

OCTOBER 2023

Galkangu – Bendigo GovHub



Galkangu - Bendigo GovHub. Copyright© 2021 Murrupuk Art by Natasha Carter. This artwork is reproduced with permission.

Celebrating Galkangu's co-design collaboration process between DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and the Victorian Government

The partnership between the Victorian Government and DJAARA has seen the inclusion of meaningful Dja Dja Wurrung design elements and language in the architecture, landscaping and spaces within Galkangu - Bendigo's new GovHub building.



Galkangu

[pron: gull-kang-gooh] is a Dja Dja Wurrung word, meaning "build together, we make together, make things happen together, more connected to Country."

What is Galkangu?

Galkangu was delivered by Regional Development Victoria, Development Victoria, builders Icon Fairbrother and DJARRA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation). Opened in mid-2023, Galkangu now centralises the delivery of a range of government services creating a one-stop-shop for customers in the heart of Bendigo. Up to 1000 employees from the City of Greater Bendigo and various Victorian Government Departments are accommodated in this state-of-the-art office building, creating a stronger and more cooperative public sector presence in central Bendigo.

We are proud of Galkangu's significant design and sustainability features including its large mass timber frame, 6-star Green Star target (achieved already for Design) and the embedment of Dja Dja Wurrung design elements. These features affirm Dja Dja Wurrung's rights as Traditional Owners and their responsibilities for the care and governance of Country and society.

The co-design process and key features

DJANDAK, a Dja Dja Wurrung enterprise, formed a Traditional Owner Working Group (Wartaka) of Elders and knowledge holders who identified several cultural priorities for Galkangu, which combined the aspirations of respect, recognition, reconciliation and self-determination.

The Wartaka prepared a brief which included the vision and story for the building. DJANDAK members also provided advice to Development Victoria regarding the selection process of the builder. With all this in place, the co-design process could be realised. This was made up of several workshops and studio sessions between the Dja Dja Wurrung team (DJAARA, DJANDAK and DUMAWUL), Development Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, the architects and landscape designer (Lyons Architecture and GLAS Landscape Architects) and the builder Icon Fairbrother.

The co-design process incorporated key design elements into the fabric of Galkangu through its architecture, interior design, landscaping and artworks.

For more information:

Visit development.vic.gov.au/projects/bendigo-govhub



The key Dja Dja Wurrung design elements

Artworks and design features included throughout Galkangu are rich in symbolism, messaging and narrative. They include:

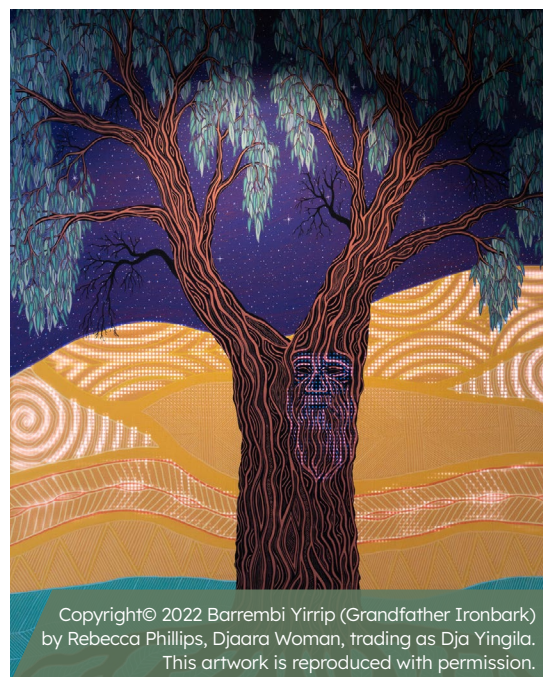
- **Architecture:** A large mass timber frame and a 6-Star Green Star target reflect Dja Dja Wurrung's values of Caring for Country.
- **Dja Dja Wurrung language:** featured throughout - the building's name itself, on the timber columns in the public customer service area and the naming of meeting rooms and other spaces, carrying thousands of years of traditions, customs and values.
- **Interior design:** granite and bluestone seamlines have been incorporated into the forecourt and foyer flooring representing a reflection on two perspectives of the influence of the mining of bluestone, quartz and gold on Country. This narrative, of truth-telling and the reconciliation journey ahead, is echoed in the wall, ceiling and flooring design of the three Showcase Meeting Rooms. The interior design of the whole building reflects the layers of the Box Iron-Bark forest that would have stood at the site pre-colonisation.
- **Artworks:** include the façade, forecourt sculpture with augmented reality experience, entranceway paintings with light and sound installation, and a meeting room table.
- **Landscape design:** A diverse native and predominately indigenous planting palette, as well as granite features in the internal courtyards with a water feature and a circular gathering place. Edible, medicinal, aromatic, fruiting and flowering plants are all included, symbolising the importance of keeping Country healthy.
- **Multimedia:** an Application (App) called 'Galkangu - building with Djaara' has been developed to explain the design features in detail. It includes a language learning game with pronunciations, artist interviews and an augmented reality experience. The App will be released for download in late 2023.

Galkangu artwork in focus

Entrance doorway artworks by Rebecca Phillips

These two paintings tell the story of Ancestor Trees, Marti Gulli Galki. Galki balag, the tree people dreaming reflects the beliefs of ancestry, connection to Country and relationships to each other and the trees as evidenced in Dja Dja Wurrung language and stories. In the mother tongue, 'Galki', the trees, also means bones - they are the bones or structure of Country. The branches are named 'darrack' which is the same word used for arms. The bark of the tree is named 'mitj' also meaning the skin of human bodies.

This artwork includes a soundscape and lighting installation.



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Façade artwork by Natasha Carter

The three-story-high frit patterned glass façade artwork reinforces the relationship between people and Country, the seasons and layers of Country as well as the strength of Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung people) as custodians and Traditional Owners of Djandak (Country).

“Artworks - Giramal and Buri-Gutang Djaa. Giramal means shield. The shield design and the diamond motif represent honour, protection and identity. Buri-Gutang Djaa means journey or travel across Country” explains Dja Dja Wurrung, Yorta Yorta and Jaru artist Natasha Carter.

Forecourt Sculpture by Rebecca Phillips

The sculpture at the entrance of the building takes the form of physical statues of Elders coming together with purpose, sitting in a circle – representing respectful and active governance. It is named Ngurare Beng Marna meaning Important, Big Meeting.

The four Elders sit with Nyernang, Wurrekang, Dhelkup Nyernila (listening, talking and good deep listening) each contributing their skill mastery, totemic lore and kinship responsibilities to the conversation of tribal governance and the roles in season and ceremony of Country. They are sharing with the other Elders, what comes from their murrup (spirit).

This artwork includes an Augmented Reality experience with a soundscape, as part of the App.

Feature Meeting room table artwork by Troy Firebrace

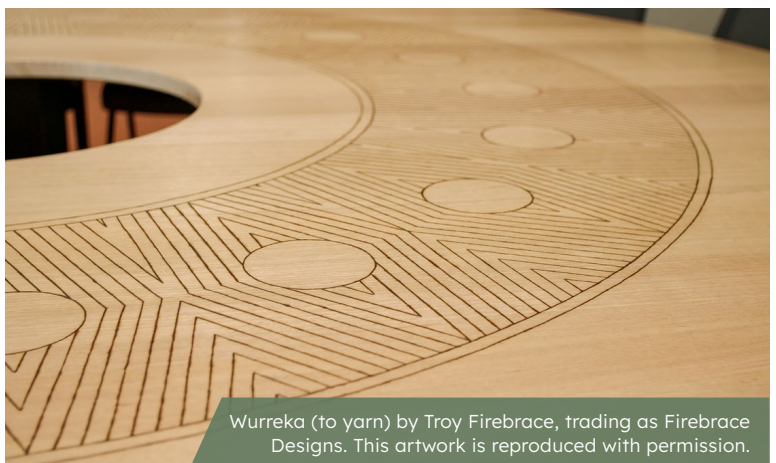
Named Wurreka (to yarn), the 18 Ancestors of Dja Dja Wurrung Country today are represented as 18 circles that surround the centre of the table located in the Marti Biyal (Ancestral Redgum) Meeting Room. The spirits of the Ancestors help guide the decisions that influence our surroundings and the place that we call home. The wood burning of the patterned line-work represents an interwoven connection, an unheard whisper that can influence right over wrong.



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Copyright© 2022 Ngurare Beng Marna (Important, Big Meeting) by Rebecca Phillips, Djaara Woman, trading as Dja Yingila. This artwork is reproduced with permission.



Wurreka (to yarn) by Troy Firebrace, trading as Firebrace Designs. This artwork is reproduced with permission.

What I believe we have achieved here, if there is this one iconic thing, is to embed a true spirit into a building, and just as much as people have spirit and plants and animals and locations have spirit, we think that we've achieved that with Galkangu, it has murrup, it has spirit.

- Rodney Carter, CEO DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)



A landscaped internal courtyard at Galkangu

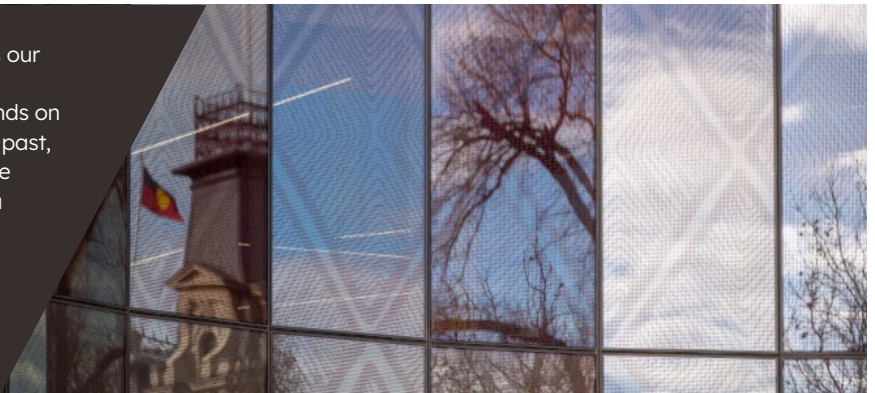


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Meeting rooms identified by Dja Dja Wurrung language

Development Victoria acknowledges and extends our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of the land that Galkangu stands on today. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and future 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.



For more information:

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