



Wadawurrung
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation



Paleert Tjaara Dja

Let's make Country good together
2020-2030



Wadawurrung Country Plan Summary

2020



Caring for Country

As Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and community, we have created a Country Plan that is based on our cultural values.

*"Comugeen budj-o thalikiyu kin bil beng-ordi-ngadak.
Ngarrwabil, boron, guli, bagurrk. Comugeen budj-o bengadak
ngarr-uk dja, ngubiyt, weagoon gobata gupma wurring-wurring
baap beng-ordi-nganak, djarrima murrup-nhuk bengadak*

*Gobata Wadawurrung balug jumbuk didalbil murrup-nhuk
bundjil monomeeth beek-o weagoon. Mutjak-ak noogie n'uder
durralully.*

*Wa-ngarrak Wadawurrung balug bengadak mirriyu boron-dja
gobata-k ying, ngarrimilli, wah-ak, karrung, kuy-a, nyanay-
it-yanunit, djilenawurr, baap willam beng-ordi-ngadak."*

"We deeply respect our people of the past. Elders, children, men, women. We deeply respect their knowledge of Country, water, life, their care of the traditions and of each other, we stand with their spirit.

Great spirit **Bundjil** told us to take care of the great life within the land. To only take what you need without selfishness.

Wadawurrung shared their knowledge of singing, dance, trade, camps, fishing, hunting, paintings, and homes to us to protect for our future generations.

We all need to help."

Stephaine Skinner, Wadawurrung 2019

Our Vision

*Wurrggurwilwa gupma bengadak
Wadawurrung*

All people working together to make Wadawurrung Country and Culture strong.



Please note this document may contain the names and images of people who are now deceased.

Miriam Dja Willam

Our home Country



"We see our young ones speaking and singing."

Aunty Mary Zimmer, Wadawurrung Elder



This area may change as Treaty and other land and water negotiations progress.

Caring for our land and sea Country

Wadawurrung Country stretches from the Great Dividing Range of Ballarat, to the coast from the Werribee River to Mangowak (Aireys Inlet), including Djilang (Geelong), the Bellawiyi Peninsula and Surf Coast. As currently defined by our Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) map and covers over **10,000 square kilometres** or **1 million hectares**. This area may change as Treaty and other land and water negotiations progress.

Wadawurrung people are determined to see our cultural authority for making decisions in looking

after our Country recognised and respected, and to see cultural knowledge as the basis for this management. Knowing this will help heal us and our Country. For Wadawurrung and for the benefit of everyone living on, visiting and enjoying our Country.

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation is the representative body for Wadawurrung Traditional Owners with over 300 members. The Corporation works to support our aspirations for looking after our cultural heritage, Country and community.

"Ceremonies bring back memories of the past."

Uncle Wally Eccles, Wadawurrung Elder



This plan enables us to grow partnerships and relationships with those visiting, living and working within our Country; so, we can all enjoy and care for it better together.

Our Governance Area

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation was appointed in May 2009 as a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) under the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

This means we are the legally recognised corporation, custodians, decision makers and knowledge holders for looking after our cultural heritage.

Our Country includes the major cities of Djilang and Ballarat and incorporates the activities of 11

separate local councils – including many that are experiencing very high rates of growth in terms of population, infrastructure, commercial and residential development.

Wadawurrung Country also includes the start of the Great Ocean Road, one of Australia's most iconic and popular tourist destinations.



About Us

As Wadawurrung Traditional Owners we live by **Bundjil's** lore to care for Country and all things living as our ancestors have always done.

Our **Dja** (Country), is more than a place. Our coastal cliffs, wetlands, grassy plains and people were all formed by **Bundjil** and our ancestor spirits who continue to live in the land, water and sky. **Kaveet Baveet** (Black Hill near Gordon) is where **Bundjil** created Wadawurrung people. **Lal Lal** Falls near Ballarat is where **Bundjil** created the waterways and where he returned to before heading to his resting places in the stars continuing to watch over us.

Our Country is interwoven with relationships no matter whether the shape of that relation is human, granite hills, **Waa** (crow) or **Larrap** (Manna gum). Country is filled with relations, speaking language, sharing stories and following lore. These spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past, our cultural practices and our stories. These spirits link us to our Country and each other which, gives us ongoing respect for and obligation to care for our Country.

The Wadawurrung today are the seven family groups who are the descendants of John Robinson, our apical ancestor. John was the son of Wadawurrung

woman **Canobeen**, – Queen Mary of Ballarat (or **Borriyallock**).

Wadawurrung Country, being so fertile and productive, was quickly taken by Europeans, pushing Wadawurrung people from our traditional living areas and hunting grounds. Like many Wadawurrung people who wanted to stay on country, Queen Mary and her son worked on stations across **Terrinallum**, **Booriyallock**, Mt. Emu and **Banongil** stations near Skipton in the north-west of Wadawurrung Country.

Over time members of the seven families have become spread across Wadawurrung country in areas such as Ballarat, Gordon, Mortlake, **Djilang**, Torquay with some living in other parts of Australia. As Wadawurrung Traditional Owners today we have fought hard to survive the impacts of colonisation and dispossession and maintained this connection with **Dja**.

Our Elders suffered deeply, and these impacts continue to be felt across the generations but with our Elders strength and resilience knowing Country wasn't ceded we are ensuring our cultural connections, knowledge and responsibilities for Country continue.

Spirits link us back through time in a continuing connection with our past, our cultural practices and our stories. Spirits link us to our Country and each other which, gives us ongoing respect for and obligation to care for our Country.



Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation offers a wide range of professional services

- Cultural heritage assessments, management plans, protection and management works
- Welcome to country and smoking ceremonies
- Artworks and linkages to Wadawurrung artists
- Cultural education and awareness workshops
- Dance and cultural practices workshops
- Wadawurrung language and cultural interpretation advice
- Cultural advice into environmental, urban and water plans
- Reconciliation Action Plan development
- Caring for Country services - cultural burning, weed, water and feral animal management



Overview of our Wadawurrung Country Plan

Wurrurrwilwa gupma bengadak Wadawurrung wurring-wurring baap dja

All people working together to make Wadawurrung Country and culture strong.



“These are the important things that we want to look after”
OUR VALUES - BUILDING BLOCKS



THREATS TO OUR VALUES

“There are lots of threats that stop our values from being healthy but some are worse than others”



3 PROGRAMS / 18 STRATEGIES

“These are the 3 programs we have decided to focus on to reduce the worst threats and improve the health of our values”



Our Values

All of our Country is important and interconnected but these are the things that need to be looked after and by making them healthy the whole of Country will be healthy.



Wadawurrung culture and people Includes: lore, language, stories, dancing and song, ceremony and cultural practices, family lineage and membership engagement.



Wadawurrung cultural sites and places Includes: story places, living places, middens, campsites, scar trees, stone tools and artefacts, stone huts, stone arrangements, ceremony sites, ochre areas, rock art, rock / water holes, burial sites, caves and birthing trees.



Bush tucker, medicines and resources Includes: ochre, fibers, pigface, trees for spears, shields, carriers, clubs, resin and medicines, reeds and grasses for flour, weaving and string, **Murnong** daisy, tubers and lilies.



Yulluk - waterways, rivers, estuaries and wetlands Includes: lakes, springs, wetlands, estuaries, springs, underground water, water, wader birds, migratory birds, camping places, fish and eels.



Inland country Includes: Volcanic grasslands, plains, woodlands and ridge country.



Coastal country Includes: sandy beaches, coastal cliffs, mangrove, Moonah tree, Tea tree, wet forest, dunes, and heathland.



Native Animals Includes: possum, wallabies, kangaroo, quoll, bandicoot, **parwon** (magpie), **connewarre** (black swan) eels, emu, echidna, lizards, butterflies, goanna, cockatoos, **Bundjil**, **Waa** and birds.



Enterprise and employment Includes: Jobs on Country and Wadawurrung businesses.



Warre - sea Country Includes: rocky reefs, tidal areas, seastars seabeds, kelp and seaweeds forests, seagrass, seals, whales, dolphin, fish, oysters and abalone.



Our Threats

These are the worst threats to our values that we will work on reducing first.



Urban development



Lack of coordination between land managers



Lack of capacity



Lack of recognition



Rising sea temperatures



Inappropriate location of windfarms



Inappropriate visitation



Water extraction



Vandalism



Weeds



Cinnamon fungus



Rabbits



Foxes and cats



Bushfires



Sea level rise



Drought



Our country plan in action

The Wadawurrung Country Plan has been developed by our elders and the community.

The programs and strategies we have identified in our Country plan provide opportunities for Wadawurrung people to be on Country together. To work alongside specialists in their field, learning and sharing knowledge, so together we are using best practice management approaches to care for Country in ways that give opportunities for Wadawurrung people to

develop our enterprise initiatives for the benefit of people today and their future generations.

The plan will be reviewed and adapted over time to ensure it is achieving what we said we would do, so it is up to date with Wadawurrung needs and continues to identify new opportunities.

“This Plan sets a clear road map to manage country, giving our children strong foundations to carry on from.”

Sarah Eccles – Wadawurrung



Programs and Strategies

These are the three programs we have decided to focus on, to reduce the worst threats and improve the health of our values.

These programs have goals, strategies, detailed work plans and indicators, so we know what needs to be done and when. We are already doing a lot of this work, often in partnerships, working collaboratively to achieve projects.

Our plan builds on this, to do even more, to seek new partnerships to keep our country and culture healthy and strong.

Programs

Strategies



Gobata Dja baap Ngubiyt

Taking care of Country and waters

Caring for Country team

Cultural values management

Dja and Yulluk – Country and water negotiations, acquisition and management

Co-management

Cultural burning

Representation on planning boards, committees and advisory groups

Cultural heritage management ‘physical artefacts’



Gobata bengadak tjarra

Us Supporting Us –
Cultural Strengthening

Culture and language strengthening program

Keeping place – a safe place for our cultural resources, for Wadawurrung to have on Country gatherings and practice culture

Cultural centre – for sharing education and enterprise

Wadawurrung cultural education, language and resources

Elders support services



Wurrgurwilwa Wadawurrung Corporation

Strengthening Wadawurrung
Corporation

Employment and mentoring

Enterprise development & support
(internal enterprises and external enterprises)

Recognition and respect for Wadawurrung People, Treaty.

Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Strengthen governance and systems

Engagement with WTOAC members



Paleert Tjaara Dja

Let's make country good together



Koling wada-ngal

Let's walk together

Wadawurrung people have a proven and proud history of working with multiple partners.

Wadawurrung are a community with a broad range of knowledge, skills and experience applicable across many areas. We welcome opportunities to collaborate

in ways that enable our cultural knowledge and skills to be applied to enhance the health and respect of our community and Country.



"Educating people of cultural ways, connects them to Care for Country too."

Corrina Eccles

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Nyatne - thanks to our contributors

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