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Bush Heritage Australia tackles environmental crisis amid economic downturn

LEADING conservation group Bush Heritage Australia surges ahead despite global economic difficulties increasing its impact on the Australian economy.

Bush Heritage illustrated their dedication to conservation by creating a striking visual display in the Melbourne CBD promoting its vision of protecting 7 million hectares of Australia by 2025.

On the morning of Monday February 2, Bush Heritage Australia staff cascaded the steps of Flinders St Station and held up signs that sequentially formed the number 7,000,000 (hectares). They were then flipped over to reveal various illustrations of iconic Australian animals – some of which are found on Bush Heritage Reserves.

Images were excerpts from an illustration used in a supersize billboard currently on display on the corner of Flinders and Swanston St in Melbourne.

Bush Heritage Australia CEO Doug Humann said the organisation wanted to convey that despite the economic difficulties facing both corporate and non-profit organisations, Bush Heritage remains actively dedicated to our vision, and times like these need the public's support more than ever.

“Australia's threatened species will not survive a lacklustre effort when it comes to their protection - which why our work must and is continuing. Australia is not only facing an economic crisis, but an environmental crisis, one which will not simply pick itself back up.

“We’re not just talking about climate change, but habitat loss through clearing, feral animals, introduced plants and unsuitable fire regimes.”

“We spread our message from the heart of Melbourne on Monday (from the top of Flinders St steps) to engage like-minded Australians about the Bush Heritage vision.” he said.

“Australia has the worst rate of mammal extinction of any developed country. Our plan is to protect native wildlife on our reserves and in the longer-term 1 per cent of Australia.” (7 million hectares.)

“With the public’s help, we can help our threatened wildlife by providing them with a safe environment. We can make a difference.”

Bush Heritage would like to thank *Connex Melbourne* for their support in use of the steps of Flinders St.

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Images:

PHOTO: Bush Heritage staff on Flinders St steps

(TBA)

Notes for editors:

About Bush Heritage Australia

Bush Heritage is a national non-profit organisation that protects Australia’s unique animals, plants and their habitats. Bush Heritage achieves this by acquiring and

managing land of outstanding conservation value, or by working in partnership with other landowners.

About the 7 million vision – background (the Howard Government)

In 2002, the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council estimated that if we are to effectively conserve at least 80% of Australia's animals and plants for the future, an additional 22 million hectares of land needs to be set aside for conservation. That is 3% of Australia, and so Bush Heritage made the commitment to protect 1% of Australia by 2025 (i.e. 7 million hectares).

How is Bush Heritage achieving its vision

- Bush Heritage developed a national approach, titled the 'Anchors in the Landscape' (AIL).
- The AIL strategy selected five key regions in which to work by investing in long-term conservation activities.
- These regions enabled BHA to create effective partnerships with key landowners such as Indigenous groups, governments and pastoral companies.
- Staff plan and develop the broader projects and the detailed actions needed on the ground.
- Funding not only helps to acquire properties but ensures the much needed work on the ground is carried out.