The Life of the Yarra Audio Tour: Church St Bridge Transcript

Narration - Sarah: As we walk to the bus shelter on Alexandra Avenue, you'll see an Indigenous marker with the story of Derrimut just downstream of it. You may like to turn off the audio and take a moment to learn Derrimut's story.

Narration - Sarah: Take a look now at the Church Street bridge, you might like to walk along the bridge for some way and look back at the riverbank. The bridge as you currently see it opened in 1923. It is the second incarnation of a bridge at this point on the river; the first was a narrow iron bridge which was built in 1857, but this bridge proved too small for a major river crossing. The bridge you currently see is Heritage listed. In the early 1920's the bridge committee insisted on a bridge that would contribute to the beautification of the city, as at that point in time, the river was polluted and the land on either side of the river here were industrial zones. On the eastern side of Chapel street there were factories operating into the mid-20th century. This paints quite a different picture to what is here today.

Narration - Sarah*:* When land is cleared as it was to make way for all this industry many years ago, weeds can grow back in their place. The Yarra Biodiversity Project aims to revegetate the banks of the Yarra with native plants to reduce the impact invasive weeds have on our waterway. Weeds can be carried to the river bank by the water, wind, birds and animals; they can also come from our own gardens.

Narration - Patrick: Garden thugs are the name given to plants that can escape from a garden or backyard and can dominate the surrounding natural environment to the detriment of existing natural ecosystems. Often common plants used for landscaping. You might have an ecosystem near you that contains indigenous plants and native species of animals that rely on them as their food source. Then nearby in your own backyard you introduce an invasive exotic species, that you bought at your local plant nursery. Then a birds eats a berry from this plant and spreads its seed into your local frog pond or your grassland. And then that exotic species takes hold, as it's outside of its natural range and doesn't have the normal checks and balances that would keep it in control in its natural environment. It takes over and degrades that ecosystem and can destroy it, and all the animals and ecosystem services it renders are degraded because of something you were growing in your backyard.

Narration - Sarah*:* If you'd like to help reduce the amount of invasive plants in Melbourne look up "Sustainable Gardening in Stonnington". It identifies some common invasive plants that escape from gardens, as well as a list of local native plants that you could plant instead. Mark Schneider, gardener at City of Stonnington describes how he supports indigenous plants in his garden...

Mark Schneider: *I use a lot of indigenous species at home, I have exotic substitutes. Some of these substitutes are hardier, and offer fruit and habitat for local animals and lizards. Harder, sometimes you can manipulate we're talking hedging pruning. Boobiellas I hedge them into loose hedge. I've made a fantastic disc hedge out of dodonaeas. Creepers -*

wonga wonga vine (pandorea pandorana) which is for the damper zone around your house. Clematis you've got climbers. Correas for flowers and the honey eaters. Daisy shrubs the thorn bills come in love them.

Narration – Patrick: Ecosystem services provided by indigenous plants can be thought of by the ecosystem services the indigenous plants themselves are facilitating by attracting fauna into an area. For example, pollination provided by native bees, which are attracted by indigenous plants as a food source; predation of pests you might have in your vegetable patch by native birds which are brought in by indigenous plants as a food source; and also wider things like lower maintenance required by indigenous plants in gardens. Provides a garden environment that you'll still get benefits out of like flowering and seasonal change, but with lower cost in terms of maintenance and upkeep. Because these plants have evolved to suit the local growing conditions more than an invasive species would.