

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Monday, 19 June 2023

DJA DJA WURRUNG COMMUNITY CENTRE ONE STEP CLOSER

The Andrews Labor Government is helping the Dja Dja Wurrung People achieve their long-standing dream of a corporate and community centre on Country in Bendigo.

The Deputy Premier and Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan recently joined the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (Djaara) for a traditional sod-turn ceremony to mark the start of the centre's construction.

Expected to be completed in 2024, the purpose-built centre will be the base for Djaara's corporate and business operations, including their emerging agricultural business and expanding cultural and natural resource management services. It will have spaces for learning and interaction, including a theatrette and yarning and ceremonial spaces.

Honouring the survival, growth and culture of the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the design of the cultural hub will reflect the distinct landscape of their Country, including the foothill forests to the south and the red gum floodplains to the north.

The Labor Government handed over freehold title for the site on Hattam Street to the Djaara in 2022. This builds on the Government's investment of almost \$11.3 million in the construction of the centre in 2021. The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* contributed a further \$5 million to the project.

More information is available at djadjawurrung.com.au/projects.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

"Designed by and for the local community, this centre will honour the rich history of the Dja Dja Wurrung people and provide a space where their strong culture is recognised, protected and promoted for the benefit of all Victorians."

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan

"As the new home to the Dja Dja Wurrung, this permanent, purpose-built community hub will provide a destination for First Nations businesses and the wider community to drive economic growth and employment in Bendigo."

Quote attributable to Dja Dja Wurrung Group CEO Rodney Carter

"This year, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our Recognition and Settlement Agreement and today is a critical moment in our history with the beginning of construction of our new corporate home. This will be a place for us to work together to create a future for Central Victorians that would make all our Dja Dja Wurrung Ancestors proud".