

Art and conservation create invisible connections

Atop a step ladder in Melbourne's City Square (Australia) today internationally acclaimed artist, John Wolseley, will launch *Invisible Connections*, a book that depicts the dramatic journeys of migratory shorebirds, while putting the finishing touches on his mural, Australia's largest waterbird scene. This is a free event. Guests will have the opportunity to meet the artist, photograph the mural and talk to some of the contributors to *Invisible Connections*. Co-author, Dr Danny Rogers, from the Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG), a special interest group of Birds Australia (BirdLife Partner), will discuss shorebird conservation. Copies of the book will be sold at the event. *Invisible Connections* is a stunning photographic display that follows the migration of shorebirds flying from their breeding grounds in Far East Russia, through East Asia and on to Australia and New Zealand. "It really is amazing what migratory shorebirds do, year in and year out," says Dr Rogers. "Most of the time we are completely unaware that these tiny birds are flying overhead." They travel along the East Asian - Australasian Flyway, a shorebird "super highway" made up of over 20 countries. Protection and conservation of stopping or staging sites where the shorebirds rest and feed is vital for their survival. "Invisible Connections" highlights the need for international cooperation to protect these important areas and reveals the surprising and little-known connections that exist between countries, habitats and people. John Wolseley has been commissioned by the Melbourne City Council for a public art initiative titled "Propositions for an Uncertain Future" which seeks to address different aspects of climate change with five responses, through art, to a fountain without water. He is a world-renowned painter, known for his unique depiction of the Australian landscape and its flora and fauna, as well as being a passionate conservationist. John's inimitable style will burst out of the site where the City Square fountain once cascaded, in an impressive celebration of the bird life of our wetlands. Influenced by current conservation issues, this mural reflects the story of the federal government's recent buyback of the Gwydir wetlands north of Moree, NSW, one of the largest Ramsar sites in Australia. Visit the City of Melbourne website to learn more about "Propositions for an Uncertain Future" public art initiative or the CSIRO Publishing website for a sneak preview of "Invisible Connections". *Photo credit: John Wolseley / Birds Australia*