



Landscapes for life

Monday 8th June, 2009

ANNOUNCEMENT:
‘Take the leap from wealth to significance’ –
Chris Darwin’s first message as Bush Heritage Ambassador

CHRIS DARWIN, the great-great grandson of naturalist Charles Darwin (author of *On the Origin of Species*) joins The Hon. Tim Fischer as a Bush Heritage Australia Ambassador.

A long-standing Bush Heritage supporter, Chris gave Bush Heritage Australia a generous gift in 2003 that led to the establishment of the Charles Darwin Reserve. He has inherited from his famous relative a strong commitment to ending the alarming rate of species decline on our planet.

Chris Darwin said this was the right step forward to inspire others to support the work of Bush Heritage Australia and the urgent need to protect Australia’s unique land, water and wildlife.

‘Living in the comforts of the western world, it is easy to have a pleasant life, but finding meaning can be more challenging. When we donated the money to Bush Heritage we saw them use it to do something of significance, not just for Australia but for the world,’ he said.

‘One way of looking at our global situation is that we live on a small moist lump of rock that is spinning through space. We have got nowhere else to go, and considering this we appear to be hugely undervaluing the natural world. After all, the natural world produces our oxygen, our soil, the ozone layer; it cleans our water and air, and so does much more. We know that the only way to keep planet Earth habitable for the long term is to preserve the natural world and yet, for reasons that are beyond comprehension, both in Australia and globally we are destroying the natural world as if it was surplus to requirements.’

‘When (my wife) Jacqui and I donated a double-digit percentage of our total wealth to doing our bit to protect the natural world, it was a worrying moment. But once we had given the money we realised that we could live comfortably without it and instead we had been given the warm glow that we had made the world a better place for our children.’

‘We encourage like-minded individuals to take the leap: move from wealth to significance, because it is something that you will never regret.’

Bush Heritage CEO Doug Humann said the support Chris has provided to Bush Heritage has been an inspiration to many people who have in turn provided their own support.

‘We greatly value and admire Chris’ enthusiasm and commitment to conservation.’

‘The vision of Bush Heritage is to protect 1% of Australia by 2025. Having Chris as an Ambassador brings a new platform to inspire others.’

This event coincides with the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin’s birth and 150 years since the publication of *On the Origin of Species*.

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Notes to media:

High resolution photos of Chris Darwin available.

Caption: Chris Darwin examines a salmon gum, PHOTO: Bush Heritage Australia

Media interviews available with:

Doug Humann, CEO Bush Heritage Australia

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Chris Darwin

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Notes to editors:**About Chris Darwin BSc**

Chris Darwin is the great-great grandson of Charles Darwin. He went on the first Round Britain Windsurf Expedition and the Social Climbers' expedition to host the world's highest dinner party. Both expeditions were world firsts. He has written two books: *The Social Climbers* and *The Ultimate Australian Adventure Guide*.

Chris and Jacqui (his wife) gave the donation that allowed Bush Heritage to purchase the Charles Darwin Reserve. Chris has worked as a volunteer on three major charity fundraising programs. For Bush Heritage, Chris worked as a volunteer for nearly a year to help raise \$1.2 million.

Chris is a canyoning, abseiling and rock climbing guide in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

Bush Heritage Australia Ambassadors

The Hon. Tim Fischer

John Williamson

Phillip Adams

Roger Woodward AC OM OBE

About Charles Darwin Reserve

The Charles Darwin Reserve is situated on the edge of WA's Avon Valley wheat belt. Formerly a sheep station in urgent need of conservation, the 68,000 hectare property is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot. It lies within the South-West Botanical Province, an area that covers only four per cent of Australia while providing habitat for 52 per cent of the nation's rare and threatened plant species.

Bush Heritage Australia's Charles Darwin Reserve protects precious remnant vegetation in a region that once supported impressive expanses of eucalyptus woodlands, shrub land and heath vegetation. Much of this vegetation has been cleared for agricultural activities. As a result, Charles Darwin Reserve stands as a vital refuge for plant and animal species in the region. York gum and mixed salmon gum-gimlet woodlands provide important habitat for the Reserve's dynamic bird life.

Since acquiring the reserve in 2003, Bush Heritage Australia's on-ground management has resulted in a visible recovery of the area, including a reduction in the number of weeds, foxes and goats.