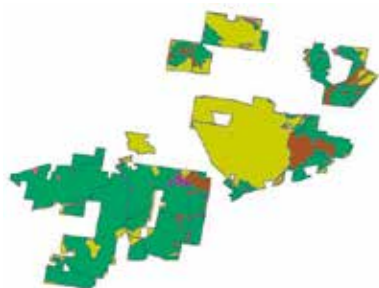
PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Plants with medicinal properties, food value, and uses in ornaments, necklaces, weapons and tools are known by Dja Dja Wurrung throughout these parks. Murnang (Yam Daisy), a staple food in the past, which has declined greatly since European occupation, is known from all the parks. The plant Austral Crane’s Bill is used to treat diarrhoea and Blackwood to treat rheumatism. Many different kinds of Matt Rush are used for weaving. Lumps of sugar are dropped onto the forest floor by Manna Gum. The Common Reed provides materials for ornaments, necklaces, rope, and the root can be eaten.

Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands are the dominant vegetation across the parks, providing a unique system of habitats. Eight plant communities and seventy plant species listed by the Victorian Government for their conservation status (vulnerable, threatened or endangered) are in the parks. Kara Kara National Park protects the largest relatively intact area of Box–Ironbark forest and woodland in Victoria.

Baramul (emu), yabbies, fish, gurri (kangaroo), possums, koala and many other animals in the park have links to Dja Dja Wurrung People. Bunjil (wedge-tailed eagle), Waa (Australian raven) and Dyinyap (sulfur-crested cockatoo) who roam across all the parks are vital as ancestral beings responsible for the creation of their Country.

The parks provide habitat for four mammals, thirty two birds, two frogs, three lizards and one snake listed as rare and threatened, including the beautiful Brush-tailed Phascogale and Swift Parrot. Many hollow-dependent animals are found in the parks, particularly Kara Kara, such as the Powerful Owl, Squirrel Glider, Brown Treecreeper, Sugar Glider, Feathertail Glider, Brushtail Possum, Ringtail Possum and Yellow-footed Antechinus. However, the history of logging, mining and settlement has greatly depleted the parks of vital resources to support these animals.



Legend

Protected Plant Communities³

- Box Ironbark Forests or dry/low fertility Woodlands
- Dry Forests
- Healthy Woodlands
- Herb-rich Woodlands
- Lower Slopes or Hills Woodlands
- Mallee
- Plains Woodlands or Forests
- Riparian Scrubs or Swampy Scrubs and Woodlands
- Riverine Grassy Woodlands or Forests



³ May not reflect current vegetation. Based on natural extent of native vegetation.



RIVERS AND WATERWAYS

The parks sit in the upper catchments of several significant waterways, including the Loddon, Campaspe, Avoca, and Wimmera Basins. While no wetlands of state significance are located in any of the parks, Hepburn Springs is recognised as important for its mineral waters. The Trentham Falls in Hepburn Regional Park is a culturally significant wetland to the Dja Dja Wurrung People. Seepages and the associated wetland communities of Kooyoor State Park are also of cultural and natural significance. Water is critical to all aspects of Dja Dja Wurrung life:

You camp near water, it's a base for your food and stuff, lots of food grow along the banks of the river, lots of animals would come down to the river to get drinks. It's a life giver, the river.
Rick Nelson, Dja Dja Wurrung⁴.

LAND AND CLIMATE

The parks display a range of land features: ancient sedimentary and metamorphic rocks scattered with gold deposits, granite mountains, volcanoes and lava flows. Dja Dja Wurrung stories record how Lalgambook (the Emu, Mt Franklin in the Hepburn Regional Park) erupted scattering large boulders, lava and smoke across the land towards Mt Tarrengower. Big Hill Range, (in Greater Bendigo National Park), part of the same hard metamorphic rock formation as Mt Tarrengower, is listed as a Geological Site of State Significance.

The rainfall of Dja Dja Wurrung Country generally follows the slope of the land, with the wettest areas to the south-west (~1200mm annually), dropping off to the relatively dry northern plains (~350 mm annually). Climate change projections suggest annual warming will increase the number of hot summer days (over 35°C), reduce annual rainfall, with more frequent and longer droughts. Bushfire hazards are frequently high.

SELF-DETERMINATION OF DJA DJA WURRUNG PEOPLE

For Dja Dja Wurrung People, the parks are vital in their goal to have an established place in society and be empowered to manage their own affairs. Several resources underpin such self-determination: the *Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA)* and the *Traditional Owner Land Management Agreement* to jointly

manage Aboriginal Title lands between the Victorian Government and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. The ongoing ability of Dja Dja Wurrung to engage equitably depends on the health and viability of these assets. Victoria Government agencies are integral to supporting the empowerment of Dja Dja Wurrung in the parks, including through delivery of their obligations under the RSA. These agencies have a wealth of resources including personnel, knowledge, systems, documents and data.

ENTERPRISES

The parks' assets underpin enterprises in tourism, bee-keeping, and Natural and Cultural Resource Management services. More than eighty apiary sites are currently located across the parks. The region is visited by more than two million day trippers each year, many of whom undertake recreation in the park. Activities such as revegetation, fire management, cultural site rehabilitation and pest control are vital to park management. Dja Dja Wurrung People have their own business in land management and recognise that they have a relative advantage through their culture, traditional knowledge of Country, asset base and rights to resources that open up enterprise opportunities in all these sectors.

JOINT MANAGEMENT

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung People) and the State of Victoria (on behalf of the people of Victoria) have agreed to share responsibility for the parks. Aboriginal Title to the parks reflects the rights and responsibilities of Dja Dja Wurrung People for this land and underpins effective management and land justice.

In 2002, as a result of the Victorian Government's decisions to improve the conservation of Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands, all the parks were enhanced. The Joint Management Plan brings a new phase into the life of these parks.

⁴ <http://www.cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/seeing-the-land-from-an-aboriginal-canoe/rick-nelson-interview-part-1-at-bet-bet-creek-dja-dja-wurrung-country/>. Accessed 31 July 2017

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