

## Wanyarram Dhelk

# Bendigo Creek Restoration Project

Bendigo, Victoria

### Key Messages

- Collaborating with multiple stakeholders provides an opportunity to rejuvenate community connection to waterways and emphasise the strong relationship between the creek and local Aboriginal communities.
- Creek restoration will improve public amenity and enhance the ecological value of the waterway.
- Improving waterway health is economically and culturally important, and provides substantial community health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Through Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises, the Wanyarram Dhelk project will provide opportunities for ongoing jobs and training.

### Project overview

The Wanyarram Dhelk project, meaning “good waterhole” in the local Aboriginal language, is a collaborative project between Traditional Owners from the Dja Dja Wurrung community and North Central Catchment Management Authority.

The Bendigo Creek Streamside Reserve, although highly modified, is a valuable linear reserve providing significant habitat, recreational and aesthetic value to a rapidly developing community. Bendigo Creek also serves as an important biodiversity link, with many of its tributaries connected to the Wellsford State Forest and Greater Bendigo National Park.

The project seeks to implement aspirational goals outlined in the Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan by establishing a mentoring and work experience program with key government partners for high school aged Dja Dja Wurrung and other Aboriginal students.

Restoration works along Bendigo Creek will help to provide an important habitat corridor for the movement of fauna through the agricultural and residential landscape to Coliban Water's Bendigo Water Reclamation Plant, where endangered and vulnerable bird species and the vulnerable Growling Grass Frog have been reported.

### Organisations

This is a joint project between Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises and North Central Catchment Management Authority, with contributions from The City of Greater Bendigo, Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Coliban Water. Funding was also provided by the Victorian Government through the Aboriginal Water Unit and Healthy Waterways programs.

### Objectives

This project aims to improve the health of Bendigo Creek and its tributaries, and improve community connection to the waterway. It is also capacity-building, giving Traditional Owners the opportunity to work back on Country.

*“The project not only had environmental aims but was also capacity-building, giving Traditional Owners the opportunity to work back on Country.”*

### Outcomes

#### Environment

Weed control, restoring riparian vegetation and establishing frog ponds have been undertaken by Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises and North Central Catchment Management Authority to improve the health of Bendigo Creek and its tributaries.

The project has increased the cultural values of the project sites by reintroducing culturally significant food and fibre plants back into Country

The project is working in collaboration with its partners to implement and promote cultural practices, such as including burning into the pre and post management of the project sites

The implementation of frog ponds will trap sediment before it enters the Bendigo creek ensuring the longer term health of the waterways, Dja Dja Wurrung people and Country.

#### Community

A workshop with Traditional Owners was held for Dja Dja Wurrung people to view restoration works and to identify their priorities for the creek.

The project includes a pathways program with Eaglehawk Secondary College and the Bendigo Senior Secondary College, which aims to support Aboriginal students seeking higher education opportunities and employment in their chosen field.

### Lessons Learnt

To achieve successful results, it is important to engage early with all relevant stakeholders and maintain regular communication

### Contact

**Shane Anstee** | Project Officer, Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises | P: (03) 5444 2888  
environment@djadjawurrung.com.au | <http://www.djadjawurrung.com.au>

**Nick Layne** | Project Manager, North Central Catchment Management Authority | P:(03) 5448 7124  
<http://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/>



Right: Lisa Neville with Maree Edwards, Dja Dja Wurrung artist Ron Kerr and Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation Chairman Trent Nelson.

### Acknowledgements