

A close-up, profile view of a woman's face, looking towards the right. She has white body paint or clay applied in horizontal bands across her forehead, cheeks, and chest. Her hair is dark and curly. The background is dark and out of focus.

Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander

# Protocols Guide

September 2021 update



CITY OF GREATER  
**BENDIGO**

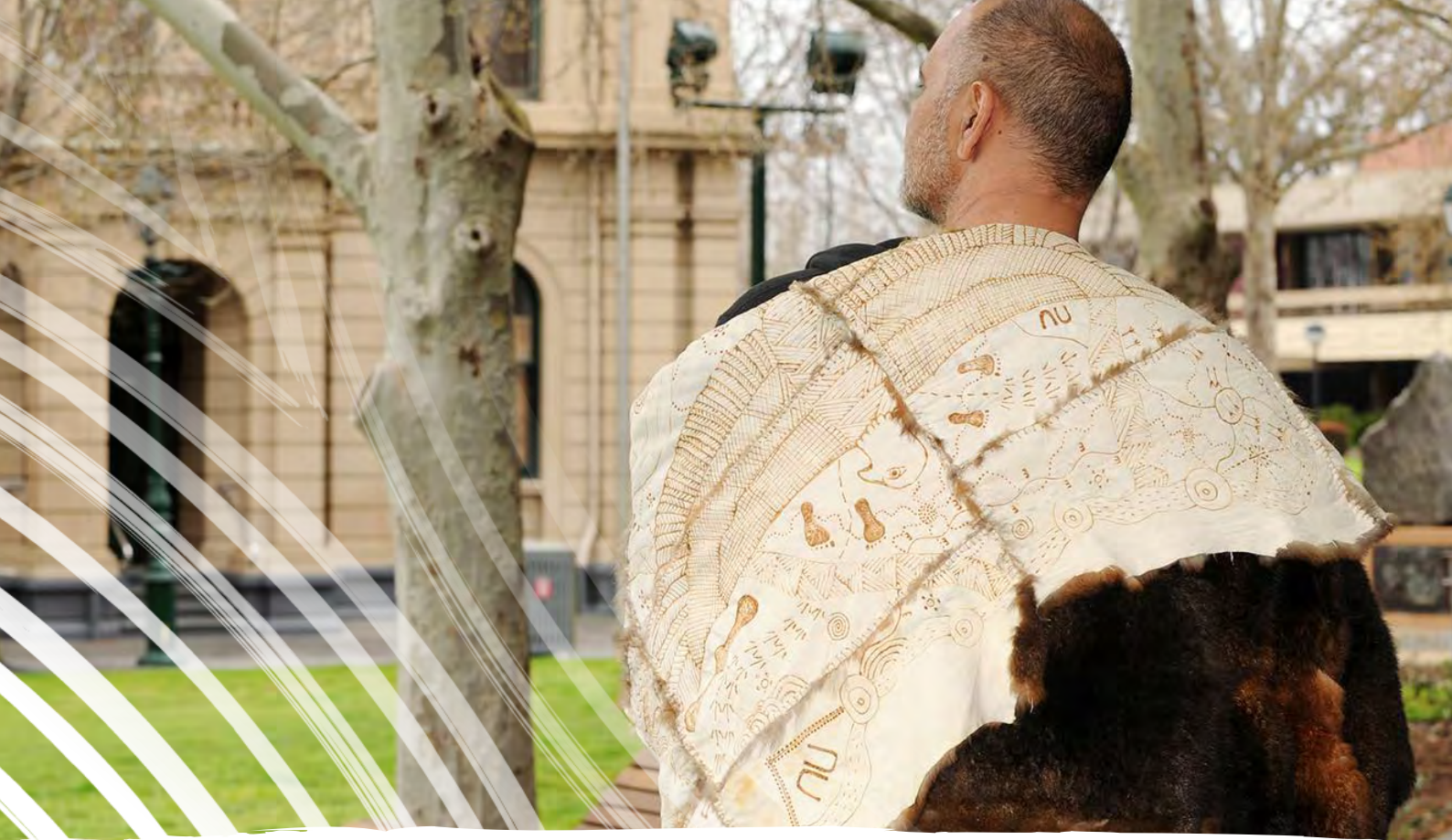


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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
people are advised that this Guide may  
contain images of people who have died.





# 01 Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of this protocols guide is to provide City of Greater Bendigo employees with guidance regarding engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It provides practical advice on the appropriate use of terminology when engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and assists staff to understand the use of Welcome to Country, Acknowledgement of Country, Aboriginal Smoking and other protocols when delivering programs and services within Greater Bendigo.

This guide was developed in 2019 as a key action of the City's first Reconciliation Plan 2016-2019 and has been updated in September 2021. These protocols form part of a wider effort to make the City a more inclusive, welcoming and culturally safe environment, and to promote respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It remains a guiding document for the City's work as part of our new Reconciliation Plan 2021-2025, *Barpangu* "build together".

By adopting these protocols in the way we do business and engage with community, our organisation will continue to become more culturally aware and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.


## Scope

This guide applies to Councillors and all employees of the City.

## Rationale

The use of this guide will assist City staff to:

- Use the appropriate terminology and language;
- Consider cultural sensitivities when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities;
- Build and strengthen relationships with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community;
- Understand key principles for communication when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations; and
- Gain a better understanding of Aboriginal cultural protocols and traditions when developing City plans and policies, and organising events, meetings and capital works.



## How to use the guidelines

This guide provides information on some of the important protocols of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. However, it is a general guide only and is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of protocols. Instead, it is designed to be a starting point for City staff wishing to seek further information on how to effectively engage with and build respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and how to incorporate this into their areas of work. City staff should continue to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives about how and when to observe these and other protocols. City staff are also encouraged to seek the advice of staff members who regularly work with and have been effective in their engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

## References

This protocols guide was developed with information sourced from the following:

- Aboriginal Victoria
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Engagement Toolkit 2012 (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocol Guide (Victoria Police)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols 2012 (City of Sydney)
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Audiences 2016 (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet)
- Helping Your Organisation To Create A Welcoming Environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 2014 (Inner North West Primary Care Partnership)
- Maggolee: Local Government and Aboriginal Communities Working Together
- Working with Aboriginal communities and organisations: a communications guide (Department of Human Services)
- Reconciliation Australia
- Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013 (Victorian Government and Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)
- Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2018 (Victorian Government and Taungurung Land and Waters Council)





## 02 Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the City of Greater Bendigo is a diverse and vibrant community. It is made up of Traditional Owners and many other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with links to different language and community groups across Australia. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who live in the municipality are also members of the Stolen Generations. These individuals have been displaced from their traditional Country and they, along with their families, still face the negative and enduring impact of these government policies and practices.

The City recognises the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the municipality is located.

According to the 2016 ABS Census, a total of 1,847 City residents identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This was an increase from 1,441 (or 1.4%) in the 2011 Census.

### Traditional Owners

The municipality of Greater Bendigo is located within the Kulin Nation. The Kulin Nation is an alliance of five distinct but closely related Aboriginal nations that covers south central Victoria. Their collective territory covers 2 million hectares and extends around the Port Phillip region, the Great Dividing Range, and the Loddon and Goulburn River Valley. Before European settlement, five tribal groups spoke five related languages. These language groups were connected

through shared moieties (totem) – Bunjil (wedge tailed eagle) and Waa (crow). The moiety/kinship system determined the pattern for marriage between individuals, clans and tribes. The five language groups of the Kulin are: Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Wadawurrung, Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung.

### Dja Dja Wurrung

The Dja Dja Wurrung are the Traditional Owners of a significant area of Central Victoria. Dja Dja Wurrung Country extends north from the Great Dividing Range, including Mount Franklin and the towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the south east, to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo, Boort and Donald in the north west, Rochester to the north east, and to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca in the south west. It covers the catchments of Avoca, Loddon and Coliban rivers.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples are also known as the “Djaara” (people of the area). “Dja Dja Wurrung” translated means “Yes Yes tongue/speak”, which relates to the collective language group. Djaara People speak the Dja Dja Wurrung language.

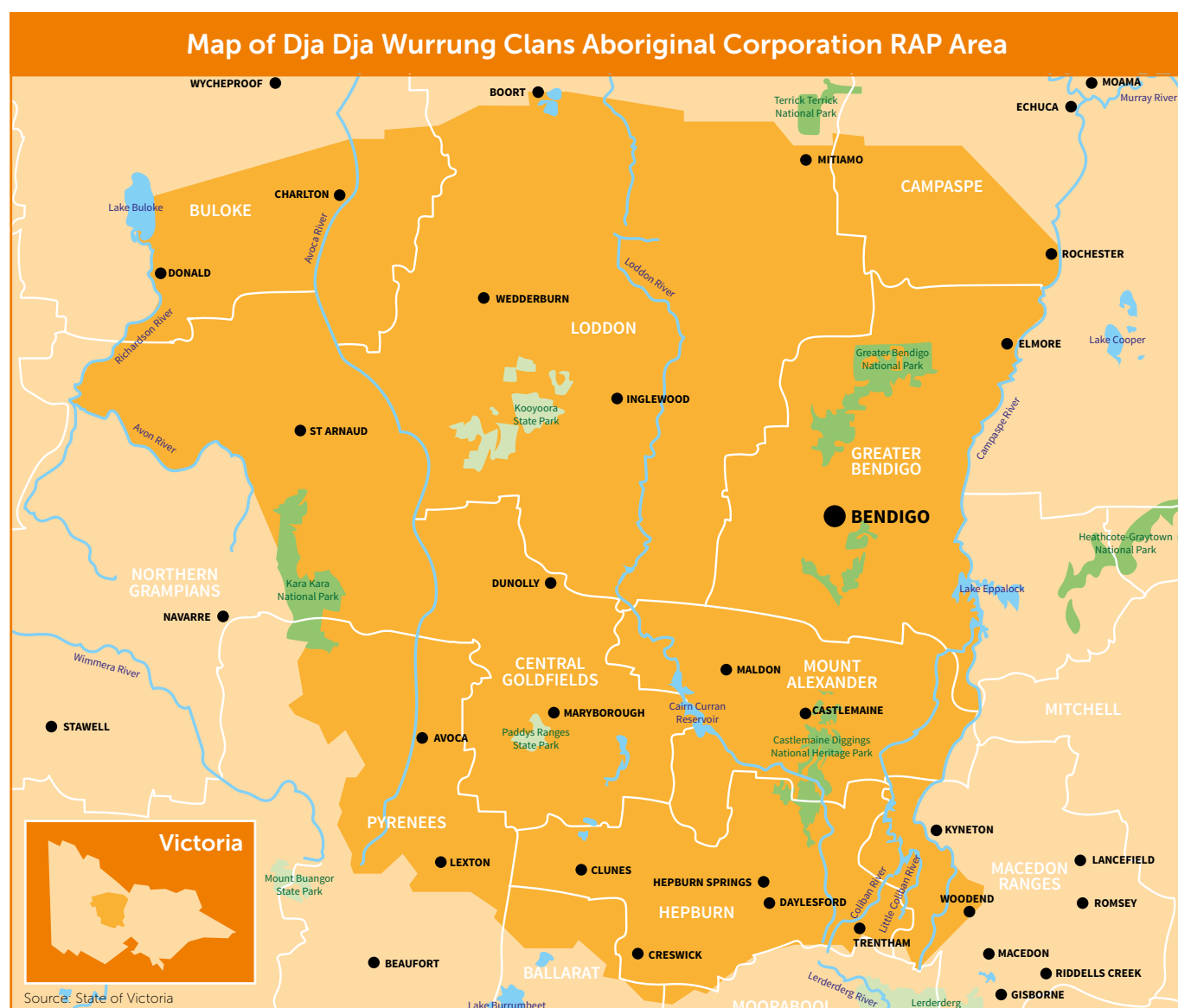
The Dja Dja Wurrung have a special relationship with and connection to the land. For example, Dja Dja Wurrung People experience a close cultural, spiritual, physical, social, historical and economic relationship with the land and waters that make up their country. Dja Dja Wurrung People see all the land and its creatures in a holistic way that is interconnected with each other and with the people.

Following the arrival of Europeans in Victoria in the early 1800s, the Dja Dja Wurrung People experienced significant disruption to their traditional cultures, identity, economic order and wellbeing. Many Dja Dja Wurrung were forced from their traditional lands, whilst important cultural sites, waterways and food sources were destroyed by early settlers and their unsustainable use of the natural environment. Successive government policies and practices also made it difficult for Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors to practice their traditional lore and customs, and extinguished their right to stay on their Country to access its resources.

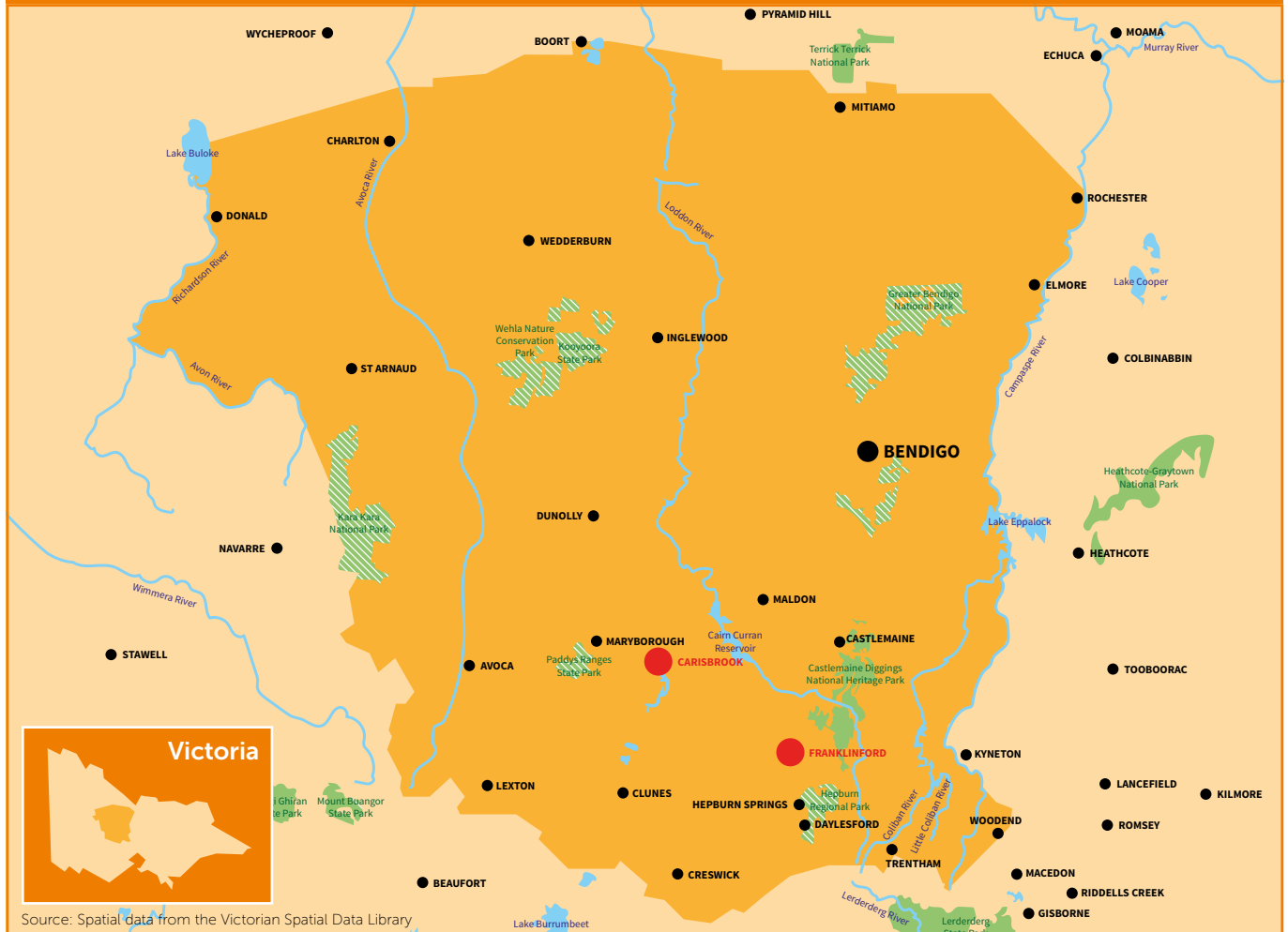
Today, the Dja Dja Wurrung People continue to practice their cultural traditions, celebrate their community, and work to achieve their aspirations for Dja Dja Wurrung Country and people.

The Dhehkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034 sets out the Dja Dja Wurrung aspirations for the next 20 years. [www.djadjawurrung.com.au](http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au)

The following local governments are located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country: Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Buloke, Northern Grampians, Central Goldfields, Pyrenees, Ballarat, Hepburn, Mount Alexander, Macedon Ranges and Campaspe.



## Map of Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement Area



● Carisbrook and Franklindford freehold transfers

▨ Areas of Joint Management with Aboriginal Title

## Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement

In 2013, the Victorian Government and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) (on behalf of the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner Group) entered into a Recognition and Settlement Agreement. The Agreement formally recognises the Dja Dja Wurrung People as the Traditional Owners of central Victoria. It is the first comprehensive settlement under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic), which in its process settled four Dja Dja Wurrung Native Title claims in the Federal Court dating back to 1998. However, by entering into the Recognition and Settlement Agreement, the Dja Dja Wurrung are not able to make another Native Title claim to the Federal Court for the next 1,000 generations.

The Agreement area extends from north of the Great Dividing Range near Daylesford and includes part or all of the catchments of the Richardson, Avon, Avoca, Loddon and Campaspe Rivers. It includes Crown land in the City of Greater Bendigo, Lake Boort and part of Lake Buloke.

The Agreement relates only to Crown lands and waters within the external boundaries of the Agreement area.

The settlement includes:

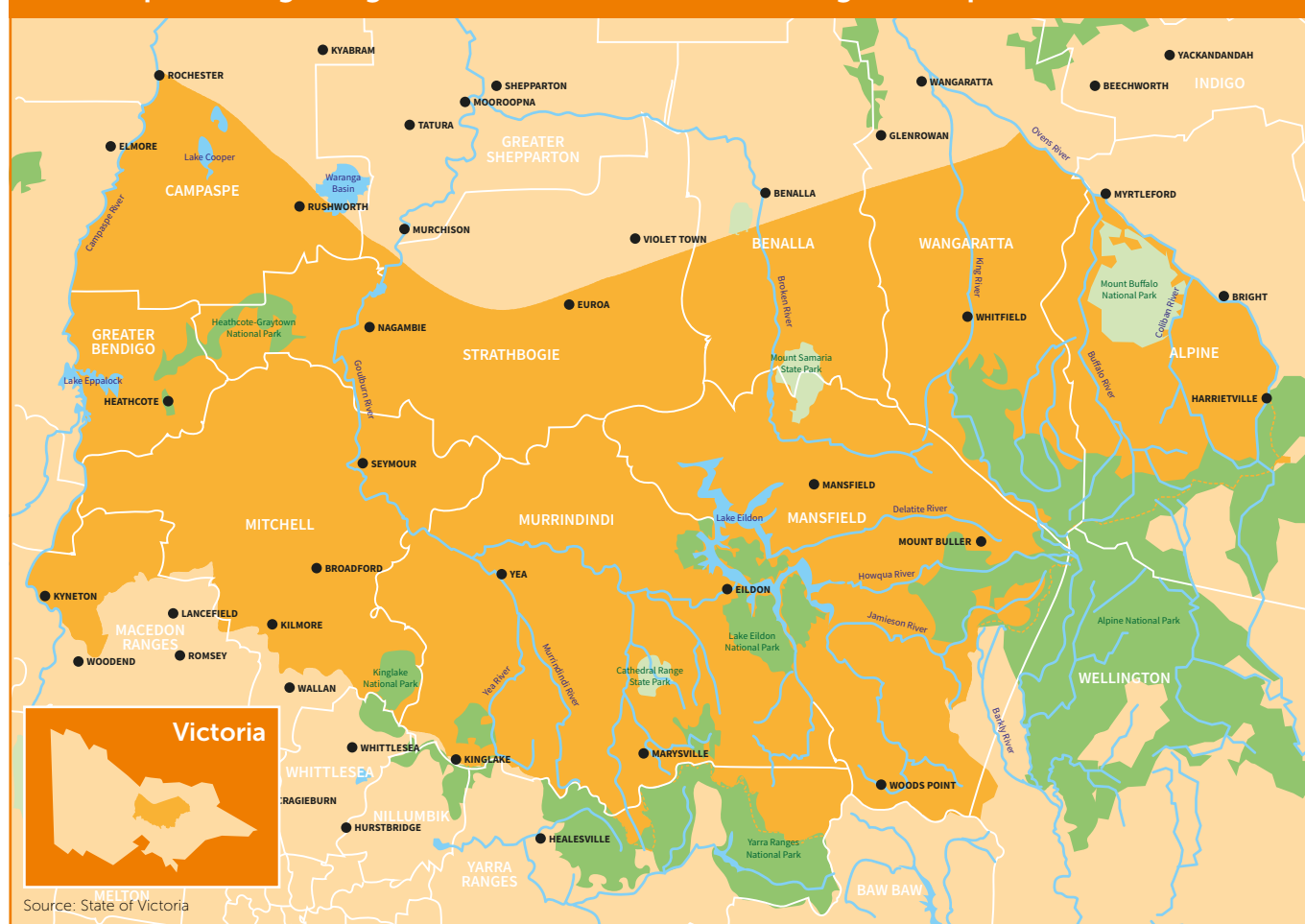
- Recognition of the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owner Group on approximately 266,532 hectares of public land.
- Transfer of two national parks, one regional park, two state parks and one reserve to 'Aboriginal title' held by the Dja Dja Wurrung, to be jointly managed in perpetuity with the State.
- Transfer of two freehold properties (approximately 56.2 hectares) of particular cultural significance at Carisbrook and Franklindford.
- Funding support to advance the cultural and economic aspirations of Dja Dja Wurrung People; and
- Enabling Traditional Owners to take certain natural resources within agreed limits, based on sustainability principles.

More information and details on the Recognition and Settlement Agreement can be found at:

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/dja-dja-wurrung-settlement](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/dja-dja-wurrung-settlement)



## Map of Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation RAP Area



### Taungurung

Taungurung Country covers over 20,000 square kilometres and stretches from Kyneton in the south-east up to Rochester in the north-west, across to Bright in the north-east and down to Woods Point in the south-east. The Taungurung People describe themselves as the people of the rivers and the mountains, with the Goulburn River running through their heartland Country, and the high country peaks of Buller, Stirling and Buffalo dominating the eastern uplands. The Great Dividing Range marks the southern boundary.

The Taungurung People are many clans sharing one language and deep spiritual connection with Country. The various Taungurung clans were all associated with defined areas within the tribal lands. Each clan had strong connection with and responsibility for its clan area, and for the songlines that traversed them. Today, Taungurung People collectively take responsibility to care for and maintain Taungurung Country.

The Taungurung ancestors had intimate knowledge of their environment to ensure both livelihood and sustainability. The mirnion (yam daisy) was a reliable food staple, and other plants such as the Bracken Fern (food and medicine), the Tree Fern, Kangaroo

Apple and Cherry Balert were a valuable food sources and are still growing on Taungurung Country today.

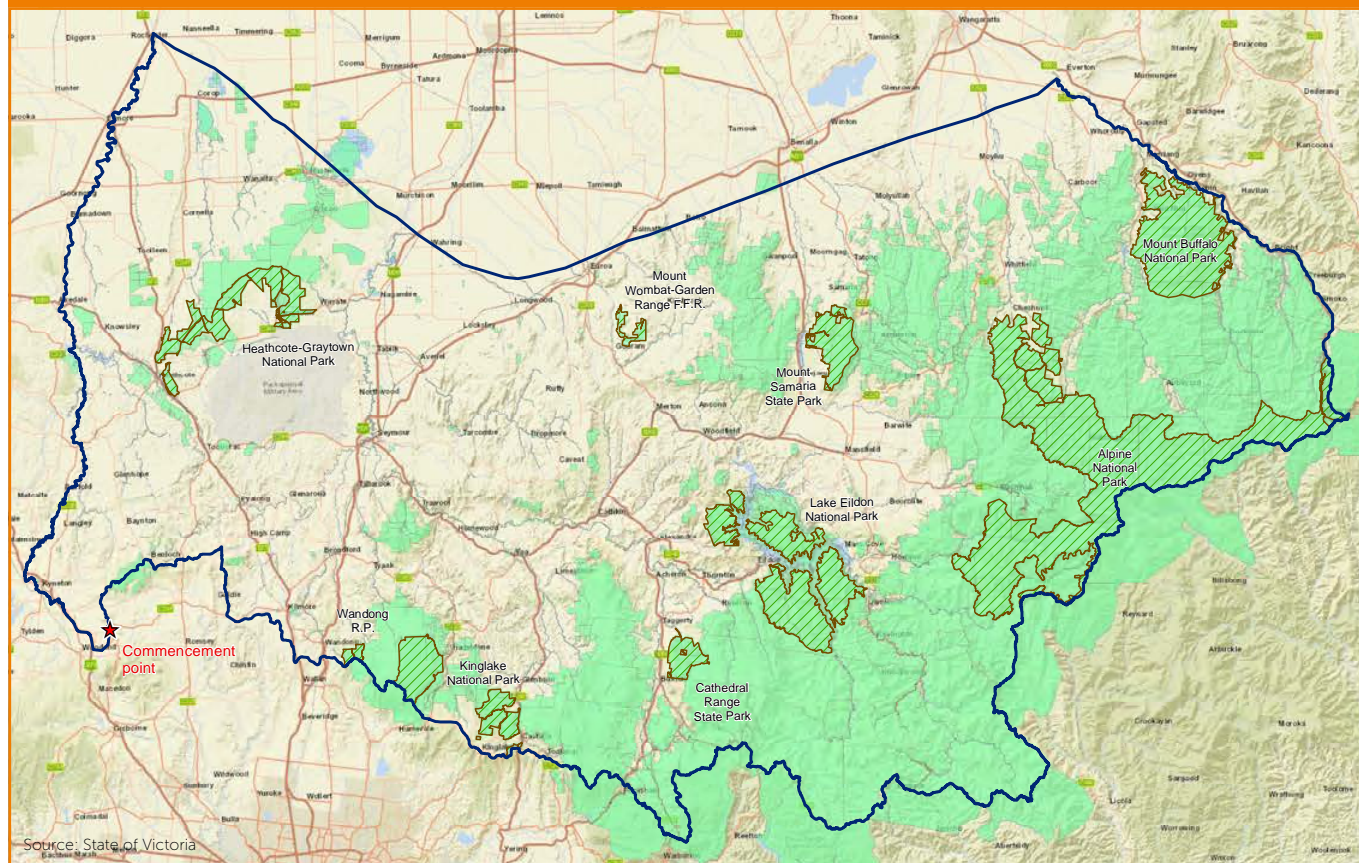
The permanent river systems and associated floodplains provided ongoing resources of fish and other wildlife, as well as plant resources. The various clan groups migrated on a seasonal basis through their territory dependent upon the seasonal variations of weather and the availability of food.

Like other Traditional Owners, the Taungurung Peoples faced profound disruption and displacement through the early establishment and expansion of European settlement. At various times, Taungurung Peoples were restricted to living on Aboriginal settlements and missions, established at Michellstown, Acheron and Coranderk, which limited movement, cultural practices and employment. Today, many Taungurung still live on Country and have formed a strong and vibrant community.

The following local governments are on Taungurung Country: Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Mount Alexander, Strathbogie, Mansfield, Macedon Ranges, Greater Shepparton, Alpine, Benalla, Wangaratta, Murrindindi and Mitchell.



## Map of Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement Area



### Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement

On 26 October 2018, the Victorian Government, the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, and the Taungurung Traditional Owner Group signed a suite of agreements under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (VIC). The Agreement formally recognises the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of central and north eastern Victoria. It also marks the first time the Victorian Government and a Traditional Owner Group have worked together to resolve native title issues exclusively outside of the Federal Court's claims process. The Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) commenced on August 11, 2020.

The agreement area covers 8.5 per cent of Victoria and includes almost 11 per cent of Victoria's public land.

The settlement package formally recognises the Taungurung people as the Traditional Owners for part of central Victoria. The package includes:

- Funding to support TLaWC to manage the settlement's benefits and obligations, and undertake economic development
- Measures to strengthen Taungurung culture
- Grants of nine parks and reserves as Aboriginal title, and up to five surplus public land parcels as freehold title

- A regime for managing activity on public land
- Resourcing and strategies for the Taungurung people to access, use, and manage natural resources

More information and details on the Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement can be found at [www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement)

DJAARA (trading as Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council are the Registered Aboriginal Parties for the municipality and are the voice of Traditional Owners in the management and protection of cultural heritage. See page 13 for the definition of a Registered Aboriginal Party or RAP.

Further information on the role and services of the local RAPs can be found at:

- DJAARA (trading as Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) 13-15 Forest Street, Bendigo VIC 3550  
[www.djadjawurrung.com.au](http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au)
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council  
37 High Street, Broadford VIC 3658  
[www.taungurung.com.au](http://www.taungurung.com.au)





## 03 Terminology when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### Aboriginal

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent; identifies as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives, or has lived.

- Always capitalise the 'A' in Aboriginal when referring to Aboriginal people from across Australia. The word 'aboriginal' with a lower case 'a' refers to an aboriginal person from any part of the world. It is considered offensive when 'Aboriginal people' or 'Aboriginal communities' is written with a lower case 'a' within any brochures or literature distributed within the Aboriginal community.
- The term 'Aboriginal' should be used as an adjective rather than a noun (i.e. Aboriginal people).
- Never abbreviate 'Aboriginal' as this is considered offensive.

### Aboriginal people or peoples

'Aboriginal people' is a collective term for the original people of Australia and their descendants. However, this term does not emphasise the diversity that exists within Aboriginal culture and communities. Using the term 'Aboriginal peoples' and adding an 's' to 'people' emphasises the diversity of Aboriginal languages, communities, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

### Torres Strait Islander

Is a person or descendant from the Torres Strait Islands, which is located to the north of Cape York Peninsula between mainland Australia and New

Guinea. The term 'Torres Strait Islander' refers to people of Torres Strait Islander origin, whether or not they are also of Aboriginal origin.

- Use upper case 'T', 'S' and 'I' for Torres Strait Islander.
- Never abbreviate 'Torres Strait Islander' as this is considered offensive.
- The term should be used as an adjective rather than a noun (i.e. Torres Strait Islander community, Torres Strait Islander peoples).

### Traditional Owners

Traditional Owners are directly descended from the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inhabitants of a culturally defined area of land or Country. Traditional Owners have ongoing spiritual and cultural ties to this Country that are derived from the traditions, observances, customs, beliefs or history of the original Aboriginal and Torres Strait inhabitants of the area.

- Use 'Traditional Owner' to refer to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person or group as defined above.
- The City's municipal boundary falls within the traditional boundaries of the Kulin Nation, with the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung Peoples being the Traditional Owners. The term 'Djaara' refers to the people who belong to the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner Group (note that DJAARA in capitals refers to the corporate arm of Dja Dja Wurrung, trading as Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)



## Koori and other terms

'Koori' and other terms are directly derived from Aboriginal languages and are often used by Aboriginal peoples in specific areas when referring to themselves. Note that many Aboriginal peoples from other areas of Australia reside within Victoria and still use their traditional names. Always check with the local Aboriginal community about using this type of terminology. The following words are the most commonly used in each State and Territory:

- "Koori" or "Koorie", which is a New South Wales term that is used by many Aboriginal people in Victoria and New South Wales
- "Palawa", which is usually used in Tasmania
- "Murri", which is usually used in north-west New South Wales and Queensland
- "Nunga", which is usually used in South Australia
- "Yolngu", which is usually used in the Northern Territory (north-east Arnhem Land)
- "Anangu", which is usually used in Central Australia
- "Noongar", which is usually used in Western Australia

## First Nations

'First Nations' is an inclusive term that is used when referring to a group that make up the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

**It is recommended that staff use the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'**

## Indigenous (Australian)

'Indigenous people' or 'Indigenous peoples' is often used as a non-specific term to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- Avoid using the term 'Indigenous' as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel the term diminishes their Aboriginality and is not appropriate to use. It is recommended that staff use the term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'
- The term 'Indigenous' is now the primary term when referring to native flora and fauna
- Using 'indigenous' with a lower case 'i' can be used to refer to indigenous people from other parts of the world, and is not referring solely to Indigenous people of Australia

## Aboriginality

Government agencies and community organisations usually accept three 'working criteria' as proof or confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. This follows the working definition as defined by the Federal Government. This definition states that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who is:

1. Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent;
2. Who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
3. Is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

Not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are dark skinned.

It is offensive to question the 'amount' of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 'blood' or to expect an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to divide their Aboriginality into parts. It is particularly offensive to refer to labels such as 'full-blood', 'half-caste' or 'quarter-caste' as these labels were derived from past government policies and definitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These labels are considered racist and oppressive terms and should not be used.

## 04 Other Terminology

### Country

'Country' is a term used to describe a culturally defined area of land associated with a particular culturally distinct group of people or nation. Country also refers to the diverse relationships, deep connections and understandings that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to the land and environment.

- 'Country' is often used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe family origins and associations to particular parts of Australia. For example, the City of Greater Bendigo is on both Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.
- Use 'Country' to refer to a particular culturally defined area of land e.g. Dja Dja Wurrung Country, Taungurung Country, Wathaurung Country.

### Community

Within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, the term 'community' takes on different meanings and refers to country, (extended) family ties and shared experience.

- Use the term 'community' to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living within a particular geographical region, but remaining mindful of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within that 'community'.
- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person may belong to more than one community, such as where they come from, where their family is, and where they live or work.
- 'Community' is about inter-relatedness and belonging within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

### Nation

'Nation' refers to a culturally distinct group of people associated with a particular culturally defined area of land or country. Nation boundaries cannot be changed.

### Clan

A clan is a named, local descent group, larger than a family but based on family links through a common ancestry. A clan is a subset of a nation. While some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may use this term, its usage should be respected. It is generally not appropriate for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to use this term and, if unsure, guidance should be sought from local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples or organisations.

### Elder

Elders are highly respected members of their communities and are recognised as the custodians of cultural knowledge and beliefs passed on from generation to generation. Elders are chosen and accepted by their communities as people who have permission to disclose cultural knowledge and beliefs. They have a significant role in preserving and passing on culture, guiding younger members of the community and making guiding decisions for the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

- Always use an uppercase 'E' when using the term 'Elder'.
- In some instances, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples above a certain age will refer to themselves as Elders. However, it is important to be aware that in traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, age does not necessarily mean that one is a recognised Elder.
- It is important to ensure recognised Elders (or other respected community representatives) are involved in negotiations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where possible. While it is important to negotiate with recognised Elders or other respected community members, this should not replace negotiation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations for advice and direction.

For Greater Bendigo, these organisations include the Registered Aboriginal Parties (DJAARA and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council), the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative, or local networks such as the WARTATJARRANG (coming together) Local Aboriginal Network.







## Sister / Brother / Cousin / Uncle / Aunt

In non-Aboriginal culture, these terms would be used to refer to familial relationships. However, these terms have very different meanings in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities. They are used as a greeting to acknowledge a person as a sign of respect. For example, younger members of the community will generally use the term 'Uncle' or 'Aunt' when referring to adults as a sign of respect. However, this does not necessarily mean that people are related as in non-Aboriginal culture.

Non-Aboriginal people should not refer to someone as 'Aunt', 'Uncle', 'Cuz', 'Sis' or 'Bruz' unless you are invited to do so.

## Mob

'Mob' is a term that is often used to refer to a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people associated with a particular place. The term does not have the same negative connotations as when used in mainstream English.

- 'Mob' is an important term for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is often used in a friendly way to describe who they are and where they are from. 'Mob' is generally used by and between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- It may not be appropriate for non-Aboriginal people to use this term unless this is known to be acceptable.

## Registered Aboriginal Parties

Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are organisations that hold decision-making responsibilities under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 for protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in a specified geographical area. RAPs have important roles and functions in managing and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. RAP appointments are determined by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. There are currently 10 RAPs in Victoria. For the City of Greater Bendigo, this includes DJAARA (trading as Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council.

For more information on the tasks performed by RAPs, visit the Victorian Government's Aboriginal Victoria website. [www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/registered-aboriginal-parties.html](http://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/heritage/registered-aboriginal-parties.html)

## Stolen Generation

The term 'Stolen Generation' refers to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons who were forcibly removed as children from their families, homes and communities, in accordance with government policy at the time. Children were removed by churches, welfare bodies and government agencies and placed in institutional care or with non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander foster families.

## Native Title

Native Title is the recognition under the common law of Australia that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold pre-existing rights and interests to the land and waters.

Native title was first accepted into Australian law following the High Court of Australia's historic decision in 1992 regarding *Mabo v Queensland (No 2)* [1992] HCA 23; (1992) 175 CLR 1 (*Mabo*). Known as the *Mabo No. 2* decision, this decision recognised that the rights possessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under their system of traditional laws and customs survived colonisation. The native title of a particular group is defined by the traditional laws and customs observed by that group of people.

Following the *Mabo No. 2* decision, the Federal Government enacted the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) giving statutory recognition and protection of native title. The Act also lays out the procedures for making a claim for a determination of native title through the courts.

For native title rights and interests to be recognised, it must be established that:

- The native title claim group have rights and interests that are possessed under traditional laws acknowledged, and traditional customs observed.
- The native title claim group by those laws and customs have a connection with the land or water; and
- That those rights and interests are recognised by the common law of Australia.



## 05 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols

### Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country ceremony is conducted by a Traditional Owner to welcome people visiting their Country. This protocol is delivered at the beginning of a meeting, event or ceremony, and is an important mark of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A Welcome to Country generally takes the form of speeches of welcome, but may also include traditional dance, singing and smoking ceremonies.

- A Welcome to Country should be arranged for all major public or significant forums and events, and especially for any function or milestone of significance for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- A Welcome to Country can only be conducted by a representative of the Traditional Owner Group.
- Always use upper case when referring to 'Welcome to Country' in writing.

A Welcome to Country must be arranged through the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) for the Greater Bendigo region – DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) or the Taungurung Land and Waters Council. A set fee is required to cover costs for this cultural service. See page 8 for contact details of the RAPs.

### Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is a protocol delivered at the opening of meetings, conferences, special events and official functions. It is a way for other people to acknowledge and pay respects to the Traditional Owners of the land on which they are speaking. Unlike a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country can be given by any non-Aboriginal person or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is not a Traditional Owner. It can be delivered with or without a Welcome to Country.

- An Acknowledgement of Country should be given:
  - By the first speaker but subsequent speakers may also choose to acknowledge the Traditional Owners.
  - At the start of all major events and public functions, forums, larger meetings (i.e. 10 or more people), exhibitions, training sessions etc.
  - At the start of meetings at which people from external organisations are present.
  - At the start of meetings at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons are present.

The following is considered appropriate wording for an Acknowledgement of Country within the City of Greater Bendigo:

*I acknowledge that the City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.*

*I would like to acknowledge and extend my appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung People\*, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are standing on today.*

*Today, we pay our respects to leaders and Elder's past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People\*.*

*We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.*

*\* If staff are delivering an Acknowledgement of Country on Taungurung Country please refer to Taungurung People.*

This is the City's official Acknowledgement of Country and this new wording has been approved by DJAARA (trading as Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) as of May 2018.

If time permits, however, you may also wish to cite the full version of the Acknowledgement of Country found on page 15.



## Acknowledgement of Country - full version

*The people belonging to the Djandak, meaning Country, that we are on, through bloodline and kinship, are known as the "Djaara" or people of the area.*

*Over time, many Djaara have come to identify as "Dja Dja Wurrung" the collective language group. We recognise that the Dja Dja Wurrung People have a special relationship with their Djandak.*

*I would like to acknowledge and extend my appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are standing on today.*

*We recognise that the arrival of Europeans in Victoria caused a rupture in the spiritual, environmental, political and economic order of Dja Dja Wurrung People.*

*Unrecorded numbers of Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors had their lives taken in their fight for Djandak and Martinga Kulinga Murrup (Ancestral Spirits). Other Dja Dja Wurrung were forced from their traditional country.*

*Dja Dja Wurrung ancestors struggled to maintain their way of life.*

*Today, we pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.*

*In a constructive step towards reconciliation, the State of Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung People came together in good faith to reach this Recognition and Settlement Agreement in 2013 and to recognise the traditional owner rights under the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010, as a means of settlement of the Dja Dja Wurrung native title claims.*

*It is a means by which Dja Dja Wurrung culture and traditional practices and the unique relationship of Djandak is recognised, strengthened, protected and promoted, for the benefit of all Victorians, now and into the future.*

*We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.*

The full version is consistent with the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement, with the wording taken from the 2013 Recognition Statement signed between the Victorian Government and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.





If you are uncertain about who the Traditional Owners of an area are, the following wording would be appropriate:

*I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.*

This Acknowledgement of Country could also be delivered anywhere in Australia.

**If you are confident saying an Acknowledgement of Country, you can deviate from these options and give your own unique version – you may want to recognise particular Traditional Owners in attendance or highlight the relevance of the event to Traditional Owner cultures.**

## Smoking ceremony

A Smoking Ceremony is undertaken in Aboriginal communities to cleanse the space. The ceremony is a purification ritual and is always undertaken by a Traditional Owner who has specialised cultural knowledge. As per a Welcome to Country ceremony, this needs to be booked through either Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation or Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.

## Sorry Business

Sorry Business refers to the period of mourning for a deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. In many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities it is offensive to refer to a deceased person by name or to show photographic images of the person during the mourning period, unless agreed to by family members. Mourning periods differ between communities and sometimes may last for a week, a year or an indefinite period. Before using the name of a deceased person or publishing their image, it is essential to obtain the family's permission.

## Intellectual property and cultural copyright

Cultural copyright and the protection of intellectual property are key issues when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the custodians of their culture and have a right to own and control their own heritage. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander intellectual copyright covers all forms of traditional cultural expression, such as traditional stories, music, dance, song, and artistic works and designs.

If an employee wishes to access and make use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural materials or knowledge, it is important to gain permission from relevant individuals or organisations. Some of this may also be registered on the Intangible Heritage Register, in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The relevant compliance process will need to be adhered to.

## Aboriginal knowledge and remuneration

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the owners and holders of their culture and knowledge. Any person who is engaged in a cultural capacity – such as performing traditional dance, music, delivering speeches, providing an artwork or participating in a project – are entitled to request remuneration for their time and expertise. At the City, it is expected that any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person who is engaged by the City for their cultural knowledge should be remunerated appropriately for their time and service.

## Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander images, photographs, film

Before filming or taking photographs for inclusion in any publications or other media, including the City's own publications, written consent must always be obtained before using their image. The person must be completely briefed as to how the image will be used and how long it will be used for. In addition:

- Always ensure that images of Aboriginal people or persons are used in an appropriate manner e.g. that the image is representative of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Greater Bendigo.
- Many Aboriginal communities consider displaying an image of a deceased person as disrespectful. Do not use these images.



## 06 Tips for effective communication

All communications with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be respectful and culturally sensitive. When communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is important for staff to have an awareness of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, to use appropriate language and to be aware of potential barriers to engagement. This may stem from poor experience in dealing with mainstream organisations or the impact of past government policies and practice.

General considerations when communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people include:

- Demonstrate respect, this can be done through:
  - Paying attention to and having an awareness of local protocols and traditions;
  - Acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land at the start of meetings, events and other public functions;
  - Showing an awareness of, sensitivity and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures;
  - Being present and listening well to community members; and
  - Listening to and following the advice of local community members and Elders.
- Take the time to build trust, rapport and positive relationships with community.
- Use clear and accurate language e.g. avoid acronyms, technical terms and highly bureaucratic language.
- Always work in partnership with community and seek input and advice right from the start when planning and developing projects. Consultation should be ongoing.
- Be aware of the considerable demands, often limited resources, and time pressures placed on the Registered Aboriginal Parties, local Aboriginal community organisations and individual community members.
- Allow sufficient (and often longer) time for consultation with community.
- Engage with community in a space that is culturally safe, welcoming or most comfortable for community members. Often this means engaging with community at their workplace, a neutral meeting space or at a venue chosen by community members.
- Take the initiative and increase your own knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage and issues.
- Undertake cultural awareness training and other workshops especially for Councillors and City staff.
- Show your support by becoming involved and attending local events and community activities, such as Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and other events throughout the year.
- Be aware of the City's obligations under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement to ensure successful engagement.
- Be aware of the City's legal responsibility under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 as, in some instances, engagement with the Traditional Owner Group, such as DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council, is required under law.





## 07 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags

The City's flag flying protocol includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags being flown permanently at the Bendigo Town Hall.

### Aboriginal flag

The Aboriginal Flag was designed by Harold Thomas in 1971, a Luritja man from Central Australia. It has come to represent the unity of Aboriginal people. The symbolic meaning of the flag colours are:

- Black representing the Aboriginal people of Australia
- Red representing the red earth, the red ochre and a spiritual relation to the land
- Yellow representing the sun, the giver of life and protector



### Torres Strait Islander flag

The Torres Strait Islander Flag was designed by the late Bernard Namok from Thursday Island and was created as a symbol of unity and identity for Torres Strait Islander people. The flag was recognised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in June 1992 and given equal prominence with the Aboriginal flag.

The Torres Strait Islander flag has three horizontal panels:

- The green represents the land
- The black represents the Indigenous people
- The blue represents the sea
- The white represents peace
- The five points of the star represents the five major Island groups. The star also represents the navigation, a symbol of the seafaring culture of the Torres Strait



The panels are divided by thin black lines and the white Dhari (traditional headdress) sits in the centre and represents Torres Strait Islander people.





## 08 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander calendar

### January 26

#### **Australia Day / Invasion Day / Survival Day**

January 26 has multiple meanings. It is considered a day of celebration for many non-Aboriginal Australians. However, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, January 26 is considered a day of mourning. It represents invasion, dispossession and the loss of culture and sovereignty.

In 1938 on the 150th anniversary of the landing of the first fleet in Sydney Cove, a 'Day of Mourning' was organised by Aboriginal leaders in Sydney. To many since then, January 26 has become known as 'Invasion Day'. It represents the beginning of unlawful invasion and the devastating impacts of colonisation, which are still felt by Aboriginal communities today. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also choose to refer to January 26 as 'Survival Day' in acknowledgement of the survival of their ongoing traditions and culture.

The day is marked by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the country through marches, rallies and concerts. The Invasion Day rally and *Balit Narrun Festival* (Share the Spirit) is held annually in Melbourne.

### February 13

#### **Anniversary of the National Apology**

The Apology to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was delivered by the, then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd on February 13, 2008. The National Apology acknowledged members of the Stolen Generations and apologised for past laws, policies and practices and the trauma these policies have caused for Australia's First Nation peoples.

### April 2

#### **National Close the Gap on Indigenous Health Equality Day**

The Close the Gap campaign, launched in 2006, involves a coalition of peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream health bodies, non-government organisations and human rights organisations advocating for health and life expectancy equality by 2030.

The Close the Gap campaign is working towards a major goal – to close the gap in health and life expectancy outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Aboriginal Australians within a generation. The first National Close the Gap Day was held in 2007 and has since become a growing national movement with events held annually across Australia.

**May 26**

### **National Sorry Day**

Sorry Day has been held on 26 May across Australia since 1998 to raise awareness of the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their families and homes. This annual event acknowledges the painful effects of the forcible removal policies and its impact on the children that were removed and their families.

**May 27 to June 3**

### **National Reconciliation Week**

National Reconciliation Week is a national campaign, held from May 27 to June 3, to celebrate and build respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. It commemorates two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the successful 1967 Referendum and the 1992 Mabo decision by the High Court of Australia to recognise native title rights.

The week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, and to explore how each of us can join the national reconciliation effort.

For more information, visit Reconciliation Australia:  
[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)

**June 3**

### **MABO Day**

This date marks the anniversary of the landmark decision made by the High Court in 1992, recognising the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of their land for the first time. The legal case was brought by Torres Strait Islander Eddie Mabo and others, and challenged the concept of 'terra nullius' that claimed Australia was unoccupied before British settlement. This decision also altered the foundation of land law in Australia and led to Parliament passing the Native Title Act in 1993.

**First Full Week of July**

### **NAIDOC Week**

NAIDOC Week is held on the first full week of July each year and is a celebration of the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself. Visit [www.aidoc.org.au](http://www.aidoc.org.au) for exact dates and more information.

**August 4**

### **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day**

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day is held annually on August 4. The day was first celebrated in 1998 by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, the national non-government peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The day is a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

**August 9**

### **International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

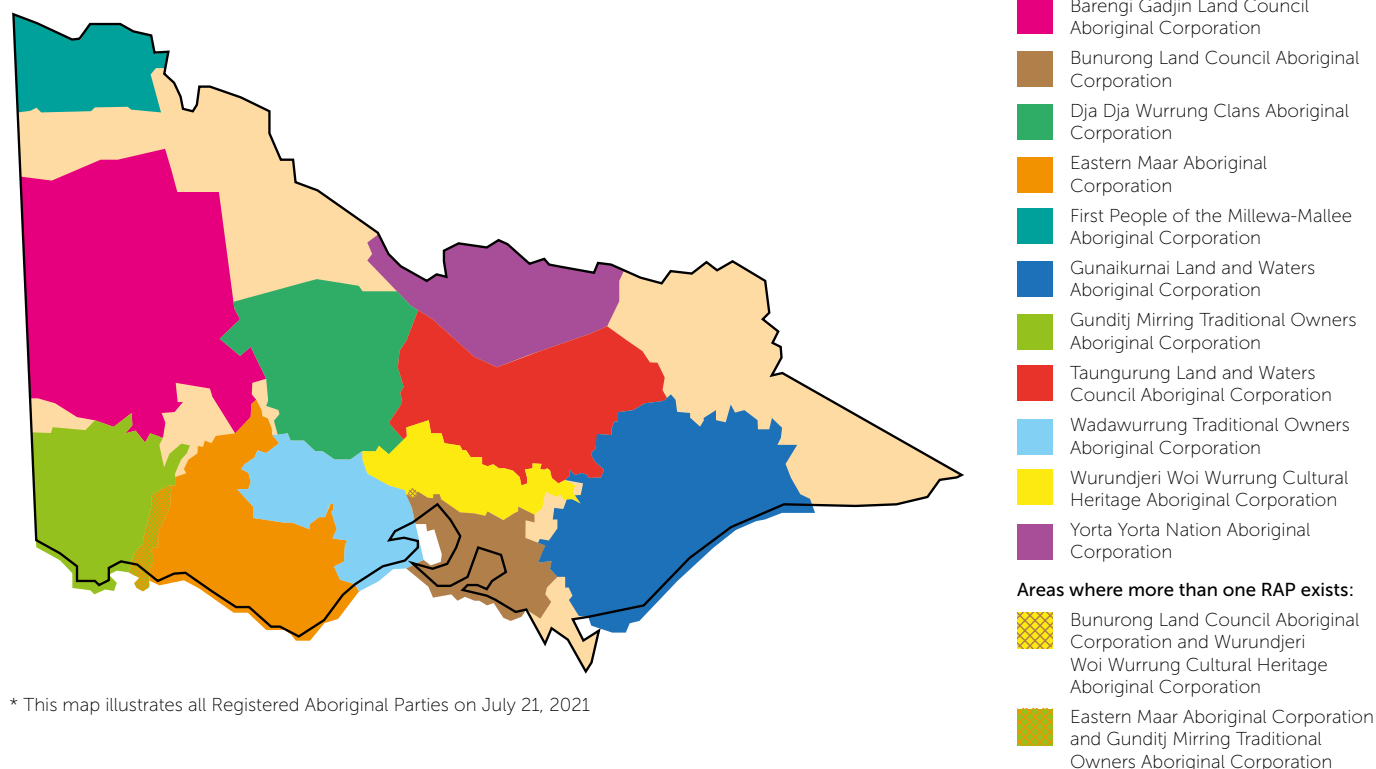
In 1994, the United Nations declared August 9 as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The date marks the day of the first meeting, in 1982, of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.





# 09 Boundaries and languages

## Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) in Victoria



## Aboriginal languages of Victoria



# 10 Resources

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation

The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families.

[www.healingfoundation.org.au](http://www.healingfoundation.org.au)

## Aboriginal Victoria

[www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au)

## Australian Government Indigenous Affairs

[www.indigenous.gov.au](http://www.indigenous.gov.au)

## Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

[www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

## Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BDAC)

Established in 2001, BDAC delivers a range of health and social services to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Dja Dja Wurrung Country, covering approximately five of the six Local Government Associations in the Loddon Campaspe region.

[www.bdac.com.au](http://www.bdac.com.au)

## City of Greater Bendigo

City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan 2021-2025: *Barpangu* and annual progress reports.

[www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Community-and-care/Aboriginal\\_and\\_Torres\\_Strait\\_Islander\\_Reconciliation](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Services/Community-and-care/Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_Reconciliation)

## Closing the Gap, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

The Prime Minister's annual report to Parliament on progress in Closing the Gap.

[www.closingthegap.gov.au](http://www.closingthegap.gov.au)

## Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board

A Traditional Owner Land Management Board responsible for the delivery of a Joint Management Plan for the Appointed Land under the Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement between the State and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation. The Appointed Land comprises six national parks in central Victoria that have been transferred to the Traditional Owners on Aboriginal Title.

[www.djandak.com.au](http://www.djandak.com.au)

## Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC)

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

## Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition Settlement Agreement, Department of Justice

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/dja-dja-wurrung-settlement](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/dja-dja-wurrung-settlement)

## Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd)

A company solely owned by Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC). Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises Pty Ltd main purpose is conducting works in cultural heritage and environmental services and supporting the regional investment in Central Victoria.

[www.djadjawurrung.com.au/enterprise](http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au/enterprise)

## Koorie Heritage Trust

[www.koorieheritagetrust.com.au](http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com.au)

## Local Aboriginal Network (LAN) and the LAN Five Year Plan 2016-2020

The Local Aboriginal Networks (LANs) are voluntary community networks, bringing Aboriginal people together to set priorities, develop community plans, improve social cohesion, and empower Aboriginal Victorians to participate in civic and community life.

[www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/local-aboriginal-networks-and-gathering-places](http://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/local-aboriginal-networks-and-gathering-places)

## Maggolee: Local Government and Aboriginal communities working together

[www.maggolee.org.au](http://www.maggolee.org.au)

## NAIDOC Week

[www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au)

## Reconciliation Australia

A national organisation working to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community, and is involved in a number of national initiatives and programs.

[www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)

## Reconciliation Victoria

[www.reconciliationvic.org.au](http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au)

## Taungurung Land and Waters Council

[www.taungurung.com.au](http://www.taungurung.com.au)

## Victorian Aboriginal Business Directory

<http://directory.business.vic.gov.au/aboriginal>

## Victorian Aboriginal Corporation Languages (VACL)

[www.vaclang.org.au](http://www.vaclang.org.au)

City of Greater Bendigo staff can also access a wide range of resources, documents and information on the City's Sharepoint page.