

Cars and social media have might as well rendered the art of walking as less relevant in our daily lives. But it is the simple practice of walking that makes us and our cities feel more human. Navigating through the sprawling plots of industrial land and suburbia in Melbourne's west for endless hours was an alienating yet profound learning experience. Walking from the hustle and hum of the city, we experience stillness and an overwhelming vastness to the outer areas of the west. Intricate layers of social histories/geographies to the areas were eventually revealed as time passed on. It was what had led me to now think of our city as one big living organism - perhaps a separate spatial and social unit that is comprised internally of interconnected places and people. The sightings of graffiti and vandalism showed that it has imposed its social geography to these areas - and is an apparent ubiquitous feature to industrial sites. Vibrant tags have repeatedly been ingrained on factory walls with haste, and seem to act as space markers to highlight the territory of urban youth groups and gangs. What could be considered as active and creative engagement with these industrial areas should also be seen as a reclamation of urban spaces for people, and not just for profit. The sudden discovery of a guerrilla community garden revealed itself as critical space for building on social cohesion and moreover, exchanging of cultural values and heritage in outer suburbia. Olive trees had undoubtedly caught our attention. As symbols of 'peace' and 'harmony', the mass plantations of these trees seemed to serve as a familiar marker of 'home' for many of the European residents in the suburbs. Community gardens have afforded a pedagogical space for these elderly residents and young families. Not only do they seem to teach local residents how to achieve coexistence and everyday multiculturalism, but they have the potential to plant seeds for connections beyond cultural differences. Like living organisms, the various industrial sites and residential settlements have grown, matured and at times, adapted itself to the ever-changing conditions of the outer world - whether it is being social, economic or environmental.



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Walking Out is a survey of Melbourne Water owned and managed public land throughout the Western suburbs. Material for the exhibition was gathered over a two day 42km walk undertaken in January 2018 by the design and research not for profit OFFICE. The walk began at the mouth of Stony Creek under the shadow of the West Gate Bridge, and concluded at Greenvale Reservoir, which straddles Melbourne's urban growth boundary. The exhibition highlights the shift in conditions as you exit urban Melbourne, passing through industrial estates, into suburbia and finally leaving Melbourne proper as you cross the threshold of the urban growth boundary. By utilising linear public assets, such as waterways and pipe tracks to navigate the city, our changing relationships to water and public space was revealed. The walk was undertaken entirely on public assets and predominantly on Melbourne Water owned land, therefore the spatial conditions that were explored were especially that of public space and water infrastructure. The exhibition is as a part of a wider body of research into how Melbourne Water (and other government bodies) assets can be better leveraged for greater social and environmental outcomes. In a densifying city and world, our public space should work harder in order to service the growing demand. Only through interrogation into current occupation, and considered site specific design responses can we leverage our existing public assets to meet the coming challenges.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we walked, and pay or respect to Elders past, present and emerging. This booklet is a collection of images taken throughout the walk. No two booklets are the same. The pages are unbound so they can be reordered and rearranged. Through this operative document new adjacencies can be made and conclusions drawn.

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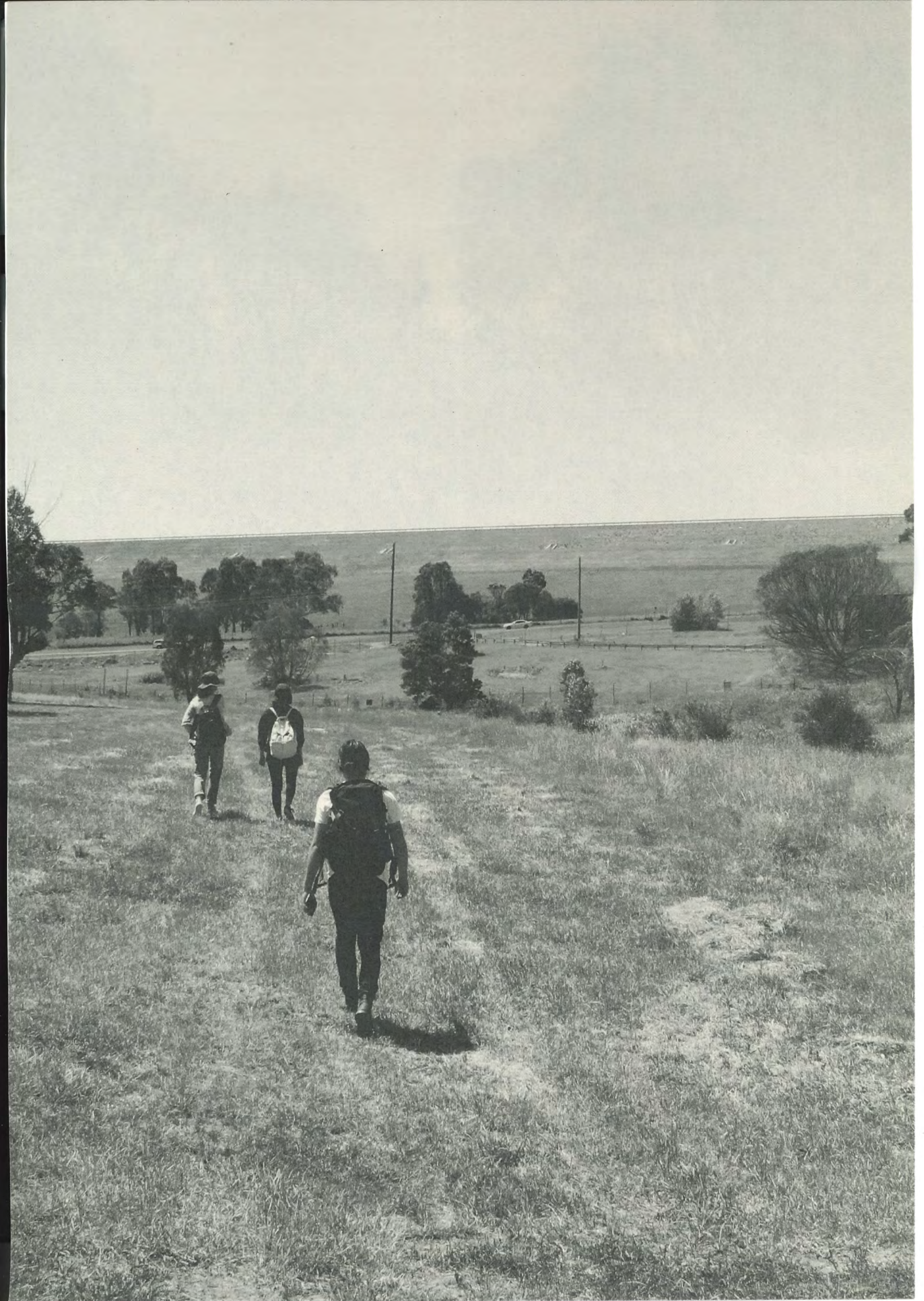




















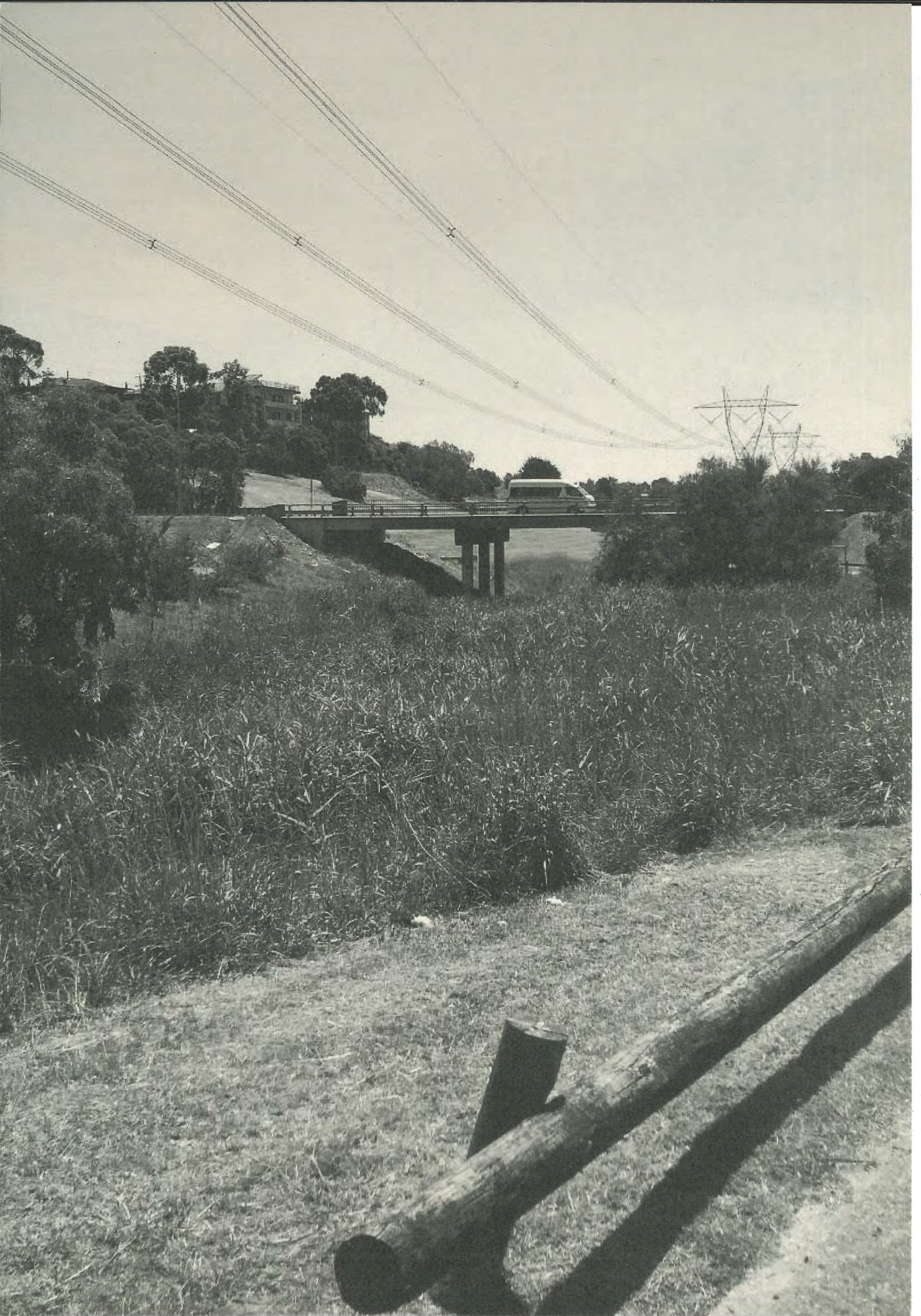


















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