

Yea Wetlands Plan 2019 - 2021



Overview

The Yea Wetlands is a premier natural resource area within the Murrindindi Shire sustained by water from the Yea River. It is a focus for community engagement and an important destination for regional tourism. The Taungurung Clans have long recognised the environmental and cultural significance of the Yea Wetlands. It has been only since 1998 that the local community has co-ordinated its commitment to the area. It is acknowledged that the preservation and development of the area depends on effective water management and enlightened stewardship.

- ❖ In September 2000 the Murrindindi Shire Council established the **Yea Wetlands (Special) Committee of Management (YWCoM)** through exercising the power to delegate conferred on it by section 86(3) of the Local Government Act 1989.
- ❖ In 2004 the **Yea Wetlands Trust (Trust)** was established as a public charitable trust and registered as an environmental organisation with Deductible Gift Recipient Status.
- ❖ In 2013 the **Y Water Discovery Centre Inc (YWDC)** was incorporated in accordance with the Consumer Affairs Victoria Association Incorporation Reform Act 2013.

The Yea community therefore 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. There is an overlap in the aims promoted by each of these bodies. 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 Yea Wetlands Plan encompassing all strategic aspects of the development and management of activities. This document is a statement of the shared vision, mission and aspirations of the three entities.



Vision

To position the Yea Wetlands as a vibrant community hub and a major regional tourist destination servicing visitor needs, focusing on educational and conservation programs that showcase life-giving and challenged freshwater resources, the local environment and ecosystems.

Mission

To provide committed and effective stewardship of the Yea Wetlands that includes: broadening community understanding of their natural assets and diverse ecological systems; enhancing their natural, scientific, cultural and environmental significance; and providing facilities and amenities that promote education, research, tourism, recreation and community use.

The Y Water Discovery Centre will be the hub to promote educational, cultural and conservation programs, regional tourism attractions, events, local businesses and their products.

Programs and Projects Framework

The framework for Yea Wetlands activities in the period 2019 to 2021 is structured around six priority programs each embedded with more detailed action projects encompassing the aims of all three entities.

- Program A.** Yea Wetlands Experience
- Program B.** Wetlands Natural Resources
- Program C.** Good Governance Arrangements
- Program D.** Partnerships and Relationships
- Program E.** A Premier Visitor Information Centre
- Program F.** Fundraising and Community Engagement

Program A. Wetlands Experience

- a. Install new environmental learning and directional signage for the Wetlands and prepare complementary information guides relevant to schools and the general community.
- b. Hold and promote sponsored lectures and information sessions for the community at YWDC on topics relevant to our mission.
- c. Develop and implement annual programs of 'Wetlands experience' events and activities focusing on the Wetlands' natural resources and amenity, its flora and fauna and cultural significance to Indigenous Australians.
- d. Develop and implement a plan for the ongoing regular renewal of the interpretative elements in the 'Russell Wealds' Wing.

Program B. Wetlands Natural Resources

- a. Manage the Yea Wetlands natural assets and resources with plans for improvements and on-going maintenance activities such as weed control, plantings, pest management and surveys of flora, fauna and culturally significant sites.
- b. Explore the feasibility of developing the Southern Wetlands natural resources.

Program C. Good Governance Arrangements

- a. Encourage the YWDC Executive Committee to have cross membership with the YWCoM and Trust to provide the forum for coordinating and conducting Yea Wetlands planning and activities.
- b. Develop and implement succession plans for each Wetlands entity ensuring continued stable and strong leadership for the Yea Wetlands.
- c. Develop and implement a plan for co-branding Yea Wetlands activities.

Program D. Partnerships & Relationships

- a. Maintain an effective dialogue with Murrindindi Shire Councillors and their Officers through regular interactions for long term mutual benefit to clarify and formally confirm Council's expectations of and contributions to the Yea Wetlands and its entities.
- b. Develop strategies to establish productive partnerships with Yea businesses, sponsors, water management authorities, local groups and our Taungurung community.
- c. Explore the feasibility of developing the YWDC as the hub for re-invigorating local business and tourism contributions to the enhancement of Yea and District communities.

Program E. A Premier Visitor Information Centre

- a. Strengthen the Yea Wetlands entity membership base through expanded and engaging outreach initiatives and regular information bulletins.
- b. Continue to attract and train community volunteers to service the needs of visitors to the Centre and develop expertise through on-going training and service recognition activities.
- c. Through the Centre's kiosk project and merchandising activities develop and implement a five-year plan to increase visitor numbers and the financial sustainability of the Centre and contribute to developmental activities at the Yea Wetlands.
- d. Maintain the Centre's accreditation as a Visitor Information Centre and tourism attraction.

Program F. Fundraising & Community Engagement

- a. Develop and implement a community engagement plan to encourage local and regional communities to support Yea Wetlands through effective and coordinated marketing of a consolidated program of events and activities.
- b. Prepare and distribute quarterly a Yea Wetlands Newsletter promoting achievements and initiatives at Yea Wetlands.
- c. Work in partnership with local communities to conduct an annual fundraising event to enhance the programs, facilities and amenities at Yea Wetlands.
- d. Grow partnerships with external philanthropic and grant bodies to diversify sources of additional funding.

Further details on the operations of the Yea Wetlands may be obtained from the following sources:

Y Water Discovery Centre

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Yea Wetlands Committee of Management

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Yea Wetlands Trust

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