



Media Statement

Tuesday 13 December 2022

Congratulations DJAARA on Galk-galk Dhelkunya

Today has seen an important shift in the way Traditional Owners are enacting their rights to holistically manage Country.

This morning, the DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) launched *Galk-galk Dhelkunya* Forest Gardening Strategy.

It is an unavoidable but no less distressing requirement that in order to exercise our rights as Traditional Owners, we must do so through imposed legislative and regulatory systems.

Galk-galk Dhelkunya cuts through those systems, much like the Victorian Traditional Owner Cultural Landscape Strategy does, to outline an approach that could meaningfully return Country to health. To do so, first and foremost, Country must be decolonised.

The act of decolonising requires an entirely new approach to landscape management. First, Traditional Owners must be enabled to treat Country holistically and not through predetermined ownership types and legislative layers.

“Traditional Owner Corporations must be supported to manage Country in their own way, according to their own principles and practices. DJAARA have today shared with us their vision to heal Djandak and it is essential that they are enabled to realise this vision through the removal of statutory and regulatory barriers.”

Paul Paton, CEO, Federation of Victoria Traditional Owner Corporations

DJAARA have shown us their way to approach Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country) so that it can be managed back to good health. It is the responsibility of Government to review and reform the existing systems that govern Country management so that Traditional Owners can manage as they were for 60,000 years.

We congratulate DJAARA on this significant document and the vision it holds for the wellbeing of Country and all who live on it.