

Three interpretive signs are located on site at the Wanyarrum Dheik Frog Ponds on the Bendigo Creek trail near Knight St White Hills.

The site is well worth a visit to see how Djaara have been involved in restoring the site with frog ponds to bring back biodiversity on a disused piece of land, slowing down flows off nearby streets and bring culture and language back into the landscape.

Students can see the vegetated frog ponds, lots of indigenous vegetation and a dancing circle.

Sign 1

**Wartaka Wanyarra Dum**  
Welcome to the Frog Ponds

We welcome you to share this space with regard to its purpose.  
**Wanyarra Dum** means Frog Waterhole or Frog Ponds.

**Gapa Gatjin**  
Knowing Water  
Gapa Gatjin is a Dja Dja Wurrung water advisory group that comes together to share and grow their knowledge around **gatjin** by going out to water places on **Djandak** (Country).  
Gapa Gatjin have been involved in decision making, place naming and regeneration works for **Wanyarra Dum** and connecting waterways.

**How we have changed the journey of water**  
The legacy of **Djaara** people has been the maintenance of crystal clear waters for thousands of generations. **Gatjin** has **murrup** (spirit). It is a living entity that must be respected and protected. Surrounding land use (construction of dams, agricultural runoff, goldmining and contamination) have made significant changes on the water quality and its effect on the environment. Environmental degradation has hindered the ability for the soil to hold water, filter it naturally and altered its movement through watercourses and catchments.

**Upside down Country**  
Extensive alluvial mining for **Gara Gara** (gold) created a sludge that stopped the flow of water in the **Yaram Yaram Manya** (the Bendigo Creek). This is the legacy of mining that still interferes with the health of Country and the people today. Upside down Country is disturbed soil left over from mining, washing sediment into our creeks and affecting our water quality when it rains.

**Djaara Natural Resource Management**  
Fifteen thousand food and fibre plants have been embedded in shallow ponds. This slows down water flow, helping to heal sick water by trapping sediment. The use of **Djaara** Traditional Ecological Knowledge on Country supports the aspiration of the **Dheikunya Dja** (Healing Country) Country Plan 2014-2034.

**Our Djaara journey healing water**  
**Dheikunya Gatjin**  
Healing Water  
Restoring this site was initiated by the **Wanyarram Dheik** (Good Waterhole) project. By creating a bridge of terrestrial frog ponds between the stormwater drains and the **Yaram Yaram Manya** (the Bendigo Creek), it traps sediment and releases improved water back into the Creek.  
**Dheikunya Gatjin is Dheikunya Djandak**  
Healing Water is Healing Country

**Cultural Ecology for all**  
**Wanyarra Dum** benefits the whole community by creating a space that supports cultural practice and promotes reconciliation, improved ecological functionality, improved water quality locally, along the **Yaram Yaram Manya** (the Bendigo Creek) chain of ponds meeting all the way to **Gurtjin Bolok** (Tang Tang Swamp) **Brolga** Swamp.

**Malangu ngaldurrong yana dheikup murrupuk dheik Dja.**  
Let's walk together in good spirit for good Country.

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# Wartaka Wanyarra Dum

## Welcome to the Frog Ponds

**Wartaka** means to come with purpose. We welcome you to share this space with regard to its purpose. This landscape has been restored through the **Wanyarra Dream** project which means Good Waterhole. Fifteen thousand food and fibre plants have been embedded in shallow ponds. This slows down water flow, helping to heal sick water by trapping sediment.

**Wanyarra Dum** means Frog Waterhole or Frog Ponds. Frogs are a key indicator species that the water is healthy. This place has been restored to a more natural environment for all to enjoy, but primarily for native water animals. Please keep your dog on a lead and out of the water. Thank you.

Welcomes with the White Feather of the Cuckoo - Symbolic of Djaara offering safe passage after Welcome ceremony

**Balak galik manya, djimbayang wukjarra bundjij, dheskunya djowima murrunayang**  
People meeting with many hands teaching/learning cultural knowledge, to learn and to share our living Country.

### Djandak Wii

#### Cultural Fire Practice

**Djandak Wii** is different from mainstream fire practices. It's about connecting with Country, enabling the learning and teaching of what is in the environment. Observing indicators and enabling people to burn at the right time with the right fire. The cultural practice of **djandak wii** is about healing Country and healing people, it is part of our identity, knowing our Country's biodiversity, how it functions and how to apply **djandak wii**. Right plant, right place, right fire. **Djaara** are practicing **djandak wii** today all over **Dja Wurrung Country**. Culturally important plants on this site rely on cool burns so they can regenerate.

### Culture in the landscape

This is **Djaara Djandak** (Dja Wurrung Country). The original people of this area are known as **Djaara** or the **Dja Wurrung** people.

**Dja Wurrung Country** is a cultural landscape that is more than just tangible objects; Imprinted in it are the dreaming stories, Lore/Law, totemic relationships, songs, ceremonies and ancestral spirits, which give it life. Our belief systems embrace Country knowing that all things are connected and have a **murrup** (spirit) water, birds, plants, animals, rocks and mountains.

### Ngulumbarra Yapenya

#### Dancing/Singing Together

**Wanyarra Dum** is regenerating ecologically and culturally. The dance/gathering circle is created as a culturally safe space for **Djaara** (people) to visit in town and practice our culture. Having song and ceremony enriches the cultural and spiritual health of the Country and all People.

### Waa and Wii

#### Raven and the Fire

**Waa** (the Raven) has many dreaming stories. This one comes from a time when **Waa** was white. Circling over the plains one day, **Waa** had spotted smoke rising up from Country and went to investigate. As he got closer he saw **Gagajarr Gurk** (The Seven Sisters) from the **boorangi** (night sky) who were first carriers of this fire, which came from their **garra** (yam stick). **Waa** was drawn to that **wii** (fire) and tricked the sisters away from it to have a closer inspection. Getting close enough to feel the heat, **Waa** pulled a flaming stick and flew off, the flames burning the white feathers black. Quickly dropping the flaming stick and starting another fire. **Waa** had shown the way of **djandak wii**, and mosaic burning to **Djaara**.

**Wanyarra Dum**  
Bec Phillips, Djaara Woman

**Waa Dreaming**  
Bec Phillips, Djaara Woman

There is a family of Ravens who nest here and watch over **Wanyarra Dum**

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# Murrin Bap Dja

## Living Mother Country

The **gatjin** (waters) of this land are regarded as the lifeblood of our **Murrin Bap Dja** our (Living Mother Country); the rivers are the veins that move it from place to place in the holistic organism that functioned in symbiosis. **Gatjin** is life, and all life depended on the free flow of water throughout **Djandak** (Country).

**Djandak** nourishes us and therefore we must care for it knowing that what we put in the river, we put into ourselves.

**Gatjin** holds memory, songs and stories. **Gatjin** has **murrup** (spirit), the life-force in the energy of all things. It must be respected as an entity in itself that knows where it needs to go.

### Gatjin

#### Water

Originally, the great **gatjin** (waters) of **Djaara Djandak** (Dja Wurrung Country) flowed with seasonal rain events that pumped **gatjin** to the flood plains and grasslands and forests. Connecting lakes, creeks and rivers and swamps. The periodic wetting and drying phases made for healthy and abundantly diverse swamps. Rivers and waterways would pool and pond in their paths, creating refuges for aquatic creatures. In dry times, this was known as **Yaram Yaram** chain of ponds.

"We would like to acknowledge our **Marti Guli** all of our **Djaara** Ancestors, and pay our respect to them and their survival. In particular, we acknowledge **Emma Guer** and her birth place being at **Yaram Yaram** (the Bendigo Creek). Her descendants have played an integral role in the restoration of this site."

### Witji Weaving Plants

**Djaara** people have been weaving for countless generations with sedges and rushes from healthy water ways. Using dilly bags and baskets to carry their **djakitj** (food). Using nets to catch fish and ducks according to the Six Seasons of **Dja Wurrung Country**. In order to carry on this tradition, **Djaara** people are healing water and planting food and fibre plants for cultural use and for future generations.

### Culturally Significant Plants

Native food plants are important for bringing life back to **Djandak** (Country) and there are many that are culturally significant to **Djaara**. They are harvested and cooked and prepared and are now known to be highly nutritious and some even having superfood status. It's important for any living culture to be able to eat their traditional foods.

### Bunjil's Lore/Law

**Bunjil's** Lore bestowed to **Djaara** in the time of Creation, outlined that in order to live with all other creations in balance, you must only take what you need. This is something that **Djaara** wish to see continued, as our Lore/Law never ceased to exist even with the introduction of new laws.

**Bunjil** watching down through the eyes of the Wedge-tailed Eagle

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