

# LISTENING TO COUNTRY

A PLACE MAKING STRATEGY

# HEALING COUNTRY

FOR MARK'S COUNTRY PLACE

PLACEMAKING FOR THE  
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

YABBIES  
PRESENTATION FOR  
MARK'S COUNTRY PLACE

Galka- trees

# KNOWING COUNTRY



Darrak-branches

Girra - leaves

Murnang - daisy

Ngulum

Dhelkunya Dja  
Healing/make  
good, land/

Dja or djaa - earth

We live, work and study on the unceded lands of the **Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation**. We acknowledge their Elders, past and present, and we acknowledge their deep and ongoing connection to Country, place and culture.

This studio has a focus on **Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri Country**, in what is now commonly known as Kyneton. We acknowledge their Elders, past and present, and we acknowledge their deep and ongoing connection to Country, place and culture.

As aspiring practitioners in the fostering of space and place, on Country, we pay our respect to the long lineage of place-making that has occurred across so-called-Australia, and on Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri Country.

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This report is the culmination of our first foray into professional place-making. First off, we would like to thank **Dr Iderlina Mateo-Babiano** and the suite of professionals who trained and supported us in making this project. Secondly, we would like to thank **Sue and Stuart** for allowing us the opportunity to actively apply this training in the real world. Lastly, we would like to thank the **Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (Djaara)**, who's knowledge and willingness to share have allowed us to craft such a special project.

As a team we were well organised and worked well together. By splitting our work into smaller sections and master planning our approach, we were able to deliver a final report, where every section was a collaborative work. We have included the name of the responsible member in the bottom right of each spread. Special thanks should be given to Lily for her work in compiling the text and work into the final document.

With thanks,  
Mira, Urvashi, Mehika, and Lily

## STORY OF COUNTRY: UNDERSTANDING DJANDAK

*"In a time when the landscape was bare and featureless, the ancestral spirits shaped the earth with Bunjil, creating song lines, raising trees out of the soil and making places of power where an object was left behind, where a spirit had entered the earth or where a journey was completed and a spirit sat down on the land."*

– Rebecca Phillips (Descendant of Caroline Malcolm), Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation<sup>1</sup>

Djandak is connected, and each place is known and valued. Inside the water, birds, plants, animals, rocks and mountains are murrups (spirits), who connect Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung people) to their history, culture and traditions.<sup>2</sup> Mark's Country Place exists within Djaara, as an element of Djandak, it bears responsibility to protect and enhance Country. Place-making for this site needs to revolve around rebuilding and healing the connection and the stories of the Murrups, in a way that is respectful and in line with the vision of Djaara.

We began our understanding of Mark's Country Place, through sitting in a guided meditation of Country, a technique developed from Matt Novaceski's meditations on place.<sup>3</sup> Through this meditation we Storyed place through a Dja Dja Wurrung lens and built a mental map of Country which we have depicted in the slide opposite using the techniques in Blair's Lilyology, and Bawaka et al.'s reading Country.<sup>4</sup> The key holders of Knowing in the sight, are the water that flows through the earth; the vast expanses of sky above us; the wired fences; and the stones that sit in the Earth, or have been moved about. In the distance, the site is overlooked by Geboor (Mt Macedon), and life springs from Yaluk (the Campaspe River). The history of this place is likely deeply associated with Yaluk, and the water which flows over the site in the rainy seasons is an important element of the project, symbolising the all-encompassing connectedness of Country. The Stones represent the 'Upside-Down Country'<sup>5</sup> and remind us of the dispossession and

<sup>1</sup>Rebecca Phillips, 'Recognising Traditional Owners', Bendigo Nature, 8 November 2016, <http://www.bendigonature.org/traditional-owners>.

<sup>2</sup>Djaara, 'Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034', Plan (Djandak: Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation, 2017), <https://djandak.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Dhelkunya-Dja-Country-Plan-2014-2034.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>Matt Novaceski, 'Place, Story - Openings to Possibility' (Academic Lecture, Participatory Planning, University of Melbourne, 6 September 2023).

<sup>4</sup>Nerida Blair, 'Lilyology as a Transformative Framework for Decolonizing Ethical Spaces within the Academy', in *Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology*, ed. Jo-ann Archibald Qum Qum Xiem, Jenny Bol Jun Lee-Morgan, and Jason De Santolo (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019); Bawaka Country et al., 'Working with and Learning from Country: Decentring Human Author-ity', *Cultural Geographies* 22, no. 2 (April 2015): 269–83, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1474474014539248>.

<sup>5</sup>Djaara, 'Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034'.

<sup>6</sup>A nod to the "brick wall" in: Blair, 'Lilyology as a Transformative Framework for Decolonizing Ethical Spaces within the Academy'.

## STORY OF COUNTRY: UNDERSTANDING DJANDAK

displacement of Djaara. The wired fences remind us of the binds of the past, and the confines of Western epistemology.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the sky teaches us to think large – imagining the possibilities of what the future might bring. These are the stories that we heard in place, and the stories we want to share with you.

The recent history of the area around Mark's Country Place is marked with the wanton destruction of Country. When Country is sick, so too are its people. Cox et al. talks about the health benefits experienced by First Nations communities when they are closely tied to Country and tradition.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the history of colonisation, First Nations people are 1.9 times as likely to live with a disability.<sup>8</sup> First Nations people make up a disproportionately large part of the disabled community, and should be a core consideration in our place-making project. When Country is healthy, everybody benefits, the land is more climate resilient,<sup>9</sup> we can maintain unique cultural heritage,<sup>10</sup> and benefit from an interconnected system of culture, nature, and connection to place.

To develop our strategy we wanted to highlight this history while using our position to be part of the healing process. Through working within the Strategic Framework set out by the Djaara corporation, we can shape a proposal that aligns with their goal of maintaining and reviving cultural practice and heritage (goals 2 and 3) and healing the lands and waterways of Djandak (goals 5 and 6).<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, we are not embarking on this process alone, and have a network of connected communities, businesses, and publications to drive our work in Listening, Healing, and Knowing Country.

(Right) Fig. 01. Collage, in part made from Cornelis, Jari. A Coastal Carpet Python (Morelia spilota) Basks in the Winter Sun on the Edge of a Cliff of Lamington National Park. 2019. TNC Photo Contest. [https://blog.nature.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/e5b77812dad7b0786bd6d12a9bd88262\\_original-e1603068157149.jpg](https://blog.nature.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/e5b77812dad7b0786bd6d12a9bd88262_original-e1603068157149.jpg). Park, Geoff. Wedge-Tailed Eagle, Moolort Plains. V. 14 March 2017. Photograph. <https://geoffpark.wordpress.com/2017/03/16/bunjil-lakes-flight/>.

<sup>7</sup> Terrance Cox et al., "We're Also Healers": Elders Leading the Way in Aboriginal Community Healing', *Australian Journal of Primary Health* 28, no. 4 (31 May 2022): 283–88, <https://doi.org/10.1071/PY21289>.

<sup>8</sup> National Indigenous Australians Agency, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework', Government Report (Canberra, ACT, Australia: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 9 August 2024), <https://www.indigenoushp.gov.au/measures/1-14-disability>; Sarah Maddison, *The Colonial Fantasy: Why White Australia Can't Solve Black Problems* (Sydney, AUSTRALIA: Allen & Unwin, 2019), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detailaction?docID=5734468>.

<sup>9</sup> Neva Collins, 'Valuing Indigenous Environmental Stewardship in Responding to Climate Change', *Court of Conscience*, 2010.

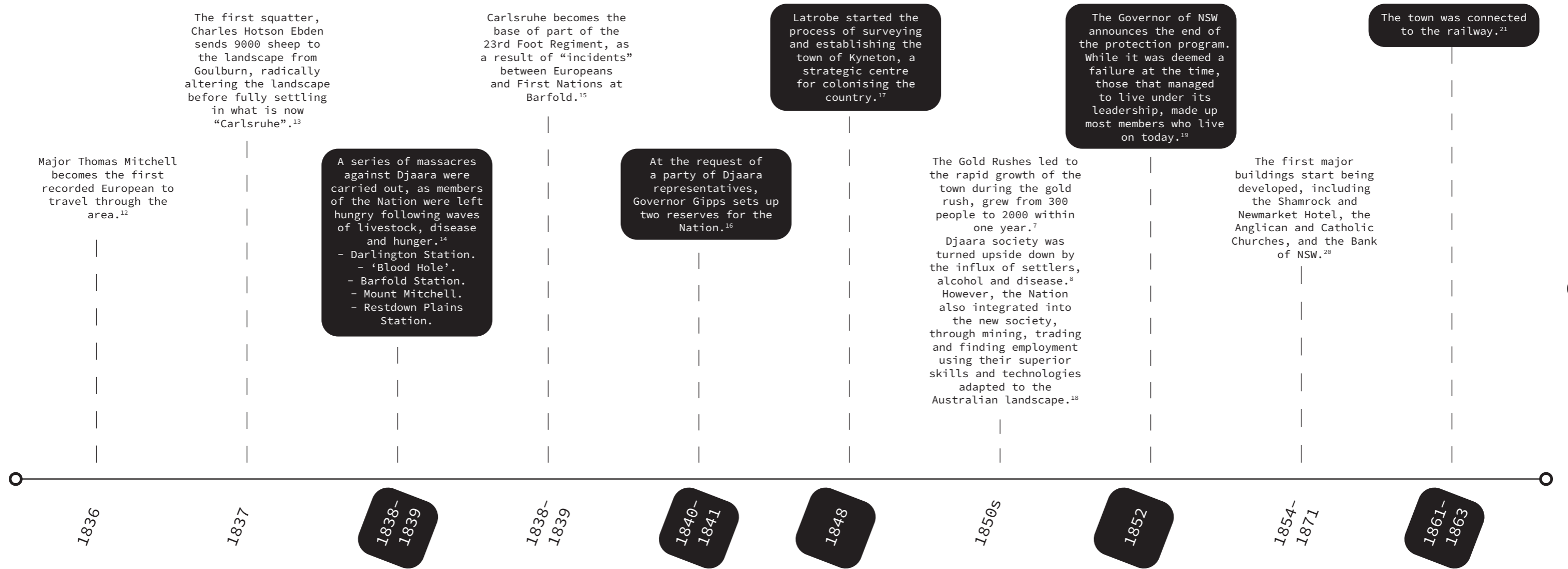
<sup>10</sup> Djaara, 'Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014–2034'.

<sup>11</sup> Djaara.



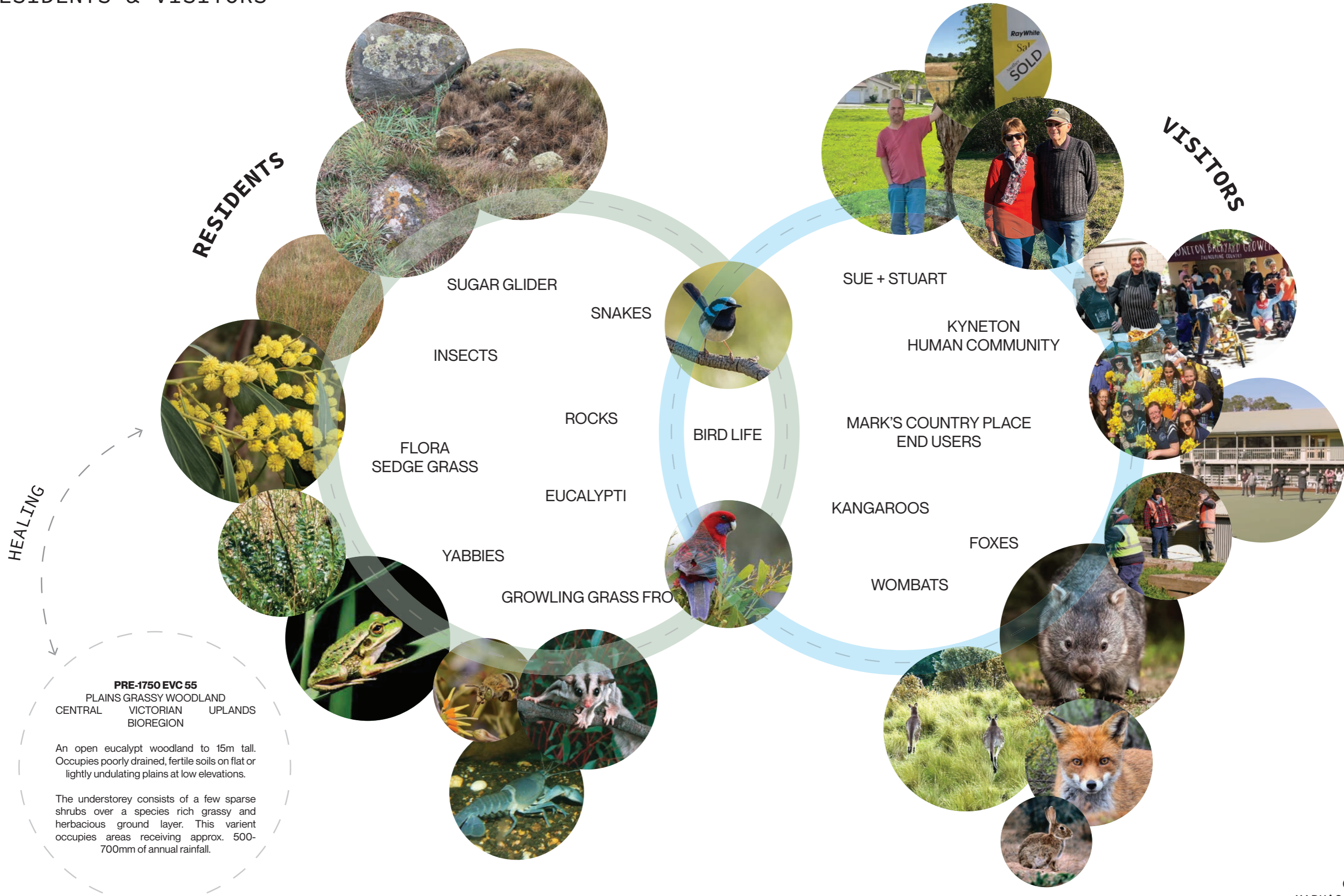
A representation of the interconnected knowledge that  
Country holds, as shared by Yorta Yorta man Jason  
Tamiru from ABPL90437 Studio. YABBIES  
MARK'S COUNTRY PLACE

COLONIAL HISTORY OF PLACE



<sup>12</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton,' kyneton.org.au, 2021, <https://kyneton.org.au/history.html>.  
<sup>13</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton.'  
<sup>14</sup>Lyndall Ryan et al, 'Colonial Frontier Massacres, Australia, 1780 to 1930,' (Newcastle: University of Newcastle, 2022).  
<sup>15</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton.'  
<sup>16</sup>Tim Rowse, 'The Good Country,' *Australian Historical Studies* 49, no. 2 (3 April 2018): 268-69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2018.1454282>.  
<sup>17</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton.'  
<sup>18</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton.'  
<sup>19</sup>Fred Cahir et al, 'Not Invisible, Not Silent, Not Nameless,' *Cultural and Social History* 20, no. 4 (8 August 2023): 517-35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2022.2156263>.  
<sup>20</sup>Cahir et al, 'Not Invisible.'  
<sup>21</sup>Rowse, 'The Good Country.'  
<sup>22</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton.'  
<sup>23</sup>Kyneton Connections, 'History of Kyneton.'

RESIDENTS & VISITORS



010

011

## RESIDENTS & VISITORS

The site for Mark's Country Place has a rich tapestry of inhabitants, forming an ecology that can either be maintained, repaired, or destroyed through the project's development. The diagram on the previous page explores this tapestry through the lens of 'Residents' and 'Visitors,' visualising the entities that are sustained and have the opportunity to sustain this Country, and also those who may introduce harm to this place, such as the rabbits. In this sense, we can think of the residents and visitors as welcome and caring, and others that are unwelcome and destructive.

In this visualisation, we position Sue and Stuart as welcome visitors to the site, who are seeking to create a place of community connection within this existing ecology. We invite Sue and Stuart to conceptualise their role within this ecology to be that of custodians and healers – harnessing their power to foster the welcome existing relationships and opportunities of the site's natural features and inhabitants. As custodians of the site, Sue and Stewart should seek out opportunities to heal and foster the site's existing, welcome ecology and features.

Additionally, Sue and Stewart should engage with opportunities for the potential healing of Country through the reintegration of native species, within the broader planting schedule of Mark's Country Place, as well as within our proposal for a native garden. The Pre-1750 Ecological Vegetation Class of the site is 55 – Plains Grassy Woodland of the Central Victorian Uplands Bioregion. This is characterized by the Department of Sustainability and Environment as:

*"An open eucalypt woodland to 15m tall. Occupies poorly drained, fertile soils on flat or lightly undulating plains at low elevations. The understorey consists of a few sparse shrubs over a species rich grassy and herbaceous ground layer. This variant occupies areas receiving approx. 500-700mm of annual rainfall."*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, *EVC/Bioregion Benchmark for Vegetation Quality Assessment*, (Melbourne: VGDSE, 2004), [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

<sup>25</sup> Djaara Balaki Wuka, 'Turning 'wrong way' climate, 'right way', (Victoria: Djaara, 2023), <https://djadjawurrung.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DJA46-Climate-Change-Strategy-230523.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Djaara, 'Djakitj Dhekkunya Beng,' Djaara (DjaDja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation), accessed 12 September 2024, <https://djakitj.com.au/>

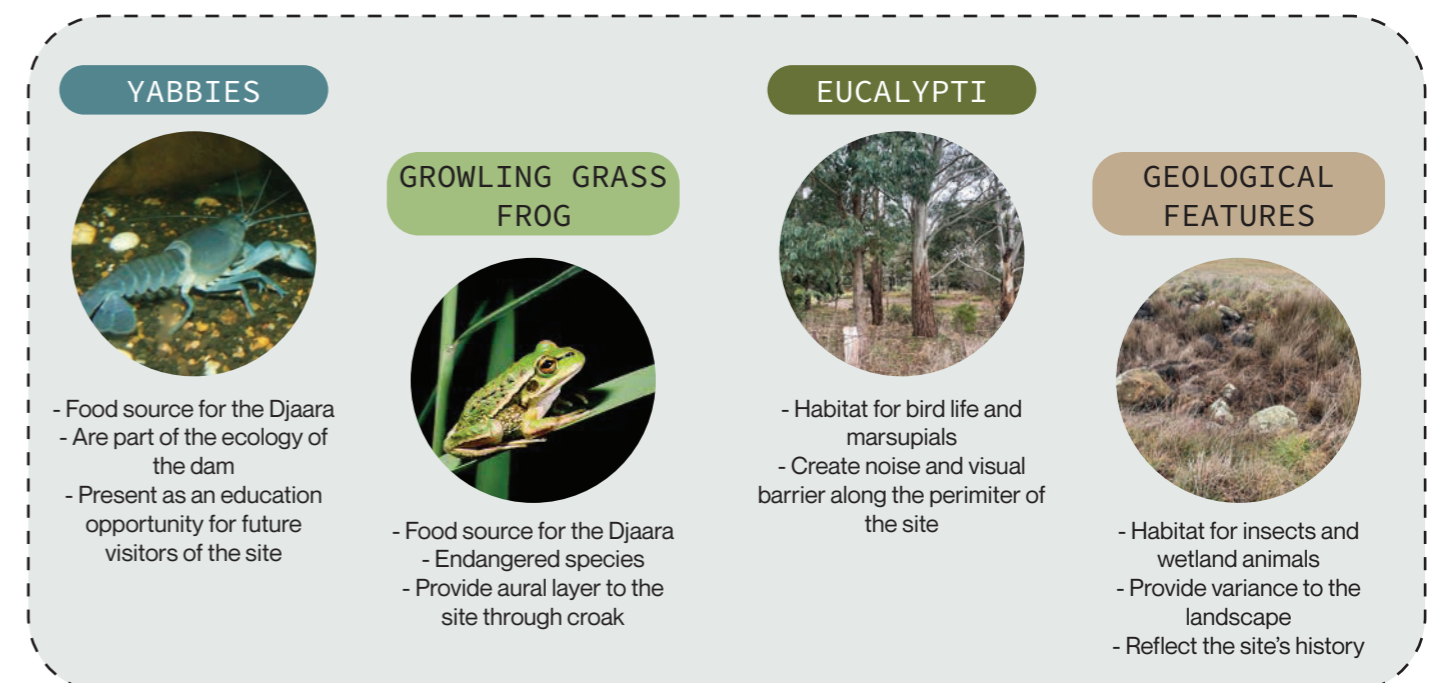
<sup>27</sup> Australian Government, 'Litoria raniformis — Southern Bell Frog, Growling Grass Frog, Green and Golden Frog, Warty Swamp Frog, Golden Bell Frog SPRAT Profile,' accessed 1 August 2024, [http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon\\_id=1828](http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=1828)

## KEY SPECIES

Below, we identify some of the key species of the site, describing their significance to Country (Djandak) and water (gatjin) and the opportunity they present to Mark's Country Place.<sup>25</sup>

Included are two native food sources for the Djaara: yabbies, and growling grass frogs. Yabbies are important to the Djaara, and are forming a major part of the Djakitj native food farm venture being undertaken by the Traditional Custodians of the area. Retaining and nurturing their existence on site makes sense and aligns with the agenda of healing Country.<sup>26</sup> Growling grass frogs, an endangered species, were also a traditional food source for pre-colonial populations and can provide intrigue to the site through their croak.<sup>27</sup>

Other residents of the site that present opportunities are the neighbouring eucalypti and the geological features of the site. The eucalyptus tress offer a buffer at the northern end of the site from noise, and also provide habitat for birdlife and marsupials. The existing geological features of the site also provide variance within the landscape and reflect the history of the site, given that miscellaneous rocks are often a feature of the region, as was explained by the landscape architect on our site visit.



The charming setting of Kyneton, a historic town known for its natural beauty and cultural legacy, is where Mark's Country Place is located. Mature trees, rolling terrain, and possible watercourses are just a few of the site's distinctive natural characteristics. The site's ecological importance is enhanced by the existing vegetation, which is mostly native eucalypts and offers important habitat for local species.

#### Neighbourhood Context

Kyneton has a wealth of historical and cultural background, emphasizing environmental and communal sustainability. Numerous community gardens, a thriving cultural scene, and heritage buildings all demonstrate the town's dedication to conserving its history while embracing a sustainable future.

Land uses in the neighbourhood are a combination of business, residential, and agricultural. The Macedon Ranges and the Campaspe River are close by, offering chances for outdoor activities including cycling, fishing, and trekking. The town's strong feeling of community and dedication to sustainability complement Mark's Country Place's objectives.

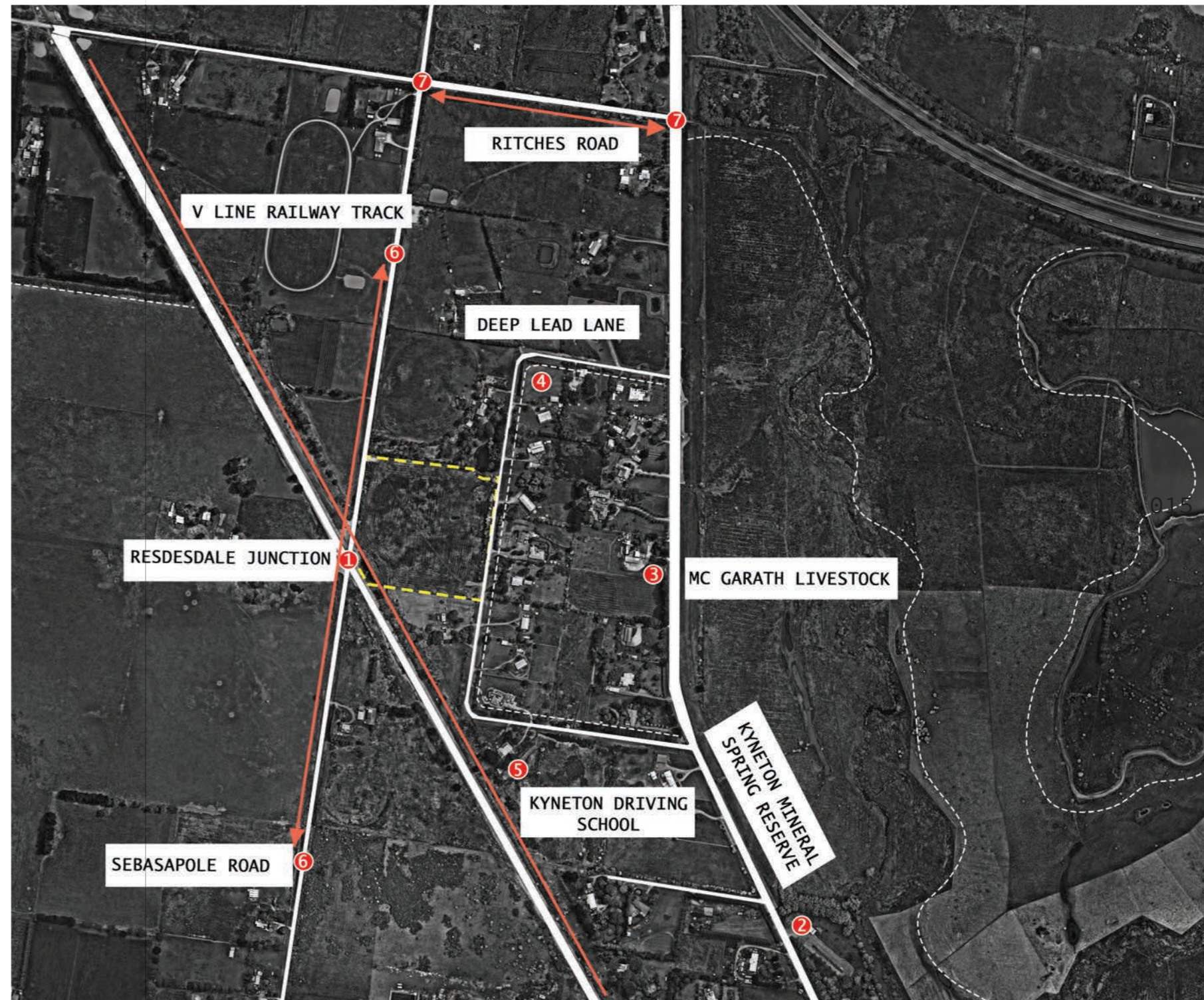
We can create a design that blends in with the surrounding landscape, honours the local heritage, and advances the region's sustainability by comprehending the site's unique features and its larger context within the Kyneton community.

#### Connectivity and Accessibility

Mark's Country Place has excellent access to the surrounding area. Visitors and employees may easily travel between Kyneton and Melbourne and other rural areas by taking the adjacent V/route train route. The site's accessibility and ability to draw tourists from a wider catchment area are improved by this train link.

Road connectivity: The location is easily reachable via a system of local roads, making it convenient for both private vehicles and public transit. Traveling to neighbouring towns and cities is made easier by the proximity to major routes.

Overall, Mark's Country Place has the potential to become a model for sustainable and community-focused development if its ecological and cultural value are adequately considered. This project may produce a dynamic and sustainable area that benefits people and the environment by reestablishing the site's natural ecosystem, integrating traditional Indigenous knowledge, and interacting with the local community. Mark's Country Place may develop into a treasured community asset that inspires future generations, fosters a connection to nature, and promotes well-being with careful planning, design, and continuous upkeep.





EXPERIENCE OF PLACE



Sedge grass + water control



Neighbouring tree line + dam



Existing dam + rocks



Poplar forrest + pathway system



Grass + rocks



CAMPASPE RIVER

V-LINE TRAIN TRACK

DEEPLAD LANE

## EXPERIENCE OF PLACE

During our site visit to Mark's Country Place, we were able to experience the natural features of the site, as has been represented within the aerial map/diagram on the previous pages. The site is by no means a tabula rasa – and shouldn't be treated as such. Sue and Stuart have a number of natural features that they are custodians of and have the opportunity to incorporate within their vision for Mark's Country Place.

We were glad to hear about their plans to retain the existing poplar forest and to integrate it with a pathway system for exploration by their visitors. Though not native, they are using an established and existing feature of the site to their benefit, which is the kind of attitude we are proposing within our project. The neighbouring tree line and dam are also features that can be utilized; the trees, which provide habitat for birdlife, offer a sound and sight barrier to the adjacent property. The dam is also a potential point of intrigue if the correct safety measures are included. The existing dam in the center of the site is also an opportunity that could be utilized by Sue and Stewart – given the cost of excavating, it would be a shame to miss the opportunity to use the hole to create an experience on the site and to heal Country.

These features can also be used to accommodate the special interests that may be had by those with different dis/abilities. As Sue and Stewart explained, noise and the feature of the nearby train line present as both an opportunity and constraint: some members of the disability community may find the noise of the train, which passes at regular intervals, overwhelming; while others may have a special interest with the trains. The tension of this example reflects the complexity of delivering a project to be enjoyed by diverse stakeholder groups: what, and who, is prioritized? Is there a solution that accommodates both people within this scenario? We encourage Sue and Stewart to wrestle with these questions.

<sup>28</sup>Idertina Mateo-Babiano and Gini Lee, "People in Place: Placemaking Fundamentals," in *Placemaking Fundamentals for the Built Environment* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 22.

<sup>29</sup>Mateo-Babiano and Lee, "People in Place."

<sup>30</sup>Matthew Carmona, *Public Places Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315158457>.

<sup>31</sup>Nourhan Mohamed Bassam Elhalawany, Hisham S. Gabr, and Ahmed Mostafa Abdelghaffar, "Exploring Theories of Social Inclusivity and Creative Placemaking Analyzing Engaged Creative-Placemaking in Different Case Studies," in *Cities' Vocabularies and the Sustainable Development of the Silkroads*, ed. Stella Kostopoulou et al. (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 59–71, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31027-0\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31027-0_6).

Every stakeholder in Mark's Country Place has different objectives that complement their own viewpoints and passions. Access to fresh food, a higher standard of living, and educational possibilities are valued by the community as ways to improve the local environment, fortify links within the community, and advance general well-being. This is in line with the placemaking tenets, which prioritize developing environments that improve people's quality of life.<sup>28</sup> In addition to producing jobs and promoting a feeling of place, local government seeks to promote economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community development. Companies use community participation to engage workers, improve their brand, and satisfy corporate social responsibility. To further their purposes, nonprofit organizations prioritize community relationships, resource mobilization, and social and environmental impact. To protect their history and guarantee sustainable land management, traditional owners place a high priority on cultural preservation, community empowerment, and environmental protection.

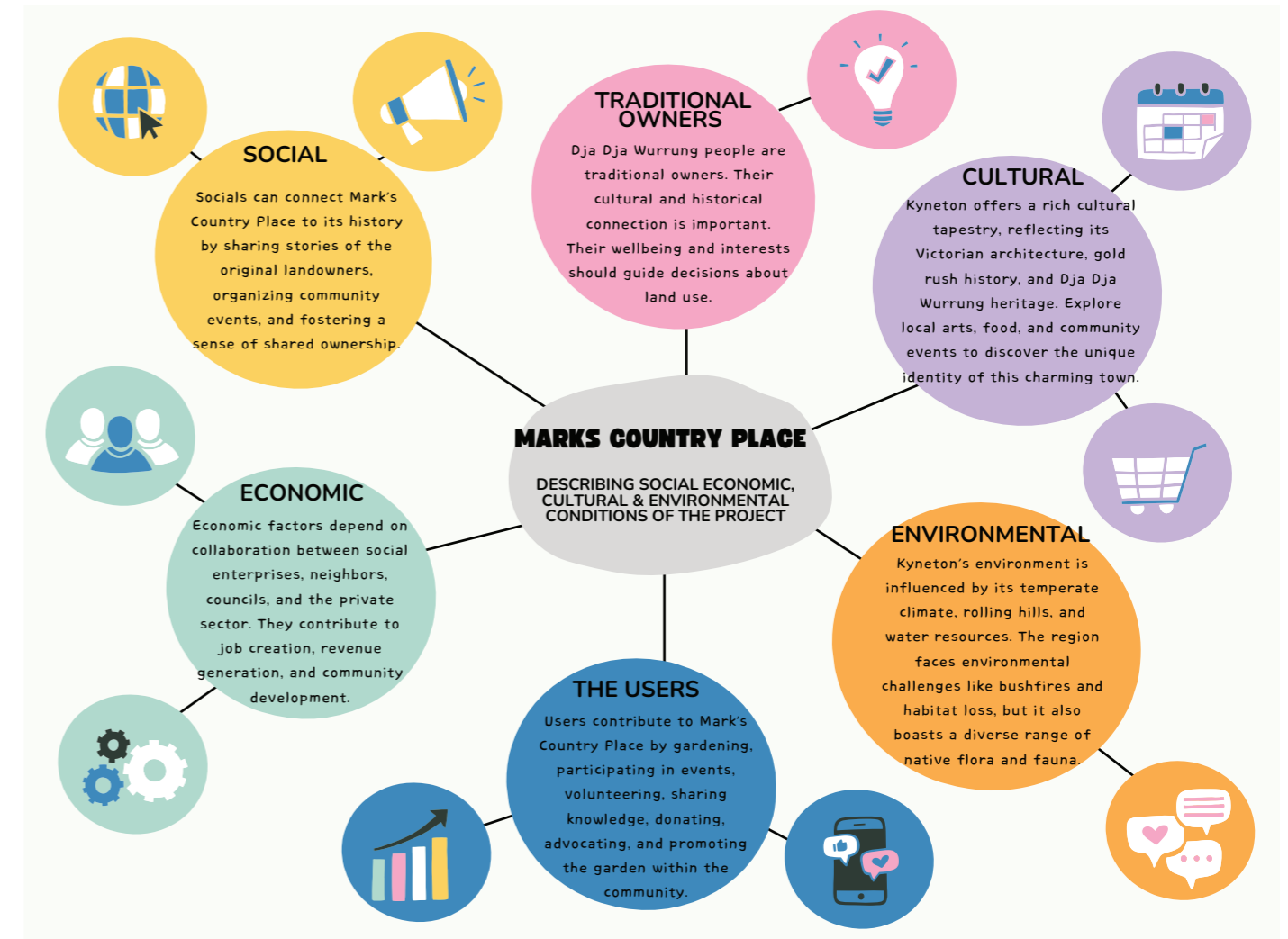
Mark's Country Place can create a more lively and sustainable community by successfully interacting with these many stakeholders and encouraging a feeling of ownership and shared purpose. This is in line with the placemaking tenets, which highlight the significance of developing spaces that people adore and identify.<sup>29</sup> Mark's Country Place has the potential to develop into a bustling centre of community activity that enhances the general resilience and well-being of the neighbourhood by comprehending and meeting the requirements and goals of all parties involved.

The community works together to shape public areas via a process called placemaking. It is a method of making spaces more aesthetically pleasing, practical, and sustainable.<sup>30</sup> Stakeholders can be included in the development and design of Mark's Country Place to help build a location that satisfies community needs and goals.

Additionally, placemaking can improve community relationships and social capital. Placemaking may contribute to the development of a feeling of community pride and belonging by establishing areas where people can congregate and engage. Individuals' and communities' health and well-being depend on this.<sup>31</sup>

By considering the diverse goals of all stakeholders and applying the principles of placemaking, Mark's Country Place can become a thriving community asset that benefits everyone.

Stakeholders in Mark's Country Place likely have diverse goals, reflecting their unique perspectives and interests. Here are some potential goals for key stakeholder groups:



THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

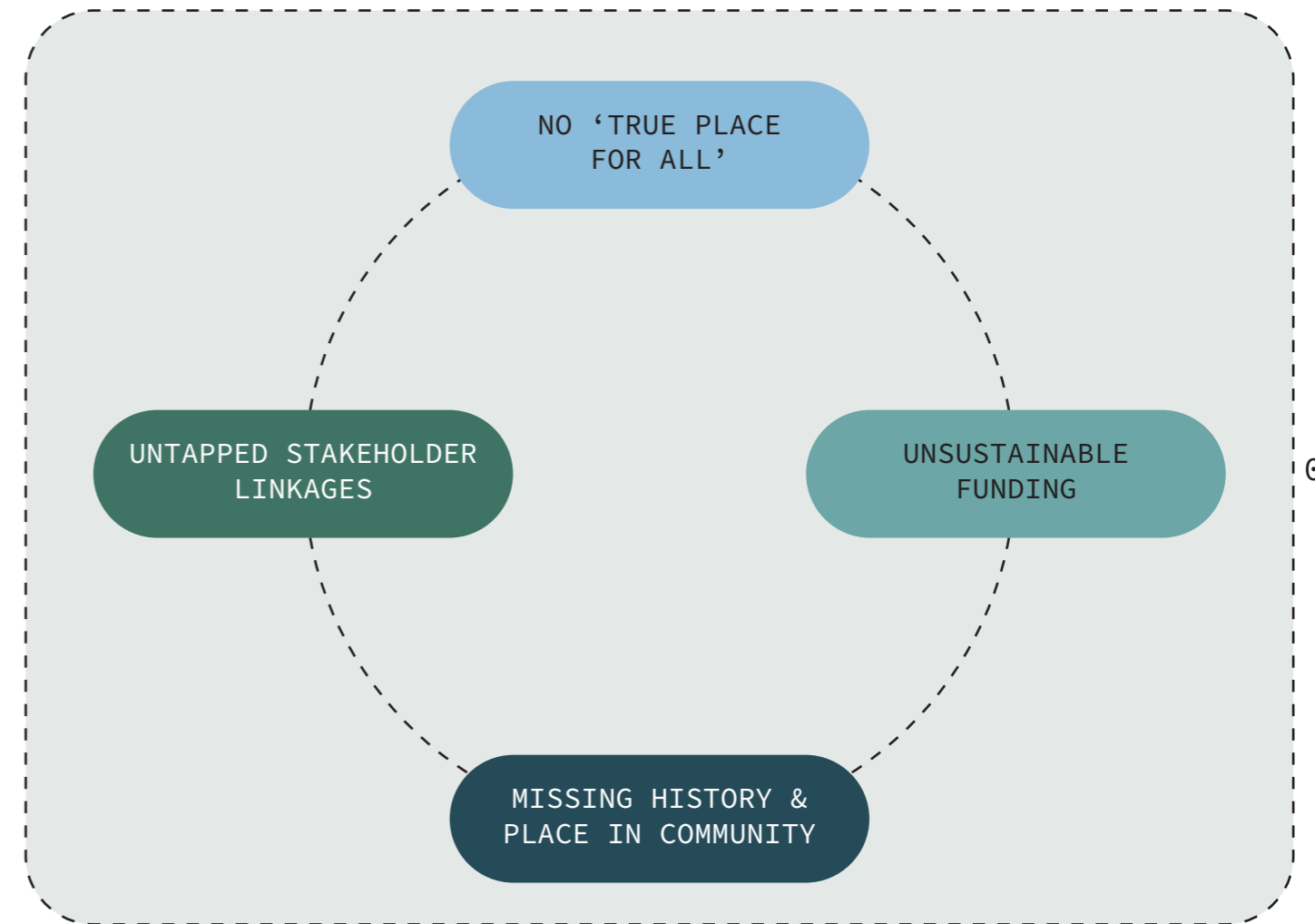
For Mark’s Country Place, there are legitimate risks which could lead to the failure of the project as a whole. In identifying these risks, we hope to reconceptualize them as opportunities that can be harnessed to drive the project towards a successful outcome, and an outcome that can heal the Country of the site and make it an accessible place for all. Our project, which will be introduced in the following pages, seeks to address these potential obstacles to prevent them from happening.

**No ‘true place for all’:** Sue and Stewart’s core vision for Mark’s Country Place is a “welcoming, all-access garden facility for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy, relax and connect.”<sup>32</sup> Ensuring this goal through place-making practices can be tricky, especially given the historic difficulty in positioning social justice at the core of place-making projects. Sue and Stewart are doing amazing work in building a place for people with disabilities, we can help make this a space for the whole community, especially people from diverse backgrounds.<sup>33</sup>

**Missing history and place in community:** Places are made of their layers of history and the ways in which people interact with the place over time, and the meanings that are assigned to it. Mark’s Country Place would benefit by rooting itself in the histories of the area, intensifying and deepening people’s existing connections.<sup>34</sup>

**Unsustainable funding:** Organisations with diverse income streams are more resilient and sustainable. Mark’s Country Place would benefit from diversifying their funding model, and working with both private benefactors and public funding to sustain the project.<sup>35</sup>

**Untapped stakeholder linkages:** There are good people doing good things in Kyneton and the surrounding regions, across a multitude of sectors and interest areas. Mark’s Country Place would benefit from connecting with these people in order to foster a strong community of practice.<sup>36</sup>



<sup>32</sup> “Welcome to Mark’s Country Place.” Mark’s Country Place 2024, accessed October 03 2024, <https://www.markscountryplace.org/>  
<sup>33</sup> Ruth Fincher, Maree Parry, and Kate Shaw, “Place-Making or Place-Masking? The Everyday Political Economy of ‘Making Place’,” *Planning Theory & Practice* 17, no. 4 (1 October 2016): 516–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2016.1217344>.  
<sup>34</sup> Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, (Minneapolis, UNITED STATES: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detailaction?docID=310284>  
<sup>35</sup> Atul Kumar and Somnath Chakrabarti, “Charity Donor Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review and Research Agenda,” *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* 35, no. 1 (1 January 2023): 1–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10495142.2021.1905134>  
<sup>36</sup> Linda C. Li et al., “Use of Communities of Practice in Business and Health Care Sectors: A Systematic Review,” *Implementation Science* 4, no. 1 (17 May 2009): 27, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-4-27>.

PLACEMAKING AS...

This project views placemaking through the following lenses and seeks to produce an opportunity for Mark's Country Place that reflects and aligns with these aims:

**Cultural representation and perspectives:**

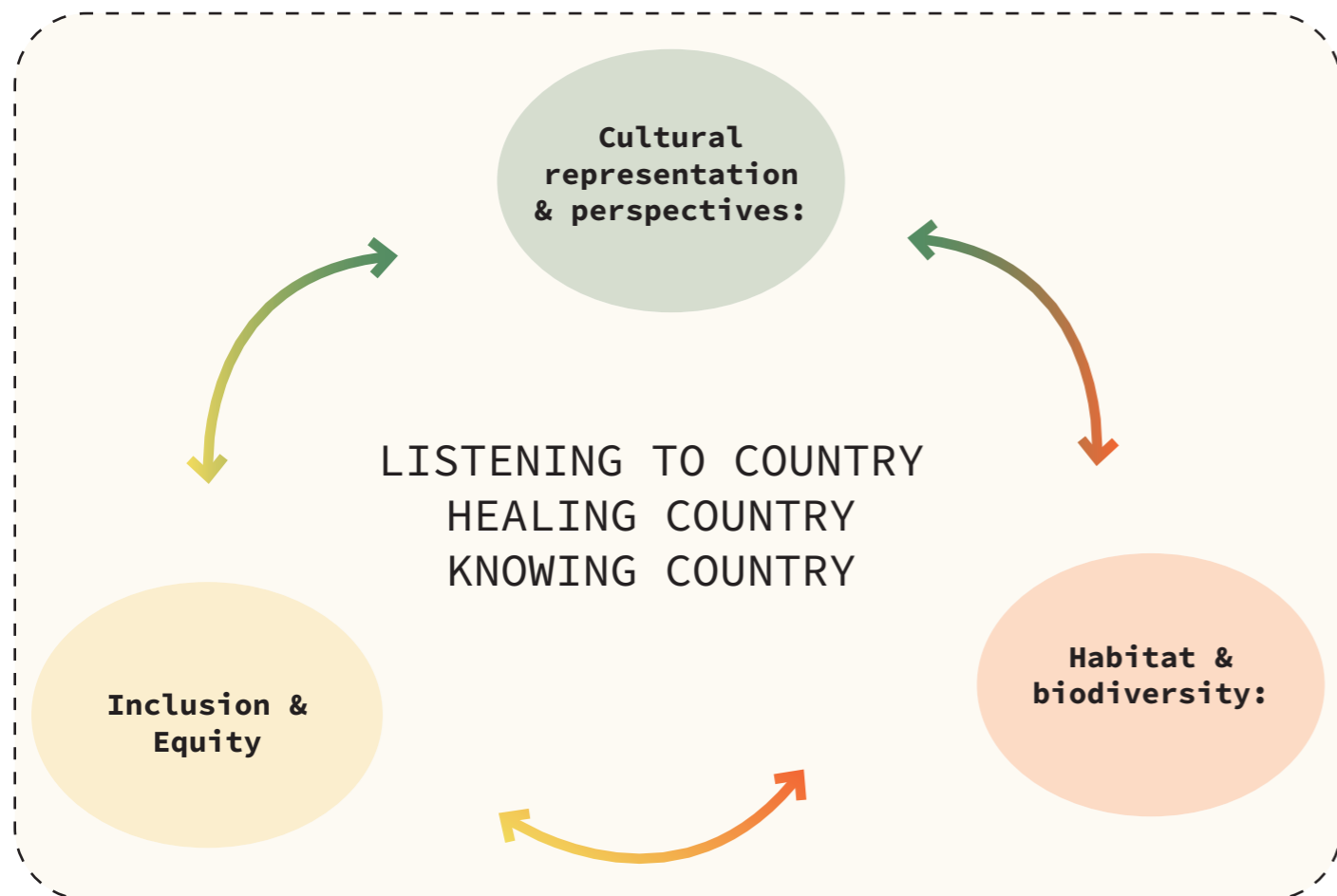
Placemaking as an enabler of integration, respect and representation of different groups including First Nations communities.

**Inclusion and equity:**

Placemaking as a pathway to deliver equity in our places. Remember that equity is different than equality. While equality aims to deliver the same conditions to all, equity is about providing just opportunities and acknowledging that different groups of people have different needs. This is an opportunity to address disability, designing for age.

**Habitat and biodiversity:**

Placemaking as an enabler of biodiversity and a response to biodiversity emergency.



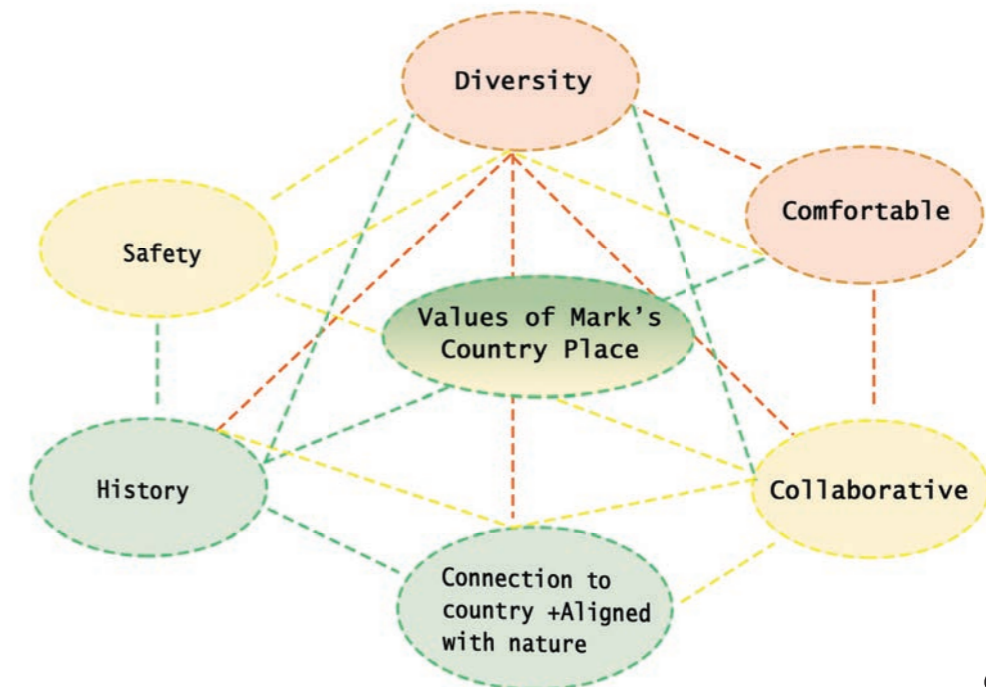
VALUES OF MARK'S COUNTRY PLACE

Mark's Country Place upholds certain values that are deeply rooted in cultural representation, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship, placemaking is vital in reflecting the voices, stories, and histories of the diverse communities along with having a strong focus on people with disabilities and the traditional owners of the land. Addressing and reinforcing these intersectionalities would foster a sense of shared responsibilities and strengthen community ties.

Whilst placemaking focuses on creating equal opportunities for everyone, the project shall be centered around creating fair experiences that are tailored to the specific requirements of diverse groups. This would translate into considering age, ability, skills, and factors alike to gauge the specific needs and curate spaces that people genuinely use and thrive in.

Moreover, the commitment to habitat and biodiversity highlights a proactive stance in addressing ecological challenges. By enhancing the existing green spaces, we are trying to reintroduce some of the indigenous species back to the land and adopt adaptive methodologies to make the place more ecologically sustainable, resilient, and relaxing for its users.

The place shall aim to champion cultural diversity, social inclusivity, and ecological balance while addressing the challenges of truly knowing the place and comprehending its connection with the past, present, and future.



## ENGAGEMENT / SITE VISIT

A complex natural system with abundant biodiversity and cultural value is the location of Mark's Country Place. Engaging with the site's current residents and their ecological ties is essential to ensuring the project adheres to sustainability and cultural sensitivity guidelines.

We may better appreciate the site's potential and the necessity of cautious stewardship by knowing its pre-colonial ecosystem. Details on the site's natural features and biological processes are provided by its designation as a Plains Grassy Woodland of the Central Victorian Uplands Bioregion. An open forest structure, a varied understory of grasses and herbs, and well-drained soils are characteristics of this vegetation type. By acknowledging the ecological importance of this sort of vegetation, we can put policies in place to protect native plant species, control invasive weeds, keep the soil healthy, and save water. We can create a management strategy that promotes the ecosystem's long-term viability and health by carefully examining the ecological context of the site.<sup>37</sup>

The project's capacity to repair and restore the ecological integrity of the site is among its most important prospects. We may aid in the preservation of these species and improve the biodiversity of the area by restoring native species like yabbies and grumbling grass frogs.

The Djaara people place great cultural and ecological value on yabbies. In addition to being a traditional food source, they are also essential to the upkeep of wetland ecosystems. Restoring ecological balance and fostering cultural practices are two of the larger objectives of Indigenous land management that are in line with the reintroduction of yabbies to the area. A local Indigenous project called the Djakitj Native Food Farm has been actively involved in yabbies production and conservation, offering invaluable knowledge and experience.

Another endangered species that could profit from habitat restoration on the property are growling grass frogs. These frogs help regulate insect populations and are significant markers of the health of wetland habitats. We can provide these frogs a safe place to flourish by establishing appropriate habitat, such as ponds and wetland regions.

The site's current eucalyptus trees are essential to the surrounding ecology. Numerous natural species, such as birds, possums, and insects, find homes in these trees. Their nectar-rich blooms draw pollinators like bees and butterflies, and their thick foliage provides cover and places to nest. Furthermore, eucalyptus trees may contribute to a more pleasant and healthy atmosphere by filtering air pollutants and lowering noise pollution.

Rocks and boulders are examples of the site's geological elements that give the landscape personality and diversity. By incorporating these elements into the architecture, one may create distinctive microhabitats for species, such as tiny mammals and reptiles using rock fissures. Moreover, they can be utilized to produce aesthetically pleasing elements like dry stream beds or rock gardens. The ecological value of the site may be increased by combining these pre-existing characteristics and working with the land's natural contours to produce a sustainable and harmonious design.

Engaging with the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the land's Traditional Owners, is crucial to ensuring that the project respects the site's history and cultural value. We may learn a great deal about the site's cultural history and apply traditional ecological knowledge to the space's management and design by collaborating with the Dja Dja Wurrung people.<sup>38</sup>

Mark's Country Place has the potential to become a model for sustainable and culturally sensitive development if the ecological and cultural characteristics of the land are carefully considered. We may reduce the project's environmental effect by giving ecological restoration, water-sensitive design, and the use of sustainable materials priority. Furthermore, we can create a space that is both environmentally sustainable and culturally significant by incorporating traditional ecological knowledge, honouring and respecting the Dja Dja Wurrung people's cultural heritage, and involving the local community in the design and management process.

<sup>37</sup>DEECA, 'DEECA', DEECA (DEECA, 10 November 2020), <https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au>.  
<sup>38</sup>DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation).

Our vision for Mark's Country Place is to build a place where Djandak shines through. We want to work together with Djaara, and the community to build a place where we can listen to each other, heal together and know our place. We hear the Murrup, and listen to the Songlines that run through this country.

Mark's Country Place will become a space where history and knowledge is made clear, with the aim of bringing the disabled, Indigenous, and all other residents of Kyneton and its surrounds together to learn about their connection to place.

OPPORTUNITIES



SOLUTIONS



OUR VISION & OUTCOME



# LISTENING TO COUNTRY HEALING COUNTRY KNOWING COUNTRY

PLACEMAKING FOR THE  
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Galka- trees

Darrak-branches

Wurrekang- talk

Girra - leaves

Murnang - daisy

Ngulumbarra- Gathering together

Dhelkunya Dja  
Healing/make  
good, land/

Djarrk - common reed

Larr- stone

Dja or djaa - earth

Group: YABBIES  
MARK'S COUNTRY PLACE

MEHIKA



OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

As has already been discussed earlier within the report within the 'Potential Obstacles' section, there are a number of potential obstacles for the site and for the project that Mark's Country Place aspires to be. The table below explores further the opportunities and constraints of the site, framing constraints as 'the cost of doing nothing,' meaning the cost of not utilising the opportunities that are present within the site, community, and stakeholders.

The image on the adjacent page marks out the area of the site for Mark's Country Place that our proposal for a collaborative native regeneration garden would be placed. This placement has been chosen for its centrality, and as it works within the existing masterplan for Mark's Country Place, meaning it can be reasonably and easily adopted within Sue and Stewart's existing plans for the site.

OPPORTUNITIES	COST OF DOING NOTHING
UTILISING SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGES AT HAND (LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, WINDARRING, DJAARA, COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS)	OPERATING IN A SILO
ADDRESSING & HEALING COLONIAL INJUSTICE	PERPETUATING COLONIAL INJUSTICE
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE	EXCLUDING POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS
DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE	HOMOGENEITY OF EXPERIENCE
DIVERSITY OF VOICES	SINGULAR VOICES
DIVERSE FUNDING STREAMS	UNSUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODEL
LONGEVITY & FUTURE PROOFING	SHORT LIVED IMPACT
PROVIDING A SERVICE FOR DIVERSE END USERS	EXCLUDING POTENTIAL END USERS
REACHING YOUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY	OBSCURITY



LISTENING, HEALING, KNOWING



**LISTENING**



**HEALING**



**KNOWING**

**CONSULTATION & LEARNING**

**LISTENING** TO PLACE WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A WAY FORWARD

- Engaging stakeholders (ie Dja Dja Wurrung/Djaara)
- Language use
- Walking Country together and storying Country; discovering objectives and goals
- Developing plan

**IMPLEMENTATION & DEVELOPMENT**

**HEALING** PLACE THROUGH LISTENINGS, ECOLOGICAL REHABILITATION, DEVELOPING ACCESSIBLE NATIVE GARDEN PROGRAM FOR SUSTAINABLE REHABILITATION OF COUNTRY

- Ground works
- Planting with volunteers or laborers
- Development of 'Knowing Country' programme for later activations

**LONG-TERM ACTIVATION & IMPLEMENTATION**

**KNOWING** PLACE THROUGH CONTINUED CARE, STORYTELLING AND TEACHING. PLACEKEEPING AS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

- Ongoing maintenance and healing
- Sharing in caring for Country
  - Accessible programme of engaging with Country
- Ongoing community outreach via digital activations through existing social media community networks

034

035

## 3 PHASES

## LISTENING



Actively interacting with the community and traditional owners is essential to the Mark's Country Place project. This calls for a multifaceted strategy that emphasizes candid communication and group decision-making. We may get insightful information from a variety of community members, such as Indigenous Elders, locals, and those with disabilities, by setting up seminars, forums, and surveys.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, to respect and integrate the Dja Dja Wurrung groups aboriginal corporation's cultural practices, traditions, and expertise into the project, a solid working partnership is necessary. The cultural consultation will be in line with the goals and values of the land's traditional owners thanks to this cultural consultation.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) provides important information on how to manage land sustainably. We may encourage biodiversity and restore ecological balance by including TEK into the project. Techniques that have been honed over many centuries, such as sustainable harvests and controlled fires, can be used to restore the land and its ecosystems.

Making the area accessible to everyone, including those with impairments, is a key component of this therapeutic endeavour. By making the landscape more accessible, we can make sure that everyone can use the area and take advantage of its benefits. Providing open routes, eliminating obstructions, and establishing gradual slopes are all part of this. For those with sensory sensitivity, adding sensory components like pleasant flora, soothing soundtracks, and tactile pathways can also improve the experience. All members of the community may feel included and like they belong if we provide a wide variety of events and activities that suit a range of interests and skill levels.

Inspiring communal stewardship and environmental consciousness requires information sharing and cultivating a closer bond with the land. We may use easily understood language to teach visitors about the site's ecological and cultural value by putting up informative signs. The history, culture, and ecology of the region may be thoroughly understood through guided tours and seminars offered by Indigenous Elders, environmental specialists, and residents. A feeling of community and shared responsibility may be fostered by using digital platforms and social media to reach a larger audience and promote online interaction.

By giving community involvement, cultural sensitivity, accessibility, and education priority, this project can have a long-lasting beneficial effect on the community and environment.

<sup>39</sup>DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)', accessed 3 October 2024, <https://djadawurrung.com.au/>.

## 3 PHASES

## HEALING



The vision for this place revolves around healing through active listening and community engagement. At its core, the proposal focuses on the rehabilitation of land with a strong connection towards community stewardship and respect for the traditional owners of the land and the environment. A key initiative of this project will be the development of an accessible native garden aimed at promoting a sense of Djaara place.<sup>40</sup> The healing aspect of the project invites community members from private and public forums to join hands in curing the land through collaborative exercises. It seeks volunteers and laborers to participate in hands-on activities such as planting native species (sedge grass, eucalypti, rocks), and restorative groundworks to regain the value of the land as close to what it was before the colonization, adapt techniques that support Indigenous survival and resilience instincts and action plans.

Another way that this could be achieved is by implementing traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in land management, this can involve practices like controlled burns, sustainable harvesting, and replanting of specific flora and fauna around the land to restore ecological benefits. This collaborative effort will not only revitalize the land but also build a strong shared purpose for the people of Kyneton. According to the Dhelkunya Dja (Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034) document which plays a pivotal role in our comprehension of the place, it mentions that through healing country a unique relationship between Dja-Dja Wurrung people and the community can be established that will promote the benefit of all Victorians.

Additionally healing country can also foster a positive response from a diverse mix of people especially people with specific disabilities or needs. Through healing the country, the land will be more soft, tactile, and smooth, helping people with disabilities to use the site easily and navigate their way around in a better manner. The groundworks need not be extensive, just minor compaction of land, overturning of fertile soil, and modification of landforms (big rocks and boulders) that can be moved to other parts of the site can result in the land being more accessible and convenient for the target user group. According to the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) the reoccurring cost of healing the country over 10 years would be around \$424,730 including the labor costs (both professional service providers and volunteers registered to work during the healing program phase), the cost of the supplementary planting of native species that will take place on the site in the following years. Based on this quantitative data and the quality of space that

<sup>40</sup>DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation)

we are aiming to curate for the people, stakeholders can adopt these straightforward actions, to contribute towards the healing of the site and support traditional and economic viability.

## KNOWING



038 Central to this project is the idea of “knowing the Country” which seeks to deepen the understanding of the traditional land about its culture and ecological significance whilst also appreciating its history and features. This gained knowledge would foster a stronger connection towards the land and subsequently connect people to view it as a valuable resource leading to its advocacy for continued care and nurturing. Some of the ways of doing this is through “knowing the place” through storytelling and teaching.

Developing place-keeping through storytelling could instill the concept of collaborative learning and would promote people of diverse communities and needs to find a reason to embrace and resonate with the land, this would be a shared effort and would require input from people of all ages, skills, and abilities within the community and the extended public sector. Another way of “knowing the Country” will be through strategic placement of signages, that would educate the people about the Dja Dja Wurrung vocabulary and connotations. These signages will spark curiosity amongst the visitors and will subsequently encourage them to know more about the site and its custodian’s history and culture.

Another important part of “knowing the country” is a continuous commitment to the project that requires active participation and passive support from stakeholders of all sectors. It must be ensured that regular maintenance activities such as community clean-up drives and strategic restorations can take place during active event hours, after-hours, and off-season times. These steps would serve as reminders to the

people of Kyneton to see as their duty to nurture and support the land, while also creating an elaborative maintenance framework that can be followed by future generations.

Additionally sharing the knowledge bank of experiences, resources, and benefits would instil a positive response from the community members generally drawing attention towards the project for future investments and events. This will promote the people of the community to build connections with one another alongside the land forming a vibrant and thriving community stewardship.

Through accessible educational tours, guided walks, meditations, workshops, and events individuals can connect more deeply with features of the land envisaging an anecdote unique to everyone. Corporates from across Melbourne can join hands with the current owners to achieve Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) benefits from the “knowing the country” program and provide this project more credibility.

039 Lastly one of the most important factors of “knowing the country” would be its social media outreach and digital activation, in today’s age and time, where everything is a click away, leaning on social media platforms for creating awareness and excitement about these events can be highly beneficial, this would not only help invite stakeholder and investment opportunities from far and wide but also create a strong digital footprint amongst other indigenous, and disability foresting initiatives existing globally.

## MONITORING

As a proposal it is difficult to implement a holistic monitoring and evaluation, however through adopting a reflexive participatory approach, we can evaluate our progress as the project unfolds. Drawing from developments in care ethics, we have devised a system of caring with. This is developed out of Tronto's Ethic of Care, and outlines how communities which develop minorities' ability to direct the way in which care infrastructure (think of things like the NDIS, or wheelchair accessible ramps) is run, deliver stronger and more resilient outcomes than top-down systems.<sup>41</sup> Alam and Houston highlight the importance of these networks being reflexive and constantly bettering and remaking themselves in a more equitable manner.<sup>42</sup> We propose a two part structure of evaluation and monitoring that put the target demographics of the project in charge of deciding the evaluation of the space. Through hosting a few workshops over the year, we can deliver a positive experience for everyone.

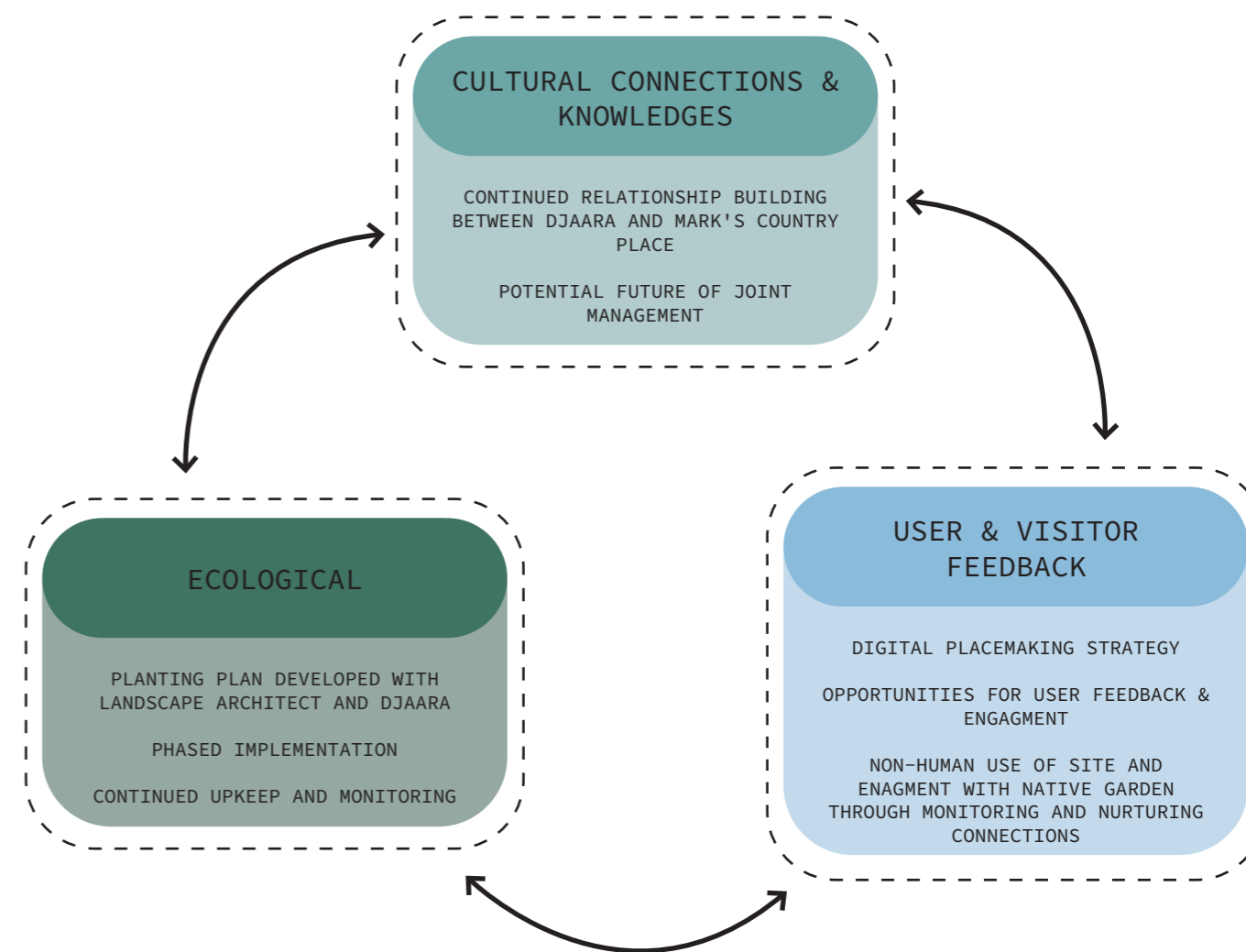
### Steering Committees

Steering committees deal with the evaluation of our placemaking project, and also serve as an opportunity to get people engaged and invested in the space. We propose a steering committee for each of the three target demographics of this project, people living with disability, people engaged in Dja Dja Wurrung land care, and key community representatives. These committees ought to have equal power and deciding the efficacy of this project, however given the sensitive nature of the information discussed, the Dja Dja Wurrung committee is allowed veto power over any decisions that they deem inappropriate or unacceptable. This reflects both fast strategic goals and their rights as held by international law.<sup>43</sup> This structure also gives unprecedented autonomy to people who are living with disability and allows them to have access to developing a project with real world implications.

### Use Monitoring

The second method focuses much more on the monitoring of the success of the project. Above, we have discussed a phased implementation plan for the project. This can be monitored through counting the number of users of each particular space, especially considering both human and nonhuman visitors. Here we can use citizen science programmes and digital placemaking tools to enhance our project, and better connect to the community.<sup>44</sup>

This two part structure presents yet another opportunity to drive engagement with Mark's Country Place. Both can be adapted into single day workshops that are enjoyable and fun for people to engage in, while simultaneously delivering advanced results in monitoring and evaluation.



<sup>41</sup> Joan Tronto, 'There Is an Alternative: Homines Curans and the Limits of Neoliberalism', *International Journal of Care and Caring* 1, no. 1 (March 2017): 27-43, <https://doi.org/10.1332/239788217X14866281687583>.

<sup>42</sup> Ashraf Al Alam and Donna Houston, 'Rethinking Care as Alternate Infrastructure', *Cities* 100 (1 May 2020): 102662, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102662>.

<sup>43</sup> Djaara, 'Dhelkunya Dja: Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034'; Australian Human Rights Commission, 'Right to Self Determination', [humanrights.gov.au](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/right-self-determination), accessed 3 November 2024, <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/rights-and-freedoms/right-self-determination>.

<sup>44</sup> Dominique Hes and Cristina Hernandez-Santin, eds., *Placemaking Fundamentals for the Built Environment* (Singapore: Springer, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9624-4>.

## WHO TO LEARN FROM & BUILD ON

Though there is no single case study that reflects our proposal for Mark's Country Place exactly, there are a multitude of existing businesses and programs that Sue and Stuart can use as references, and which validate the opportunity for success within our proposal. These diverse examples reflect the breadth of opportunity to engage with cultural knowledge sharing.

Djaara's Djakitj business is perhaps most pertinent to Mark's Country Place, due to its relevance as a project from the Country upon which Mark's Country Place exists, and the subsequent lessons that can be learned from this groundbreaking First People's venture. The venture is essentially a farm run by the Djaara Aboriginal Corporation, through which they are "researching, developing and growing traditional native ingredients that have cultural importance to the Djaara people of central Victoria."<sup>45</sup> This case study can be used as a key resource by Sue and Stuart in the development of the native regeneration garden – both in terms of planting schedule and a source for cultural knowledge. Their website and the documents provided by Djaara are essential reading for Sue and Stuart prior to the commencement of their engagement with this First People's group.

The Awabakal Environmental Education Centre is additionally a great case study for the knowledge sharing element of our proposal. A NSW school, it provides tours on Country to students, enabling "quality environmental and sustainability education for students and teachers in Newcastle, the Hunter Region and surrounds."<sup>46</sup> This engagement reflects a collaboration between state government and First Peoples, providing a cultural knowledge sharing opportunity on Country. This case study can be adapted by Mark's Country Place to develop an accessible learning plan for visitors of all dis/abilities to the site, teaching people about the layers of Country and of Place.

Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre is a similar example to Awabakal. 'Narana' means a deep listening and understanding in Wadawurrung language, and their "vision is to promote Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people by developing a better

understanding of culture through community connections."<sup>47</sup> In sharing cultural knowledge, it actively keeps the living culture of Australia's First People's alive and thriving. Sue and Stuart can similarly, in their own way, work towards reconciliation through Mark's Country Place, by healing this Country, and by creating opportunities for cultural learning on-site.

Lastly, Deadly Ed offers a range of services to teach all Australians about the long history of our continent. One such service is a bush tucker garden with signage, wherein they help with native garden design and create "designed plant signage to ensure the cultural knowledge stays within the organisation for years to come."<sup>48</sup> Sue and Stuart could extend this example through incorporating accessible signage within their native planting, to teach visitors of all abilities about Country and the history of place.

### CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING



**NARANA**  
Aboriginal Cultural Centre  
Developing a better understanding of culture through community connections



**DJAARA**  
Djakitj  
'Restocking the pantry' the Djaara way



**DEADLY ED**  
Bush Tucker Gardens & Signage  
Native gardening as an essential learning and wellness resource for all ages



**AWABAKAL**  
Environmental Education Centre  
Quality environmental and sustainability education for students and teachers

<sup>45</sup>Djaara, "Djakitj Dheekunya Beng."

<sup>46</sup>Awabakal Environmental Education Centre, "About our school," Awabakal Environmental Education Centre, accessed 01 October 2024, <https://awabakal-eschools.nsw.gov.au/about-our-school.html>

<sup>47</sup>Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre, "Narana's Vision," Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre, accessed on the 01 October 2024, <https://www.narana.com.au/>

<sup>48</sup>Deadly Ed, "Bush tucker gardens and signage," Deadly Ed, accessed 01 October 2024, [https://www.deadlyed.com.au/pages/bush-tucker-gardens?srsltid=AfmBOopvzKJMMDFIKYpK-8la7h5cywd36Wv\\_zfPMVn\\_XO94U1f1ka3a](https://www.deadlyed.com.au/pages/bush-tucker-gardens?srsltid=AfmBOopvzKJMMDFIKYpK-8la7h5cywd36Wv_zfPMVn_XO94U1f1ka3a)

## BUDGET

Thorough budgeting is necessary to guarantee Mark's Country Place's long-term viability. This entails considering both the setup and continuing costs of operations.

Land acquisition, infrastructure construction, equipment procurement, and acquiring the required permissions and licenses are examples of initial expenditures. The size of the property, the project's location, and other variables will all affect the precise expenses. A community garden's initial expenses may include land purchase, site preparation, water installation, and raised bed building, according to the Rhode Island Land and Water Partnership.<sup>49</sup>

Maintenance, utilities, insurance, employee pay, supplies, community activities, and marketing are just a few of the expenses that are included in ongoing operational costs. For the garden to remain healthy and long-lasting, regular upkeep is essential. Ongoing expenses are influenced by utilities including garbage disposal, power, and water.

044 Sufficient insurance coverage is necessary to guard against possible dangers. Labor expenditures will be a major outlay if the project calls for recruiting employees. Additionally required are ongoing costs for gardening equipment, seeds, and fertilizer. There may be extra expenses for advertising the garden and holding community gatherings.

Mark's Country Place has a few options for making money. Large sums of money can be donated by people, foundations, and businesses. Certain projects or efforts may be supported by grants from governmental and nonprofit institutions. A consistent source of revenue can be generated by charging membership fees. Selling goods like fruit, plants, or handcrafted crafts might bring you extra money. Plant sales and auctions are examples of fundraising activities that can assist collect money for general operations or initiatives.

By giving careful thought to these elements and creating a thorough budget, Mark's Country Place can successfully handle its money and accomplish its long-term objectives. Cost estimates that are more accurate can be obtained by speaking with local suppliers, contractors, and specialists. Furthermore, carrying out a comprehensive feasibility study can provide insightful information about the project's financial sustainability.

<sup>49</sup>Haley Rhode, 'Establishing a Community Garden for Impoverished and Food Insecure Residents in Garden Grove, CA: A Grant Proposal - ProQuest', accessed 13 October 2024, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/be9d4150951c352df65f2d1aff4446a7/1?pq-origsite=scholar&db=18750&diss=y>.

## UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE

The project would be scrutinized according to the following value benefits that it provides to the consumers:

### Country Value

*Preservation of Heritage:* The project emphasizes storytelling and teaching through shared experiences and anecdotal documentation of the past, present, and future. It builds upon the strong foundation of indigenous culture and tradition.

*Community Identity:* Engaging local stakeholders, organizations, and community members to find identity and credibility. The project gets legitimized within the public sphere and people take notice of it.

### Awareness Value

*Learning Opportunities:* The program fosters engagement with the country and educational learning promoting understanding of local ecosystems and indigenous practices.

*Skill Development:* Visitors of the mark's country place will benefit from acquiring skills related to gardening, groundwork, ecological engagement, and resource pooling, empowering everyone to generate new provocative ideas.

### Ecological Value

*Ecological Restoration:* Continuous maintenance and restoration contribute towards a thriving generative ecosystem that is resilient, self-reliant, and sustainable. The introduction of native flora and fauna back to the site builds a strong foundation to fight against climate change.

### Health and Well-being Value

*Mental and Physical Health Benefits:* Engaging with native land through hands-on activities can promote alleviated fitness, good mental health and help people cope with everyday stress, and give them a platform to relax and recharge with family in nature's nest.

### Monetary Value

*Job Creation:* Involving volunteers and laborers in groundworks and restoration efforts could create more jobs and establish the framework of a thriving circular generative economy.

### Societal Value

*Community Engagement:* By establishing a strong network of placemaking and people's participatory approach, societal and interpersonal relationships become stronger.

*Inclusivity:* Programmes accessible across all skills, ages, and abilities foster a mutual platform for sharing experiences, learning, and boosting one another.

### Digital Value

*Enhanced Outreach:* Utilizing digital platforms for community outreach will allow for a wider and younger audience to connect with the idea and provide valuable and insightful feedback for the continuous relevance, improvement, and functioning of the project. The creation of online communities can also help get in touch with extended stakeholders having similar interests in either country, native species, accessibility or just gardening.

045

UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE

We wanted to thoroughly understand the scope and costing of our proposal, so we constructed an exhaustive Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) to fully understand the scope of the project. We estimated the non-recurring costs through compiling the immediate costs of the project, including the cost of planting, Djaara engagement and Plant Signage.<sup>50</sup>

The recurring costs were designed using Greyling and Bennett's CBA of the Regent Honey Eater Habitat Restoration in the Capertee Valley, as the project work seemed comparable. We costed the volunteer labour as this is standard practice in Commonwealth budgeting.<sup>51</sup> This also had the added benefit of allowing us to plan the costing in a worst-case scenario where volunteer labour is unavailable. The project is considerably better off without the cost of volunteer labour which totalled \$171,830 over 10 years, making up just under half of the total recurring costs. Despite this, our analysis shows a payback period of little more than 2 years, a very positive sign for the project.

The majority of our benefits were a result of running educational programs in the project area, which totalled \$93,900 a year, after the very initial construction was complete. This success is primarily thanks to the purpose of conducting a tours and educational workshops. This should be conducted through the building of community partnerships with schools, holiday programs, and in appealing to corporate workers and recreationalists, as reflected by other community organisations like CERES.<sup>52</sup> We modelled the revenue based on a total of 15 events with 20 participants priced at \$145 per person, and 20 events with 40 participants priced at \$63 per person, reflecting a possible income stream.<sup>53</sup>

The project achieved a benefit to cost ratio of 1.62 over 5 years, and 1.4 over 10. Generally, projects that are above 1 are financially viable, and sustainable. Most notably, we have achieved a net present value of \$249,839, which is exceptionally high. Despite the positive projections, and the risk averse process we adopted, it is important to consider the uncertainty of projects and the possibility of unforeseen risk.

Performance measures:	5 years	10 years
IIR (\$)	104%	112%
NPV (\$)	\$94,861.54	\$249,839.20
Payback period (Years)	2.1	2.1
BCR (#)	1.62	1.40

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 10	5 yr TOTAL	10 yr TOTAL
<b>BENEFITS</b>								
REVENUE	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 93,900.00	\$ 93,900.00	\$ 93,900.00	\$ 469,500.00	\$ 306,700.00	\$ 776,200.00
COST SAVINGS	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 2,343.45	\$ 2,343.45	\$ 4,686.90
COST AVOIDANCE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
OTHER BENEFITS	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL BENEFITS</b>	<b>\$ 5,468.69</b>	<b>\$ 20,468.69</b>	<b>\$ 94,368.69</b>	<b>\$ 94,368.69</b>	<b>\$ 94,368.69</b>	<b>\$ 471,843.45</b>	<b>\$ 309,043.45</b>	<b>\$ 780,886.90</b>
<b>COSTS</b>								
NON-RECURRING	\$ 7,550.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,550.00	\$ 9,550.00
RECURRING	\$ 17,583.00	\$ 17,533.00	\$ 48,783.00	\$ 48,733.00	\$ 48,683.00	\$ 368,415.00	\$ 181,315.00	\$ 549,730.00
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 25,133.00</b>	<b>\$ 19,033.00</b>	<b>\$ 49,283.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,733.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,683.00</b>	<b>\$ 368,415.00</b>	<b>\$ 190,865.00</b>	<b>\$ 559,280.00</b>
<b>NET BENEFIT OR COST</b>	<b>-\$ 19,664.31</b>	<b>\$ 1,435.69</b>	<b>\$ 45,085.69</b>	<b>\$ 45,635.69</b>	<b>\$ 45,685.69</b>	<b>\$ 103,428.45</b>	<b>\$ 118,178.45</b>	<b>\$ 221,606.90</b>

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2025	10 year TOTAL
<b>NON-RECURRING COSTS</b>							
Initial Planting and Construction	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,000.00
Malamiya (Cultural Heritage Consult)	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00
Plant Signage (15 signs)	\$ 1,050.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,050.00
Language Use Request	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00
<b>TOTAL NON-RECURRING COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 7,550.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 500.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 9,550.00</b>

Notes:  
Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-Op, 'Price List'.  
Djaara, 'Dhelk Djuwima I Our Services'.  
DeadlyEd, 'Plant Signage'.  
Djaara, 'Dhelk Djuwima I Our Services'.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2025	10 year TOTAL
<b>RECURRING COSTS</b>							
Labour - Volunteers	\$ 17,183.00	\$ 17,183.00	\$ 17,183.00	\$ 17,183.00	\$ 17,183.00	\$ 85,915.00	\$ 171,830.00
Labour - Professionals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31,300.00	\$ 31,300.00	\$ 31,300.00	\$ 156,500.00	\$ 250,400.00
Supplementary Planting	\$ 400.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,500.00
<b>TOTAL RECURRING COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 17,583.00</b>	<b>\$ 17,533.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,783.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,733.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,683.00</b>	<b>\$ 243,415.00</b>	<b>\$ 424,730.00</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 25,133.00</b>	<b>\$ 19,033.00</b>	<b>\$ 49,283.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,733.00</b>	<b>\$ 48,683.00</b>	<b>\$ 243,415.00</b>	<b>\$ 434,280.00</b>

Greyling and Bennett, 'Environmental Economics Research Hub Research Reports', S3.2.2.  
Calculated as 1/3 of the tours/group visits  
Greyling and Bennett, 'Environmental Economics Research Hub Research Reports', S3.2.1.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	TOTAL
<b>REVENUES</b>							
Tours/group visits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 93,900.00	\$ 93,900.00	\$ 93,900.00	\$ 469,500.00	\$ 751,200.00
Council Grants	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00
State Grants	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 5,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 20,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 93,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 93,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 93,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 469,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 776,200.00</b>

Calculated as [20\*full fare (\$145pp) \* 15] + [40\*fullfare(\$63pp) \* 20] CERES School of Nature and Climate, 'Learn Gardening, Cooking & Craft | CERES Workshops & Courses'.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 'Community Climate Action Grants'.  
DEECA, 'Victorian Landcare Grants'.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2025	10 year TOTAL
<b>COST SAVINGS</b>							
Reduced maintenance costs	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 468.69	\$ 2,343.45	\$ 4,686.90
<b>TOTAL COST SAVINGS</b>	<b>\$ 468.69</b>	<b>\$ 468.69</b>	<b>\$ 468.69</b>	<b>\$ 468.69</b>	<b>\$ 468.69</b>	<b>\$ 2,343.45</b>	<b>\$ 4,686.90</b>

Based off difference water usage lawn with shrubs v native garden (National Poly Industries, 'Calculating Your Farm Water Usage Requirements'; Coliban Water, 'Rural Fees and Charges 2024-25'.)

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2025	10 year TOTAL
<b>COST AVOIDANCE</b>							
None	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL COST AVOIDANCE</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2025	10 year TOTAL
<b>OTHER BENEFITS</b>							
Expansion of Aboriginal heritage and Knowing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Closer ties to communities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL OTHER BENEFITS</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>TOTAL BENEFITS</b>	<b>\$ 5,468.69</b>	<b>\$ 20,468.69</b>	<b>\$ 94,368.69</b>	<b>\$ 94,368.69</b>	<b>\$ 94,368.69</b>	<b>\$ 471,843.45</b>	<b>\$ 780,886.90</b>

Uncountable NSW Treasury, 'Valuing First Nations Cultures in Cost-Benefit Analysis'.  
ibid.

<sup>50</sup>DeadlyEd, 'Plant Signage', Deadly Ed, Accessed 1 November 2024, <https://www.deadlyed.com.au/products/plant-signage>; Djaara, 'Dhelk Djuwima I Our Services', accessed 1 November 2024, <https://djadawurrung.com.au/dhelk-djuwima-our-services/>; Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-Op, 'Price List', January 2024, <https://www.vinc.net.au/about/price-list>.

<sup>51</sup>Tertius Greyling and Jeff Bennett, 'Revegetation of Regent Honeyeater Habitat in the Capertee Valley: A Cost-Benefit Analysis', *Environmental Economics Research Hub Research Reports*, no. 81 (December 2010).

<sup>52</sup>CERES School of Nature and Climate, 'Learn Gardening, Cooking & Craft | CERES Workshops & Courses', CERES (blog), 11 June 2024, <https://school.ceres.org.au/adult-learning/>.

<sup>53</sup>ibid.



## LISTENING, HEALING, KNOWING

A PLACEMAKING STRATEGY FOR  
MARK'S COUNTRY PLACE

In essence, our project stands as the vibrant fabric woven from listening, healing, and knowing Country. As we gather to share our experiences of land, and the stories of our ancestors and embrace the earth around us, within everyone's heart there will be hope to nurture and take care, of this pious piece of land. Each seed that we would plant, each story that is shared shall transcend with time from generation to generation. We would then become the living kaleidoscope of this world that fosters connections and embraces nature.

Imagine a place where laughter fills the sweet summer breeze, smoke from the native fire, and people sit around reciting their stories, rich colors of flora and fauna bloom in the surroundings in full glory, where every visitor feels included, welcomed, and valued.

This is not just a mere vision but a possibility up for grabs, with Mark's Country Place we are we are trying to curate an experience that would celebrate inclusivity and embrace disability in its truest form.

As we embark on this journey of listening, healing, and knowing, let us keep in mind that every act of care is a step towards a more just and equitable society, with a strengthened spirit of collaboration, we can not only rejuvenate ourselves but also contribute towards the greater good. We can adapt to become stewards of a legacy that honours our past while nurturing the promise of a vibrant future. Together let us move forward, with the stories of the past guiding our way and the heartbeat of the land thumping with every step that we take. Together let us curate an experience for our future generation to learn about our rich history, companionship, connections, and relationships. Let us make Mark's Country Place the reflection of a harmonious society.



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Fig. 01. Collage, in part made from Cornelis, Jari. A Coastal Carpet Python (Morelia spilota) Basks in the Winter Sun on the Edge of a Cliff of Lamington National Park, 2019. TNC Photo Contest. [https://blog.nature.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/e5b778f2dad7b0786bd6d12a9bd88262\\_original-e1603068157149.jpg](https://blog.nature.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/e5b778f2dad7b0786bd6d12a9bd88262_original-e1603068157149.jpg); Park, Geoff. Wedge-Tailed Eagle, Moolort Plains, V. 14 March 2017. Photograph. <https://geoffpark.wordpress.com/2017/03/16/bunjil-takes-flight>

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