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Welcome to the first edition of our joint Y Water Discovery Centre and Yea Wetlands newsletter. We aim to use this forum as an opportunity to communicate with our valuable members, friends and supporters and to keep you informed and updated on current activities and future plans for the Y Water Discovery Centre and the Yea Wetlands.

Yea Wetlands Plan

As many of you will know the Yea community has three bodies with dedicated volunteers having strong interests in attracting and servicing the needs of the region's visitors and caring for, enhancing and promoting the Wetlands:

- The Yea Wetlands Committee of Management, responsible for the management and stewardship of the Yea Wetlands.
- The Yea Wetlands Trust, established as a public charitable trust to raise and administer funds to help support environmental and education activities at the Y Water Discovery Centre and the Yea Wetlands.
- Y Water Discovery Centre Inc, an incorporated committee responsible for the management and stewardship of the Y Water Discovery Centre.

There is an overlap in the aims promoted by each of these bodies and they have recognised their common interest in the maintenance and promotion of the Wetlands. To date they have acted with limited coordination of their agendas because there are legal and regulatory constraints pertaining to each body that do not allow the Yea Wetlands to be governed and managed by a single independent entity.

There is now a consensus that the way forward is a consolidated plan encompassing all strategic aspects of the development and management of activities. The Yea Wetlands Plan is a statement of the shared vision, mission and aspirations of the three entities and a positive and exciting next step for the future of this much valued asset.

Copies of the Yea Wetlands Plan can be downloaded at www.ywatercentre.com.au or pick up a copy from the Y Water Discovery Centre front desk.

What's new at the Y Water Discovery Centre?

Visitor Services Update

Volunteer News

Volunteers at the Y Water Discovery Centre recently participated in a fun and informative training session on Customer Service delivered by Brookford Consulting Group. The topics covered enhanced the volunteers' skills for dealing with a variety of people. The behaviour profile activity was very well received as everyone discovered which personality profile they are – Vulture, Owl, Peacock or Budgie – and can now recognise those features in YWDC's visitors and attend to their needs accordingly.

An additional training session was held in the Wetlands where volunteers learnt about the plants in the Wetlands and their use in indigenous culture.

2019 Victorian VIS Summit

The 2019 Victorian Visitor Information Services Summit will be held in the Murrindindi Shire and will see some 150 tourism industry professionals including representatives from the Victorian Tourism Industry Council, Visit Victoria, Regional Tourism Boards and key visitor experience staff from across the 65 visitor information centres in Victoria visit our Shire from the 21-23 August.

The event comprises a 2-day conference which will be held at Holmesglen at Eildon as well as a number of 'Discover Dindi' familiarisation tours for delegates to see and learn about the fantastic natural attractions and tourism businesses we have in the Shire. These familiarisation tours will be a great opportunity to showcase our beautiful region and increase the awareness of Murrindindi Shire as a tourism destination, and will include a visit to the YWDC and Yea Wetlands.

Both the YWDC and MiRa at Marysville will be the official host Visitor Information Centres for this Summit so it is a fantastic opportunity to showcase both our Centres to these key stakeholder groups.



Stop Press!

Y Water Discovery Centre Finalist in Murrindindi Business Awards

Exciting news! The Y Water Discovery Centre @Yea Wetlands is a finalist in the **Excellence in Customer Service** category in the **2019 Murrindindi Business Awards**. A big shout out to all our amazing volunteers who deliver such fantastic customer service 363 days a year! The awards will be presented on Tuesday 25 June.

Volunteering at the YWDC Join our team

We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated and reliable team of 40+ volunteers supporting the Y Water Discovery Centre.

With a broad range of skill sets and expertise they provide support across a wide range of activities including:

- Visitor Servicing
- Guided Tours
- Education Programs
- Retail
- Database Management
- Bookkeeping
- Catering
- Cleaning & Maintenance
- Gardening

We are always keen to welcome new members to the team and in particular are seeking people who are available to cover shifts on a weekend.

Commitment can be as little as one shift per fortnight or more regularly as desired and available. Shift times are 9am – 1pm or 1pm – 5pm. The Centre is open 7 days a week except for Christmas Day and Good Friday.

If you know of someone who would like to get involved, please encourage them to contact:

Pauline Roberts 0408 246 308
proberts@murrindindi.vic.gov.au

Yea Wetlands Kiosk Development

Visitors to the Y Water Discovery Centre @Yea Wetlands will notice work has commenced on the construction of a refreshment kiosk on the back deck area at the Centre. The Wetlands Kiosk will be an added service for the thousands of visitors who drop in to the Centre each year to enjoy Yea's regionally significant wetlands, receive up to date tourism information and browse the gift shop. It will also provide a hub for locals to enjoy a coffee or ice cream with family and friends after a walk in the Wetlands.

The Kiosk will be managed separately to the Visitor Information Centre which some 45 local community volunteers have successfully developed over the last five years into one of Victoria's major tourist information hubs and which now attracts almost 30,000 visitors each year.

Funding for the Kiosk has been sourced from a combination of the Y Water Discovery Centre's reserves and a Murrindindi Business and Tourism grant awarded by Murrindindi Shire Council in 2018. Building works are being overseen by local architect Ian Sichlau with a largely local contingent of tradesmen.

The Wetlands Kiosk will offer visitors tea & coffee, ice creams and light refreshments and where practicable these will be sourced from local suppliers and will be consistent with the Y Water Discovery Centre's environmental sustainability practices.

In developing its business plan for the Kiosk, the YWDC Inc Committee has been mindful of the need to complement the services already available elsewhere in Yea. The Centre's unique outdoor setting and indigenous garden overlooking the Wetlands, together with its highway junction location, mean the Kiosk is well placed to encourage even greater numbers of the thousands of travellers passing through Yea each month to break their journey and spend some time experiencing the range of services and activities Yea has to offer.

Chairman Frank Larkins said, "The Y Water Discovery Centre @ Yea Wetlands is a not for profit, volunteer managed organisation seeking to promote awareness of water resources and the important role wetlands play in our environment. We are committed to promoting and supporting the local tourism industry and businesses in our region. The Kiosk will help us to remain financially sustainable and continue to provide these important services".

Works are expected to be completed in time for the Kiosk to commence operating late in 2019. It is anticipated that initially the Kiosk will open for three to four days a week coinciding with the times that visitor numbers are greatest, i.e. on Thursdays, Fridays, weekends and major public holidays.

Help us grow

Y Water Discovery Centre Inc Membership

A strong and active membership base will help the Y Water Discovery Centre Inc in its endeavours to continue to enhance our facilities and grow our programs and activities. Please help us to expand our membership base by encouraging others to consider joining. New membership applications can be submitted at <http://eepurl.com/c2kEUX>



Wetlands Wanderings

Weed Removal

The Yea Wetlands Committee works in partnerships to achieve a variety of goals. Latest target is the removal of English Ivy, that has slowly prospered after the honeysuckle removal. Yea High School has provided students from two programs - VCAL and Year 9 Community Connections to help with the Ivy removal. Day One of the program kicked off with two students and just 90 mins of work - check out the before and after photos. It is a welcome start to claim back the land ready for some planting in August. Well done lads!

The Wetlands Committee is dedicated to the removal and control of exotic and invasive weed species. We have had much success over the years with the removal of woody weed species (Hawthorn being the main one) and of course Japanese Honeysuckle which is now at a maintenance level. Honeysuckle will always be present in the wetlands, but with annual maintenance, vigilant surveillance, and speedy treatment, we hope that it never rises to great heights ever again and maybe one day will be totally eradicated.

Of course, removal of one species creates opportunity for others to fill the void as no amount of planting can fill the gaps fast enough. English Ivy is slowly and stealthily spreading its runners in various locations, but it has been put on notice! Working in partnership with Yea High Students from both the Year Nine Community Connections program and VCAL, committee member Glenda Woods has been working with students for several Tuesday afternoons, tackling the job of hand pulling the Ivy. It takes time and is quite physical work, but slow and steady progress is being made. Thank goodness for recent rain which has made the task a little easier.

The aim is to clear the large patches, most of which are situated before the Suspension Bridge and to then try and contain it. We hope to do planting in August to cover the spaces exposed. Many thanks to the Yea High School students for doing the dirty work! The environment and wetlands are the winners!

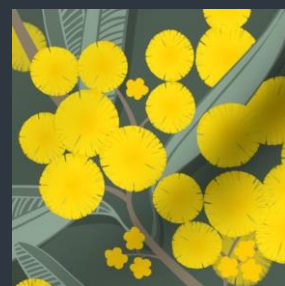
Friends of the Wetlands

Join our team

If you know of someone who would like to get involved with our wetlands activities - from fundraising and special events to working bees and tree plantings, please encourage them to contact us at:
yeawetlands@gmail.com

Did you know?

The Taungurung word for Golden Wattle is "Berri-Yung". In traditional medicine gum from the plant is used to make drinks to aid indigestion, stomach disorders and to treat coughs and colds. Smoke from the burning plant is also used for healing purposes.



Before...



After...



Yea High students Dylan Fraser and Kirk Mercuri lend a welcome hand.

Doing our bit for Citizen Science

Environmental organisations are realising the power of citizen science to gather a lot of information about the nature of things. Whether it be the Backyard Bird Count run in October each year or the Wild Pollinator Count run twice a year in Autumn and Spring, details of sightings from across the continent can be used to better inform scientific decisions and strategies. Recently the Australian Platypus Monitoring Network has launched an Australia-wide platypus survey complete with smartphone app so that anyone seeing a platypus can easily register it on the national database.



The Yea Wetlands has formally set up two observations points within the wetlands reserve for monitoring platypus. One is on the suspension bridge across the Yea River and the other is on the bridge just north of the 'Wedding Lawn'. If you want to contribute to the effort simply stand at either location for ten minutes and count the number of platypus you see. Then enter that number, with the time of observation into the website (www.platypusnetwork.org.au) or the app. Observations of no platypus are just as informative as sightings.

For data to be valid at least 2 observations per week have to be recorded. So help us by spending 10 minutes of quiet time and seeing what you can see.



Members of the Upper Goulburn Intrepid Tribe

Intrepid Landcare Tribe arrives in Murrindindi!

The Upper Goulburn Landcare Network are proud to welcome the Upper Goulburn Intrepid Tribe to our area.

On Sunday 2nd June, Annette and Jess coordinated a get together of like-minded young adults who have a passion for the environment. They met at the Yea Wetlands to discuss their passions and goals for the future, and what they would like to achieve for their own and future generations.

With a tour of the Wetlands, a BBQ lunch and a planning workshop, much was achieved on the day. The group is looking forward to working with local landcare groups in the area, as well as taking in some recreational activities, starting with a planting day with Yea River Catchment Landcare group and a bonfire with Home Creek-Spring Creek Landcare group. Both events occurring on the 22nd June.

If you are between 18 – 35 years old and would like to join the tribe, you can contact Annette at; a.m.cavanagh@outlook.com.au

For more info about Intrepid Landcare go to www.intrepidlandcare.org

Flight of the Feather-horns

The standing joke amongst the Friends of the Wetlands volunteers is that the Clean-Up Australia Day event, usually occurring on the first Sunday in March, is a mixture of rubbish collection and dodging a very particular type of beetle that swarms at this time of the year. It is called a Feathered-horned Beetle (*Rhipicera femorata*) and true to the myth it swarmed during CUA Day in 2019.

Not much is known about this genus of beetle. The male of the species has fan-like antennae (pictured), the female, rod-like ones. The white dots on the wing cases are actually patches of hair. It is suspected that the larvae are parasitic on cicada larvae. Not much to go on is it? From experience we also know that the larvae burrow in the ground around the acacia thickets along the eastern anabranch of the Yea River near the picnic shelter. This year the adults were flying for more than three weeks.

If you want to see this amazing sight you may have to sign up for our Clean-Up Australia Day event in 2020.



Fundraising News

The Yea Wetlands Committee of Management has consistently been able to raise much needed funds by doing good 'old fashioned' catering. As we all know, there is money in food! The team, under the expert guidance of committee member Amanda Hard, has catered for several Rotary meetings so far in 2019.

Save the date for the next round of catering gigs:

Thurs 18th July and Thurs 19th September for Rotary Dinners

Rotary Yea Garden Expo on Saturday and Sunday 21st and 22nd September.

If you're keen to help please contact Amanda on 0459 248 488.



Yea Wetlands Trust - Help us grow

The Yea Wetlands Trust Fund is included on the Register of Environmental Organisations and as such has been granted Deductible Gift Recipient status. Since its formation in 2004 the Trust has raised over \$350,000 to assist the development of both the Wetlands and Y Water Discovery Centre as a base for environmental learning.

The Trustees welcome fully tax deductible donations, bequests and gifts (greater than \$2) to:

1. assist in the management, protection and development of the ecological and environmental assets of the Yea Wetlands;
2. deliver and grow environmental learning programs; and
3. facilitate research that grows our understanding of the ecological systems in the wetlands.

To find out more contact: yeawetlandstrust@gmail.com

Events & Activities

Wetlands PaintOut

Monday 28th January was an opportunity for local and visiting artists to get together and spend some time in the beautifully serene Yea Wetlands. The Yea Wetlands Committee of Management held its first PaintOut in quite a few years, with assistance from renowned artist Julian Bruere. Artists arrived and enjoyed a delicious morning tea of cakes made by Angela ten Buuren using native ingredients such as a lemon myrtle. Artists painted and sketched the morning away, with several of the local community coming to watch and learn. Afterwards, a BBQ lunch of local meats and wines was enjoyed by everyone before artists set off for the Rotary Art/Craft Show to collect any unsold work. Most commented on the wonderful scenery and lighting available for them to capture with their brushes, pens and pencils. It is hoped that when their individual works are completed, many will choose to exhibit in 2020 in the annual Rotary Club of Yea's Art / Craft Show over the Australia Day weekend in January, where there is a specific category for artwork on the Yea Wetlands.



Julian Bruere at work in the Wetlands

School Holiday Activities

Did you know we run School Holiday Activity Programs for primary school-aged children every Wednesday during school holiday periods? From art based activities to science discovery sessions and Wetlands exploration these are a great way to keep small people occupied during the holidays. Bookings are via the YWDC and only \$4 per child.



Community Tree Planting Day

Save some time Sunday morning 11th August between 9am and 11am to help the Yea Wetlands Committee plant 300 trees and grasses. Meeting place will most likely be at the Flat Platypus in Cummins Reserve, entrance off the GV Hwy. BYO gloves and robust footwear. Tools and plants supplied! Keep an eye on the YWDC and Wetlands Facebook pages for updates.



Diary Dates

School Holiday Activities
3 July, 2019

Celebrating NAIDOC Week
7 – 14 July, 2019

Community Tree Planting Day
11 August, 2019

School Holiday Activities
25 September, 2019

Yea Pottery Group Exhibition
26 September – 1 October, 2019

School Holiday Activities
2 October, 2019

YWDC Inc Annual General Meeting
29 November, 2019

Wild Pollinator Count
17 November, 2019

Contact Us



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Yea Wetlands Trust
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