

theWay-theWater-theWalk

(Reserved for the Convenience or Pleasure of the People.)

Punctum's *theWay-theWater-theWalk* (Reserved for the Convenience or Pleasure of the People), is developed on the sacred lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung in Jura Country where waterways remain central to cultural identity. Rivers and waterways are the veins of Country and are the source of Jura creation stories, cultural heritage, connection with ancestors, and traditional knowledge.

Part large scale puzzle, part performance in a plumbed landscape, *theWay-theWater-theWalk* (Reserved for the Convenience or Pleasure of the People), invites you into the push, pull and complex balancing act between water management for the environment, large scale irrigation farming, and economics in the Murray Darling Basin.

The Murray-Darling Basin is not a singular place. Its name derives from the two major rivers, the Murray River and the Darling River. Covering over one million square kilometres through 40 First Nations and four States, the basin drains about one seventh of Australia's total land mass and is one of the most significant agricultural areas in Australia.

Separated from land since 2014, its water has become an asset, a financial product, a 'blue gold', and global investors are thirsty for it. Trading in its water is valued at hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

No longer a natural resource to which everyone has a right, the Murray Darling Basin's recent signs of system collapse open a barrage of issues.

With this focus on the Murray Darling Basin, *theWay-theWater-theWalk* poses a 'wicked problem', one that is byzantine to behold and complex to solve.

It is a cross basin 'simulation' offering an experience that highlights the stakes at play and draws from the multiple mechanisms affecting the Murray Darling Basin.

"Reserved for the Convenience or Pleasure of the People", drawn from a statement on a Mining Lease and Property map circa 1860 to describe land use as "reserved for the convenience, recreation or amusement of the people" along a section of the Loddon River at Vaughan Springs in Jura Country.



BENEFACTORS GALLERY

the Way - the Water - the Walk

(Refrain from the Convenience or Pleasure of the People.)

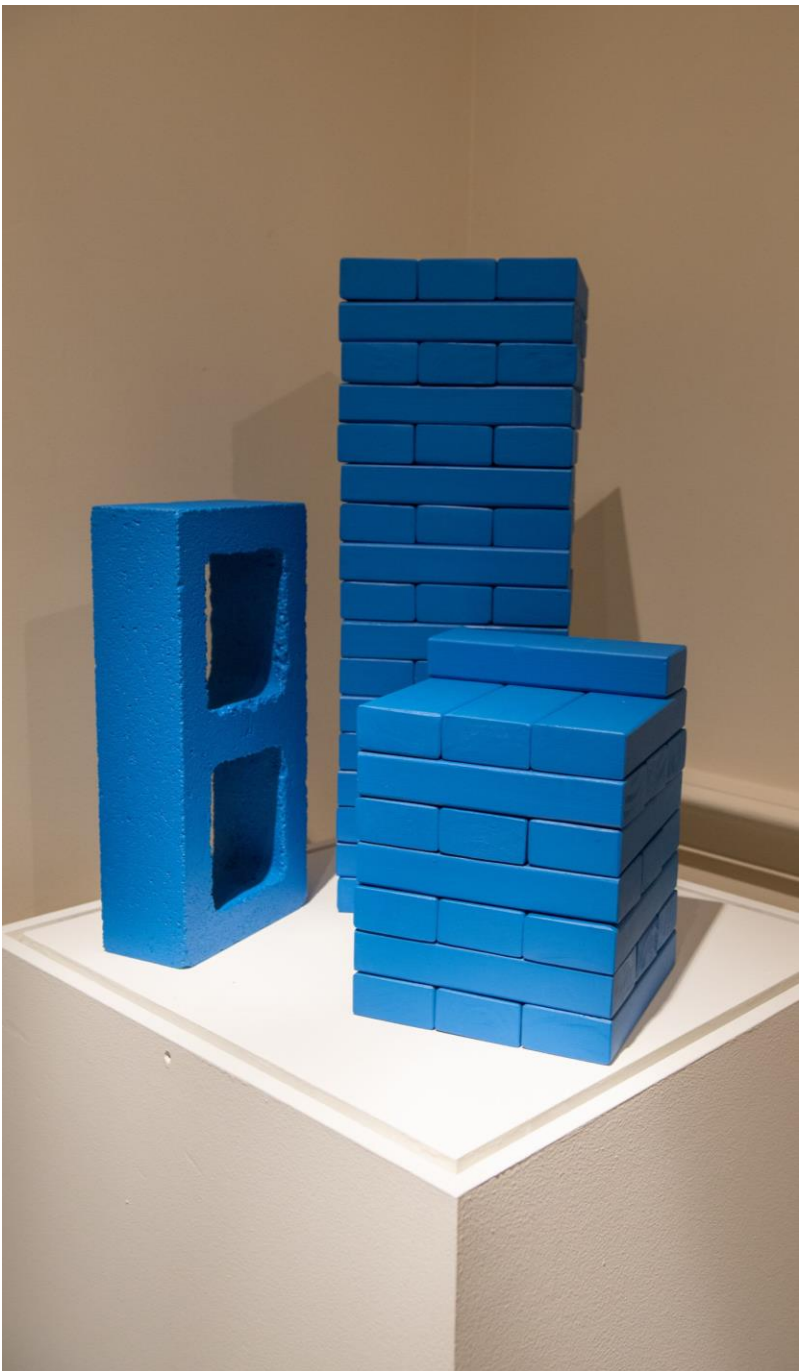


"You go to the people of... any irrigation town, right down to the dairy farmers, and [try saying] that taking water away will have no negative economic impacts. These people deserve their voices to be heard and I always make sure that happens."

Quoted in article, Sydney Morning Herald, 12/02/2019

"One of my aims... is to rescue those narratives [of the river] from the abstract... and explore why things seem to be falling apart. At the heart of this narrative is the collision between the realities of the landscape - the intimate details, the banks and tributaries, the complexities of community and society - and... the affairs of the nation."

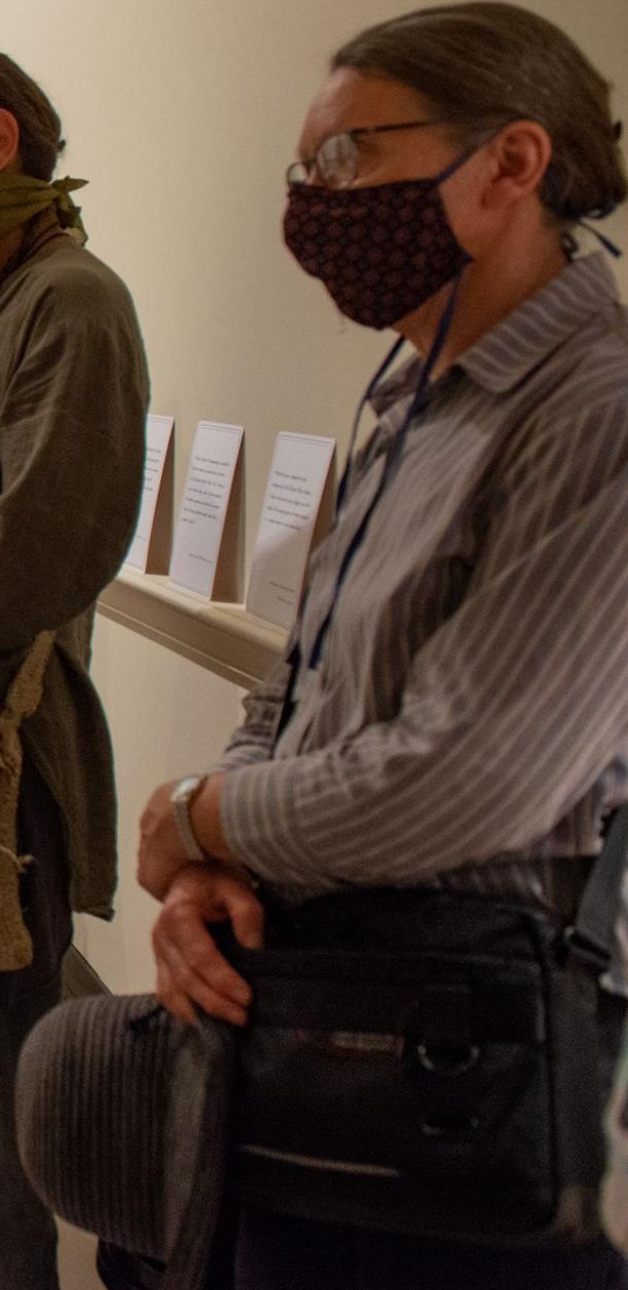
Quarterly Essay, 2019



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BENEFACTORS GALLERY



Informational cards or brochures are placed on a ledge on the right side of the gallery. They appear to contain text and possibly small images or diagrams.

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BENEFACTORS





I could have been
Shared, protected, respected
A sound tonic of drips
Always there
Always flowing
I am
Interrupted, pushed through, tired
Drained, lost, frustrated

Residents of
Mount Alexander Shire on Jaara Country

I could be full of life
Wild
Laughing
Bright
But where are my people?

Residents of
Mount Alexander Shire on Jaara Country

I am a Yorta Yorta woman living on Jaara Country
I am a wind and water person – the sea and fresh water
I am a fresh water deep diver
I must always have a bath where I live...
Water around me.

We become very clear around water
It opens you up to inner knowledge
Ideas come
It is a time of being still
Knowledge comes from water in that way.
When I'm in water
I'm in country with my ancestors

It cleanses my spirit
It sings to my soul
It whispers to me.

Kath Coff

Wetland, billabong
Frog
Duck
Snake
Pooled, silted, still
Flash of bird feather
Fresh water fish

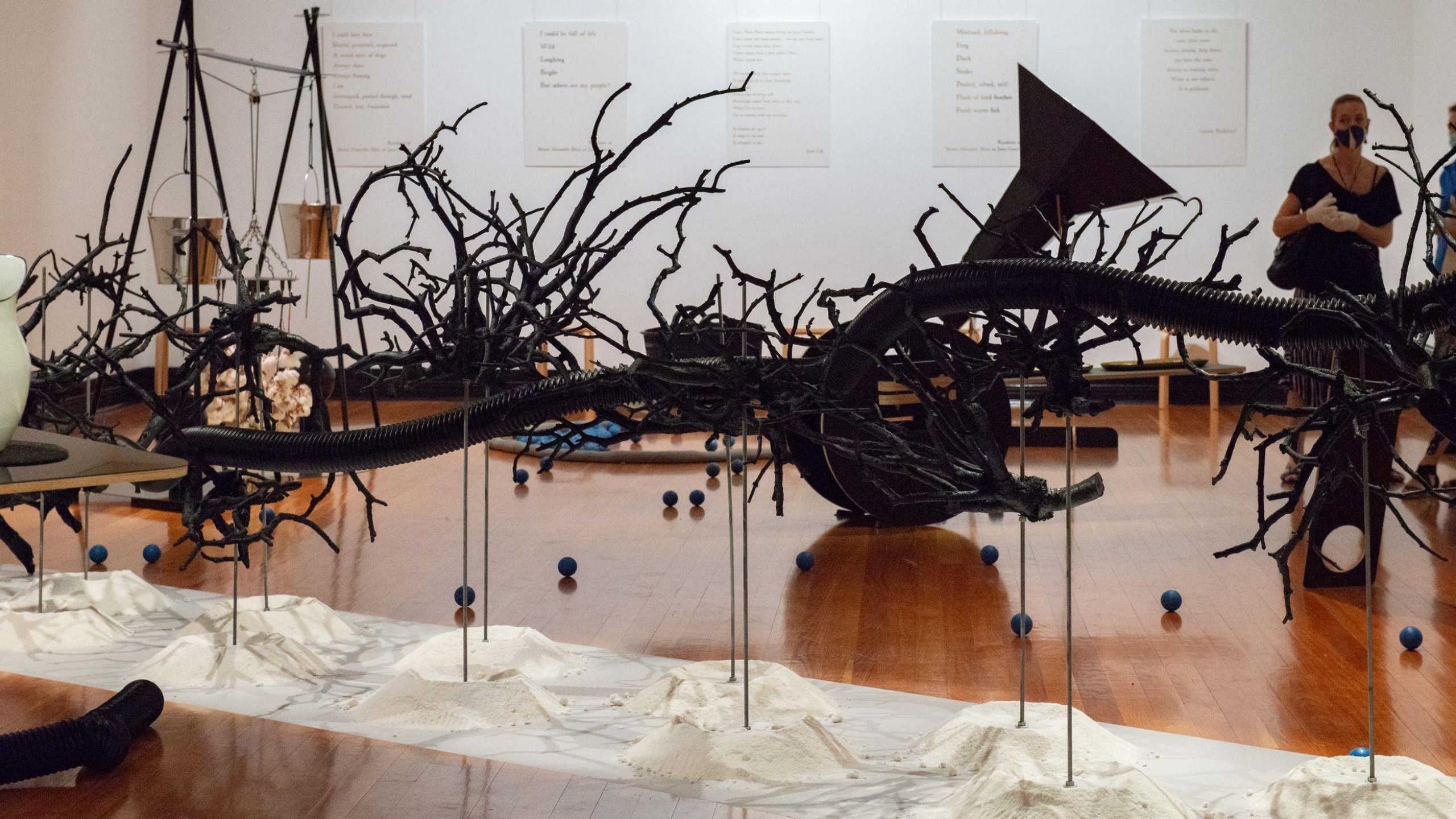
Residents of
Mount Alexander Shire on Jaara Country

You never bathe in the
same river twice
because already, deep down,
you have the same
destiny as running water.
Water is not infinite.
It is profound.

Gaston Bachelard







I could have been
Blind, generous, resigned
A secret mass of sleep
Always there
Always fleeing
I am
Unrecognized, pushed through, used
Disputed, lost, frustrated

I could be full of life
Wild
Laughing
Singing
But where are my people?

You're the one who's been crying in your dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams
I've been crying in my dreams

Worked, inhaling
Frog
Duck
Snake
Pond, wild, still
Flock of bird feathers
Fresh water fish

The water table in the
lake was high
because already they thought
you had the water
already in drinking water
They're not where
It's a goddamn







Informational card held by a person on the left, partially visible. It contains text and a small graphic of a hand.

Informational card held by a person on the right. The text is partially legible and includes the heading "The Big Almond" and a small diagram of a beehive.

BEES WAX










- The Authority -
Assessing plans for how each area on the river will use
its water.

On this day when you...
... must balance four different water resource plans,
ensuring reliable supply of water along the whole river.

You must ensure:
Almond Region has exactly 90 blue blocks.
Then, you may:
Move a maximum of 3 balls or blocks between the Raisin,
Dairy, and/or Cotton Regions
You may only move blocks & spheres between these 4
regions. Do not move water from any other area.



Raisin Dairy
Almond Cotton



"The lack of water is ruining a lot of the farms because we can't water our pastures and crops and a lot of small acreage irrigation farms are going back to dry farms as it's too difficult."

Quote by author, ABC News, irrigation



I could have been
skunk, porcupine, squirrel
A crowd noise of dogs
Always there
Always there
I am
Interrupted, pushed through, tired
Disappointed, lost, frustrated

Reveries of
Miss Adelaide Stone in June County

I could be full of life
Wild
Laughing
Bright
But where are my people?

Reveries of
Miss Adelaide Stone in June County

Wetland, billabong
Frog
Duck
Snake
Poised, silent
Flash of light
with water

Reveries of
Miss Adelaide Stone in June County

The sound of the
water
The sound of the
water
The sound of the
water
The sound of the
water

Reveries of
Miss Adelaide Stone in June County









Wetland, billabong
Frog
Duck
Snake
Pooled, silted, still
Flask of bird feather
Fresh water fish

Exhibition of
Helen Alexander Skene in John Country



Text on the left wall panel, partially obscured by the sculpture.

Wet
Frog
Duck
Snake
Pond
Flash
Fresh

Mount Almond









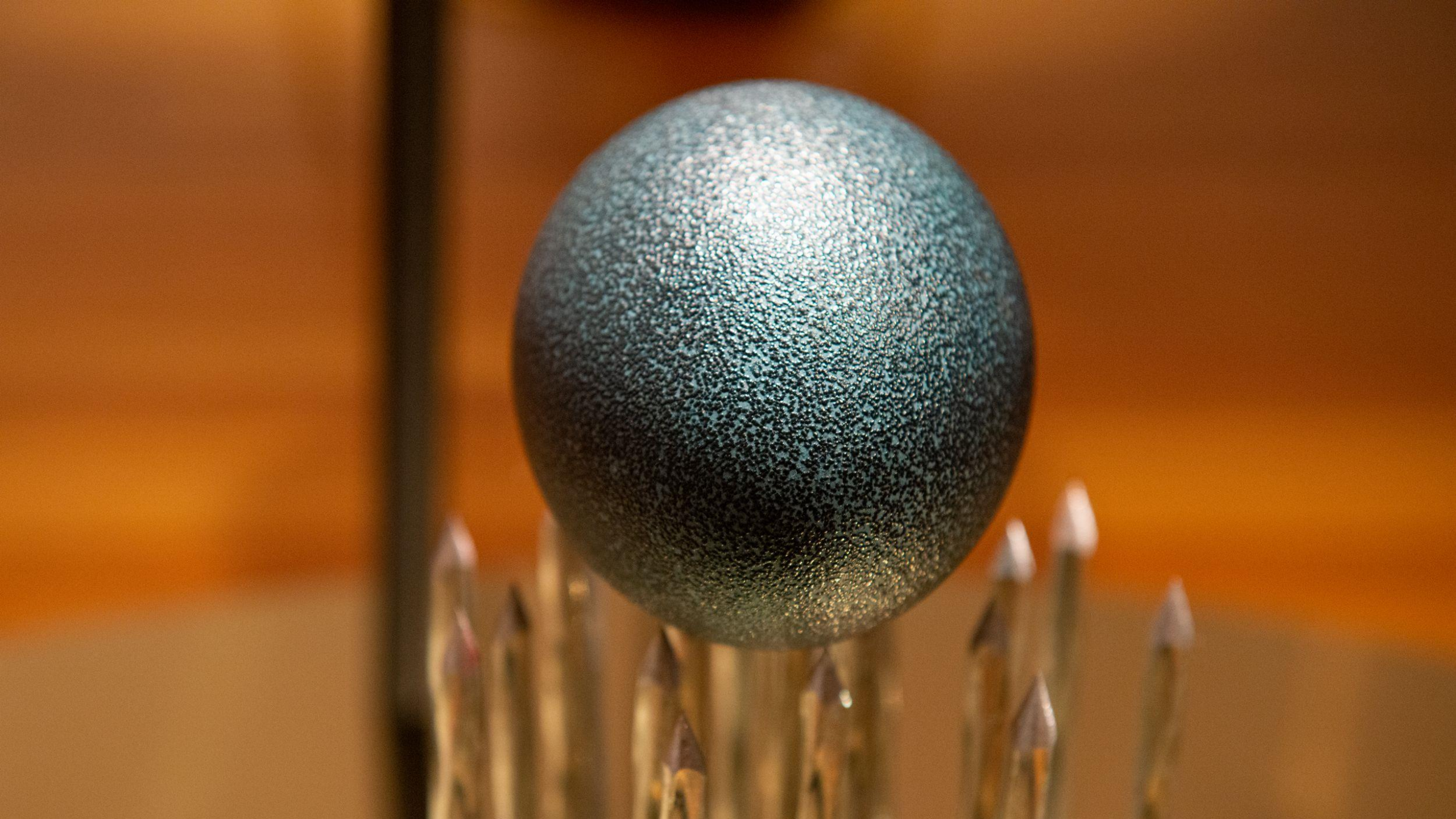












"One of my aims... is to rescue those narratives [of the river] from the abstract... and explore why things seem to be falling apart. At the heart of this narrative is the collision between the realities of the landscape - the intimate details, the banks and tributaries, the complexities of community and society - and... the affairs of the nation."

Quarterly Essay, 2019

"Sometimes when a [river] bill goes to parliament, you have to close your eyes and get some animals on the track that you didn't want to put on the track. We have an attachment to these animals, we bring them up for generations and every cell becomes a hard one."

It's heartbreaking. It really is."

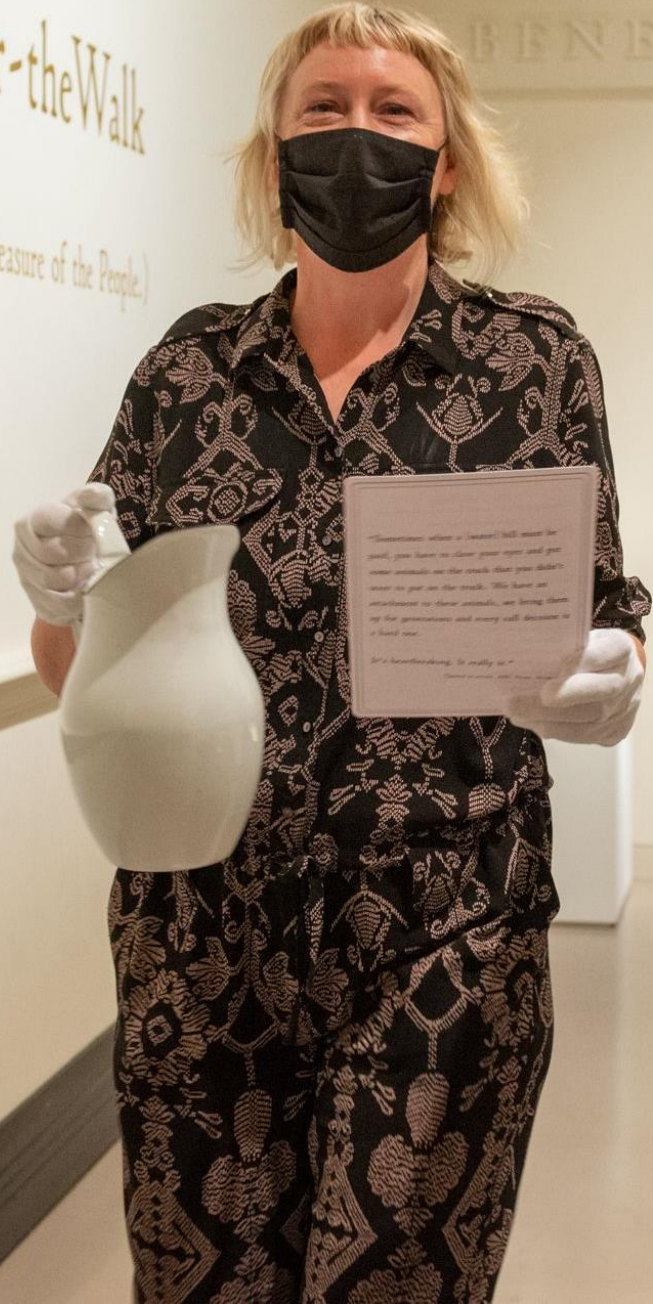
Quarterly Essay, 2019

"It's like an ocean of abstract theories and as [the bill] only get to see abstract for a month or however long they're not there. Which is kind of like if I read 'OM, you see we only know more for a month.' It would get boring after a while. It would get monotonous. And you might want to read a book with."

Quarterly Essay, 2019

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BENEFACTORS GALLERY



Creative team for theWay~theWater~theWalk

Work in Progress presentations – November 2020

Concept, direction, and design collaboration – Jude Anderson

Design and construction – Morwenna Schenck

Performers – Briega Young, Josiah Lulham

Sound design – Jacques Soddell

Participation and on-line simulator design – Georgia Symons

Caretakers – Jude Anderson, Morwenna Schenck, Anna Schwartz, Georgia Symons

Documentation – Ideas Agency and Diana Domonkos

Punctum General Manager – Steve Mayhew

In collaboration with Castlemaine Art Museum

With contributions from Mt Alexander Shire residents and First Nation members of Nalderun, Emeritus Professor Nordin Hasan, Dr Jazmin Llana, Matt Cornell, and generously supported by Claire Eliza – Pool of Dreams, Creative Victoria and the Australia Council's Fellowship program.

