

# GOBATA WULEMBURRI DJA

## Climate Action Strategy 2026–2030

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation

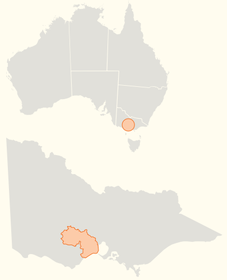
Wadawurrung
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation

# Acknowledgement of Country

We Acknowledge and pay deep respects to our Ancestors who held immense knowledge and cared for each other and Djа. We look to these stories and our Elders who continue to guide us as we celebrate our strength and Culture.

As we see changes to Djа we listen to great spirit Bundjil who told us to only take what we need without selfishness. We use this deep connection to Djа and Culture to walk together for future generations

Uncle Norm,
WTOAC Renewable Energy Advisor
Elder – Hector Norman Arthur Robinson Family Line



## About the artwork
### (Featuring on the front cover)

**Jenna Oldaker**
*Magpie Sunrise*

Parrwang the Magpie is significant in Wadawurrung Culture, as he gave us the very first dawn. When the sky once covered the Earth in darkness, it was Parrwang and the other magpies that fought hard to lift the sky up to split it open and show the beauty of the very first sunrise. Parrwang and the other magpies, were so overjoyed to see the light and feel the warmth of this beautiful sunrise, that they all broke out into song. This is why you will hear magpies even now sing a joyous song as they greet the sunrise each morning.

This is illustrated in the artwork by the beautiful sun rising high in the sky on Wadawurrung Country, as Parrwang and his magpie friend sing their joyful song from below. Bundjil the Eagle, our Spirit Creator, flies high above over Wadawurrung land, as we send thanks to him for continuing to watch over us since his creation. On the left are gumnuts, the woody fruits of the Eucalyptus trees, and above are the sunny yellow flowers of the Murnong (Yam Daisy) that once covered the lands of Wadawurrung people and were a staple part of their diet.

On the right side, is the symbol for meeting place, a place where we can all gather together to yarn, share stories and connect. Surrounding the meeting place symbols are the traditional 'ᑎ' shapes symbolising people – recognising the significance of family and community coming together.

People can be seen holding hands as another symbol of community and spirit, as we are reminded that we all need to come together to help care for our beautiful Djа (Country). The arrows are symbolic of continuity in the community - how we must continue to look after one another and our land, in order for the land and community to continue to provide and care for us. Our coastal Country, surf coast, yaluk (rivers) and wetlands are represented in the artwork by the bright blue colours moving through the centre.

To learn more about Jenna's work please visit: **www.murrupart.com.au**





Please note this document may contain images, names and references to deceased Indigenous Australians.

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# Definitions

## Wadawurrung Language and terms

### Wulemburri Dja

Although our Ancestors experienced climate change, it was not at the speed and scale of human-induced climate change like we are experiencing now. We did not have a phrase for climate change in Wadawurrung Language. Members of the Ngal Ngal La Committee yarned and agreed upon the Wadawurrung phrase wulemburri Dja to describe climate change. Wulemburri Dja means unhealthy Country. This is what we are seeing and experiencing because of the many impacts of climate change.

### Gobata Wulemburri Dja

This Strategy has been named Gobata Wulemburri Dja, meaning caring, or to care for, unhealthy Country. This is what we must all do if we are to slow down, stop and reverse climate change.



## Climate Change terms

| | |
|---|---|
| **Adaptation** | The process of adjusting ecological, social and economic systems, as well as the decisions of people, communities, businesses and governments, to cope with actual or expected climate impacts. It involves preparing for and responding to change in ways that reduce risks, avoid potential damage, and make the most of opportunities that arise in a changing climate. |
| **Blue carbon** | Carbon captured and stored by coastal ecosystems like mangroves, seagrasses, and saltmarshes. These ecosystems lock away carbon for a long time and also protect coasts, support marine life, and boost biodiversity. |
| **Carbon offsets** | The action or process of compensating for carbon (or greenhouse gas) emissions arising from industrial or other human activity, by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent additional reductions in carbon emissions. Examples include tree planting to sequester carbon, methane capture and use and renewable energy projects. |
| **Carbon emissions** | See Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions |
| **Climate change** | The wider set of long-term changes to the Earth's climate caused by global warming. It includes hotter days, stronger storms, shifting seasons, droughts, floods, rising seas, and impacts on ecosystems and communities. |
| **Climate safe services** | Culturally safe and responsive disaster prevention, response and recovery services like community education on local hazards and risks, emergency relief, evacuation, search and rescue, early warning systems and real-time local communications, insurance and legal support, volunteer management etc. |
| **Climate impacts** | The effects of climate change on people, places, and nature. Climate impacts include things like more frequent heatwaves, stronger storms, floods, bushfires, droughts, rising seas, loss of wildlife, and challenges for food, water, and health. |
| **Climate solutions** | The actions people, communities, businesses, and governments take to tackle climate change. Climate solutions include switching to renewable energy, protecting forests and oceans, improving energy efficiency, redesigning cities, and creating fair systems that help everyone adapt and thrive. |
| **Global warming** | The gradual heating of the Earth caused mainly by people burning coal, oil, and gas, cutting down forests, and other human activities. This extra heat warms the atmosphere and oceans, making the planet hotter over time. |
| **Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** | The release of gases, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere and cause global warming. These are often called carbon emissions and come mainly from burning fossil fuels, farming, industry, and land clearing. |
| **Green carbon** | Carbon stored in land-based ecosystems such as forests, grasslands, and soils. Trees and plants capture carbon dioxide as they grow, helping to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. |
| **Mitigation** | Action to limit climate change. Mitigation action either reduces emissions of greenhouse gases or removes those gases from the atmosphere. |
| **Net Zero** | Net zero is the internationally agreed goal for limiting define global warming fglobal warming. It requires rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions to near zero (typically a 90–95% cut), and then balancing any remaining emissions through credible, permanent carbon removals. Unlike carbon neutrality, which can rely more on offsets, net zero prioritises real reductions first. Beyond this, organisations can also choose to invest in projects with wider benefits—such as biodiversity protection or wetland restoration—that support both climate and ecological resilience. |
| **Resilience** | The ability of natural, social and physical systems or communities to withstand and recover from climate shocks and stresses, while adapting to change in ways that allow them not just to function, but to thrive into the future. |
| **Safe climate** | A climate that allows the natural environment, existing and future generations and communities to survive. The current climate conditions are not safe for a large range of species and increasingly unsafe for millions of people. |
| **Teal carbon** | Carbon captured and stored in freshwater wetlands like rivers, floodplains, and swamps. These ecosystems trap carbon in plants and soils, while also improving water quality, supporting wildlife, and reducing flood risks. |



# Introduction

**Since our stories began our people have relied on Dja (Country), yaluk (waterways) and murran (nature) to sustain and guide us.**

The lore laid down by our Karringalabil (Great Creator Being) Bundjil (Creator Spirit – Wedge Tailed Eagle) teaches us that everything has its place, and everything is connected. Our Ancestors understood this, and we continue to walk in their footsteps – nurturing, healing and protecting Dja for future generations.

But climate change is threatening Dja, our People, our Culture and our values.

Wulemburri Dja (unhealthy Country) is affecting everyone and everything. Heatwaves are more common, more intense and lasting longer. Sea levels are rising and our coast is eroding. Rainfall patterns are changing, causing more drought and more flooding. Our seasons are disrupted. Bushfires will continue to burn hotter, for longer and more often.

These impacts are damaging Dja, hurting our native dhurrungwil (animals) and our totemic species, eroding our living places and disrupting our Cultural practices—and they are harming our People, with our Wurring Wurring (Elders) most at risk.

We have to act.

We have to stop emitting the greenhouse gases that are causing wulemburri Dja – within our organisation and in our community.

We have to adapt the way we work, build, travel, live and play to our changing climate.

And we have to work together to strengthen our resilience when times get tough.

We can't do it all. Everyone has a role to play. We need to koling wada ngal (walk together).

This Gobata Wulemburri Dja - *Climate Action Strategy* outlines the role Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation can play, and where others need to step in. It builds on the vision and values of Wadawurrung's *Healthy Country Plan* - Paleert Tjaara Dja*: Let's Make Country Good Together 2020-2030* and connects with other important work like the *Wadawurrung* Wiyn *Cultural Fire Strategy Healing Country with Fire 2024-2034.*



Our People have lived through major changes in climate before. Our Cultural stories and songlines carry memory of these shifts – when warri (sea Country) and the coastline were once grassy plains and rivers, until a big flood came. When Bonan Yawang (Mount Buninyong) and Terrinalum (Mount Elephant) were formed by great eruptions after two warriors fought. These stories teach us how our Ancestors adapted through deep knowledge and connection with Dja.

Change is not new to us, it is something our People have navigated before. But today's change is different. The rate and scale of climate disruption is faster, and we are adapting while also living through the ongoing impacts of colonisation. Today, Wadawurrung Kinkinbil (Wadawurrung People) don't hold equal political or economic power, we don't own most of our land, and many of the traditional ways of adapting are harder to practise. But we continue to uphold our Cultural responsibilities and care for Dja, as our Ancestors did.

Wulemburri Dja brings lots of challenges – but it also brings opportunities for Wadawurrung Kinkinbil to lead and benefit from the transition to a cleaner, more climate-resilient future. This includes our traditional work of looking after Dja through Cultural burning and ecological management, which also helps reduce bushfire risk and protect native plants and animals.

It also includes new ways for us to take part in emerging and transitioning economies. We can lead or partner in renewable energy, circular economy and carbon sequestration projects. This can generate sustainable income sources while also healing Dja.

Wadawurrung knowledge and leadership are also vital. There are roles in climate governance, sharing Cultural knowledge, and supporting Community resilience. Making homes more energy efficient in Culturally safe ways is another opportunity. All these efforts build a stronger future – for Wadawurrung Kinkinbil, Culture and Dja.

Around the world, efforts are growing to reduce emissions, adapt to our changing climate and build resilience. Australia and Victoria have clear climate targets and plans - but First Peoples are too often left out. This Strategy is our way of stepping in and stepping up. It sets out our voice, our priorities and our leadership – our part of the global, national and local efforts for a safer climate future.

Together, we will continue to heal and protect Wadawurrung Dja, our Culture, our values and our Kinkinbil, for the benefit of all the generations to come.

> "As Wadawurrung People, our cultural responsibility is to Gobata Dja we are already responding and adapting just like our Elders, our ancestors before us, responding to changes and healing our Dja. We see, feel and know these changes, the harm in our Dja, to our kin, our plants and animals as our cultural guide and indicators and our relationship with them. Dja gives so much and sustains so many now. This is a shared opportunity for us all to koling wada ngal, to walk together in sharing knowledge to lessen our harm to Dja for our well-being, our survival which is intimately connected to the health of Dja for us today and our future generations. It is an opportunity for Wadawurrung to provide leadership based on generational wisdom, to contribute to climate justice, the transition to clean energy, to heal our waterways, our sea Country and Dja.
>
> Sarah Eccles, Wadawurrung Woman

# Key frameworks

**Gobata Wulemburri Djа – *Climate Action Strategy* does not stand alone. It is informed by, and contributes to climate science, First Nations justice, and self-determination. Three key frameworks shape our approach and strengthen our authority to lead climate action and gobata Djа (caring for Country).**

## The National Climate Risk Assessment

The 2025 National Climate Risk Assessment (NCRA) paints a stark picture of Australia's future without urgent action to mitigate and adapt to climate change. When releasing the report, Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen warned that climate risks are cascading (worsening over time), compounding (where one impact intensifies another), and concurrent (with multiple impacts striking communities simultaneously).

For First Peoples, the Assessment acknowledges what we already know: we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change which exacerbate existing health and social disparities. The Assessment highlights that displacement from Djа due to climate change can have severe health and wellbeing consequences, including increased homelessness and weakening of family and social connections, identity, and belonging. Climate risks to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are driven by reduced air quality, extreme heat, flooding, interrupted health services, and energy insecurity.

This is not abstract or distant — this is our reality. Climate change threatens our ability to practice Culture, gobata Djа, maintain our connections to Djа, and pass on our knowledge to future generations. We must gobata wulemburri Djа and ensure Wadawurrung are participating in, or leading solutions.

## The Victorian Treaty

The recently signed Treaty between the State of Victoria and First Peoples marks a historic shift in the relationship between government and Traditional Owners. For Wadawurrung Kinkinbil, Treaty creates unprecedented opportunities to exercise self-determination in climate action – to determine our own priorities, implement our own solutions, and secure the resources and authority necessary to protect Djа and Community.

Treaty enables us to:

- Access new funding mechanisms for climate enterprises and land management programs
- Enter into agreements and partnerships with greater authority and on more equal terms
- Build capacity to develop and deliver climate solutions
- Strengthen our voice in climate policy and decision-making at all levels of government
- Create economic opportunities through climate action that also strengthen cultural practice and connection to Djа

## The Yoorook Justice Commission: Truth-Telling as Foundation for Partnership

The Yoorook Justice Commission's findings provide essential context for understanding how historical dispossession and ongoing systemic barriers have created current climate vulnerability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Commission's work makes clear that effective climate partnerships require truth-telling about past harms and genuine commitment to changed relationships.



The Yoorook Commission's findings and recommendations influence how we approach climate partnerships and collaborations:

- Partners must understand the connection between historical injustice and current climate vulnerability. Dispossession from land created the conditions that now make climate change more devastating for our People.
- Cultural safety in climate services is non-negotiable. Emergency response, adaptation programs, and climate services must be designed and delivered in ways that respect and support Wadawurrung culture and governance.
- True partnership requires accountability. Partners must demonstrate genuine commitment through equitable resourcing, adherence to Cultural protocols, and respect for Wadawurrung authority and knowledge.
- Climate justice and First Nations justice are inseparable. Together we must address the historical and ongoing injustices that have weakened First Nations resilience.

These principles inform our partnership expectations outlined in our invitation to koling wadangal (walk together) later in this strategy and set a new path for climate action on Wadawurrung Djа.









# Wulemburri Dja (unhealthy Country) is impacting our Wadawurrung Values

When we developed our Healthy Country Plan – Paleert Tjaara Dja we built a collective dream and direction for the future of Wadawurrung Kinkinbil and Dja. Through Paleert Tjaara Dja we told the story of what is important to us, and what we need to do about it.

We also agreed on a set of values, important things that we want to look after that are the building blocks for healthy Wadawurrung Kinkinbil, Dja and Culture.

Each of these values face risks from our changing climate, as well as opportunities. The connection between wulemburri Dja and our values are not necessarily clear so we have outlined some of the important ways our values will be impacted.



# Value: Wadawurrung Kinkinbil (People) and Culture

**We, Wadawurrung Kinkinbil, traditionally live by lore to care for Dja. Our health and wellbeing, as people and as a Culture, are inseparable from the health of Dja.**

But Dja is being harmed by climate change, compounding the ongoing impacts of colonisation. This continues to undermine the foundations of our Culture, driven by extractive, profit-first values of western systems.

While we see these impacts, many in the broader community do not realise that climate change affects First Nations communities like ours in ways that are unique, far-reaching and severe.

This reality applies here on Wadawurrung Dja. If climate extremes wipe out our totem species or damage our living places, our connection to Dja, and our rights to it, are put at risk.

Extreme heat is another serious concern. Heatwaves are Australia's deadliest natural disaster and pose risks to our Wurring Wurring (Elders) and others, who carry our knowledge and Culture. Hot weather also limits the time we can spend safely on Dja with them, restricting Cultural practice and intergenerational learning.

Wulemburri Dja threatens not just our environment, but our identity, rights, and future as Wadawurrung Kinkinbil.





# Value: Wadawurrung Cultural sites and places

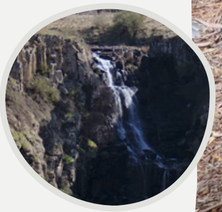
**Cultural sites and places on Dja face increased risk of damage or destruction due to the impacts of Wulemburri Dja, such as:**

- More intense bushfires
- Rising sea levels
- Heat or a lack of water killing scar, birthing, and other culturally significant trees
- Flooding and more intense rainfall changing the path of watercourses and impacting water holes
- Reduced water quality in our yaluk (rivers), creeks, and water holes

Our ability to access Cultural sites and places at different times of the year is also likely to be impacted by shifting weather patterns, more severe weather events, and bushfires. Further, our limited ability to participate in emergency response and management means we are often unable to act to protect our Cultural sites and places during those times.

Maintaining these sites and protecting them during periods of disaster is core to maintaining our connection to Dja, our wellness, and capacity to gobata wulemburri Dja.







# Value: Bush food, medicines and resources

**Our bush food, medicines, and Cultural resources face increased risk of damage or destruction due to climate-related impacts. Wulemburri Dja will affect our ability to find, care for, and sustainably harvest these important resources.**

Every plant, dhurrungwil (animal), and insect will face different challenges as the climate changes. Some will flourish in a changing climate, while others will struggle or disappear. Overall, warmer and drier conditions are expected to benefit weeds and pests more than our native species.

The patterns of what grows where, and when, are already shifting, and will continue to do so. Seasons are no longer as predictable as they once were, disrupting the reproductive cycles of our native plants. More intense bushfires and floods may wipe out species in some areas and prevent natural regrowth from occurring.

Pests and invasive species are becoming more common and will likely encroach into new areas, pushing out or damaging our native plants. Increased heat and reduced availability of ngubiyt (water) are already changing the makeup of our forests and increasing the spread and impact of pathogens, diseases, and pests. These conditions are likely to worsen, putting even more pressure on our precious resources.





# Value: Enterprise and employment

**Risks from Wulemburri Dja threaten our financial stability and ability to operate effectively. These risks are already being felt and will continue to grow if we don't act.**

## Financial Risks

We're seeing rising costs from extreme weather, like bushfires and floods, damaging assets and disrupting work. Insurance premiums are going up, and there are more gaps in coverage.

## Workforce Risks

Due to the nature of our work, our staff are more exposed to extreme heat, smoke, and disasters. For Wadawurrung kinkinbil, the stress is deeper because of our connection to Dja and the reminder of ongoing colonial impacts. Mental health pressures, and safety risks are increasing. Hot weather also affects productivity, especially for outdoor and manual work, and causes more absences.

## Transition Risks

Shifts in government policy, carbon pricing, and emissions targets are impacting how organisations work. Our Traditional Owners, staff, funders, and partners want to see us move towards zero-carbon ways of working.

## Supply Chain and Logistics Risks

Water scarcity is making it harder to care for Dja and is creating more competition with agriculture and other sectors. Climate change is also disrupting transport, access to materials, and overall continuity of operations.

## Circular economy opportunities

We can minimise our impact on Dja by being smarter about the materials we use and their end of life. We can play a leading role in reusing, recycling, remanufacturing, and purchasing purposefully.

## Employment on Dja

The need to care for Dja is more urgent than ever. In theory, this should create more jobs, but funding and resources are inconsistent. If done right, renewable energy and climate adaptation work could increase the demand for Wadawurrung-led services like Cultural Heritage management and provide meaningful, long-term employment on Dja.

> "All our Corporation is to do its best in regard to all things climate control, all the team leaders will have to work hand-in-hand for us to succeed in this endeavour.




# Value: warri and Coastal Dja (Sea Country)

**Projected sea level rise, increasing temperatures, reduced rainfall, and more frequent extreme natural disasters, like flooding, are expected to impact the ecology and dynamics of estuaries on Wadawurrung Dja.**

Existing threats, such as acidification, changes to natural estuary openings, and shifts in nutrient levels, may also worsen due to the indirect impacts of climate change.

Sea level rise will affect our coastline through increased inundation and erosion, along with direct impacts on coastal habitats and biodiversity. Important coastal ecosystems - like seagrass meadows and mangrove communities, which play a vital role in carbon sequestration – are at risk.

We have the largest stretch of registered Cultural sites in Australia along our coastline. Projected increases in storm surges will directly impact many of our coastal Cultural living places. This includes fish traps, ochre pits, and important meeting places that continue to be used today.

Sea life is also being impacted, limiting our ability to fish, dive, and harvest from the rocky and intertidal reefs as we always have. We have already noticed the loss of kelp forests and dramatic shifts in marine species. Scientists are observing these changes too, such as seaweed migrating south to cooler waters and a 15% southward shift in the range of coastal fisheries in temperate south-eastern Australia.

Damage to Dja and warri threatens the continuation of our Cultural practices. With so many others sharing our coastal Dja and warri, we continue to face challenges around recognition and equity in access and use of these vital resources.

To gobata wulemburri Dja, it is essential to sequester (store) carbon in the landscape. This includes blue carbon (carbon stored in coastal and marine ecosystems) and teal carbon (carbon stored in freshwater wetlands). We see opportunities for blue carbon sequestration in Port Phillip Bay with the Bellarine Landscape Zone, with Coastal Saltmarsh on both public and private land and seagrass communities in Swan Bay and the northern coastal areas of the peninsula.



# Value: Yaluk (rivers) and inland Dja

**Climate change will exacerbate existing threats to the health of all yaluk such as the Barwon, Moorabool, Leigh and Yarrowee (of the Barre Warre Yaluk).**

Impacts include reduced environmental flows and an increase of sediment loads from feeding tributaries. These challenges plus the spread of drought tolerant invasive weed species, such as Tall Wheatgrass (Thinopyrum ponticum), will impact on already stressed ecosystems, including wetlands, fragmented remnant vegetation and riparian habitats.

A warmer and drier climate, combined with an increase in groundwater demand, will cause many of the catchment's wetlands and swamps to dry. It will leave landscapes more exposed to wiyn (fires) that may burn hotter and faster than is typical. While wiyn has always been part of the natural cycles, playing an essential role in renewing growth, hotter, faster wiyn has potential to destroy landscapes instead of supporting natural lifecycles.

Important decisions were made on the banks of waterways by our Ancestors, a practice that continues to this day. The waterways and inland Dja are a Cultural tie between the past and the present. Damage to waterways and inland Dja threatens to erode Wadawurrung Cultural practices.

To gobata wulemburri Dja it will be necessary to sequester (store) carbon in the landscape, including through:

- Teal carbon: Carbon stored in freshwater ecosystems. Carbon sequestration opportunities include revegetation through shelterbelts, agroforestry, riparian protection and wildlife corridors.
- Green carbon: Managing native vegetation and revegetation to store carbon in the plants and the soil.





# Value: Native dhurrungwil (animals)

**Every plant, dhurrungwil (animal), and insect will face different challenges as the climate changes. Some species may flourish in a changed climate, while others struggle or die out.**

Unfortunately, warmer, drier conditions are expected to benefit pests over native species. We are already seeing changes in what grows where and when, and these changes impact dhurrungwil right across Wadawurrung Dja.

Wadawurrung Dja is home to many dhurrungwil – from monngarrk (echidna) to goim (kangaroo), kuwarrk (kookaburra) to djirnap (cockatoo). Platypus, native frogs, snakes, fish, and buniya (eels) live along our waterways. Over 200 bird species, including the endangered orange-bellied parrot and swift parrot, are found across the bays, wetlands, and reserves.

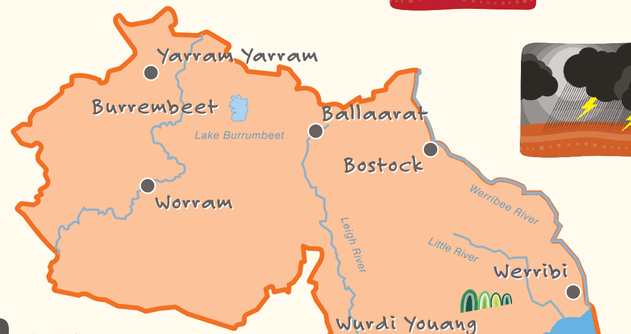
Climate change will impact these species in many ways:

- Habitat loss from wiyn (fire): As wiyn become more frequent and intense, mammal species like the spotted-tail quoll that rely on rarely burned habitat are likely to decline.
- Wetland disruption: Many waterbird species need wetlands to stay inundated long enough for young to mature. If water levels drop too soon, parents may abandon nests and young die.
- Vulnerable species: Species with limited dispersal abilities, small geographic ranges, or specialised habitat needs are particularly at risk.
- Food and breeding disruption: Changing patterns in flora will impact native animals like the orange-bellied parrot, affecting food availability for raising their young. When life-cycle timing shifts in one species, it creates flow-on effects for species that depend on it.
- Ocean acidification: Seawater is becoming more acidic at the fastest rate in 66 million years, reducing carbonate ions that marine animals like bryozoans, oysters, molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms need to build shells and skeletons. These species are likely to decline.

All dhurrungwil are important because they form a critical element of Wadawurrung bio-Cultural values. Together with plants and people, they make Dja healthy. The loss of native animals will result in wulemburri Dja.

**Bio-Cultural values** are the deep connections between people, nature, and Culture. For First Nations peoples, this means recognising that land, water, animals, plants, and people are all linked through physical, social, spiritual, Cultural and cosmological relationships that have been passed down through thousands of generations. It values not just the environment, but the stories, knowledge, and responsibilities that connect people to Country.

*Map 2:* A summary of climate impacts faced by Wadawurrung Dja. This information is from **Victoria's Climate Science Report 2024**, with specific reference to Barwon and Central Highlands Regional Climate Projections.






### Heatwaves

The number of very hot days (above 38.7 degrees) has increased from 4 to 22 per decade since 1986. If we do not reduce emissions we can expect 72 hot days per decade in Ballarat and 40 hot days per decade in Geelong from 2040 onwards.



### Rainfall

Average annual rainfall has decreaesd while extreme rainfall events are intensifying.



### Dry months

The number of dry months are set to increase by 40–60% by 2050. Cool season rainfall has already decreased by 10%



### Bushfire

The frequency, area burned and severity of bushfires has increased and will continue to increase.



### Erosion

Rapid erosion of coastal sites, including middens.



### Increased temperature

Our temperature has already increased by 1.2 degrees since 1910. This is expected to increase by 1-3 degrees by 2090 depending on how fast emissions are reduced.



### Sea-level rise

Between 2006-2018 the sea-level rose 3.7mm per year. By 2050 sea levels could rise between 0.17-0.20m. By 2090 sea-levels could rise between 0.35-0.64 m.

Map of Wadawurrung Dja according to Wadawurrung Registered Aboriginal Party boundaries. These map boundaries are subject to change.



# Climate change impacts on Wadawurrung Dja

**There are a number of ways climate change will impact Wadawurrung Dja. *Map 2* helps to highlight the different impacts that we are already experiencing and expected to face in the future.**

Many of these climate change impacts have been identified in Paleert Tjaara Dja as threats to Wadawurrung values. Some are direct threats, such as sea-level rise, drought and rising sea temperatures while others are more indirect such as weeds, rabbits and water extraction.

"Wadawurrung Country is diverse, and climate change reaches every part of it. Our Gobata Dja team is caring for Country by strengthening Cultural land management, restoring ecosystems, and leading climate action, grounded in Wadawurrung knowledge and responsibility.

Samuel Smits
Wadawurrung man and Healthy Country Manager



# Climate action around Australia and the world

**Climate change is a global problem, with very real local impacts. And we can't solve it on our own.**

There is an international agreement – called the Paris Agreement, with a shared goal to limit the global temperature increase to well below 2 degrees Celsius across our land and oceans, while still trying to limit the increase to 1.5 C.

Australia has a goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and Victoria has one of the most ambitious emissions reduction targets in the world. We beat our 2020 targets and are now working to cut Victoria's emissions by 75–80 per cent by 2035, with the goal being to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.

Other countries are also working on their targets. The seven large emitters (China, the United States of America, India, the European Union, Indonesia, Japan and Australia) along with the three countries leading the next stages of international agreements (the UAE, Azerbaijan and Brazil) are all together responsible for 63% of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2022. China currently accounts for a third of global emissions and has a goal of peaking their emissions before 2030 and reaching net zero by 2060. It was reported in early 2025 that China's emissions fell 1% in the past 12 months so they may have already peaked, which would be great news for the climate!

These global ambitions and commitments are not backed up by real policies, funding and action. To limit global warming to 1.5 degrees we need to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 42% by 2030 and 56% by 2035, compared to 2023. Current policies alone will achieve less than a 1% reduction by 2030 and 2035.

**We are not acting in line with the risk climate change poses to us all.**

But there is good work happening here in Australia and overseas.

**"Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au"**
**("I am the river, and the river is me")**

In 2017, following years of advocacy from the Whanganui Iwi, the Whanganui River in New Zealand was granted legal personhood – a global first for a river. The Act recognises the river as "an indivisible and living whole," encompassing all its physical and spiritual elements. There are now two legal guardians - one appointed by the Crown and one by the Whanganui Iwi – to act on behalf of the river's interests.

In Australia, the **Birrarung** (Yarra River) has been legally recognised as a "living entity" but has not been granted full legal personhood - meaning the river cannot initiate legal action on its own.

Many countries have followed in New Zealand's footsteps with Bangladesh giving all their rivers legal personhood as well as the Ganges in India and the Amazon ecosystem in Columbia.

Several countries are now operating without any coal-fired power stations – Belgium was the first, Portugal, Austria, Finland and Britain are all now free from burning coal, helping the climate and their communities.

In 2019, a group of 27 students from the University of the South Pacific came together to begin a campaign for climate justice. The Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change wanted to persuade the leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum to take the issue of climate change and human rights to the International Court of Justice. In March 2023, the campaign saw the UN General Assembly call on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to clarify states' legal obligations in relation to climate change and human rights.

After months of written and oral submissions the ICJ advised that States (including Australia) have binding legal obligations (under climate treaties, human rights law and customary international law) to reduce emissions, protect ecosystems and prevent climate harm.

This decision confirms that the failure to act to reduce emissions can consistute an internationally wrongful act – opening the door for legal accountability including reparations for vulnerable communities. It elevates climate justice as a matter of global justice and shared responsibility.

It also affirms that obligations to act on climate change are not discretionary - they are legal duties owed to current and future generations. The ruling is a game-changer, turning moral arguments into enforceable legal expectations.

We call on the renewable energy industry to respond to community concern about waste by integrating principles of a circular economy.

A wind farm typically runs for 20-30 years, while farms are now being designed to operate for a minimum of 30 years, we have a lot of wind farms in Australia that are coming up on the end of their operational life.

Between 85–94% of a wind turbine (by mass) is recyclable and can be recycled in Australia – mostly steel, aluminium, copper and cast iron. And some companies are seeing the opportunities in using that reclaimed material in new products.

Acciona have launched Turbine Made, Australia's first initiative to explore new ways to use raw materials recycled from old wind turbines. So far sneakers, surfboards and solar trackers have been crafted out of recycled wind turbines.

> "Let's set the tone by leading by example in the way we Care for Country. No more micro plastics. No more excess wastage of food at events or using of wasteful cutlery items like paper plates and cans. The way forward starts with us- Wadawurrung people. We know Country and know how to care for her.
>
> Kelly Ann Blake and son Will Blake, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners

# The future we want to see

**In the future Wadawurrung Kinkinbil and Djа are thriving. We are practising Culture, speaking language, and leading the way in caring for Djа.**

Our deep knowledge and connection to Dja is central to climate resilience across the region. Communities and partners walk alongside us, learning together. Our shared connection to Culture, Community and Djа shapes a more just, sustainable, and resilient future for everyone.

Wadawurrung Kinkinbil are leading efforts to manage and protect all known Cultural sites, which are well documented and safeguarded against the impacts of climate change. Even if places are transformed by climate impacts, Cultural knowledge and connection to them are maintained.

Wadawurrung Kinkinbil who want to work on Djа have meaningful jobs or run businesses in fields like climate adaptation, green, blue and teal carbon, renewable energy, and restoration. We are restoring landscapes, managing water and wildlife, and healing Djа – ensuring benefits flow to future generations and build economic independence.

Bio-Cultural landscapes are thriving across Djа – from volcanic plains grasslands to coastal heathlands. Cultural species such as murnong (yam daisy), buniya (eels), wallabies, and native plants are abundant again. Barre warre Yaluk (river system) flows freely, are clean enough to drink, and support healthy populations of aquatic life. Wadawurrung Kinkinbil have fair and long-lasting access to water on Djа, and are regularly consulted and respected in decisions about major water projects.

On the coast, sea and shoreline ecosystems have recovered. Moonah woodlands, kelp forests and seagrass meadows are healthy, supporting diverse marine life. Wadawurrung warri (ocean) species thrive in high-quality water, and shorebirds have safe nesting habitats. Thanks to strong global action, emissions have reduced, warming has slowed, and sea levels have stabilised.

Across Wadawurrung Djа, dhurrungwil (animals) are thriving. Threatened species like the Striped Legless Lizard and Growling Grass Frog are no longer at risk, and ecosystems are resilient. Wadawurrung Kinkinbil continue to care for their totemic species through Cultural leadership and practice, reinforcing intergenerational knowledge, healing Djа, and strengthening Community.

This is a future grounded in self-determination, where environmental, Cultural, and economic outcomes go together, and where caring for Djа is everyone's shared responsibility.

# Voices of the next generation

## Nandali Ahmat

*Protection and Patience*

I titled my artwork *Protection and Patience* to represent that we need to protect, care and heal Country, to give ways in times of so much take, that has created suffering for Country, through the need for power and resources in modern day lifestyle needs we have. I have incorporated the waterways, fire and harmony between people because healing Country is a collective interconnected need for all of us as a part of Djа. The role our Cultural knowledge can have alongside modern technological knowledge to see different less harmful ways of providing the resources we need to live and a different relationship to Djа. To give her time to regenerate so that my children and future generations may still know our kin, the plants, animals and experience the beauty of Djа that we do today. My artwork represents our connection to Djа, as our giver, our Ancestor murrup (spirits) within. The role we have Culturally and as a society to protect and care for Djа as our life essence.

*Artwork opposite: Protection and Patience* by Nandali Ahmat





# Our climate action

**As we walk towards a future where our sovereign rights and interests are recognised and our formal recognition with the state has deepened, Wadawurring Kinkinbil continue to bear a heavy load to keep Djа, our People and Culture safe and healthy.**

**Wulemburri Djа, another impact of colonialisation and capitalism, has added to our load.**

We call on governments, businesses and other organisations to koling wada ngal (walk together) to protect Djа, our Culture and our People from the impacts of climate change.

We need to protect and restore our bushland, wetlands, mangroves and grasslands.

We must stop using fossil fuels and equitably transition to renewable energy with Wadawurrung voices guiding this. And we need to make sure our homes, businesses, Cultural sites and essential infrastructure (like roads, energy and communications) are as protected as possible.

And of course, we are - and will continue to - play our part. This Strategy focuses on the actions that Wadawurrung can lead, support, and advocate for.

To guide this work, we have drawn on the three key programs from Paleert Tjaara Djа to shape the climate action strategy:

1. **Gobata Djа baap ngubiyt**
   **Taking care of Country and Water**
2. **Gobata bengadak tjaara**
   **Us supporting us: Cultural Strengthening**
3. **Wunggurrwilwa Wadawurrung Corporation**
   **Strengthening Wadawurrung Corporation**

Each strategy includes a set of climate objectives that outline what we want to achieve, the actions Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation will take, and the ways our partners can koling wada ngal.

Actions are identified as:

- Short-term – starting in the next 1–3 years
- Long-term – starting in years 4–5 of the plan
- Ongoing – extending our usual work or forming the foundations we must continue over time

**Our partners and supporters**

We work in partnership with a wide range of organisations as we deliver on Paleert Tjarra Djа.

As we implement this Gobata Wulemburri Djа – Climate Action Strategy we expect to deepen our work with state government, local governments, water authorities, catchment management authorities, private developers, renewable energy companies and many other businesses.

We will also be seeking support from philanthropic organisations and other community organisations to help deliver on our priorities.

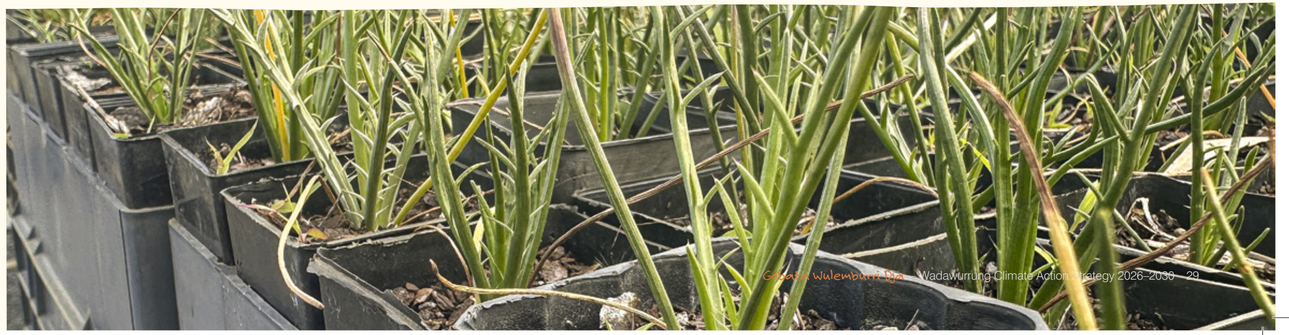


| Gobata Dja baap ngubiyt<br>(Taking care of Country and Water) | |
|---|---|
| Returning water to Country through Cultural water releases | Mapping plant and animal species, resulting in identifying five new seed collection sites for threatened and endangered species |
| Building our knowledge through Aboriginal Waterways Assessments and Cultural Value Assessments | Learning more about threatened plant and animal species and helping these become more resilient |
| Healing Country through revegetation, pest plant management, weed spraying, and conservation | Rehabilitating and restoring the Moorabool Yaluk |
| Partnering with land managers to develop and deliver Coastal Adaptation Plans and coastal adaptation projects | Launching the Karringangitj Baleert (Growing Strong) Nursery at Bostock and selling Wadawurrung provenance plants at a commercial scale |
| Partnering with universities on blue and teal carbon research projects | Providing input into a variety of stakeholder strategies and initiatives: coastal, fire, water, biodiversity, etc. |
| Developing and delivering the Wadawurrung Wiyn Cultural Fire Strategy | Monitoring koalas to learn more about their movements and behaviour on Wadawurrung Country |
| Improving biodiversity outcomes on Country, including bio-Cultural assessments | Partnering with Barwon Water on the Porronggitj Karrong project to heal the site through a Cultural lens |
| Collecting and growing Wadawurrung provenance seeds to increase seed stock and native plants being planted on Country | Restoring and improving the health of wetlands, rivers and waterways |

*Table 1:* Work that Wadawurrung are already doing to support climate action across the three key programs



| Gobata bengadak tjaara<br>(Us supporting us – Cultural Strengthening) | Wunggurrwilwa wadawurrung Corporation<br>(Strengthening Wadawurrung Corporation) |
|---|---|
| Building, and drawing on Wadawurrung Cultural knowledge (within ICIP – Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property - protocols) to respond to climate change | Installed 7.4kW solar system and 9.8kWh battery at Mair Street office |
| Inviting Traditional Owners to learn about, and be involved in Wadawurrung-led Caring for Country projects and activities | Installed 14.8kW solar system and 48kWh battery at Bostock |
| Working with stakeholders to include Wadawurrung Culture and appropriate knowledge in decision-making | Exploring WTOAC-led businesses providing climate solutions e.g. aquaculture plot at Grassy Point |
| Using the Wadawurrung Urban Design Guidelines to incorporate Cultural values, including caring for Country, in developments | Strengthening the recognition of our Rights and Interests with the State and Commonwealth |
| Sharing Wadawurrung Culture and knowledge through Cultural education to encourage stakeholders and the community to protect and care for Country | |



Over the past few years Wadawurrung have been bringing **wiyn murrup** (fire spirit) back to **Dja**. Cultural burning is an important way to rebuild connections that were lost due to dispossession by connecting **Dja**, Community and Culture.

By relying on our knowledge and practice we can use Cultural burning as a way to minimise climate change impacts. Cultural burning plays a key role in healing and caring for **Dja** including reducing fuel loads, improving biodiversity and fostering new growth of native species.

Conducting Cultural burns and being out on **Dja** helps us to watch, learn and be guided by **Dja** on how we can increase resilience in the face of a changing climate. We want to improve the resilience of **Dja** and our native species first, before bringing in species from other Country.

Our **Warri Dja** is under threat from erosion, sea level rise and storm surges. This part of **Dja** is full of resources and is where our Ancestors used to fish, dive and harvest. There is a large number of midden sites and living places located along the coastline which showed us how **warri** provided so plentifully for generations of **Wadawurrung Kinkinbil**.

We are working alongside the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority to develop a Master Plan and coastal hazard assessment for **Kurrak Panyul** (Point Impossible). Incorporating Wadawurrung Knowledge and Cultural management practices in this process enables Wadawurrung to play an active role in protecting midden sites and living places at **Kurruk Panyul.** In the future we want to work more broadly with community and government to improve the health of **Warri Dja**.



The blue carbon ecosystems (coastal/marine ecosystems like mangroves, seagrass, saltmarshes) that have been restored and are thriving on Wadawurrung **Dja** are already estimated to deliver $17.2 million in benefits to the community every year. They do this by helping to clean our air and water, storing carbon, reducing floods and erosion and supporting biodiversity. They also offer food, materials and space for Culture, connection and healing.

While mangroves have increased by about 64% since the 1960s, saltmarsh has declined by about 36% ad seagrass distribution decreased by 80%. Across Wadawurrung **Dja**, more than 14,000 ha of lost mangroves and saltmarshes could be restored through reintroducing tidal flows, fencing wetlands from farm animals and pests and by moving infrastructure away (managed retreat) from the rising sea.

This is a powerful opportunity for Wadawurrung to lead climate solutions that benefit nature, people and Culture.



# Gobata Dja baap ngubiyt (Taking care of Country and Water)

| Objectives | | Wadawurrung Actions | Partner and Supporter Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. To continue to protect and heal Dja** | | **Short-term (1–3 years)** | Continue to partner with, and create new partnerships, for Wadawurrung to care for and heal Dja.<br><br>Ensure that Wadawurrung is involved from the start of strategic planning processes and enable joint or Wadawurrung-led planning and management.<br><br>Pilot innovative climate solutions with Wadawurrung.<br><br>Invest in employment and training opportunities for Wadawurrung Kinkinbil on Dja.<br><br>Compensate Wadawurrung for the pollution and degradation of Dja.<br><br>Compensate Wadawurrung for the carbon sequestered throughout Dja. |
| | 1.1 | Build the resilience of biodiversity, ecosystems and species on Wadawurrung Dja under a changing climate. This could include initiatives such as Right Plant, Right Place; Cultural thinning and forest gardening; seed collection and seed banks of species; reading Dja before planting climate-adapted species. | |
| | 1.2 | Deliver and expand blue, green and teal carbon projects on Wadawurrung Dja. | |
| | 1.3 | Provide opportunities for Traditional Owners and WTOAC staff to be involvedin climate and sustainability solutions at work, at home and in Community. This could include supporting Wurring Wurring (Elders) planting programs to rekindle connection to Dja or joining community gardens to access local produce and native bush foods. | |
| | | **Long-term (4–5 years)** | |
| | 1.4 | Develop threatened and endangered species action plans for at-risk culturally significant species. | |
| | | **Ongoing** | |
| | 1.5 | Continue to deliver (and where possible expand) the current Gobata Dja baap ngubiyt program. In particular: expanding the Wadawurrung Nursery to include coastal and ocean plant species, wiyn murrup – heal Dja through Cultural burning, bring ngubitj (water) back to Country, restore and rehabilitate coastal ecosystems. | |
| | 1.6 | Work with land managers to make sure Wadawurrung Kinkinbil have a real say in how Dja is cared for. | |



| Objectives | | Wadawurrung Actions | Partner and Supporter Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2. To build and share our knowledge of local climate impacts and strategies to adapt to climate change** | | **Short-term (1–3 years)** | Invest in capacity building.<br><br>Provide funding for priority projects.<br><br>Incorporate Wadawurrung knowledge and experience into programs when it is shared freely. |
| | 2.1 | Develop and share education resources that highlight the stories and values of bio-Cultural landscapes, drawing only on knowledge that Wadawurrung Kinkinbil choose to share. These resources will emphasise the importance of protecting these landscapes from the impacts of climate change. | |
| | | **Ongoing** | |
| | 2.2 | Work with funders and partners to design and deliver projects that are priorities for Wadawurrung. These projects will focus on building and sharing knowledge of local climate impacts and practical strategies for adapting to our changing climate. By centring Wadawurrung values and perspectives, these collaborations will strengthen community resilience, support Cultural and ecological knowledge, and ensure resources are directed towards outcomes that matter most to Wadawurrung Kinkinbil and Dja. | |
| **3. To ensure renewable energy projects on Dja empower Wadawurrung Kinkinbil and protect Dja** | | **Short-term (1–3 years)** | Work with Wadawurrung to implement, report against and advocate for the guidelines.<br><br>Support Wadawurrung with funding and capacity building to achieve these actions. |
| | 3.1 | Develop an internal approach and guidelines for renewable energy projects on Wadawurrung Dja and work with project developers to implement them. | |
| | 3.2 | Implement a program to engage directly with Traditional Owners and community to install solar, batteries and energy efficiency where appropriate on their homes, businesses and community facilities. | |
| | | **Long-term (4–5 years)** | |
| | 3.3 | Track the impact of renewable energy projects on Dja (ensure that they care for Dja and generate local economic benefits) and report back to community. | |
| | | **Ongoing** | |
| | 3.4 | Investigate appetite for investing in renewable energy projects on Wadawurrung Dja (including Wadawurrung-owned/led projects). | |
| | 3.5 | Advocate to government and the renewable energy industry for improved regulation and outcomes for WTOAC, including Free, Prior and Informed consent, healing Dja, value-sharing. | |

# Gobata bengadak tjaara (Us supporting us – cultural strengthening)



| Objectives | | Wadawurrung Actions | Partner and Supporter Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4. To protect our Wurring Wurring (Elders) and Kinkinbil (People) from the worst impacts of climate change** | **Short-term (1–3 years)** | | Develop pathways to make it easy for Wurring Wurring to access grants, rebates and funding to make their homes safe and comfortable during extreme weather events.<br><br>Support the development of Community climate safe services and spaces provision of a venue, funding or other support). |
| | 4.1 | Create opportunities for all Traditional Owners to learn more about climate change and how it will impact Country, their families and communities, their businesses and organisations and their homes. | |
| | 4.2 | Support Kinkinbil (particularly our Wurring Wurring) to access home and energy upgrades that help to make their homes safe and comfortable during extreme weather events. | |
| | **Long-term (4–5 years)** | | |
| | 4.3 | Create Culturally appropriate climate safe services and places for Traditional Owners to access during disasters, including extreme weather events[1]. | |
| | **Ongoing** | | |
| | 4.4 | Build our emergency management capacity and capabilities to ensure we can protect our Wurring Wurring and Community from the worst impacts of climate change. | |

[1] Climate safe services are Culturally safe and responsive disaster prevention, response and recovery services like community education on local hazards and risks, emergency relief, evacuation, search and rescue, early warning systems and real-time local communications, insurance and legal support, volunteer management – the list goes on and on. There are some great resources and examples from Lismore that WTOAC can draw from: *the Returning* (thereturning.com.au), *The Koori Mail* (https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-04/success-of-koori-mail-flood-response-in-lismore-first-responders/101274516) and the case for more support for indigenous organisations in the face of climate disasters (https://indigenousx.com.au/indigenous-organisations-need-more-support-to-respond-to-climate-change-and-the-disasters-it-causes/)



| Objectives | | Wadawurrung Actions | Partner and Supporter Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5. To protect our Cultural sites and practices from the impacts of climate change** | **Ongoing** | | Support WTOAC to understand and protect Cultural sites at risk of climate change impacts.<br><br>Centre Kinkinbil and Cultural assets in planning for adaptation and resilience (and ensure all important Wadawurrung Cultural sites, places and objects are given the same status as important non-indigenous places and artefacts).<br><br>Acknowledge the unique impact of Wulemburri Djа on Wadawurrung Kinkinbil, Culture and Djа in all related work (through the use of language, stories, art in consultation with Wadawurrung). |
| | 5.1 | Build our knowledge of the impact of climate change on Cultural sites and practices, including research and modelling. | |
| | 5.2 | Explore and trial nature-based resilience and/or adaptation projects to protect Cultural sites and places. Ensuring that these are place-based and informed by Cultural knowledge. | |
| | 5.3 | Build our emergency management capacity and capabilities to ensure we can protect our Cultural sites and practices. | |

# Wunggurrwilwa Wadawurrung Corporation
## (Strengthening Wadawurrung Corporation)

| Objectives | Wadawurrung Actions | | Partner and Supporter Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **6. To reduce our operational emissions to zero** | **Short-term (1–3 years)** | | Provide grant funding or other financial support. |
| | 6.1 | Install solar and batteries on every site possible. | |
| | 6.2 | Power our operations by 100% renewable energy. | |
| | 6.3 | Disconnect gas from Mair St (the last remaining site with gas appliances). | |
| | **Ongoing** | | |
| | 6.4 | Transition our fleet to electric vehicles and install charging infrastructure at key sites. | |
| | 6.5 | Improve waste management – consider banning single use plastics and other single use items, improve recycling and composting practices, update procurement policy to buy recycled and recyclable/repairable products wherever possible. | |
| **7. To ensure the whole corporation understands how wulemburri Dja is impacting on Wadawurrung Values** | **Ongoing** | | Share their own stories and experiences about how climate change is impacting Wadawurrung values. |
| | 7.1 | Develop and deliver training on climate change for all staff – helping everyone understand what it means. This could include regular on-Dja sessions to connect and learn. | |
| | 7.2 | Continue to collect stories and experiences across the organisation and the community for how climate change is impacting Wadawurrung Values (to be included in the annual report). | |



| Objectives | Wadawurrung Actions | | Partner and Supporter Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **8. To lead economic development that gobata wulemburri Dja** | **Ongoing** | | Provide funding for business cases, feasibility studies and upfront investment.<br><br>Collaborate with WTOAC on joint projects and Joint Ventures. |
| | 8.1 | Explore economic development opportunities for WTOAC that promote Cultural practise and knowledge, provide solutions to climate change and generate income. For example: carbon and biodiversity offsets; renewable energy; Cultural food production; EV charging stations; coastal nursery; aquaculture; circular economy, Hydrogen from recycled water. | |
| **9. To identify and respond to climate risks to the Corporation** | **Long-term (4–5 years)** | | Provide grant funding or pro bono direct services.<br><br>Collaborate with WTOAC on joint projects and Joint Ventures. |
| | 9.1 | Undertake a climate risk assessment of the Corporation and prioritise key actions. | |
| | **Ongoing** | | |
| | 9.2 | Support staff who are vulnerable to climate change impacts in their work. | |
| **10. To hold our partners and ourselves accountable** | **Ongoing** | | Contribute to the report and help share the stories. |
| | 10.1 | Incorporate climate change into Paleert Tjaara Dja and all strategies, policies, and reporting. | |
| | 10.2 | Report our progress each year. | |

# Koling wada ngal (Let us walk together)

**We invite all businesses, governments, organisations and individuals to koling wada ngal as we work to respond to climate change.**

We developed a set of principles to guide our partnerships to Make Country Good Together through Paleert Tjaara Dja, these principles describe what makes a good partner in our work together.

1. Respect and Acknowledgement for Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and our Cultural, ancestral, spiritual and historical connections to Dja.
2. Understand our right to access and care for Dja as an expression of our Cultural obligation, responsibilities, connectedness, our well-being and as our economic basis.
3. Dja is interconnected, alive with dreaming and creation stories, imprinted with our Cultural values and social history – there is no separation between Cultural and natural resources and people.
4. Free, prior and informed consent requires genuine engagement from the beginning of decision-making or project planning in a way that is relevant to us, providing timely information and processes that support Cultural governance.
5. We seek partnerships that are genuine, are of benefit to Wadawurrung Kinkinbil, are in the spirit of reconciliation, that address past negative impacts and enable self-determination and real outcomes.
6. Providing appropriate and equitable resourcing for Wadawurrung Kinkinbil to participate in their obligation of care and management of Dja
7. Open and honest relationships that sustain effective working partnerships.
8. Wadawurrung Traditional Owners are the holders of Cultural Knowledge. Partners understand that not all Knowledge will, or should, be shared outside the Community. Any knowledge that is shared will be done so with Wadawurrung consent and in accordance with our Cultural protocols.
9. Partners have a responsibility to create and maintain Culturally safe spaces for sharing and working together. Respect for, and appropriate protection of, Wadawurrung intellectual and Cultural property rights is essential, ensuring that any information shared is treated with care, integrity, and in line with Wadawurrung expectations.

## Contact us


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# Evaluation and reporting

**Every year we will produce a narrative evaluation, outlining our progress and what we have delivered against our objectives and actions.**

We may also include observations and experiences of climate change, including what impacts we are facing the most, and opportunities that we can work towards.

This will be shared with WTOAC's Board, Council of Elders, Ngal Ngal La, Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, staff, Community, stakeholders and broader community.

Gobata Wulemburri Dja – Climate Action Strategy is a living document and can be updated to reflect evolving priorities, concerns, opportunities and policy. It will be formally reviewed alongside Paleert Tjaara Dja in 2030.






**How this plan was developed**

Gobata Wulemburri Dja – *Climate Action Strategy* is grounded in Paleert Tjaara Dja, our Healthy Country Plan, which was created through deep consultation. Building on that foundation, we looked at how climate change will affect Wadawurrung values and asked our community what actions matter most.

We spoke with Wurring Wurring, Traditional Owners and staff through surveys, emails, online drop-in sessions, and workshops. These conversations - over cups of tea, through formal meetings, and online – shaped the Strategy and helped set clear priorities for action.

We also brought partners together in a workshop that was well attended and strongly supported. Stakeholders expressed their commitment to working with Wadawurrung and help to bring the Strategy to life.

This Strategy reflects the voices of our people and the strength of our partnerships. It sets out a path for climate action led by Wadawurrung, with community and partners walking alongside us.



Wadawurrung
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation

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