



Yoorrook Justice Commission

Submission on Economic Prosperity

Introduction

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (trading as DJAARA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission. This submission has been prepared by the Dhelkunya Dja Policy team, with input from, and building on the recent submission of the Dja Dja Wurrekatjalangu team on Land Injustice.

DJAARA is a representative body for Dja Dja Wurrung People (**Djaara**). In 2008 DJAARA gained Registered Aboriginal Party status, recognising **Djaara** as experts in relation to their Cultural Heritage and role in its protection.

After 15 years of intensive negotiations, DJAARA and the Victorian Government signed the Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) on 28 March 2013. The RSA recognises **Djaara** as Traditional Owners of **Djandak** (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). It is a means by which Djaara tradition and the unique relationship of **Djaara** to **Djandak** are recognised, strengthened, protected, and promoted, for the benefit of all Victorians, now and into the future. The RSA binds the State of Victoria and **Djaara** "to a meaningful partnership founded on mutual respect." Among other things, it recognises the rights of **Djaara** to maintain our spiritual, material and economic relationship with the **Djandak** and its resources. The RSA is a contract and is enforceable subject to law, as set out in the *Traditional Owner Settlement Act (Vic) 2010*.

Dhelkunya Dja 2014-2034, the Healing Country plan, is the central guiding document for DJAARA. It reflects the values, voice and vision of **Dja Dja Wurrung** people. **Djaara's** vision for Country recognises the central importance of economic empowerment to self-determination and community wellbeing:

The health and wellbeing of our people is strong, and underpinned by our living culture.

Our lands and waters are in good condition and actively managed to protect our values and to promote the laws, culture and rights of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

As this Country's First People we are politically empowered with an established place in society and capable of managing our own affairs from a strong and diverse economic base.

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The goals of Dhelkunya Dja also recognise the importance of economic empowerment. Goal 1 focuses on **Djaara**: *Every Dja Dja Wurrung person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle.* A key objective under this Goal is to have more **Djaara** People working on Country and in stable employment.

Goal 8 focusses on Traditional Owner Economy: *We have a strong and diverse economic base to provide for our health and wellbeing, and strengthen our living culture.* A key objective under this Goal is to 'Grow our asset base and use it wisely and sustainably to generate economic benefit for Dja Dja Wurrung People.'

Dhelkunya Dja also sets out guiding principles that inform the way **Djaara** and the Dja Dja Wurrung Group engage with others who share **Djandak**. They provide a foundation for partnerships with government and non-government agencies and groups. The principles include that:

- We will exercise our right to freely pursue Dja Dja Wurrung economic and social development, the benefits of which will be shared equitably amongst Dja Dja Wurrung People, other local Aboriginal people and the wider regional community.
- Infrastructure and enterprise development will be designed to minimise harmful impacts on our Country

To further build a self-determined future and achieve Goal 8, DJAARA has created three Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises.

Long-standing Enterprise DJANDAK has contributed to the foundations of the Traditional Owner economy through State and Local government projects. DJANDAK develops business opportunities that support capacity building, economic development and employment of **Djaara** and the wider Aboriginal community. It has been integral to realising **Djaara** aspirations to improve community well-being through economic opportunity and independence.

Through a Traditional way of business, that is grounded in **Djaa Walatjalang** (love of place), DJANDAK delivers services focused on (but not limited to) Natural Resource Management, Landscaping and Cultural Services. DJANDAK works closely with land managers and owners, applying **Djaara** knowledge to Natural Resource Management to improve sustainable environmental and cultural outcomes.

Through **Djaara**-led design landscape consultancy, DJANDAK uses shapes, textures, colours, and materials that resonate with our culture to create a contemporary cultural footprint on Country.

DJAARA and DJANDAK have established a tremendous foundation over 10 years through a tireless effort to give voice to the rights of **Djaara** People through the RSA and various government policy statements. This is now creating opportunities at an ever-increasing rate. There is increasing appetite for **Djaara**-led design and support for initiatives and leadership.

In the last 18 months the Dja Dja Wurrung Group have launched two new Enterprises: DUMAWUL and DJAKITJ.

DUMAWUL is an enterprise focusing on cultural tourism and cultural education and creative arts. **Dumawul** in Dja Dja Wurrung **djali** (language) means 'thank you between two people, the giver and receiver of Culture, in good murrup (good spirit).' DUMAWUL is building **Djaara**-led businesses to develop sustainable incomes that aligned to their specific goals and needs. This is also applied to Cultural tourism, Cultural competency training for businesses and the visual and performing arts. The valuable contribution of **Djaara** artists makes a difference to society, they educate and change minds. It is important to provide the continuation of **Djaara** culture through modern day practices. In 2024 DUMAWUL celebrated a significant milestone, with the official opening of a Creative Arts and Cultural Tourism Hub in Hargreaves Mall, in the centre of Bendigo.



In May 2023, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group officially launched food and fibre enterprise, DJAKITJ, at a new property near Bendigo. This was a significant milestone for Djaara People, and the Corporation. Since the signing of the RSA, it marked the first time that the Dja Dja Wurrung Group have invested our own funds - \$1.6 million - to buy **Djandak** back to set up this exciting business.

DJAKITJ which means 'dining room' in **djali**, is developing several projects around native Australian ingredients – including possibly the largest yabby farm in the southern hemisphere. The scale of the farm will have more than 50 yabby ponds, a brood stock and hatchery facility as well as research and development areas for both aquaculture and native plants and bush foods.

DJAARA worked with the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) who supported the vision of self-determination by providing more than \$3.5 million in funding for capital costs to establish the yabby farm and is grateful for their support.

DJAKITJ is particularly important to Djaara and has been a long-held dream., It is all about **dhelkunya beng** – nourishing the body. DJAKITJ are also working on other projects – growing knowledge and appetite for **buwatj** (Kangaroo Grass) and **murna** (yam daisy).

Through the Federal Government's Smart Farming Partnerships program the Group have led a research project into the viability of growing Kangaroo Grass in an agricultural cereal context. Through the **Djandak Dja Kunditja** (Country Healing its Home") project, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group are using Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western science to select the best-yielding varieties for varying climates and growing conditions.

Through sustained focus on **Djaara** Values, DJANDAK, DUMAWUL and DJAKITJ provide high quality services and unique leadership on Country. They are significant entities that advance economic, cultural, social and wellbeing objectives for DJAARA and **Djaara** members. The work the Dja Dja Wurrung Group do today is designed to provide the means for the next generation to prosper and strengthen **Djaara** Culture and People.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Group is currently developing an Economic Development Strategy through engagement with members, that will set out the next steps on this journey.

Responses to specific questions

Theme 1- Historic and current barriers

1. How did colonisation disrupt First Peoples' economies and prosperity? What are the ongoing effects of this upon First Peoples in Victoria?

The Recognition Statement that forms part of the RSA between DJAARA and the State of Victoria recognises that "the dispossession of the Dja Dja Wurrung People and their ancestors from their traditional country prevented Dja Dja Wurrung People from maintaining well-being and from generating and passing down wealth from that country across the generations."

The Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan further highlights that "we are not starting from a level playing field. Historical dispossession has left us with dispersed communities and a lack of community cohesion. Longstanding inequity in law, policy and governance has left Aboriginal people at a disadvantage in health, housing, employment and many of our other fundamental needs."

The work of the Enterprises, as outlined in the introduction, aims to address this, and there have been many great achievements.



But a range of barriers remain. The Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan highlights systemic barriers to achieving Goal 8 ‘such as weak commercial rights, unclear policy and legal frameworks, lack of cultural recognition, and over allocation of natural resources create difficulties in developing natural resource-based enterprises.’”

The submission of the Dja Dja Wurrekatjalangu team on land injustice, and testimony given on Country in connection with that inquiry, highlighted a range of other barriers to economic empowerment, and opportunities to address these.

The evidence heard by the Commission from Ministers of Government around Land, Waters and Skies clearly highlighted how the State Government has failed to provide any share of the enormous profits from grazing, forestry and mineral extraction to Traditional Owners whose Country is impacted, to level this playing field.

A further major barrier is access to affordable housing on **Djandak**, including for the majority of Djaara who do not currently live on **Djandak** due to dispossession and displacement.

As a result, DJAARA is implementing a housing strategy designed to:

- improve the availability of affordable, decent housing on Country for **Djaara**;
- provide the opportunity for members to return to Country, secure housing near employment opportunities; and
- allow those who do live on **Djandak** in inadequate accommodation to move into safe and secure accommodation.

DJAARA need more support from all levels of Government and from partners to implement this strategy, which will create more opportunities for **Djaara** to be employed by the Dja Dja Wurrung Group, and take up other opportunities on Djandak that align with their passions.

Initiatives that seek to improve local employment on Djandak, such as the Victorian Energy Jobs Program (VEJP) and employment targets, need to focus on housing for Djaara. Based on an initial response to DJAARA’s preliminary feedback for the VEJP, housing barriers are seen as beyond the scope of the Strategy, which would make this a missed opportunity to address intergenerational economic inequity.

The renewable energy transition, more broadly, presents an opportunity to meaningfully address, or perpetuate, intergenerational inequity. The Western Renewables Link (WRL) and Victoria New South Wales Interconnector-West (VNI-West) transmission line projects have been projected to generate \$1.9 billion in net market benefits and will likely result in a high number of wind, solar and battery projects on **Djandak** that will generate even more profits, and further impacts to Country.

Under the current arrangements, most such benefits will go to already wealthy companies and their shareholders, including many international shareholders, while the impacts to **Djandak** will be felt by **Djaara**.

There has been a significant focus, by transmission line planners and the State Government, on compensation for ‘private landowners’ who will host transmission line infrastructure, and benefits for neighbouring communities.

In thinking about benefit sharing, compensation, and economic justice, there is a need to acknowledge that all such infrastructure will be hosted on Aboriginal land, including **Djandak**. DJAARA is aware that the Minister responsible for renewable energy spoke to Yoorook Commissioners about plans the Government has in train to recognise this under the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework. While DJAARA have had preliminary discussions with VicGrid about Traditional Owner benefits, there has not yet been an opportunity to provide formal input, or to see the detail of what is being proposed.



So we cannot yet evaluate the adequacy of the approach, or how it will empower Traditional Owners to self-determine the application of any outcomes for the community.

Beyond compensation and benefit sharing, DJAARA have been highlighting the need for a focus on supporting ownership and shared equity in renewable energy projects and specific government incentives for proponents to explore joint ownership and shared equity as has been done in Canada.

There is also the need for a dedicated focus on creating opportunities for Traditional Owner enterprises through procurement, which is something the Government has expressed a commitment to as part of the Renewable Energy transition and which DJAARA are contributing to in good faith.

2. How should success be measured when it comes to economic justice for First Peoples?

For DJAARA, success is measured by the achievement of the **Dhelkunya Dja** Country Plan goals. DJAARA's primary goal, is that every **Dja Dja Wurrung** person is happy, healthy and secure in their identity, livelihood and lifestyle. A key objective in achieving this goal is to have more **Djaara** on Country and in stable employment. DJAARA struggles to realise this goal this while **Djaara** are spread out, living in unsuitable housing, and disconnected from each other and from Country, without the means to overcome this.

In line with goal 8 of Dhelkunya Dja, cultural sustainability is a measure of success for DJAARA. This can include measures such as the integration of traditional knowledge and practices in economic ventures, the protection of sacred sites and cultural heritage, and the promotion of **djali** (Dja Dja Wurrung Language) and art.

3. What are the current systemic barriers to First Peoples in Victoria achieving economic equity with non-Indigenous people

As raised in DJAARA's submission to Yoorrook on land injustice, dated 18 March 2024, a substantial barrier to land justice and economic prosperity for Traditional Owners is the exclusion of our First People's rights to the minerals of their traditional lands. Through various Acts of Parliament,¹ the Crown reserves itself the right to all minerals and petroleum across the state. Through such legislation, the State permits the use of these resources through an authorisation process in return for the payment of royalties.

As Minister D'Ambrosio acknowledged on 22 April 2024, none of these royalties flow back directly to the Traditional Owners of these resources to be used in a self-determined way, and very few make their way back at all. Proper recognition of legitimate rights to natural resources would empower Traditional Owners to achieve economic prosperity.

Equity can be achieved by

- reserving rights to minerals and petroleum in favour of Traditional Owners rather than the Crown itself; or
- providing royalties from resource development to Traditional Owners directly; or
- requiring resource developers to enter agreements with Traditional Owners on terms consistent with national and international standards, where those developers fail to do so voluntarily.

As also outlined in DJAARA's submission around land injustice, the State Government needs to adequately respond, in its approach to compensation under the Land Use Activity Agreement, to the High Court of Australia's Timber Creek case.

¹ See: *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 (Vic)*, *Petroleum Act 1998 (Vic)*, *Land Act 1958 (Vic)*.



The State continues to rely on compensation formulae set out in the RSA, which produce compensation amounts well below those required by methodology of the High Court in Timber Creek. This has the effect of short-changing Djaara every day when their rights are harmed or extinguished as a result of activities on Country.

4. What are the consequences of systemic injustice faced by First Peoples in their participation in the Victorian economy?

The history of dispossession and displacement has seen many Djaara people no longer living on Djandak, resulting in a disconnect from culture, dance, art, ceremony and more.

As a result of colonisation, too many First Nations People are denied resources and opportunities. First Peoples face prejudicial views that further limit opportunities and affect wellbeing. First Nations People are more likely to be raised in low-income households that are not owned by the family and are less likely to benefit from generational wealth transfer.

Non-Indigenous people are more likely to have had access to wealth and opportunities to achieve this for generations. The effect is that those who have not had the benefit of being raised in prosperous environments, due to dispossession and marginalisation, are starting from a disadvantage and lack of intergenerational wealth.

Poverty and marginalisation, insecure housing, and lower access to educational opportunities are barriers to good physical and mental wellbeing.

The Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan 2014-34 and DJAARA's Strategies outline a holistic approach to addressing these consequences. Through building capacity and resources, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group is able to provide support and opportunities to level the playing field, but we need all levels of government to play their part and use the levers available to them.

Theme 2 - Current government and corporate strategies

8. How would you describe the quantum and sustainability of government funding programs and investment in First Peoples' enterprises, First Peoples women in business, First Peoples economic development, First Peoples employment and Traditional Owner corporations on-country economic initiatives?

First Peoples' enterprises are essential to provide opportunities for First Nations to gain meaningful employment in a culturally safe environment. For example, businesses such as DJAARA and the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises, are a means for First Nations People to connect with their culture, heritage, and Country, and can provide a sense of belonging, direction and purpose for young people.

Theme 4- Ending systemic economic injustice

13. What works and doesn't work when it comes to building strengths-based First Peoples' economic participation?

What proves effective is when Government/Industries demonstrate a genuine respect for Dhelkunya Dja goals and actively pursue avenues to involve DJAARA in economic opportunities and level the playing field. This can entail fostering a culture of inclusion and collaboration, wherein **Djaara** perspectives, knowledge and aspirations are valued and integrated into economic initiatives. Successful strength based economic participation would mean industries are embracing self-determination and cultural sustainability, whilst also cultivating meaningful partnerships with Traditional Owner groups.



What tends to be less successful is a lack of genuine engagement and meaningful collaboration with Traditional Owner groups. Failure to engage, or engaging in a superficial way, means inadvertently perpetuating disparity and marginalisation. Proactive commitments to mutually beneficial relationships, honouring the RSA and the aspirations of **Djaara** is a priority for DJAARA.

14. What will support building intergenerational wealth amongst First Peoples?

Supporting intergenerational wealth amongst **Djaara** requires addressing systemic barriers to wealth access, respecting and implementing DJAARA's housing strategy, and prioritising Djaara led and operated businesses as preferred suppliers. Securing access to sacred spaces, resources and knowledges can allow for **Djaara**-led businesses to educate the broader community on **Djaara** culture whilst building wealth in return.

15. How can Victoria grow the Aboriginal economy?

Victoria can significantly contribute to the growth of Aboriginal economy through:

Cultural Tourism – Leveraging Victoria's rich First Nations culture and heritage and supporting Traditional Owner groups to do so. Prioritise cultural tourism in place of existing tourist initiatives that glorify colonial values and excessive mining.

Procurement Policies – Implementing procurement policies that prioritise **Djaara** businesses as a supplier for government contracts and opportunities. This will create a steady stream of revenue and business growth.

Partnerships and Collaboration – Partners are respecting the RSA, and in turn, support the economic growth of DJAARA. Successful partnerships between DJAARA and Government/Industry will look like meaningful co-design and participation from the DJAARA membership.

Education and Training – Investing in education and training programs to equip **Djaara** youth with skills and qualifications needed to participate in the workforce, and potentially, pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

16. What needs to be done to improve the way the public and private sectors value, invest in and protect First Peoples' cultural knowledge, science and intellectual capital?

To enhance recognition and protection of DJAARA's knowledge, science and intellectual capital within the public and private sectors, proactive engagement is essential. DJAARA has been actively involved in both sectors to integrate our public strategies, which have gone through thorough engagement with DJAARA's membership.

To further improve, there needs to be increased acknowledgement and respect for DJAARA's strategies, using these as a driving force to their day-to-day business.

Mechanisms need to be put in place to protect **Djaara's** cultural and intellectual property rights, ensuring fair and equitable partnerships with external stakeholders.

Through these measures, a culture of mutual respect and collaboration can be fostered, leading to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes for all parties.

17. What sectors can/should be accelerated to generate wealth amongst First Peoples and grow the Aboriginal economy?



Opportunities exist across a wide range of sectors and many are being pursued by DJAARA and the Dja Dja Wurrung Enterprises, as outlined in the introduction to this submission. Two sectors of particular focus and importance for future enterprise development within DJAARA are Tourism and Agriculture.

Tourism

Through DJAARA centred design projects in a growing number of urban spaces; infrastructure projects in the 6 parks under Aboriginal Title; and other initiatives across **Djandak**, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group have developed a range of nodes for DUMAWUL's cultural tourism offerings; self-guided experiences, walks, trails & picnics that showcase **Djaara's** rich living culture, stories and knowledge. Through the leadership of Elders, action of members, the Corporation, and Enterprises, **Djandak** is transforming, or being **Djaara-fyd** (a term we use for doing things the **Dja Dja Wurrung** way).

There is significant potential for the State and Federal Governments to better market the growing range of **Djaara**-led cultural tourism experiences, both nationally and internationally, and to support the development of further services and enterprises.

This could include support to expand DJAARA's offering into hotels, motels, and culinary services. This would align strongly with the work of DJAKITJ, DJANDAK and DUMAWUL, and the UNESCO City of Gastronomy designation of the Bendigo region, in which the Dja Dja Wurrung Group have been closely involved.

With direct flights from Sydney to Bendigo, and close proximity to Melbourne (including good access by train), there is significant potential to attract many more local and international tourists who are seeking cultural experiences that showcase the rich and vibrant living culture of First Nations people. This would deliver economic benefits to DJAARA and the wider community.

Agriculture

As outlined in the introduction, the Dja Dja Wurrung Group have been leading the way with research into the viability of **buwatj** (Kangaroo Grass) as a native perennial seed crop that provides opportunities to heal Country and create a culturally informed modern agricultural sector.

The Dja Dja Wurrung Group has completed a research and development project with university partners that identified the likely commercial viability of **buwatj** as a resilient agricultural product, that supports ecosystem function, cultural practice, and economic empowerment.

Buwatj (*Themeda triandra*) is a lower water use perennial grass that was widespread prior to European invasion. It is found in temperate grasslands, a habitat now considered to be endangered or threatened. It benefits from **Djandak wi** (Cultural Fire) as a management tool to promote healthy growth and enrich the soil. The seeds are ground to create a healthy type of flour which can be used to make bread, damper, cakes and other foods.

Buwatj is a highly resilient grass, having survived through significant climate events, including ice ages. It is a very deep-rooted grass, taking moisture from a soil profile that most other plants don't access, so it doesn't hinder other species it may grow adjacent to. It survives well in wet conditions, and can be managed without the use of pesticides or nutrients. It is a culturally significant species that has been cultivated and cared for by **Djaara**, as farmers and gardeners of the environment, for millennia.

There is great potential for Government and industry to support the Dja Dja Wurrung Group to implement farming systems for **buwatj**, and possibly other traditional foods and fibres such as **murna**



(yam daisy), to be sold as commercial products. There is also great potential for partnerships between **Djaara** and farmers that would have wider benefits for ecosystem function and climate resilience. **Djaara**-led establishment of large-scale kangaroo grass crops on Djandak may also provide an opportunity, with Government and Industry support, for **Djaara** to purchase back areas of Djandak.

This would enable DJAARA to expand our work to heal Country beyond public land, and to regain access to the vast areas of **Djandak** that are now agricultural land, from which **Djaara** have been dispossessed and, too often, denied access since colonisation.

There is even potential for DJAARA to act as a 'single desk' (like the Australian Wheat Board) to maintain control of the product/seed with its supply and prices on **Djandak**.

In developing such commercial opportunities to heal Country a critical area of focus is the protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), to ensure that **Djaara** benefit economically from the application of Traditional Ecological knowledge.

The Victorian Traditional Owner Native Foods and Botanicals Strategy (TONFABS) provides a framework for the recognition Traditional Owners' cultural ownership of such species. It provides a pathway for Traditional Owners in Victoria to play a leading role in the native foods and botanicals industry. The State Government needs to resource and support the implementation of TONFABS and the related Cultural Protocol, to ensure that **Djaara** and other Traditional Owners benefit economically from the commercialisation of species such as **buwatj** and **murna** while safeguarding ICIP.

Other sectors

Nyauwi Mutjeka (To keep the sun), DJAARA's Renewable Energy Strategy, includes a goal to explore opportunities to collaborate with industry on **Djaara**-led renewable energy and battery storage projects. Early work has commenced to implement this goal, but stronger State and Federal policy incentives should be implemented to incentivise proponents and transmission planners to support Traditional Owner-led initiatives, joint ventures, shared-equity in projects and skill development.

DJAARA's Climate Change Strategy further outlines opportunities to partner with the business community to:

- find opportunities for **Djaara** businesses to lead climate services delivery in the region
- co-design climate jobs and training opportunities for **Djaara** & the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community

DJAARA are in the process of developing opportunities for business to invest in **Djaara** & the implementation of this Strategy.

The Economic Development Strategy (in development) may outline future opportunities in other sectors.

18. What sectors of existing government expenditure and the Victorian economy should be leveraged (and investment made) to increase First Peoples' economic participation and market share? What needs to be done to make this happen?

The State Government honouring existing obligations, including under the RSA, would be a good starting point. As outlined in DJAARA's submission on land injustice, the initial Schedule 16 of the RSA was also intended to create economic opportunities for **Djaara** through natural resource management (procurement), and to date has not been implemented effectively. This is now reflected in the Natural Resource Agreement, Schedule 6: Procurement Strategy for Natural Resource Management.



The RSA Procurement Strategy establishes an annual target for each State Agency to procure NRM from the Corporation's suppliers in the Agreement Area. The target is 10% of each State Agency's 'total spend' on procuring NRM in the Agreement Area each financial year. Stronger mechanisms to ensure accountability for this commitment are needed.

The RSA also includes a Local Government Engagement Strategy, under which, local governments are expected to 'establish a preferential contracting and procurement process under which councils agree to preferentially source goods and services from the Corporation or other DDW entities/businesses.' This is also a focus of the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021 – 2026.

This requires stronger implementation by local governments and follow up by the State Government, as there has been mixed efforts by local governments on **Djandak** (of which there are 12) to adopt such policies and procedures. Even where such policies are in place, accountability for implementation needs to be strengthened.

In terms of how State Government procurement policy can support Traditional Owner Enterprise more broadly, [the proceedings and thematic analysis of a seminar held in October 2022 on the role of an Indigenous Preferential Procurement Program](#) provides useful guidance.

The seminar was convened by the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporations, Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, and Dilin Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership at the University of Melbourne. It includes inform commentary by Aboriginal delegates, including Djaara representatives, on the limitations of the Victorian Social Procurement Framework, opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal procurement through the *Yuma Yirramboi* Strategy implementation; lessons from the Commonwealth Indigenous Preferential Procurement Program; and other ways to strengthen procurement policy and compliance to promote economic equity and self-determination. It is critical that this guidance is taken into account and acted on in promoting economic prosperity for Traditional Owners and First Nations people in Victoria.

21 May 2024