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Yea Wetlands Hits the Airwaves

The Y Water Discovery Centre and Yea Wetlands were recently showcased on the ABC RN Life Matters program.

Download the podcast to hear Ian, Ron and Angela chat with presenter Fiona Gruber.

www.abc.net.au/radionational



Welcome to the summer edition of our joint Y Water Discovery Centre and Yea Wetlands newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about our recent activities and plans for the future.

Yea Wetlands Kiosk Open for Business!

The Yea Wetlands Kiosk is now up and running, providing a great opportunity for locals and visitors to Yea to experience fabulous coffee, ice cream and snacks in the stunning surrounds of the Y Water Discovery Centre garden and the Yea Wetlands.

The Kiosk operator is local Yea resident Nicholas Charles who has just completed his VCE at Yea High School and already runs a successful microbusiness, Want Biscuits! Nicholas will serve a range of locally sourced coffee, tea and ice cream as well as his delicious range of biscuits, cookies and an evolving menu of light snacks.

Y Water Discovery Centre Inc Chairman Frank Larkins said, "We think this is a fabulous opportunity to help support a young person in the community to get a head start on his career and we commend Nicholas on his entrepreneurship. As a not-for-profit organisation we are committed to supporting social enterprise initiatives and are delighted to support this new venture".

The Yea 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 (including the four-legged variety!) after a walk in the Wetlands.

A Murrindindi Shire Council Business and Tourism grant, and a significant contribution from the Y Water Discovery Centre Inc, provided funding for the Kiosk. Building works were coordinated by local architect Ian Sichlau with a largely local contingent of tradesmen. Local volunteers Don Knight, Ian Marshman and Russell Wealands have all dedicated many hours to the planning and implementation of the project.

The Yea Wetlands Kiosk is open Friday to Monday, 10am – 4pm and on public holidays.



Y Water Discovery Centre News

2019/2020 Speaker Series

The Y Water Discovery Centre @ Yea Wetlands recently presented two in a series of six public information sessions focusing on increasing awareness of local environmental issues in the context of fire, flood and drought management.

Internationally acclaimed geneticist, Professor Ary Hoffmann presented a most informative session on the topic of Adapting Nature to Climate Change on October 4. World class research studies have been undertaken by Professor Hoffmann and his international collaborators to understand how flora and fauna adapt to global climate change. Their work has shown that the environment and genetics are both key factors in species resilience and adaptation. He cited a number of examples where the same species of animal or plant is thriving in different climatic conditions through adaptation.

Scientists have had successes in field trials by supporting an endangered species in one environment with an introduced similar genetic species that has adapted to a different environment. The introduction of eucalypts from a warmer New South Wales climate into Victorian woodlands to mitigate against climate change has been very successful in such trials. Increasing the genetic diversity of native animal populations, such as bandicoots and Tasmanian devils, through introduction of animals from other remote communities has arrested the decline in numbers for some colonies.

One fascinating study by Professor Hoffmann and colleagues revealed that coral reefs in the Middle East thrive in water temperature four degrees Celsius hotter than current temperatures on the Great Barrier Reef. Adapting the Middle Eastern corals to the Australian environment holds prospects for mitigating against reef destruction through coral bleaching.

Climate Change Scientist Professor David Karoly was the key note speaker for the Climate Change and Community Responses session held on Friday 15 November. Professor Karoly heads up the Earth Systems and Climate Change Hub of the National Environmental Science Program for the CSIRO, utilising research and scientific knowledge to provide independent advice to the Federal Government on climate change matters.

His informative presentation and responses to questions was both enlightening and somewhat frightening. David explained that over 95% of climate scientists around the world agree with the extensive data, much of it examined from ice cores extracted from nearly 2km below the ice caps, that concludes we are experiencing climate change at a rapidly accelerating rate. Human activity in Australia over the past two centuries is a significant factor driving this change.

David also explained that results from numerous independent computer models from around the world were being used to predict the impacts of those changes to communities such as ours here in Yea, and the lesser impacts that are likely to occur if communities and governments changed green-house gas emitting practices.

One of David's key messages though was that while politicians at all levels may debate and delay implementing the significant policy changes needed to reverse the current trend of increased emissions, we as individuals, families, communities and municipalities have the capacity to change practices, to slow down and reverse the trend that will make it difficult for species, including humans to adapt and survive.

The Y Water Discovery Centre @Yea Wetlands Speaker Series is funded by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. Upcoming dates and sessions include:

- The Importance of Wetland Habitats, Friday 7 February 2020
- Managing Water Resources to Secure Environmental Sustainability, May 2020
- Plant Biodiversity Loss from Environmental Changes Date TBC
- Sustainable Environmental Practices by Indigenous Communities, July 2020

Bookings can be made online at www.trybooking.com/BEPDN or call 5797 2663.

Professor David Karoly



Professor Ary Hoffmann



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

YWDC Volunteer News

Twice a year the YWDC Volunteers participate in day trips known as Familiarisation Tours. A destination within the Shire of Murrindindi is chosen and by the end of the day all attendees have a much greater understanding of what is on offer in that particular geographical location – be it natural attractions, tourism businesses or seriously delicious food. This is an excellent way of introducing our tourism volunteers to the hidden secrets of the local areas and with this knowledge they can subsequently enthuse our visitors to Discover Dindi for themselves.

Our most recent training day was the Famil Tour on October 21st to the Shire's western boundary and venues in the Wonderful & Wild West. Some very favourable weather, a delicious lunch, four impressive businesses and the spectacular views from the Murchison Gap over the 'Valley of a Thousand Hills' ensured that the day was successful, as well as social.

We discovered that Andrew, train buff extraordinaire, was a wealth of information, both historical and geographical, on our tour of the Kerrisdale Mountain Railway.

At The Village Green not only did we discover an incredibly English cricket pitch, surrounded by a picket fence in the middle of the Australian bush, but also some very comfortable and well-appointed caravans - complete with ensuites - and known as Glamping.

Flowerdale Estate showed off its many facilities and provided us with an extremely delicious and extensive lunch. Surprisingly, the rather ordinary description of 'sandwiches, some small savouries and the Chef's choice for dessert' translated into a feast for all.

Finally, we headed into the tall timbers of Kinglake to explore some of the Kinglake Forest Adventures for ourselves, with the Zip Line enticing several Yea volunteers to try it out.

We were joined on the day by some rather keen volunteers from the other VICs in Murrindindi – Alexandra, Eildon and Marysville - and from the feedback so far, an excellent and informative time was had by all.



End of Year Celebrations

We recently celebrated another fantastic year at the Y Water Discovery Centre with our amazing team of volunteers, staff and committee. Thank you to each and every member of this incredible group who together make our Centre such a brilliant success.

Congratulations to Jo Aitkins for being awarded the 2019 Volunteer of the Year award and to all our team for their contributions.



Wetlands Wanderings

Royal Spoonbill Spotted in Yea

I am writing this as a very amateur bird watcher, who has spent countless hours in the wetlands over the last 20 years (but not all of it watching birds)! I had never seen a Royal Spoonbill (*Platalea regia*) until October this year and there it was, feeding in Cummins Lagoon alongside the more commonly appearing Yellow Spoonbill (*Platalea flavipes*).

Both are quite large birds (up to 85cm tall) and both feed by sweeping their submerged bill from side to side in the increasingly shallow water. If you haven't seen either bird before, they are easy to recognise as a spoonbill first by their distinctively 'spoon shaped' bill. And to tell them apart, the Royal has a black bill and black legs and the Yellow spoonbill has a yellow bill and yellow legs. Easy really when you know what to look for! Happy bird hunting.

Glenda Woods



Did you know?

Dianella admixta
BLACK-ANTHER
FLAX LILY

The Taungurung word for the Black-Anther Flax Lily Bootlace Bush is "Yarringguden marran". This perennial lily has dark green, finely serrated, linear leaves. The flowers which occur in Spring – Summer are dark blue or violet with black anthers. The lily produces pale blue berries which are edible when ripe. The berries are also used as a source of dye. Leaves can be split and twisted into string to make a strong tie for baskets and cords. Seed eating birds are attracted to the berries.



Congratulations Glenda

At the October meeting of the Yea Wetlands Committee of Management Glenda Woods was suitably thanked for all her hard work and commitment to the wonderful Wetlands over more years than she would probably admit to and, as befits such a longstanding contribution to this important environment, she has had a billabong 'out the back', named in her honour - in Taungurung no less. "Balk Wanrenga" - Balk means wood and Wanrenga is lagoon, which is the closest approximation to "Woodsy's Lagoon". And it even has water in it! Well done Glenda.



Wetlands Plantings

The Yea Wetlands, recently rejuvenated by flooding from the Yea River, has been further enhanced by the planting of 95 various species of grasses and sedges. Grade 4/5 students from Sacred Heart Primary School were assisted by Yea High School VCAL students to finish planting out an area recently cleared of the invasive introduced species English Ivy.

Partnerships are vital to the ongoing success of the Yea Wetlands and the Committee of Management are pleased that students are willing to assist in the continued improvement of the Wetland's environment.

The students, with assistance from teachers Stacey Elliott (Sacred Heart) and Amanda Hard (Yea HS), and guidance from committee member Glenda Woods, completed the task in under an hour (soft soil helped a lot!) It was a wonderful spring morning for everyone to be outdoors. The ongoing restoration of the Wetland's environment is vital as it is such an important habitat for so many native species.



Swarming in a Swamp Near You

Spring is the time of insect swarms. The unpredictable occurrence of water in a seasonal wetland means that once water is there, insects that rely on water for their lifecycles propagate quickly.

One insect currently swarming is the Love Bug (*Plecia sp.*). For those of my generation the term Love Bug conjures up images of a self-directed Volkswagen Beetle called Herbie with the racing number of 53. The Love Bug in the wetlands is a species of fly.

In late spring and early summer male Love Bugs hatch and await the arrival of the females. Mating takes place as soon as the females have hatched and lasts up to three days after which time the female lays eggs and dies. The term love bug or honeymoon bug comes from the fact that for the majority of their lives these flies can be seen flying around attached tail to tail mating. The eggs are laid in decaying vegetable matter, the substrate on which the larvae feed. The adults are nectar feeders.



Another swarming insect is the Mayfly. Living most of its lifecycle (years) as a nymph the lifetime of an adult mayfly is brief – measured in hours. This stage of the lifecycle is so small the insect has no need to eat and therefore the adult has no mouthparts. When the conditions are right (i.e. now), mayfly nymphs leave the water en-masse, mate and then die.

Mayflies are of the same order as Damselflies and Dragonflies and look similar however mayflies have one pair of wings much smaller than the other. Male mayflies have very long front legs used to grasp the female in flight so that airborne mating can occur. Extending from the back of the insect are three filaments. The outer two are called cerci. A lot of insects have cerci. In mayflies they are sensory organs. In insects such as earwigs they form defensive pincers.

These are just two of the many insects that will emerge in the coming months. Go down and check it out. *Ron Litjens*



Honeysuckle Maintenance

It may be popular with gardeners, but Japanese Honeysuckle is an unwanted weed when it grows in the Wetlands and grow it will, given half a chance!

To ensure this 'half chance' is limited, the Wetlands Committee of Management has once again embarked on its annual management program, spending \$1000 on contract spraying to keep this very invasive and fast growing weed at bay.

Since the initial grant in 2012 of \$25,500 that was spent over four years, the committee has spent \$1000 - \$1500 annually to make sure the wetlands remains honeysuckle free. So far, so good. One only has to look across the Yea River towards the North to see what the wetlands would look like, if this important work was not carried out.



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

Events & Activities

School Holiday Activities

Wednesday 15 & 22 January

We'll be running our always popular school holiday activities during the January school holidays. From art based activities to science discovery sessions and Wetlands exploration these are a great way to keep primary aged children occupied during the holidays. Bookings are via the YWDC and only \$4 per child.



Rotary Club of Yea Art Show

January 25 – 28, Yea Shire Hall

'The best little Art Show in the country' is celebrating its 35th year. A category that may be of particular interest to readers of this newsletter is the 'In and Around the Yea Wetlands' section sponsored by the Yea Wetlands Committee of Management. Prize money for this category is \$250. For more information and entry forms go to www.yearotary.org.au Entries close Friday January 3rd 2020.

World Wetlands Day Celebrations

In 2020 we'll be celebrating World Wetlands Day with two fantastic events:

Breakfast with the Birds

Sunday 2 February, Y Water Discovery Centre & Yea Wetlands

Join us for the ever popular Breakfast with the Birds. The Murrindindi Birdwatchers will host a guided walk in the Yea Wetlands from 7.30am (BYO binoculars) finishing up with a light breakfast at the Y Water Discovery Centre at 9am. \$5 adults, children free.

Speaker Series #3 The Importance of Wetland Habitats

Friday 7 February, Y Water Discovery Centre

Wetlands – the story behind the trillion-dollar price tag

In 1997, the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment valued the economic importance of wetlands worldwide at up to US\$15 trillion. This presentation will uncover some of the reasons why wetlands are so valuable, with a focus on biodiversity and current examples of the efforts of wetland managers in Victoria to keep these precious systems healthy.

Keynote speaker Pam Beattie is a natural resource manager who has worked in wetland management for 15 years. She has spent much of her time in wetland systems on the Murray River floodplain of north central Victoria and has recently joined the environmental water team at Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, where she continues her efforts to rehabilitate our waterways and wetlands.

Bookings can be made online at www.trybooking.com/BEPDN or call 5797 2663.

Diary Dates

School Holiday Activities
Wednesday 15 & 22 January

Breakfast with the Birds
Sunday 2 February

Speaker Series #3
The Importance of Wetland Habitats
Friday 7 February

School Holiday Activities
Wednesday 1 & 8 April

Speaker Series #4
Managing Water Resources to Secure
Environmental Sustainability
May

School Holiday Activities
Spike the Echidna Puppet Show
Wednesday 1 July

NAIDOC Week Celebrations
5 – 12 July



Committees of Management

The Y Water Discovery Centre Inc and Yea Wetlands Committee of Management recently held their Annual General Meetings. Outgoing Executive Members Russell Wealands (Y Water Discovery Centre Inc), and Glenda Woods (Yea Wetlands Committee of Management), were both acknowledged and thanked for their significant contributions over many years. Both Russ and Glenda will continue to be involved with activities and special projects at the Y Water Discovery Centre and the Yea Wetlands.

The Executive Members of the three bodies who together have stewardship of the Y Water Discovery Centre and Yea Wetlands for 2019 – 2020 are:

Y Water Discovery Centre Inc

Chairperson	Frank Larkins
Vice Chair & Treasurer	Don Knight
Secretary	Ian Marshman
Committee	David Anderson Janet Forde Geoff Leslie Ron Litjens Greg Noonan

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>

Becoming involved with any of our organisations, either as a committee member or as part of a working group, is a great way to contribute to our community. If interested, please contact us via the details below.

Yea Wetlands Committee of Management

Chairperson	Geoff Leslie
Treasurer	Amanda Hard
Secretary	Richard Lane
Committee	Corrine Border Rebecca Bowles Clive Bullen Angela ten Buuren Ron Litjens Peter Roberts

Yea Wetlands Trust

Chairperson	Frank Larkins
Treasurer	Greg Noonan
Secretary	Judi Marshman
Committee	Michael Chesworth

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 Yea 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).

Contact Us



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