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Leading Aboriginal barrister appointed to Bush Heritage board

National conservation not-for-profit Bush Heritage Australia today announced the appointment of Wangkamadla woman and leading Queensland barrister Avelina Tarrago to its board.

Avelina has a long standing relationship with Bush Heritage. She is a Wangkamadla Traditional Owner in far western Queensland where Bush Heritage's Cravens Peak and Ethabuka Reserves are located and has been a member of Bush Heritage's Aboriginal Engagement Committee since 2010, advising the board on Bush Heritage's 25 partnerships with Aboriginal people around the country.

Avelina is a strong voice for justice and is one of only two Indigenous women at the Queensland Bar.

"I'm pleased to join the Bush Heritage Board and continue supporting the important work that is undertaken in partnership with Traditional Owners," Avelina said.

Avelina currently works as a barrister at Brisbane's North Quarter Lane Chambers in Brisbane, and is a Member of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, President of the Indigenous Lawyers Association of Queensland and a member of Law Council of Australia's Indigenous Legal Issues Committee.

Previously she worked for the Office of the Health Ombudsman and the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, among other roles.

In 2014 she was selected as an Indigenous Fellow by the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights to undertake a two month fellowship in Geneva.

Bush Heritage Chief Executive Officer Heather Campbell said Avelina's appointment was important for ensuring Bush Heritage's commitment to Aboriginal leadership within the organisation and building cultural competency in all aspects of its work.

Bush Heritage recently announced the upcoming appointment of Cissy Gore-Birch, a Jaru/Kija woman from the Kimberley and Bush Heritage's National Aboriginal Engagement Manager, to its Senior Management team.

In 2018/2019 an Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework was rolled out across the organisation, with 62% of Bush Heritage staff attending cultural competency training. This framework will be critical in ensuring all Bush Heritage staff are supported and encouraged to work effectively with Aboriginal people and communities. Such initiatives have successfully contributed to Bush Heritage's pioneering conservation activities with Traditional Owners.

"Our work looking after country with Aboriginal people around Australia is central to our values, vision, purpose and conservation success. We are privileged to have someone like Avelina add her leadership, insight and experience to our board," Heather said.

"Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at all levels is critical to Bush Heritage's journey to becoming a better and more effective organisation, and I look forward to continuing to welcoming more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to our board and staff."



Media enquiries

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