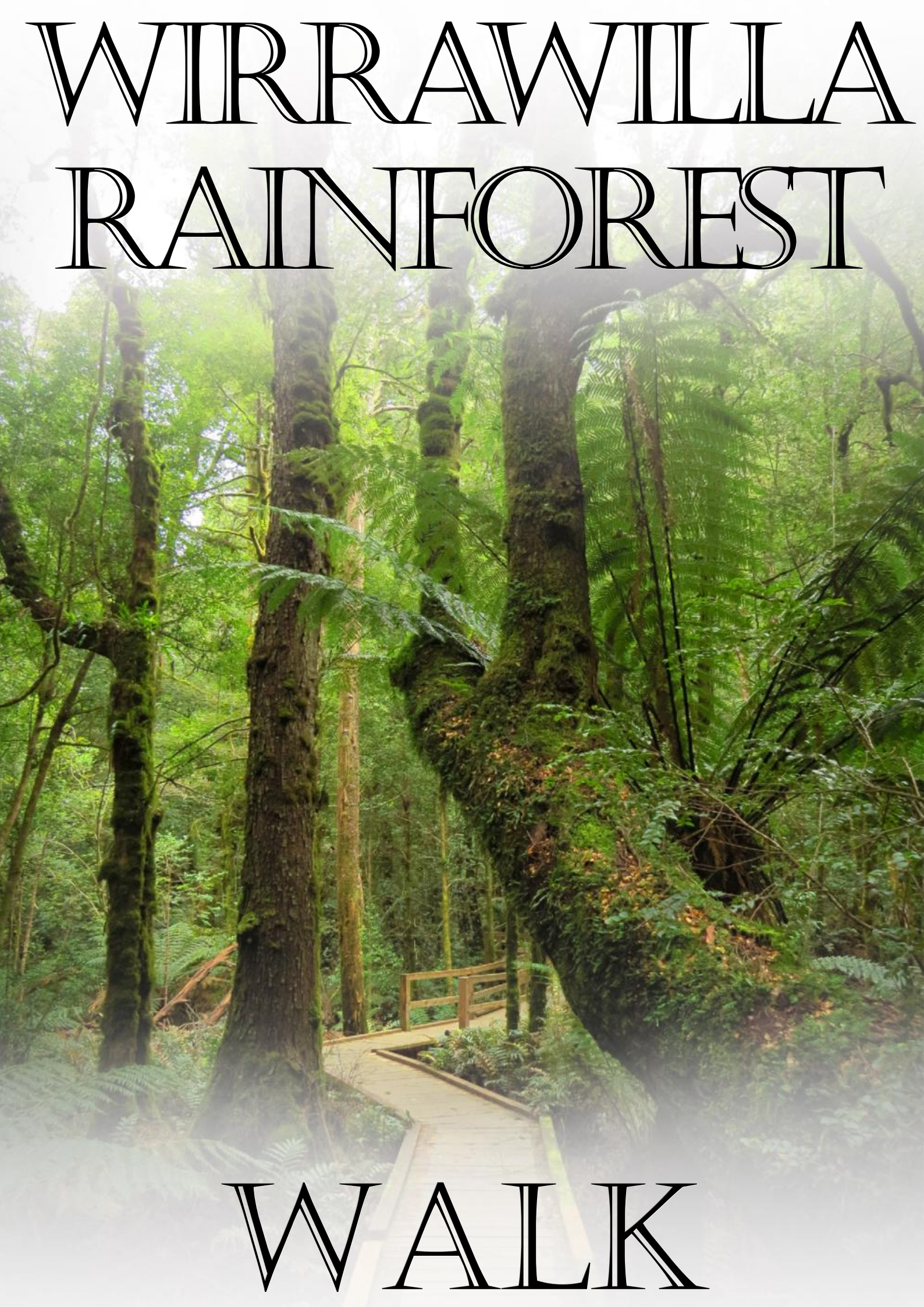


WIRRAWILLA RAINFOREST



WALK



**NATURE
SERIES**

WIRRAWILLA RAINFOREST WALK

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INTRODUCTION

Name: Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk
Location: Toolangi State Forest
Style: Elevated Walk
Walk time: 45 minutes circuit
Facilities: Carpark, toilet, Picnic tables

The Aboriginal word 'Wirrawilla' is roughly translated 'Green Trees', and this cool temperate rainforest does not disappoint in this regard - being dominated by green moss and trees.



The Wirrawilla Rainforest is an example of a damp cool temperate rainforest, and is one of just a handful left in Victoria. Over 95 percent of cool temperate rainforests are located in Tasmania, so the importance of this 'Moss Forest' cannot be overstated. One of the dominant species in the area is the beautiful Australian native Beech Myrtle, which is beautiful in autumn as its leaves colour and drop to the forest floor creating a layer of colour that is magical to see. Flora and fauna also abound in this complex eco-system, which is easily visible from the wooden elevated platform that runs through a section of the wet valley an a circuit. Historically, the walk is located around 1.5 km above the once popular Sylvia Falls, which are no longer accessible to the public.

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Carpark area and toilet at the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk in 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



One of the elevated platforms at the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Interpretative signage at the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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Meeting area at the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Pure water at the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk

**eSPLASH
MEDIA
ARTICLES**

ARTICLES FROM THE eSPLASH eMAGAZINE

2014

2016

2018

TOOLANGI STATE FOREST WIRRAWILLA WALK

OUR DISTRICT'S ONLY COOL TEMPERATE RAINFOREST WALK

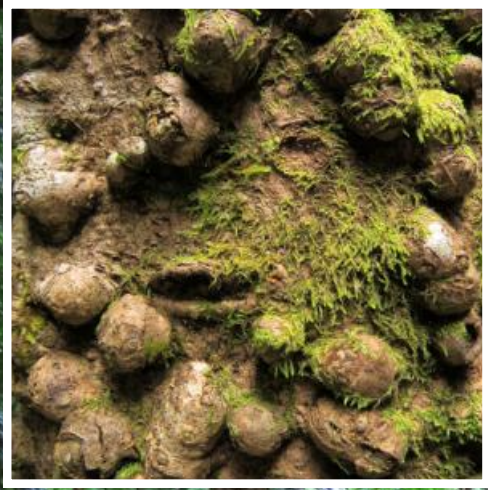


A beautiful elevated Rainforest Walk

The Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk is a truly beautiful walk that meanders through some of Victoria's best rainforest. The area is a great daytrip destination, affording the visitor a wide range of experiences.

The Wirrawilla Rainforest area is one of just a few remaining areas on the Australian mainland where areas of cool temperate rainforest still exist. Ninety-five percent of Australia's cool temperate rainforests are now found in Tasmania.





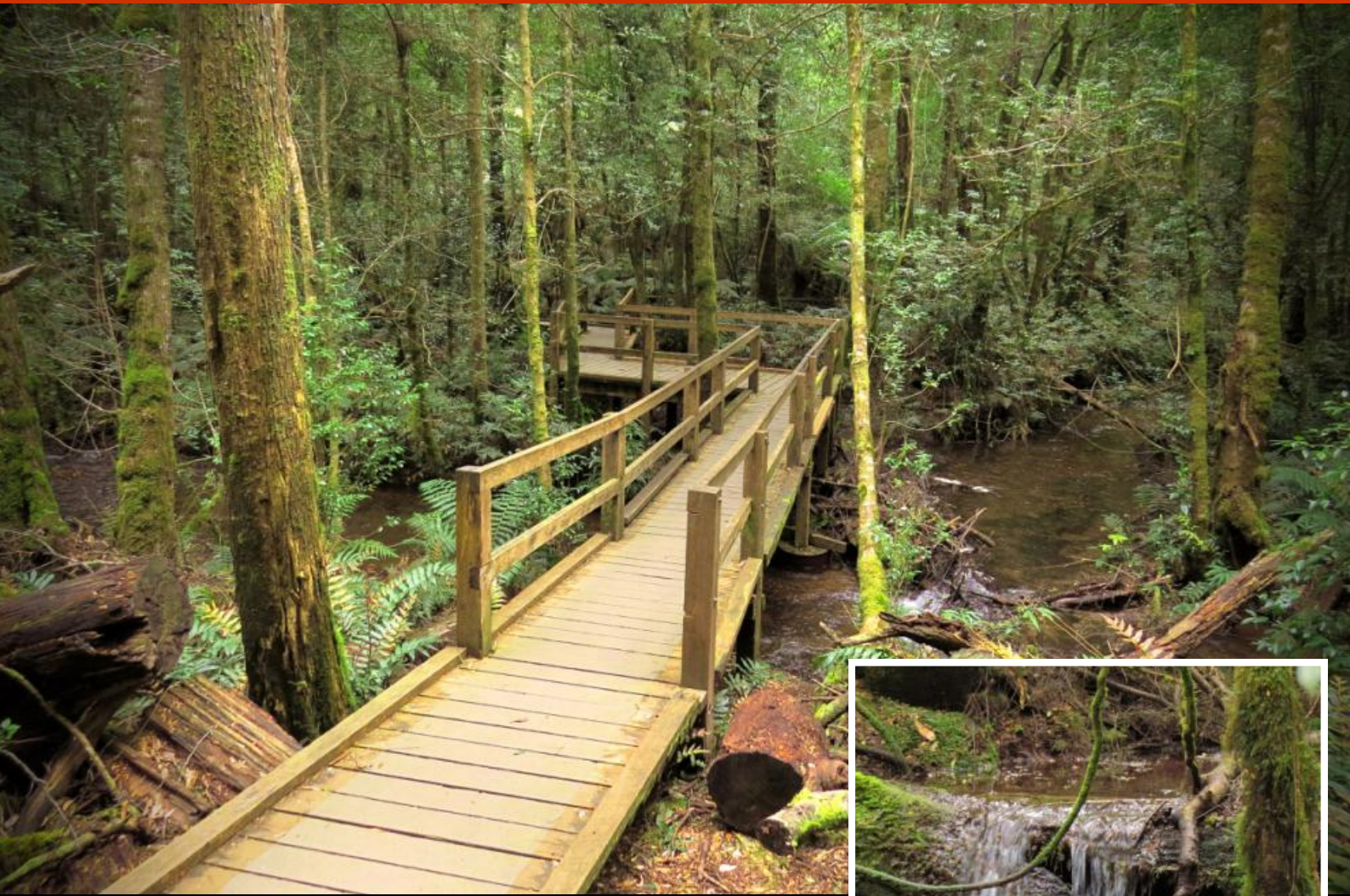




The word 'Wirrawilla' is a loosely translated Aboriginal word with the suggested meaning of 'Green Trees'. Once you have visited the area, you will see that there is no doubt that this cool temperate rain forest is dominated by green trees, moss, lichen and fungi.





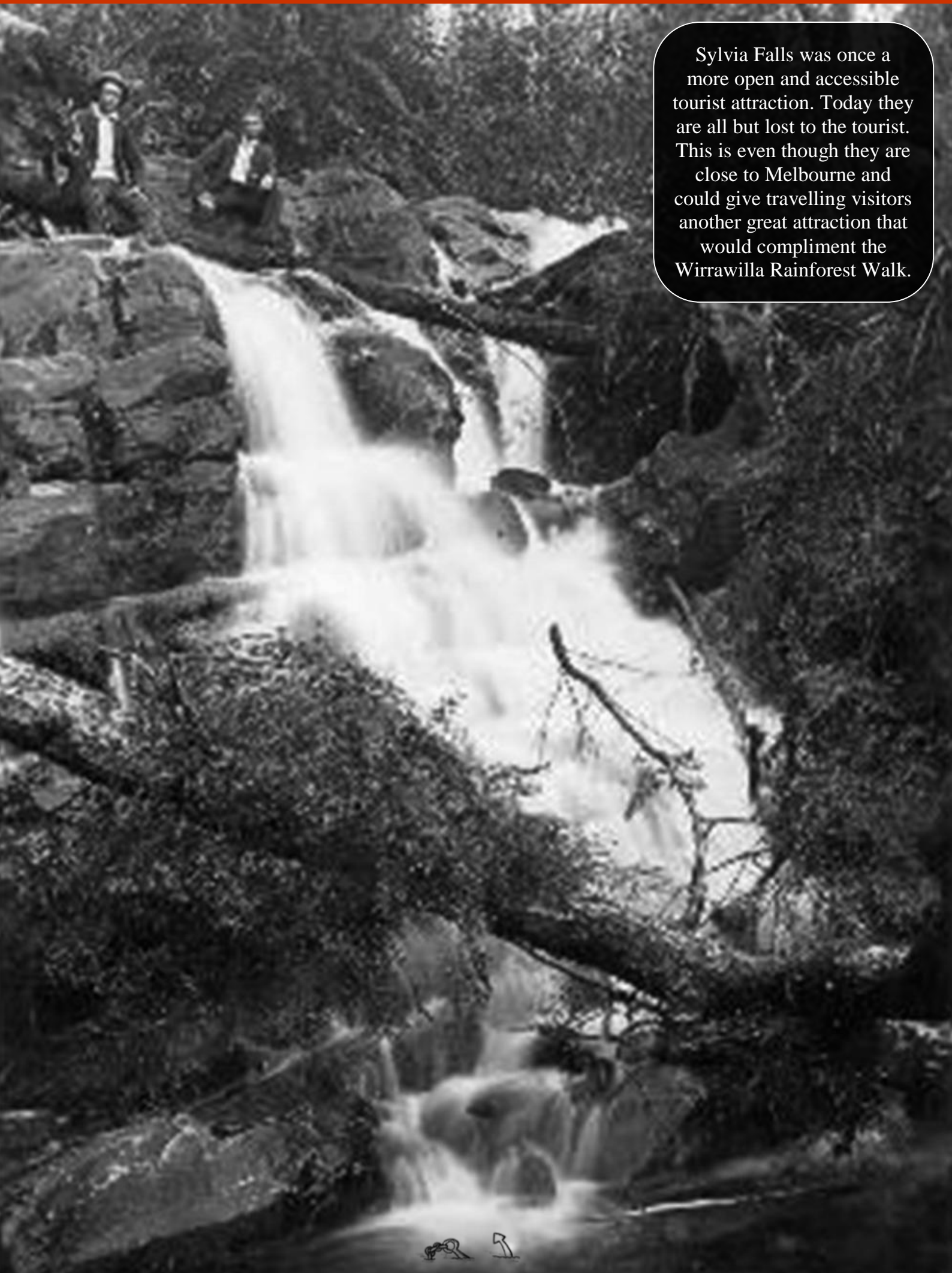


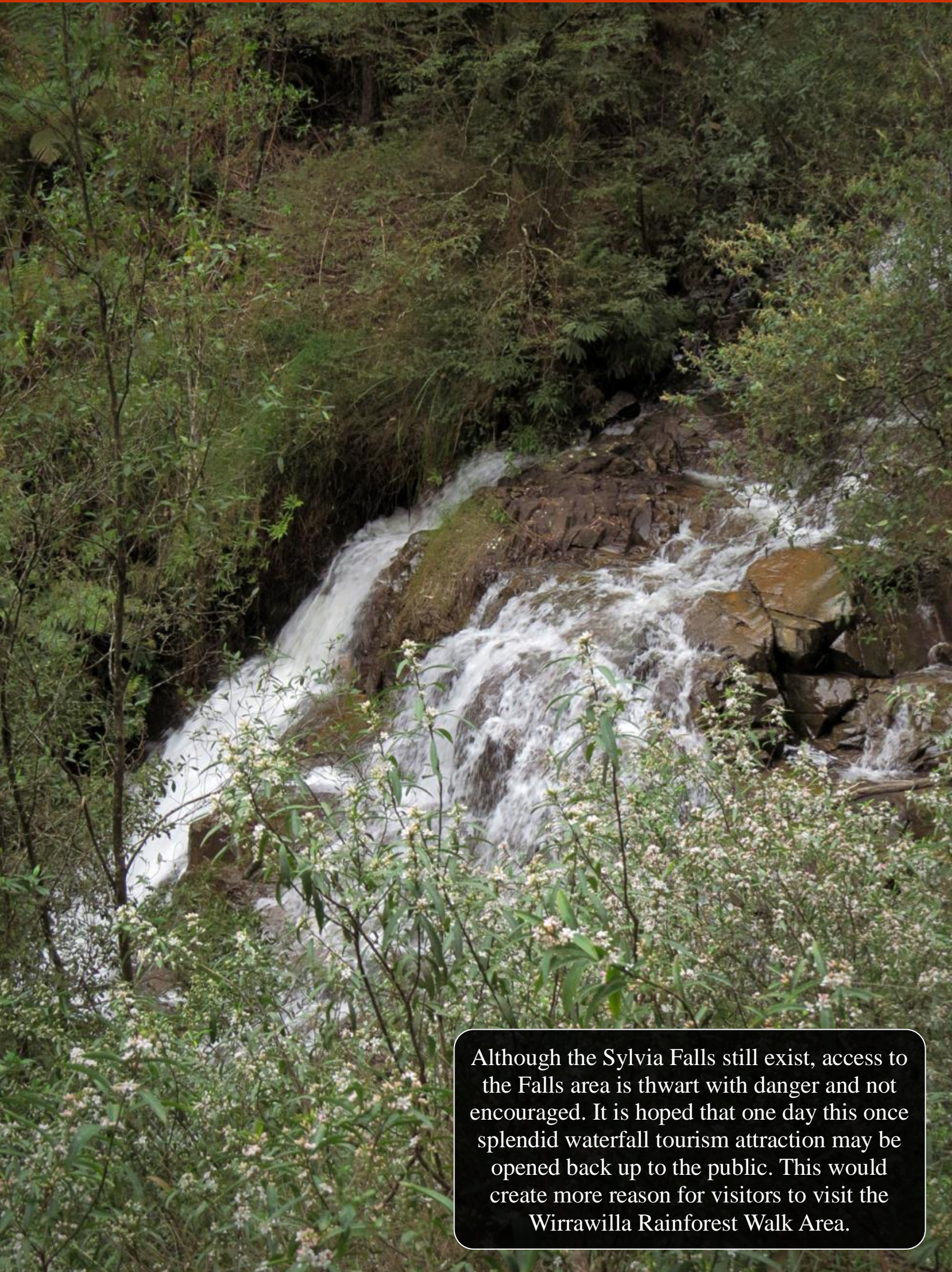
(Top) The raised platform. (Bottom) The water running through the rainforest.



Signage, facilities and platforms are all excellent

Sylvia Falls was once a more open and accessible tourist attraction. Today they are all but lost to the tourist. This is even though they are close to Melbourne and could give travelling visitors another great attraction that would compliment the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk.





Although the Sylvia Falls still exist, access to the Falls area is thwart with danger and not encouraged. It is hoped that one day this once splendid waterfall tourism attraction may be opened back up to the public. This would create more reason for visitors to visit the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk Area.

TOOLANGI STATE FOREST WIRRAWILLA WALK

COOL TEMPERATE RAINFOREST WALK - PUBLISHED 24 JUNE 2016



Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk.

It was not that long ago that I reported on this amazing walk and now we are here again and enjoying it as much as the first time. This is a gem in our local tourism industry - yet many have never been here.



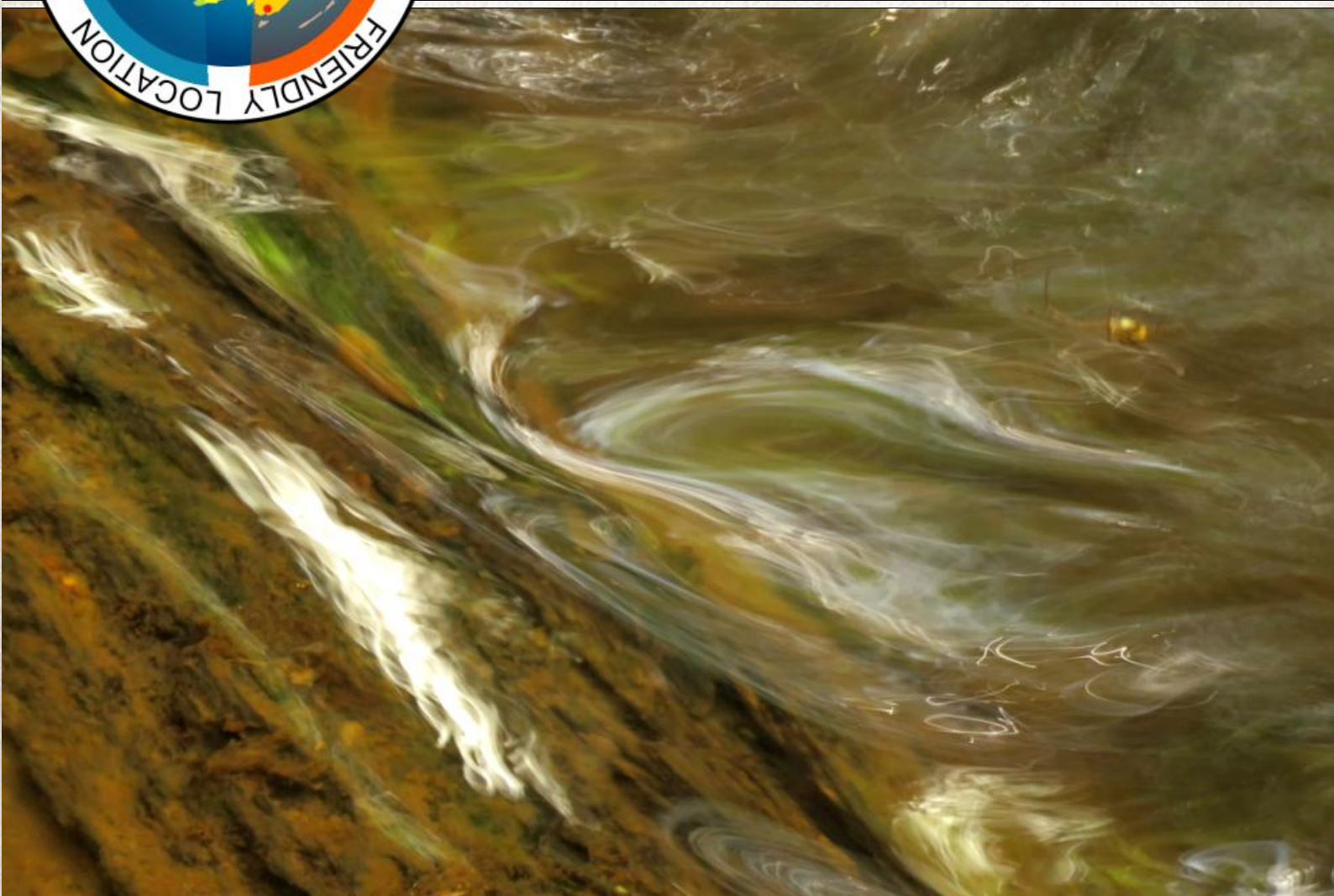
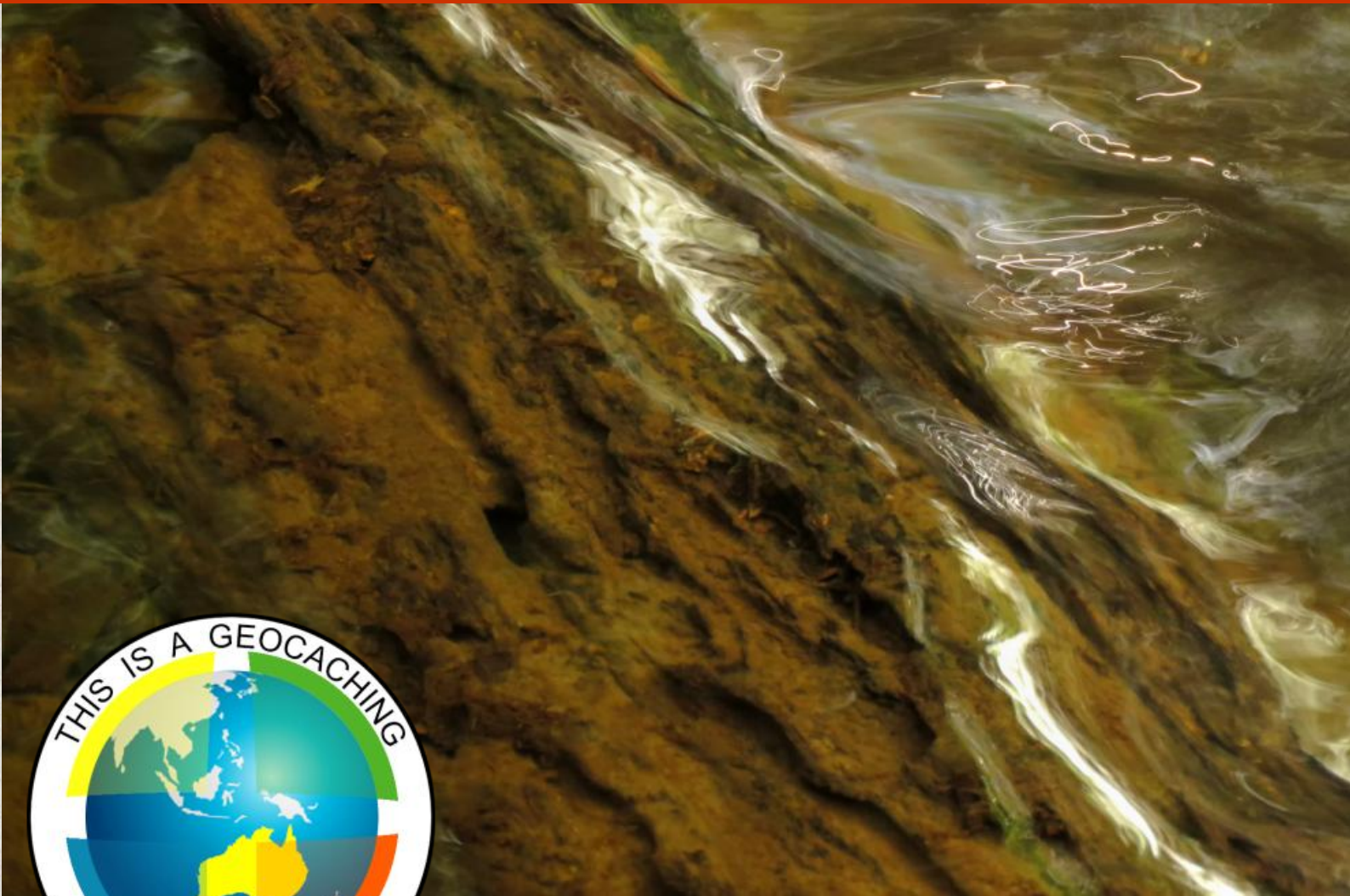
The Aboriginal word 'Wirrawilla' is roughly translated 'Green Trees', and this cool temperate rainforest does not disappoint in this regard - being dominated by moss and trees.







Fairy Tree





With over 95 percent of Australian cool temperate rainforests located in Tasmania, the Wirrawilla Rainforest is a prized spot for Victorians. It is one of those locations that I like to visit on a semi-regular basis, and is a photographers dream location.

Wirrawilla Rainforest

Look, listen and feel the magic of the cool temperate rainforest.



Living fossils
Wirrawilla is a Koalic word meaning green trees. The dominant Myrtle Beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*), Southern Sassafras (*Petalostemum moschatum*) and Blackwood wattle (*Acacia melanoxylon*) trees characterise it as Cool Temperate Rainforest. Millions of years ago, when dinosaurs roamed the earth and Australia was still joined to Antarctica, rainforests were widespread. In Victoria today, they are restricted to small, scattered patches bordering gullies and streams.



WIRRAWILLA WALK
Easy 20min walk
YOU ARE HERE

Please keep to the boardwalk, provided to avoid damage to sensitive vegetation.



A cool place to be.
Although the serrated heart-shaped leaves of the Myrtle Beech are tiny there are so many of them that the closed canopy blocks out most of the sunlight, making Wirrawilla cool and moist. Soft Tree Ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) take advantage of the shady conditions, together with a rich abundance of fungi, lichens, mosses and ferns. Notice how many plants grow on the trunks of others or on top of fallen logs so that they can better capture the light they need to grow.

Listen to the lyrebirds.
In Wirrawilla you will often hear a lyrebird singing as he displays to attract a mate. He mimics the songs of the other birds that share the forest. If you look carefully you can see the scrubwings, which lyrebirds strong feet have been seen digging in the leaf litter and rotting wood for worms, beetle grubs and other tasty invertebrates. If you are quiet you may be lucky enough to see a lyrebird dance in a clearing.



Help preserve our rainforests
In Victoria, rainforests are protected. You can help by—
- staying on the boardwalk
- taking all your rubbish home, and
- leaving the rainforest as you found it so that others can enjoy it too.

A natural water purifier.
The forest floor is covered with a thick spongy layer of leaf litter, rotting logs and absorbent mosses. As rainwater soaks through, it is filtered so that the Sylvia and Myrtle Creeks run clear with pure mountain water. Platypus and small native fish, Galaxias, live here, feeding on the invertebrates that thrive in these pristine conditions. Just below Wirrawilla the Sylvia Creek joins the Yaa River, which flows north to the Colburn then into the Murray which meets the sea near Adelaide in South Australia.



FOR EDUCATIONAL TOURS CALL
Natural Resources Conservation League on (03) 5962 9314 or
Toolangi Forest Educational Services on (03) 5962 9318



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT
Department of Sustainability and Environment
Main Road TOOLANGI 3777 Tel (03) 5962 9203





Magical Mosses



Forests are lovely places to look for mosses and lichens. They favour damp places near streams.

Mosses help to hold soil together keeping in the moisture and create soil by recycling nutrients.

The greatest threats to lichens and mosses are fire, habitat change or trampling.

So remain on the boardwalk whilst searching for *Dawsonia superba* **The Tallest Moss in the World.** This moss is about 8cm tall and bares a remarkable resemblance to a miniature pine tree.




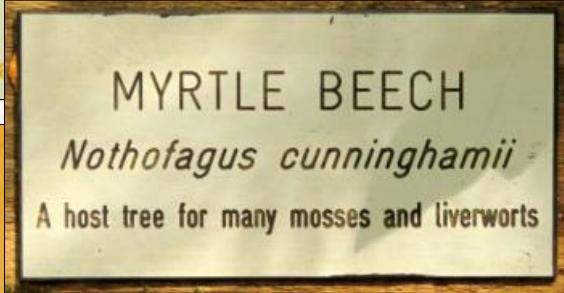
Dawsonia superba



Tanglefoot Trails

Email: Toolangi

Department of and Environment 



Journey to the sea

Species identification signs.



Rain dropping from the trees in Wirrawilla Rainforest is soaked up by the forest floor, covered with a thick spongy layer of leaf litter, rotting logs and absorbent moss. Naturally filtered water seeps into the Sylvia Creek and begins its journey to the sea.




Just below Wirrawilla Rainforest the Sylvia Creek joins the Yea River. This water flows north to the Goulburn River then continues along the Murray River eventually meeting the sea near Adelaide in South Australia.

Platypus and small native fish Galaxias live here, feeding on the invertebrates that thrive in these pristine conditions. In the summer months you may be lucky enough to spot a cheeky platypus relaxing on a rock alongside the creek bed.



Tanglefoot Trails

Email: Toolangi.Office@dse.vic.gov.au

Department of Sustainability and Environment 

Fabulous ferns

Many mosses, lichens, ferns and orchids use trees for support and to gain access to light. These plants are known as epiphytes.

They also compete for space nutrients and pollinators with creepers like Clematis, Twining Silkpod and Wonga Vine which coil their way up tree trunks towards openings in the canopy.



Soft, spreading fern fronds catch the filtered light but stay moist in the cool, damp rainforest habitat.

Filmy fern *Hymenophyllum sp.* have very thin leaves. In fact, they are just one cell thick.

Hard water fern *Blechnum wattsi* in comparison have thick leather fronds and the Fish-bone water fern *Blechnum nudum* has its leaflets arranged like the bones joined to the spine of a fish.



Distinctive Features

The dominate trees of this Cool Temperate Rainforest are Myrtle Beech, *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, Southern Sassafras, *Atherosperma moshatum* and Blackwood, *Acacia melanoxylon*.

Myrtle Beech has small, glossy green, serrated leaves. Although the heart-shaped leaves are tiny there are so many of them they form a closed canopy blocking out most of the sunlight.



Blackwood Aboriginal people used this wood for making clubs, shields and spear throwers. Bark heated over fire then infused in bathing water was considered a treatment for rheumatism.



Sassafras typically forms a conical shape. Its smooth bark is musk-scented and blotched with lichen. The leaves and whitish flowers are also fragrant.



TOOLANGI STATE FOREST WIRRAWILLA WALK

TALLEST MOSS IN THE WORLD - PUBLISHED 13 APRIL 2018



Giant Moss (Dawson superb)

The Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk is a favourite for many, and it has a few interesting surprises. One is that it is home to excellent examples of the Giant Moss *Dawson superba*, the tallest self standing moss in the world.



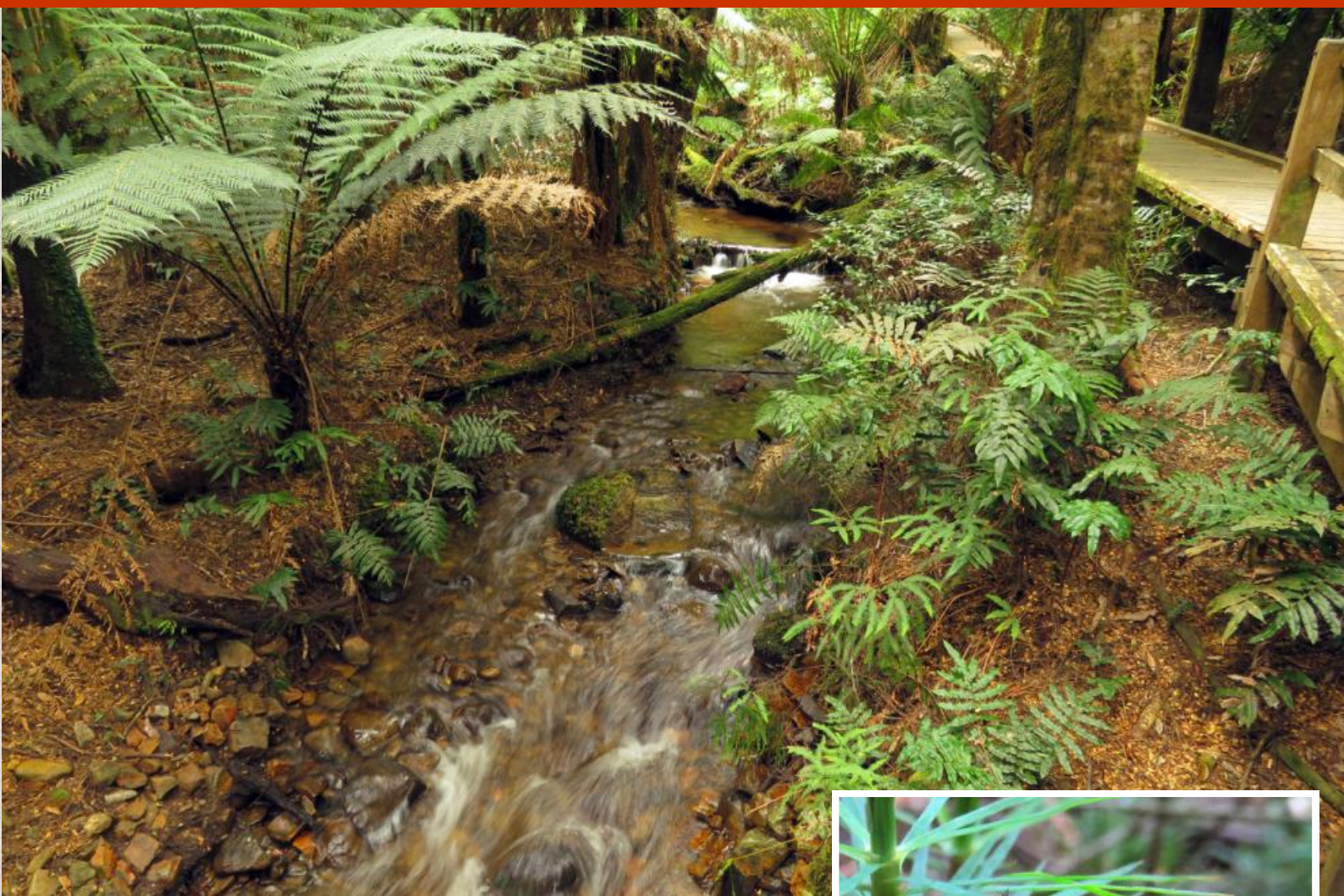
The Giant Moss, as it is more commonly called, is actually the species *Dawsonia superba* and is named after English banker and botanist Dawson Turner. He was born in 1775, elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1802, elected a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1816 and died in 1858. This species is unique as it is the tallest self-supporting moss in the world. Incredibly, a very excellent population of this wonder is found right here in Central Victoria, at the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk.

Unlike other mosses which struggle to circulate moisture throughout their extremities—forcing them to grow low to the ground, *Dawsonia superba* is unique as it is able to circulate life-giving moisture to all of its extremities, even when it is nearing its tallest height.

The Giant Moss generally grows to 60 cm, though in some instances has been recorded nearing a metre in height. Giant Moss is found in eastern Australia from Queensland to Victoria and Tasmania, as well as in small populations in New Guinea. Significant populations are also found on both islands of New Zealand. Interestingly, while it is one of the larger and taller mosses in the world, the species has one of the smallest spores in the moss kingdom. They are so small, that spores are often spread by nothing more than droplets of water falling from above and hitting the moss.

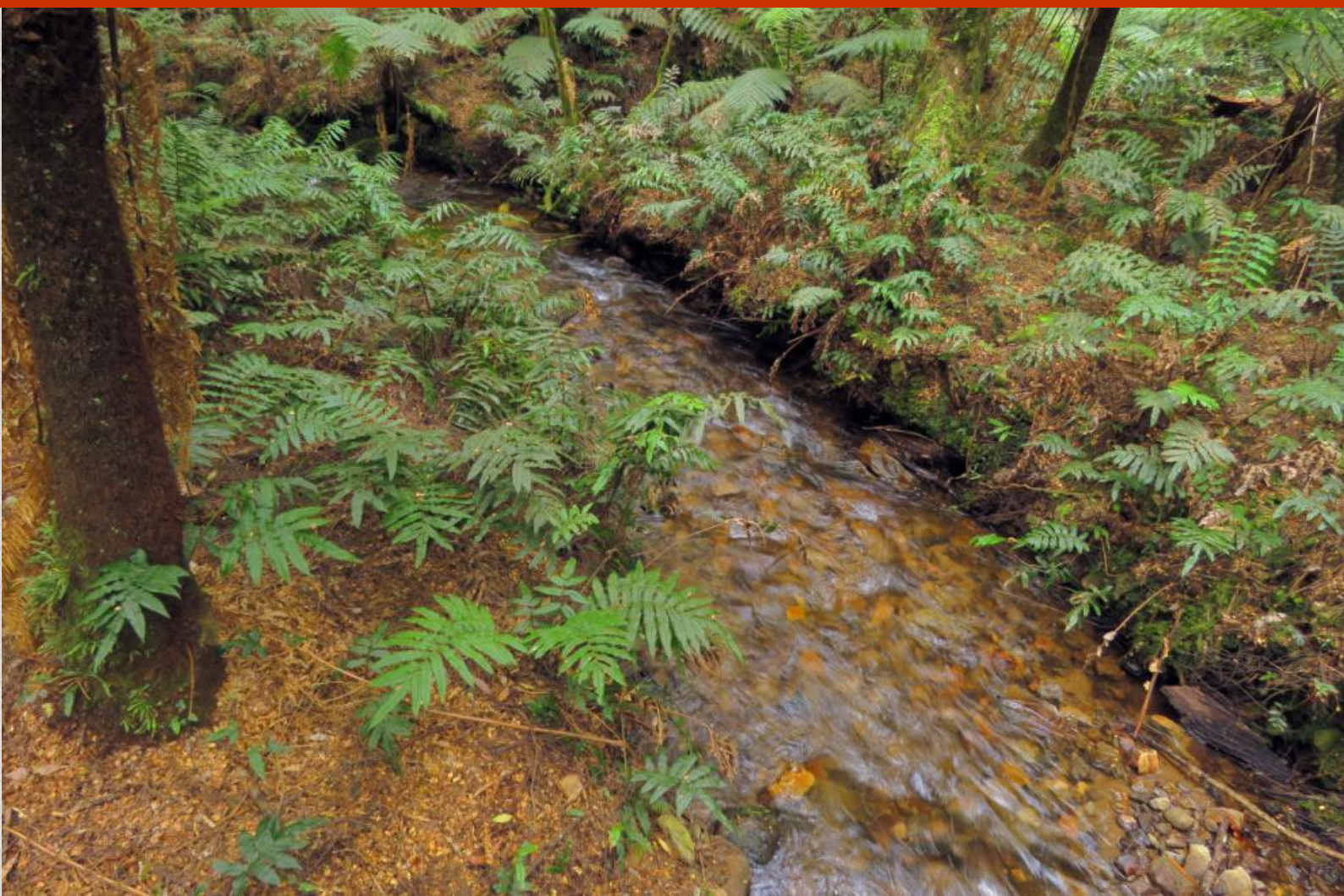


- GIANT MOSS *DAWSONIA SUPERBA* -



The moss survives in wet temperate rainforests (top)

- GIANT MOSS *DAWSONIA SUPERBA* -



The moss survives in wet temperate rainforests (top)



We highly recommend a visit to the Wirrawilla Rainforest Walk. If you end up there, seek out the Giant Moss, use your camera, and enjoy the undercover picnic area where you can reflect on this amazing area.





Artworkz
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