

MEDIA ALERT

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Leading Aboriginal women talk resilience at the 10th Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast

Conservationists, scientists, Aboriginal leaders and a prominent chef will all feature next month at the much-loved Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast presented by Trust for Nature (Victoria) and Bush Heritage Australia.

Two pioneering Aboriginal women – Keelen Mailman OAM and Melia Benn - will share their stories of resilience for the 10th anniversary of the event, which will stream online for the very first time.

Bidjara woman Keelen Mailman became the first Aboriginal woman to run a commercial cattle station at age 30 when she took over Mt Tabor, two hours from Augathella on the black soil plains of western Queensland.

Melia Benn is a descendent of the Mamu and Gungandii people and is one of only two First Nations women at the Bar in Queensland, alongside Wangkamadla woman and Bush Heritage board member Avelina Tarrago.

The theme of the breakfast is **resilience and crisis recovery**. Speakers will reflect on the importance of resilience in the face of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Black Summer bushfires and share their thoughts on the contribution women have made to conservation.

Award-winning science communicator Tanya Ha will MC the event while celebrated Melbourne chef Elizabeth Chong AM will provide a breakfast recipe for attendees to make at home.

Trust for Nature CEO Victoria Marles said conservation was at the heart of resilience.

“I think the restrictions and bushfires have really made people appreciate the value of our environment. Land management is at the core of strategies to ensure Australia’s environment is resilient in the face of threats such as climate change.

“I am excited to hear these different perspectives on crisis recovery.”

Bush Heritage Australia CEO Heather Campbell said the ability to work collaboratively and foster connections through events like the Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast was key to building a resilient environment for future generations.

“Change comes from working together to ensure that the biggest possible impact is had,” Heather said.



“Events like the Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast always demonstrate the collaborative nature of the conservation community and I’m thrilled to mark its 10th anniversary in 2021 by going online and bringing it to an even wider audience.”

The 10th Celebrating Women in Conservation Breakfast will take place on **Thursday, March 4 2021** at 7-9am AEST.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased via <https://events.humanitix.com/women-in-conservation-virtual-breakfast-2021>

Media contacts

James Whitmore, Communications Coordinator, Trust for Nature (Victoria), 0450 653 811, jamesw@tfn.org.au.

Kate Thorburn, Media and Communications Coordinator, Bush Heritage Australia, 0407 004 139, kate.thorburn@bushheritage.org.au.

[Download speaker headshots, images of previous Women in Conservation breakfasts and Trust for Nature/Bush Heritage protected landscapes here.](#)

Trust for Nature is one of Australia’s oldest conservation organisations, established by the Victorian Government in 1972 to protect habitat on private land.

It is a not-for-profit organisation that relies on the generosity of supporters to help protect Victoria’s biodiversity and works with more than 1,540 landholders across Victoria.

Bush Heritage Australia is an independent not-for-profit that buys and manages land, and partners with Aboriginal people to protect our irreplaceable landscapes and our magnificent native species forever.

There are close to 2,000 animals and plants on Australia’s threatened species list. Bush Heritage steps in where we’re needed most, protecting all species on our reserves

We respect, listen and learn from working side-by-side with Traditional Owners, and by working in partnerships with pastoralists and other organisations to have the most impact

Together, we’re returning the bush to good health.