



YEA

WETLANDS



**TOURISM
SERIES**

YEA WETLANDS

CONTRIBUTORS

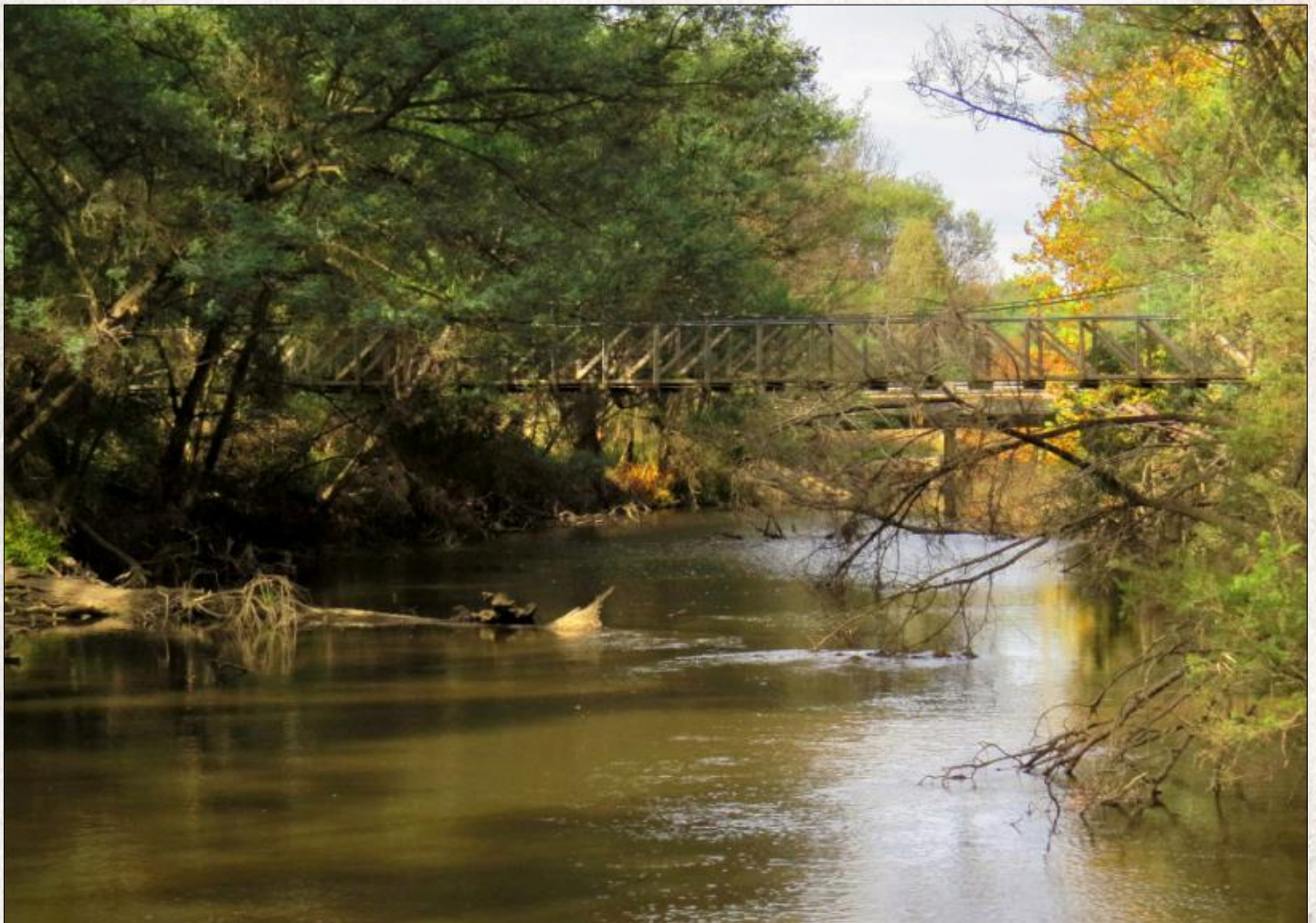
Robert Gardiner
Russel & Cheryl Wealands
David & Debbie Hibbert

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Name: Yea Wetlands
Type: Tourism Attraction
Location: Eastern end of High Street, Yea
GPS: S37.209426 E145.432129

The Yea Wetlands is located on the eastern end of High Street Yea and is the District's most important Wetland. It is home to an increasing number of plants and animals and is specifically designed for tourists.



The Yea Wetlands is a 32 Hectare parcel of land, developed into the District's most significant Wetland and water usage educational area. It incorporates a large Day Visitor Area as well as the Yea Y Water Discovery Centre. This facility includes the large modern Yea Visitor Information Centre, as well as an Interpretive & Educational Centre for children and adults. The Wetlands area is located within the boundaries of the township of Yea and is found at the eastern end of High Street, the main street of Yea.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION



Originally this land made up a small part of the larger area inhabited by the Taungurung People. Early historical records tell us that when the first white settlers arrived in the Yea District, the local Taungurung numbered in their hundreds. This wetlands area would have been a major source for food, water, recreation and a safe and fertile living environment.

The Wetlands include an information board area, suspension bridge, large frog pond, elevated walkways, bird hides, viewing platforms, picnic tables and chairs, historic relics and more. The pathways are of excellent grade, as are the parking and picnic facilities.

Work to turn the overgrown and unused area into a useable Wetlands Educational Precinct first began in the late 1990s when Yea local, Russell Wealands began working to fulfil a dream of developing a world class Wetlands Educational Area in the township. One of the first major steps forward in fulfilling his dream came when Russell secured



funding for the building of a 30 metre Cable Suspension Bridge for pedestrians across the Yea River. This joined the Wetlands area with the main township of Yea. The bridge was officially opened to the public on 29 November 2003 by then local member Ben Hardman MLA (the member for Seymour). Further works around this time included the establishment of walking tracks around the wetlands area.

After the suspension bridge was built, Russel secured a number of grants for further works, including from the State Government. A large amount of money was also raised over time by

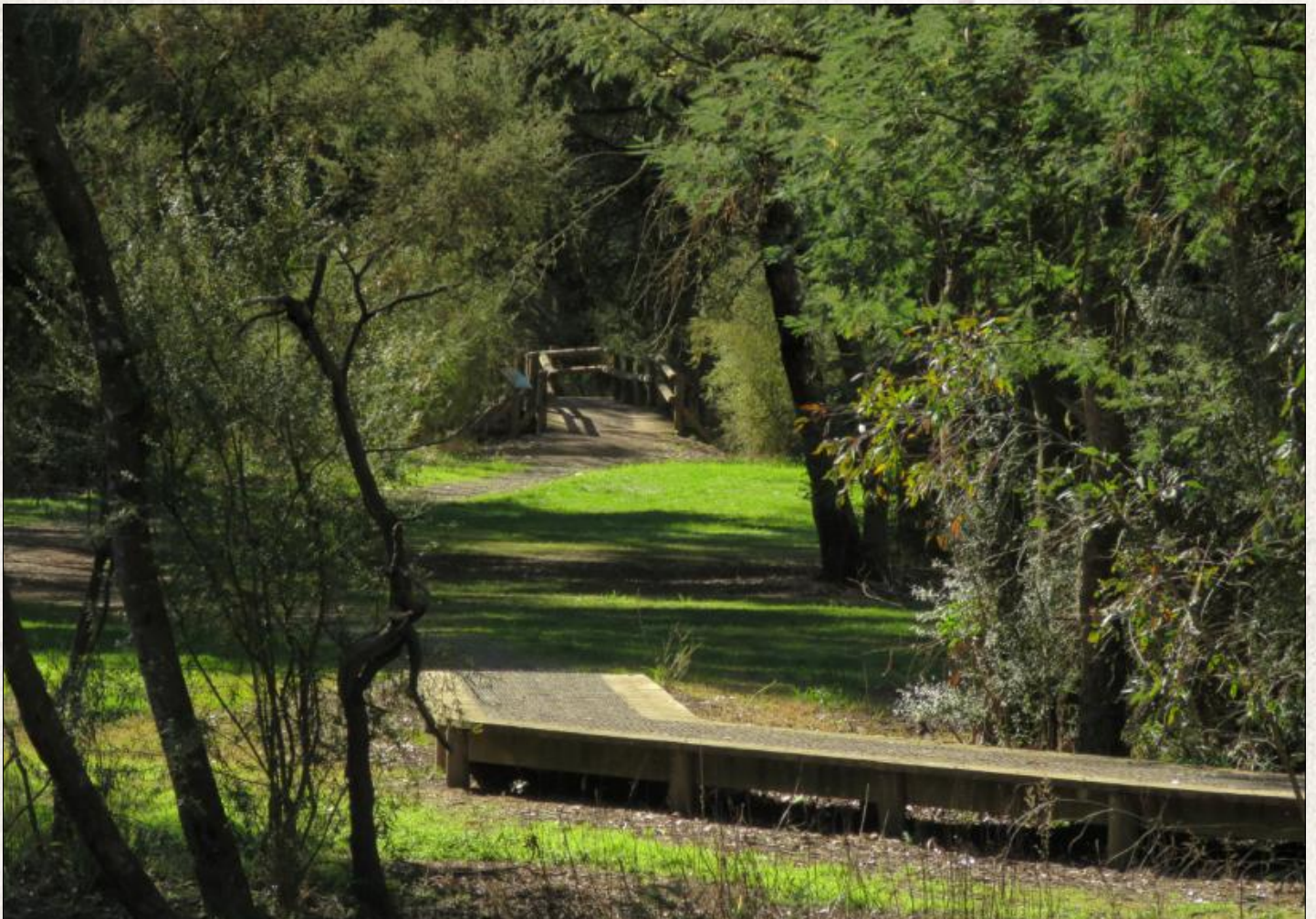
HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

the Yea Wetlands Committee.

Works completed between 2009 and 2013 included the establishment of elevated walk paths in areas most prone to water, revegetation, lookouts, bird hides, gravelling of tracks, seats, picnic tables and a large shaded table. Bird nesting boxes were established and an information area built, amongst many other initiatives.

In 2012, 1.9 million dollars was committed by the Yea Wetlands Committee from Government funding for a new Yea Wetlands Interpretive Structure incorporating a state of the art nature educational component, a Visitor Information Centre, an exhibition area and more.





HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

- Unknown** Russell Wealands began work on creating a Wetlands area at Yea.
- 2011** Taungurung Elder and long-term supporter of the Yea Wetlands project - Irene Lawrey - passed away.
- 10 March 2013** A memorial to Taungurung Elder - Irene Lawrey - was opened at the Yea Wetlands. near the frog pond.
- 29 November 2003** The Yea Wetlands 30 m pedestrian Cable Suspension Bridge was officially opened.
- 2013** An amount of 1.9 million dollars was committed for the creation of a Yea Wetlands Interpretive Centre that is to incorporate a state of the art Nature Educational component as well as a new Visitor Information Centre and exhibition space.
- April 2013** Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet and completed the Yea Wetlands Tourism brochure and Yea Wetlands map.
- May 2013** Artworkz published their first feature on the Wetlands in eSplash57, which included the release of the ePic Magazine featuring photographs of Yea Wetlands Sap from wattle trees.
- 31 May 2013** The tender to build the Yea Y-Centre was awarded to Kinglake building contractors 'Darjelyn Constructions'. They are the same group who built the Kinglake Medical Centre in 2013.

THE YEA WETLANDS

GOULBURN VALLEY HIGHWAY, YEA
PUBLISHED ESPLASH57, MAY 2013



Flora & Fauna abound

The Yea Wetlands has developed into the District's most established and visited wetlands for a very good reason.



The Yea Wetlands Cable Suspension Bridge was opened on 29 November 2003 and continues to serve as a highlight of the Wetlands area.





One of the elevated walking tracks

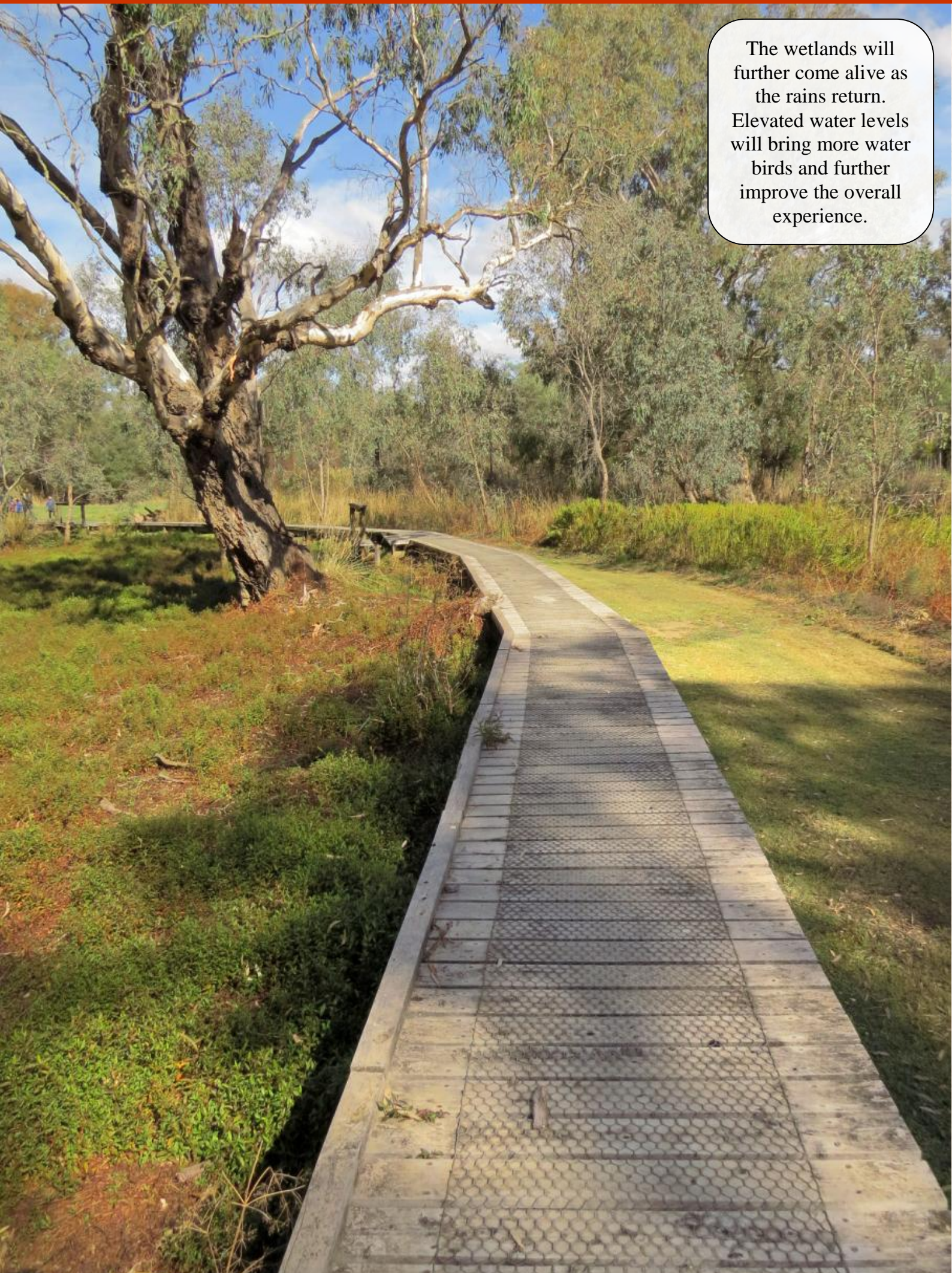


Birdlife is abundant at the Yea Wetlands. I have been pleasantly surprised with how many birds I have been able to hear, see and photograph.



Brown Thornbill

The wetlands will further come alive as the rains return. Elevated water levels will bring more water birds and further improve the overall experience.



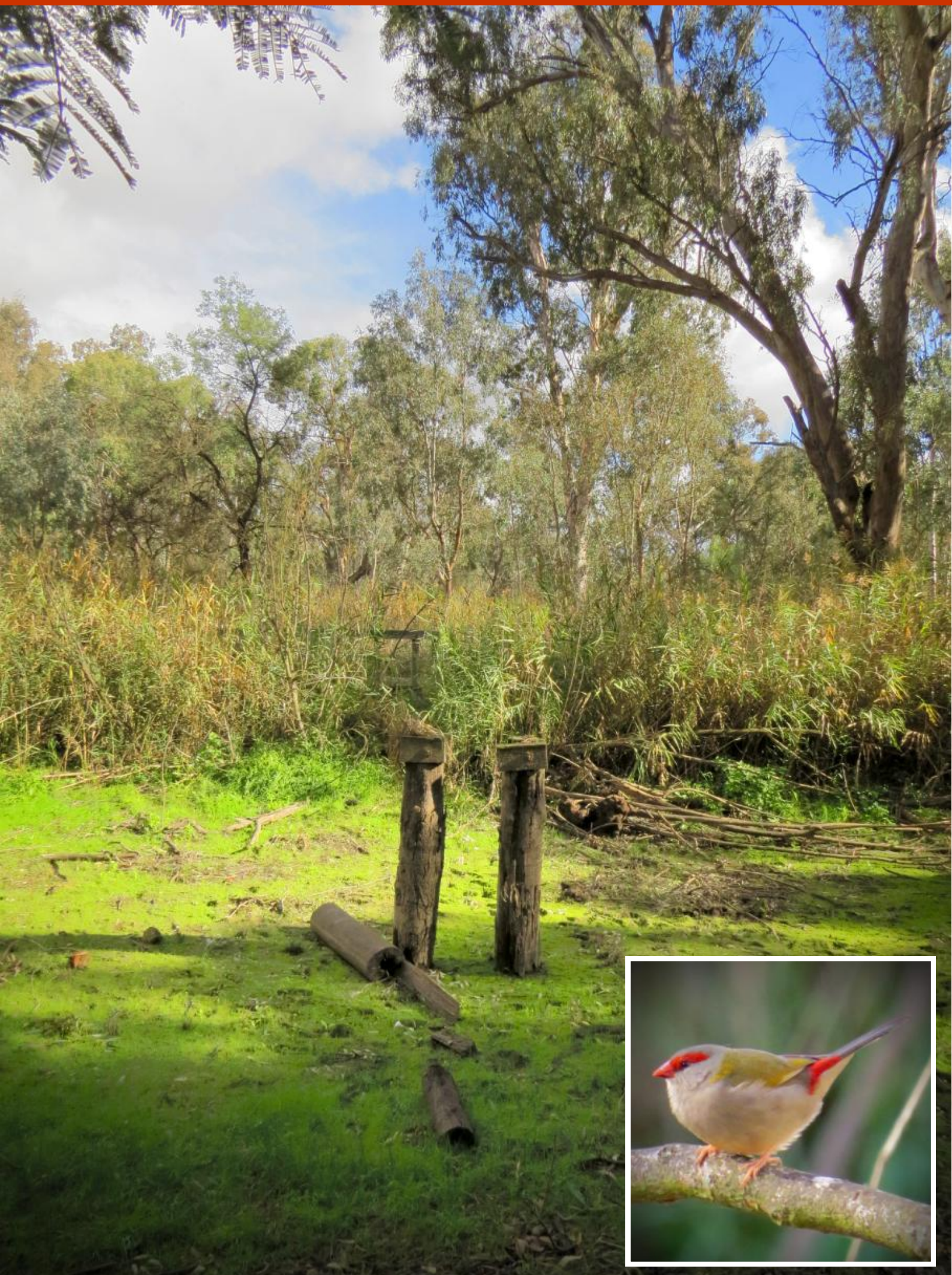
The non-slip surface on the elevated walkways







The Yea Wetlands Suspension Bridge









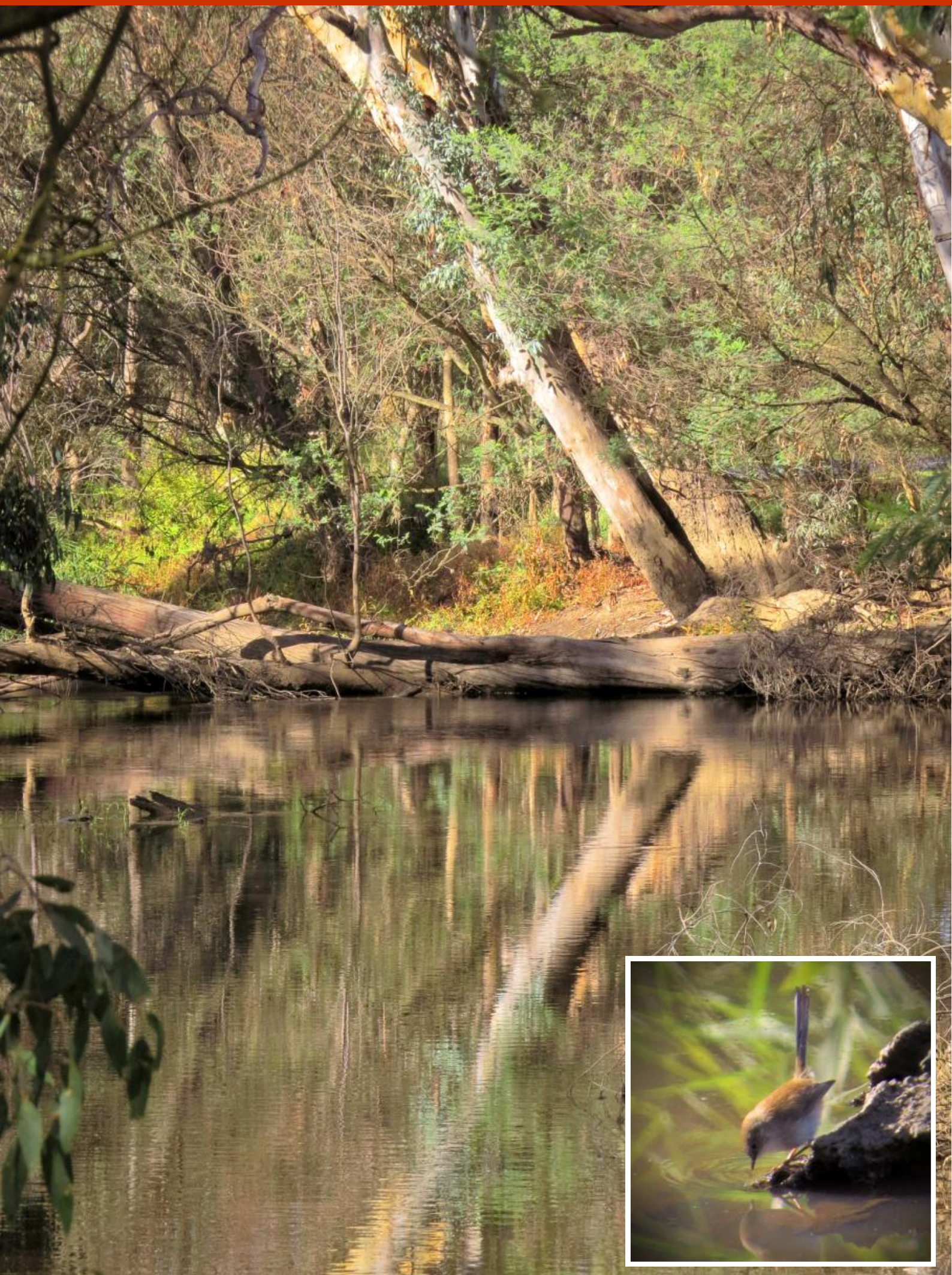


Old Man's Face in a tree along the Franklin Walk. Note the two eyes and nose



Bush setting






Superb Fairy-wren takes time out for a drink amongst the beautiful reflections



Tree sap



Dedicated to the memory of our respected Elder
Aunty Irene Lawrey
for her life long commitment to the Franklin family
and the Aboriginal community of Yea.
Acknowledgement also to the Taungurung people,
the original custodians of this country.



WHO EATS WHOM?

Some will be too tiny to see!

FRANKLIN TRACK

The Wetland Web of Life

A wide range of wetland animal life ultimately relies on plants. The plants harness the sun's energy and convert it to food energy (photosynthesis). It is not only the large plants you see growing in the water and wetland edges, but also great quantities of microscopic aquatic plants (phytoplankton) and algae that supply energy to sustain the rest of the food chain.



Adult dragonfly

Dragonfly nymph

Many insects undergo metamorphosis: in the larval stage exists in a totally different form to that of its adult parent.



Caddisfly nymph



Adult caddisfly

Freshwater wetlands contain a vast array of species (biodiversity) and large biomass (the total volume or weight of living things). Herbivores (plant eaters) and carnivores (animal eaters) occur in many different sizes. There is no simple food chain in the wetland, but a complex web of interactions between species. Every creature is a potential meal for many others.

This complex web of 'who is eating whom' is happening in every corner of the reserve – in the soils and dead organic layers beneath the water, in thick vegetation in and near the water's edge, in open water, and on the surrounding wetland and woodland vegetation. A large population of invertebrates feeds the many larger vertebrates, such as fish, frogs, manamarr, reptiles, birds and mammals. The cycle of energy is completed as both plants and animals die and are broken down by chemical and biological processes to supply nutrients to plants. Microscopic life including bacteria and fungi are important elements in preventing a build-up of dead organisms.

NOTE: Invertebrates themselves may also be predators.

THE LAND OWNED THEM

To the indigenous people, everything was interconnected: land, people and all living things. Dependent upon seasonal change, knowledge of the constellations and the developmental stages of plants and animals, people moved from place to place to maximise the availability of food and shelter.



Carraboree 1843 by William Larlet

To the Taungurung, seasons were associated with change: *weevil* season – September, *tailpole* season – October.



Yea Wetlands

Natural Heritage Trust

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FRANKLIN TRACK

The GOOD LIFE

Be quiet and patient and you may see ...

The **PLATYPUS** / *wadherrung* (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*), an egg-laying mammal or **monotreme** like the echidna / *gawarrn*, is uniquely Australian. The female produces milk, which oozes onto a patch of fur for the new-born 'puggle' to drink. The male has a poisonous spur on each hind foot, which is used for protection.

Platypus build burrows under tree roots in the river bank where vegetation overhangs the water. Native vegetation provides the platypus with protective cover from predators and offers shade during the summer / *nguni-yak-darreen*.

A brilliant diver and swimmer, the platypus closes its eyes and ears under water, using instead highly developed electro-magnetic sensors in its duck-like bill to detect worms, shrimp and aquatic larvae. It can eat its own

body weight in one night, storing excess fat in its tail for lean times.

NOTE: Platypus have been seen here feeding during dawn and dusk.



Bill of a platypus

The Yea River is also home to the one other specialised freshwater Australian mammal, the **water rat** / *nikali* (*Hydromys chrysogaster*). It has a flattened head, large, partly webbed hind feet and a long tail with a white tip.

TAUNGURUNG LAND GOOD COUNTRY, MY COUNTRY

The painting's background represents the texture of a scarred tree. Circles represent places – the border dots are outlining Aboriginal lands. A foot touching a circle signifies where the people now reside and a hand touching a circle their connection to their ancestral lands. The leaf symbolises the growth of learning and knowledge of Taungurung culture.



It's **EASIER TO RESTORE** than replace habitat

The Yea Wetlands Committee of Management takes an evolution rather than a revolution approach to restoration:

- A full range of wetland plants are being planted into the area to restore native habitat and improve water quality.
- Logs and dead trees are left as important natural habitat and for birds to perch on.
- Exotic or garden escapees have invaded the wetlands. Careful spot-spraying with specific herbicide is used for control.
- Willow trees (*Salix* spp.) reduce biodiversity. Their root-mats diminish the variety of under water habitats and above ground take the place of a wider variety of local species. Stem injection of herbicide is used to control them.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER: join 'Friends of the Yea Wetlands'

www.yeawetlands.org.au

Wetlands

Natural Heritage Trust

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Australia's earliest land plants

Rocks in the Yea district contain fossils of some of the world's earliest land plants.

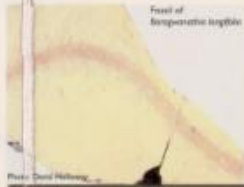
The most important of these fossils is *Baragwanathia longifolia*. It belongs to a group of primitive, non-flowering plants called club mosses or lycopods.

This fossil plant shows remarkable adaptations that helped it and other plants make the difficult transition from life in the seas to life on land.

Fossils of *Baragwanathia longifolia* first appear in rocks that were deposited during the Silurian Period, about 420 million years ago.

The Flora Fossil Site - Yea is included in Australia's National Heritage List because of its outstanding natural heritage values and worldwide significance. This place reveals valuable information about Australia's geological history, the evolution of plants and their successful adaptations to living on land.

Flora Fossil Site - Yea



Australian Government
Agrees through Gifts to the Nation
to National Heritage places

Marshalltown Earth Services

Flora Fossil Site

The John Cotton Story



John Cotton

John Cotton, accompanied by his wife Susannah and their nine children, arrived at Port Phillip aboard the ship 'Parkfield' in May 1843. The following August he set out from Melbourne for the Yea district where his brother Edward had leased land on the Goulburn River. By September that year, John had acquired the lease of a 30,000 acre (12,140 ha) property from a Mr Campbell. That land extended from the King Parrot Creek in the west to the Yea River in the east.

In November 1843, John Cotton and his family took up residence at 'Doogalook' remaining there until his death on 14 December 1849.

John Cotton had been educated at Oxford University and later became an articled clerk in London. His classical education was clearly evidenced by the elegant and evocative prose present in the forty-four letters he wrote to his brother William in England from his residence at 'Doogalook'. By 1829 he had become a Fellow of the Royal Zoological Society of London and by 1836 had published two books on the song birds of England. In Australia he maintained this interest in drawing, writing, painting and biology.



On arrival in the Yea district, he took a keen interest in observing and recording the indigenous plants, animals, birds and insects of the area. He published the first scientific work on birds in the district and became Victoria's first recognised ornithologist. John had a passionate delight in painting and his pictures captured impressions of what the area was like in the 1840's.

Much of John Cotton's early scientific work is held by the Latrobe Library.

Sign Source: R. Whittaker

Participate. Discover. Celebrate.

Yea Wetlands
Committee of Management
Developing Yea's best kept Secret



YEA WETLANDS CABLE SUSPENSION BRIDGE

Constructed in 2003, this 30m span bridge was erected to provide safe pedestrian access between the Yea township and the adjoining Wetlands.

A State Government grant of \$43,400 was provided under the Government's Rural Community Infrastructure Allocation Program.

Matching funds were provided by Murrindindi Shire Council and the Yea Wetlands Committee of Management with voluntary labour provided by members of the Yea community.

The bridge was officially opened by Ben Hardman MLA, Member for Seymour on 29 November, 2003.



MURRINDINDI
SHIRE COUNCIL



Yea Wetlands
Committee of Management
Developing Yea's best kept Secret



Victoria
The Place To Be

The Bird Hides are excellent areas to watch for those shy birds. Both Bird Hides include seating.



The Yea Wetlands is home to a huge range of flora and fauna. We were pleasantly surprised with the broad range of wildlife that we were able to experience in the wetland habitat.



YEA WETLANDS ADVENTURE TOURIST MAP

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE 5797 2663
MAP NOT TO SCALE
MAP © COPYRIGHT 2013 DAVID HIBBERT



[Download the Yea Wetlands Brochure here](#)

The Yea Wetland's area has slowly been developing in the background and has now become a major District Tourism Attraction. We visited the Wetlands numerous times in the month of April and were surprised with the large number of people roaming the area and enjoying a break at the numerous picnic tables. The above map was produced during April and highlights many of the areas. We have used the map on our new Yea Wetland's Brochure (downloadable above).

YEA WETLANDS

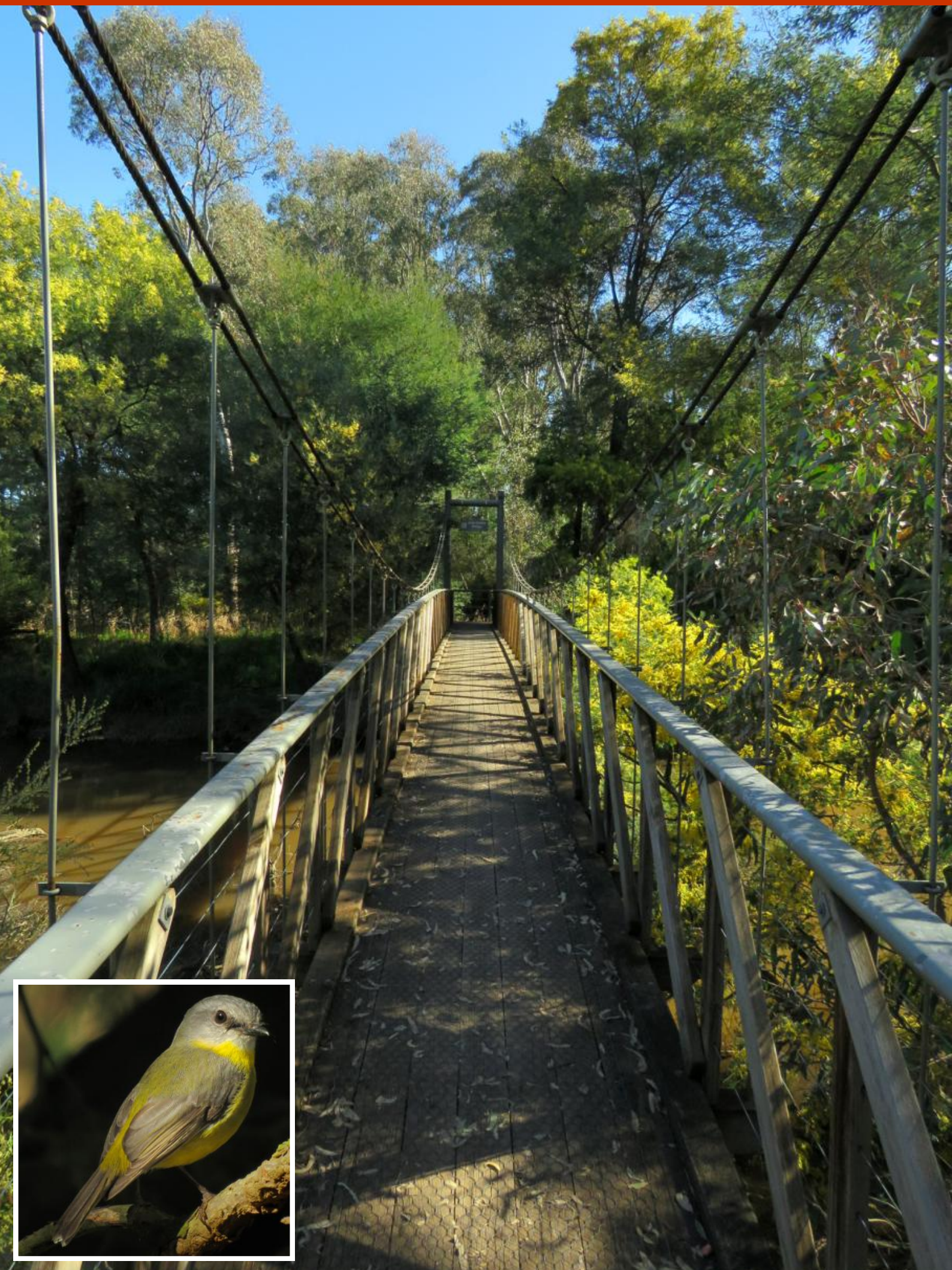
YEA - 14 SEPTEMBER 2018

PUBLISHED 20 SEPTEMBER IN ESPLASH203



A casual walk through nature

Thanks to it being a beautiful sunny day with a top temperature of 18 degrees, I felt it was the perfect time to enjoy a casual walk through the Yea Wetlands Reserve. It was extremely rewarding and a great way to relax while learning from nature.



John Cotton Bridge and an Eastern Yellow Robin (inset)



Bird hide and a tree mounted bird box (inset)



The Wetlands is full of surprises and one of them on this day was the wide range of frog calls that could be heard at one section of the track. A recording I took with my iPhone can be heard by clicking on the button on the right.

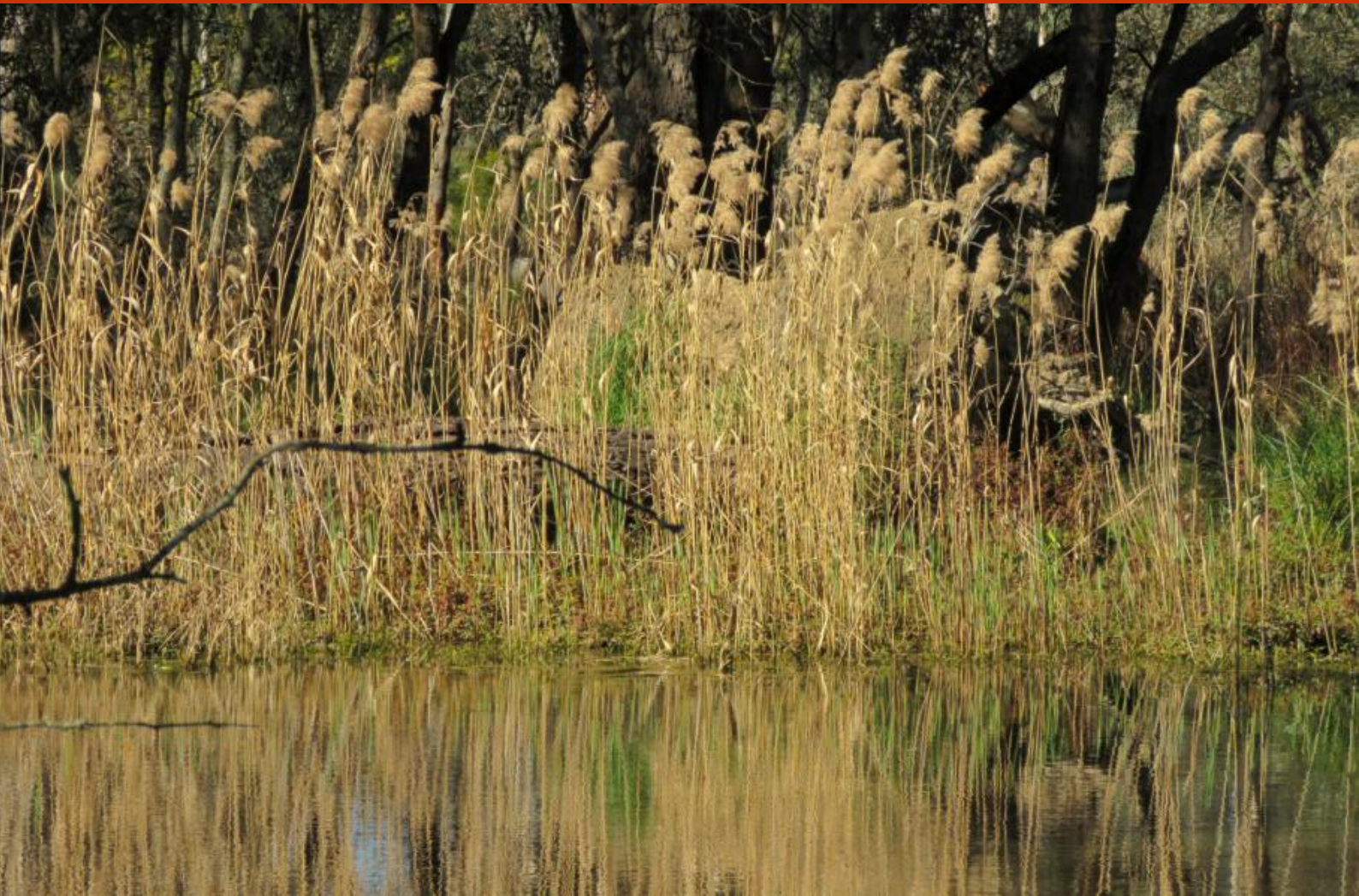




Elevated Platform and Superb Fair-wren (inset)



Elevated platforms and Eastern Yellow Robin (inset)





Artworkz

Serving the Community