

FACT SHEET

State Game Reserves in Dja Dja Wurrung Country

State Game Reserves: sites of significant biodiversity, cultural, social and conservation values

State Game Reserves (SGRs) are areas of high conservation value, reserved for the protection of wildlife and their habitat and the sustainable use of wildlife during open seasons.

Victoria's initial network of SGRs owes its existence to game hunters who recognised the degradation and loss of wetland habitat and lobbied for its conservation.

Today, SGRs provide important habitat for a diverse range of fauna, including mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and invertebrates. Many reserves contribute to the protection of threatened animal and plant species.

Hunting's rich cultural heritage

Hunting and game management contribute to a rich cultural heritage, which has been at the heart of community identity for generations and is cemented in strong and enduring traditions.

Traditional Owner Groups in Victoria have hunted wildlife for over 35,000 years. Their existence depended on the management and sustainable use of wildlife for food, clothing, shelter, and cultural and spiritual needs.

Prior to colonisation, Victorian Traditional Owner Groups actively managed the land and natural resources in their territories, according to their traditional laws and customs

Through the roles of 'Ceremony and Talk', 'Hunt and Gather' and 'Song and Dance' experiences were shared, important decisions made, relationships created and maintained, resources acquired and distributed and celebrations undertaken.

Early settlers and subsequent generations of migrants drew on proud hunting heritage and have maintained rich hunting traditions.

Today, the Australian hunter is descended from a variety of worldwide cultures, and plays an important part in maintaining traditional and cultural heritage. Hunting provides an incentive to conserve natural resources and spend time outdoors with family and friends.

Dja Dja Wurrung settlement (2013)

The *Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic)* enables the State of Victoria to legally recognise the rights and connections that traditional owner groups have in Crown land and waters. In greater central Victoria, the traditional owner rights of the Dja Dja Wurrung people were recognised under the Recognition and Settlement Agreement entered into by the State and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation in March 2013. This Agreement includes a Natural Resource Agreement that facilitates Dja Dja Wurrung access to and use of natural resources and seeks to promote their participation in natural resource management.

Their strong connections to the traditional Djaara¹ Country will be maintained for future generations to the benefit of all Victorians.

Partnering with the Traditional Owner Groups and fostering strong ties offers significant environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits to the broader community.



Dja Dja Wurrung people adorned with wood duck feathers.
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Dja Dja Wurrung Clans
Aboriginal Corporation

¹ Djaara means "person" in the Dja Dja Wurrung language. In context it also refers to Dja Dja Wurrung Country

SGRs in the Recognition and Settlement Area

There are 10 SGRs in Djaara Country, which will continue to be managed for the benefit of all Victorians:

- Frogmore Swamp
- Wooroonook Lakes (Middle and East)
- Thunder Swamp
- Tang Tang Swamp
- Merin Merin & Middle Swamp
- Lake Lyndger
- Lake Jil Jil
- Lake Cope Cope
- Lake Boort
- Avon Plains (Hancocks and Walkers Lake)

All Australians can continue to enjoy these SGRs and participate in strong cultural traditions through responsible hunting. Being a respectful hunter extends to protecting the cultural heritage of all Victorians. This includes the rich Aboriginal heritage found on many of these SGRs.

Protecting Aboriginal heritage sites in SGRs

It is important to remember that in Victoria, all "Aboriginal places" and artefacts are protected by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic). An "Aboriginal place" is an area of land or coastal waters that are of cultural significance to Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Aboriginal places include (but are not limited to): surface scatters and stone tools, scarred trees, mounds, freshwater middens and burials. Do not disturb or remove any artefacts from Aboriginal places.

Hunting-related activities like camping and driving have the potential to interfere or even destroy Aboriginal places and artefacts. Only camp and drive in designated areas.

What to do when out hunting

All hunters must adhere to laws and hunt in a responsible manner. Hunters are encouraged to partner with Traditional Owner Groups in protecting sites of significant biodiversity, cultural, social and conservation values.

You should be aware that members of the Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner Group are entitled to access and use natural resources (and engage in related activities) on Crown land and waters, under the terms of their 2013 Agreement.



Hunters in State Game Reserve.

Engaging with Traditional Owner Groups in game management projects and habitat restoration will ensure that game resources will continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

While enjoying our SGRs, ensure that Aboriginal places are not disturbed in any way. Remember that all Aboriginal artefacts and archaeological remains are protected by law and should not be removed. If you discover a burial place exposed by erosion or ground disturbance, do not disturb the site or remove any material. Immediately report your discovery to the Aboriginal Affairs State Control Centre on Tel.1300 888 544.

More information

The Dja Dja Wurrung Traditional Owner Group is extremely proud of their legal recognition and want other Victorians to understand their history as the first people of the greater central Victoria region, and learn about their unique culture and hunting practices. Their aspirations for country are outlined in the Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034 found at: www.djadjawurrung.com.au

If you would like to know more about Aboriginal cultural heritage, contact Aboriginal Affairs Victoria on Tel: 1800 762 003

For information relating to hunting, including details of what game species can be hunted and the rules that apply to all game hunters in SGRs, see the Victorian Hunting Guide, Smartphone App or GMA website: www.gma.vic.gov.au

For further information on the management of State Game Reserves, please contact Parks Victoria on Tel: 131 963



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For more information about Game Management Authority go to www.gma.vic.gov.au