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Another reserve at Liffey

In 1992, as Bob Brown was building a fledgling organisation into the Australian Bush Heritage Fund, Dr Judy Henderson was buying land. Her motivation, like Bob Brown's, was to save the magnificent trees on this property in Tasmania from being clear-felled. At the time, Judy Henderson was one of the founding directors of Bush Heritage.

Judy Henderson's block is not large (20.3 ha) but it is significant. It lies in the same cosy hidden valley as Liffey River Reserve and Drys Bluff Reserve,

the blocks purchased by Bob Brown in 1990 to become the first Bush Heritage reserves. Like these reserves it backs onto the Central Plateau World Heritage Area beneath the great dolorite and sandstone escarpment. Majestic trees cling to the walls of the steep-sided valley beneath the Great Western Tiers. A creek tumbles down over a series of spectacular waterfalls to feed the Liffey River with its platypus and native fish. This creek gully supports a mix of wet sclerophyll and rainforest species and an abundance of ferns. The area is also home to white goshawks, threatened Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles and Tasmanian devils to name just a few.

Judy Henderson has announced her intention to pass this land to Bush Heritage. It will help to build a significant protected area on the side of this beautiful glacial valley. She has the added incentive of

receiving the tax deduction now available for gifts of this kind, the benefits of which can be spread over five years. Bush Heritage will manage the property along with its neighbouring Liffey reserves. Your valuable donations will help cover its modest management costs.

Judy is pleased to have the land protected for the long term. Bush Heritage is grateful for this generous gift that is a valuable addition to the land in its care.

Bush Heritage is one of the best initiatives that I have ever been associated with. Every time I think about it I get a warm feeling in my heart. In a world where your faith in humanity gets buffeted at regular intervals, Bush Heritage is such a good news story.
Dr Judy Henderson, April 2003

Clockwise from top left: Sandstone outcrop. PHOTO: NATHAN MALES
White goshawk. PHOTO: DAVE WATTS **Tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) in the creek gully.** PHOTO: NATHAN MALES



Dr Judy Henderson AO is currently the chair of the Global Reporting Initiative which is setting global standards for the reporting of the social, environmental and economic performance of business and organisations. She has been the chair of Oxfam International and Australian Ethical Investments and received an AO in 1998 for services to developing countries and to the community through the promotion of environmental issues.



The conservation value of Bush Heritage reserves

Phil Cullen, Bush Heritage landscape ecologist, summarises the conservation values of the reserves

In the twelve years since its establishment, Bush Heritage has grown from being a Tasmanian-based organisation with two small reserves totaling 241 ha, to being the nation's most widely supported organisation with a mission to purchase private land for conservation. It now has fourteen reserves across four states and protects a total of 131 228 ha.

A defining point in this development was the purchase of Carnarvon Station in central Queensland. This was a very exciting time for both our supporters and staff. Carnarvon represented a move into the big league. Our two post-Carnarvon purchases, Chereninup Creek Reserve and, most recently, White Wells Station (now the Charles Darwin Reserve) in Western Australia, have again more than doubled our land holdings. For a relatively young organisation, Bush Heritage now owns and manages an impressive area.

So, is the acquisition of big spreads of land really contributing to the conservation of Australia's unique biodiversity?

To answer this question I have prepared a table that summarises the specific conservation values of each of our reserves (see opposite). By necessity, much of the interesting detail is missing so, by way of compensation, I have listed what I consider to be some the conservation highlights of each reserve.

There can be little doubt that the Bush Heritage reserves, whether large or small, make a significant contribution

to biodiversity conservation. Of the 104 plant communities that are reserved, 47 are of conservation significance (i.e. they have been largely lost through land clearing or are poorly represented in State reserves). From our survey work we know that the Bush Heritage reserves support at least 56 plant species and 54 animal species of conservation significance. These figures will undoubtedly increase as more thorough surveys are completed, particularly of the Chereninup Creek and Charles Darwin reserves.

The table also illustrates the important contribution that small reserves can make to biodiversity conservation. Landscape-scale properties such as Carnarvon Station tend to overshadow our smaller reserves. However, these relatively small areas often represent one of the last places where good conservation for a species or community can be achieved. They are often worthwhile complements to adjacent State reserves and provide opportunities for our supporters to visit and enjoy the areas that they have helped to protect.

At 432 ha the Tarcutta Hills Reserve (NSW), for example, has one of the best remnants of grassy white box woodland (nationally endangered) in the nation and

Clockwise from left: Colourful trunks on a scribbly gum (*Eucalyptus rossii*). Juvenile foliage on red box (*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*). Photographed at Tarcutta Hills, NSW. Nymphs of the hibiscus harlequin bug. Male Lesueur's frog. Photographed at Currumbin Reserve, Qld.

PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX



supports species such as the swift parrot (nationally endangered) and the squirrel glider (nationally vulnerable). The South Esk Pine Reserve supports one of the best stands of the rare *Callitris oblonga* (South Esk pine) and six other significant species of plants that were once widespread in the dry sclerophyll forests and woodlands of Tasmania. Chereninup Creek Reserve (WA), and a forth-coming purchase in the same district, will contribute effectively to a regional conservation initiative, the Gondwana Link project (www.gondwanalink.org) which aims to recreate habitat links across the south-west region of Western Australia.

One of the other less-well-championed values of the reserves is their importance in protecting whole, operating healthy ecosystems. Not only do they safeguard

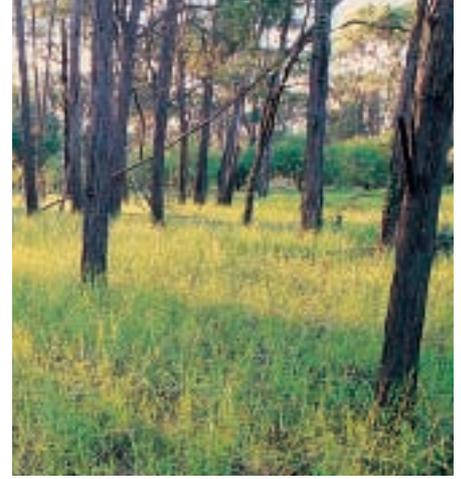
the myriad of living things in the ecosystem, most of which we are barely aware of, but they also maintain and retain healthy soils, and clean air and water. In addition they act as species 'banks', where animals and plants, from the smallest to the largest, live in safety and from where they can recolonise into the surrounding country once the landscape is repaired.

As more and more areas are protected through your ongoing generosity, we will continue to protect an ever-expanding number of Australia's rare and threatened animals and plants. This is an exciting and fulfilling prospect. Keep up the great work!

Top: Mature lancewood (*Acacia shirleyi*) with an understorey of native grasses (Goonderoo Reserve, Qld). Speckled warbler (near threatened) at Tarcutta Hills Reserve, NSW.

Below: Gnarled old white box (*Eucalyptus albens*). Diamond firetail (near threatened). Squirrel glider (nationally vulnerable). All photographed at Tarcutta Hills Reserve, NSW.

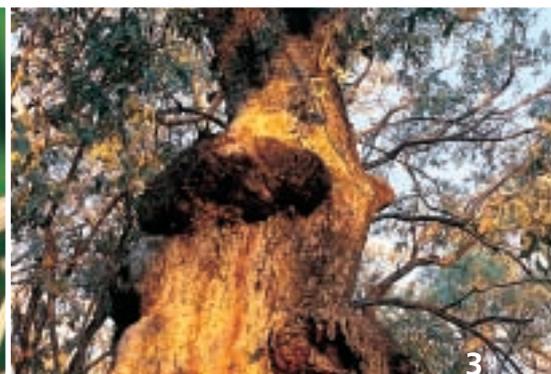
PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/ECOPIX



Reserve	Date protected	Area (ha)	No. of vegetation communities	No. of vegetation communities of conservation significance	No. of plant species of conservation significance so far identified	No. of animal species of conservation significance so far identified	Conservation highlights
Liffey River	1990	105	7	1		2	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i> forest, white goshawk
Dry Bluff	1990	136	6	1		2	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i> forest, white goshawk
Fan Palm	1993	8	1	1	19	1	fan palm forest, cassowary
Brogo	1995	120	8	4		7	dry grassy forest and dry rainforest
Erith Island*	1996	412	10	0	7		relatively undisturbed island habitat
Kojonup	1996	333	5	1	5	2	wandoo woodland, declining woodland birds
Friendly Beaches	1997	120	9	4	3		coastal heathlands and intact dune system
South Esk	1998	7	1	1	7		<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i> - <i>Callitris oblonga</i> woodland ♦
Goonderoo	1998	593	8	8		6	native grasslands, brigalow woodland, woodland birds
Tarcutta Hills	1999	432	3	1		13	grassy white box woodland, declining woodland birds
Burrin Burrin	1999	411	4	3			dry grassy eucalyptus forests
Currumbin	1999	4	1	0	6	1	threatened rainforest plant species
Carnarvon	2001	59,051	17	6	4	9	grasslands, grassy woodlands and vine thickets
Chereninup Creek#	2002	877	12	8		3	kwongan heath, woodland, mallee fowl
Charles Darwin Reserve#	2003	68,619	12	8	5	8	york gum, salmon gum and gimlet woodlands
Total		131,228	104	47	56	54	

*Lease surrendered by Bush Heritage to create the Kent Group National Park to protect all three islands, Deal, Erith and Dover.

♦ Nominated for inclusion in Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 # Recently acquired and not thoroughly surveyed.



Springing back to life

Clear water seeping from underground aquifers fills and maintains a series of surface pools at twelve sites on Carnarvon Station Reserve (Qld). Normally these springs are small oases surrounded by native grasses and water plants, with populations of frogs, native fish, aquatic insects and terrestrial animals and birds in abundance. Not only do they supply homes and drinking water for the wildlife, but they have also quenched the thirst of the human residents of the area for hundreds, and probably thousands, of years. Protecting these springs is now a critical part of the conservation management of the Reserve.

The damage caused to these springs by the activities of feral pigs in particular is devastating. Where pigs have used them, the life-giving waters have been turned into churned, muddy and lifeless bogs. Over the past two years, volunteer rangers have begun the job of fencing these unique and important habitats (see Bush Heritage News Winter 2002, Spring 2002 and Summer 2002) and the positive outcomes of their efforts so far are worth documenting.



Life and health are returning to the three springs that have been protected to date. Crystal clear pools are once again supporting a flourishing and expanding fringe of native grasses and water plants. Aquatic insects have returned and frogs should follow. The birds and small native animals are again drinking clear water.

The fences have been carefully placed to ensure that water is still available outside the enclosed area for the larger native animals. As pig numbers continue to decline with ongoing control measures, the quality of this water will gradually improve also.

The program to protect the nine remaining springs is continuing.



Clockwise from top. Clear water and returning water plants in Tea Tree Spring. Outside the fence the impact of pigs is still obvious. PHOTOS: PHIL CULLEN The spiny-cheeked honeyeater is a visitor to the springs. *Anaphaeis* butterfly rests on waterside vegetation. Volunteer rangers Peter and Margaret Calder constructing the fence to protect Orange Tree Spring.

PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/EKOPIX.



As part of the protection of the Carnarvon Station Reserve springs and to ensure that there is adequate and dependable water for the human population on the Reserve, Bush Heritage has found an alternative water supply. With a generous grant from the Thyne Reid Charitable Trusts, improvements will be made to a bore, pipes and storage to provide reliable, high-quality water to the staff and volunteers. This will mean that Lady and Blue Water springs will be freed forever of their piping and tanks and returned to the wildlife and flora. We are very grateful for this generous support.



Impressions of Currumbin

Wayne Lawler has spent a number of weeks taking photographs in the Bush Heritage Currumbin Reserve

If one phrase could sum up Currumbin Reserve it would be 'hidden treasures'. The Currumbin access road leads to a high ridge-top overlooking the valley, where you find a small ordered garden with lawns, some rare native shrubs and terraced rockeries. Hardly a nature reserve! But plunge into the subtropical rainforest on the steep slopes below and you find an incredible diversity of life crammed into the secret green worlds within.

Currumbin is only about four hectares, yet it has such a concentration of biodiversity that size is no measure of its conservation value. High on the slope is microphyll rainforest with the endangered sweet myrtle and other small-leaved species. Lower down you encounter a band of tall brush box forest, then proper subtropical rainforest, before you reach the leafy creek flat at the foot of the slope complete with a piccabeen palm grove.

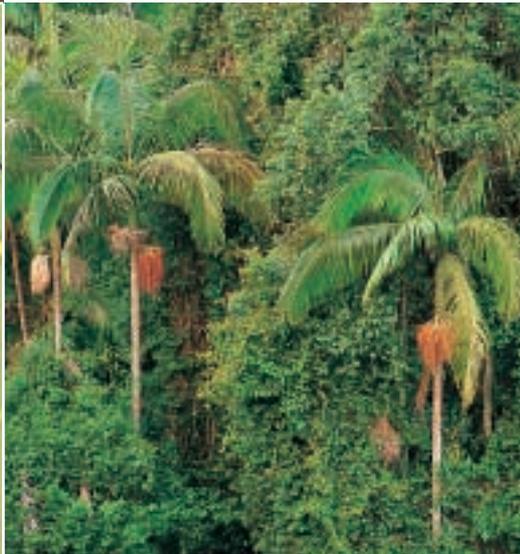
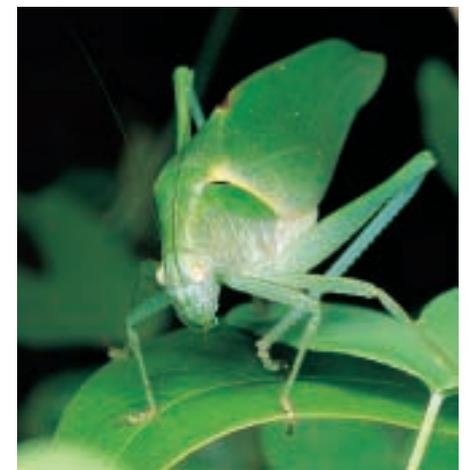
Currumbin Reserve provides a vital link between the Nicoll Scrub National Park

- the last complete example of lower old-growth rainforest on the Gold Coast
 - and the continuum of natural vegetation higher up the valley slopes. This saves the National Park from becoming a habitat island and gives the Reserve great strategic importance.

For me, the highlights of my visit were the many wildlife encounters, including my daytime sighting of a magnificent all-black mountain possum with young, nestled in the cleft of an old rainforest tree deep in the Reserve.

Clockwise from top: View through the canopy of the vine forest to the Mount Coughal National Park. A giant katydid. Blue fruits of the blue quandong (*Elaeocarpus grandis*). Grove of bangalow or piccabeen palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*). Nymphs of the mallotus harlequin bug. Black mountain possum and young. Rainbow bee-eater.

PHOTOS: WAYNE LAWLER/VECOPIX





Conservation Partnerships ~Work begins at Charles Darwin Reserve

Don Royal recounts his first weeks as volunteer ranger at Charles Darwin Reserve

The road north to the Charles Darwin Reserve passes through the Western Australian wheatbelt. Here, the only native vegetation visible clings to road verges or country that is just too rough to plough. Cleared and raked land extends to the horizon on all sides. Walls of dust blow over expanding salted flats. It is a dismal sight.

As you get closer to the Reserve the landscape begins to change. The air clears as the bush takes over. By the time you cross the Reserve boundary, heath, acacia thickets and trees have turned the environment into one of exquisite and subtle beauty. Yet, this landscape is still vulnerable. Goats, stray sheep, foxes, cats and weeds are taking their toll. There will be a lot of work to do to ensure that this area is properly protected.

From mid-March, for a month or more, I was privileged to begin the on-site work for the Reserve's restoration and protection. Working as a volunteer in such a way enables me to

indulge my passion for helping restore areas of Australia that are being 'retired' from the pastoral estate.

I was joined by a team from Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) for a week. Our primary task was to refurbish the main house which was in a serious state of neglect. The new reserve manager Leigh Whisson and his wife Jackie Courtenay were taking up duty in mid-April and it was important that their home-to-be was clean and liveable. We gave the house a thorough clean, painted it fully inside and out, and made many, many repairs. Insect screening, a rangehood, fire blanket, extinguishers and smoke detectors were installed. Repairs and improvements were also made to other buildings around the homestead. Large quantities of garbage and debris were gathered up and disposed of.

Whenever I drove south to Dalwallinu through the wheat country to obtain materials and tools, I was reminded of the fate that might so easily have befallen the Reserve if Bush Heritage had not purchased it.



I applaud you, the people of Bush Heritage – supporters, volunteers and staff – for the enthusiastic and effective way you are buying back the bush.

Don Royal
April 2, 2003

Clockwise from top: The Charles Darwin Reserve main house. Vegetation nestled between granite domes. PHOTOS: STUART COWELL. The main house with a fresh coat of paint. CVA volunteers at work. The CVA team with Don Royal at the rear. PHOTOS: DON ROYAL. Working with the tractor. The barren landscape seen on the drive from Perth. PHOTOS: STUART COWELL.



From the CEO

In April the Federal Government released the Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment 2002 (<http://www.nlwra.gov.au>). This landmark report assesses the condition of Australia's landscape and biodiversity and predicts where the current trends will lead us if they are allowed to continue. With its abundance of data and analysis it confirms for me the absolute necessity of our mission to protect intact bush if we are to effectively safeguard our diminishing natural resources. Bush Heritage's land acquisition program is one of the most important contributions to resolving this environmental crisis.

The Australian Conservation Foundation's response to the report states the facts so graphically in the comment, *Past generations may have sleepwalked through extinctions like that of the Tasmanian tiger. We are about to do it with our eyes wide open. Unless we and our governments act now, future generations will rightly hold us responsible for the conscious loss of our natural heritage.*

The report also highlights the need for greater funding for the Federal Government's National Reserve System Program. This program has enabled many organisations, both government and non-government, to create immensely important private and public reserves. However, it is worth emphasising that it is your donations that give Bush Heritage the eligibility to seek this funding. Your support is crucial.

I have been thrilled to see the fruits of our supporters' labours in recent visits to both the Carnarvon Station and Charles Darwin reserves. I know that similar progress has been made at our other reserves throughout Australia.

Volunteers at Charles Darwin Reserve have already transformed the main house into a safe, clean and welcoming home for the new reserve manager Leigh Whisson and his wife Jackie Courtenay whom we warmly welcome.

I want to thank those who give their time as volunteers for Bush Heritage around Australia. The results that these enthusiastic, skilled people achieve for conservation are very significant, and their efforts are invaluable to the organisation. In addition to their direct role in safeguarding the reserves and their animals and plants, we have estimated in the ten months to April 2003, that volunteers have contributed over \$180,000 worth of labour to Bush Heritage.

Whether you are a volunteer, contribute financially or do both, we value your support equally. Please enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you are a part of all the achievements for conservation, that collectively, we make.

Will you join with us in our exciting and achievable plan for the next five years? We plan to create at least another seven reserves across Australia. If you are looking for the simplest and most effective way to help and are not already one of our Friends of the Bush, please consider a monthly automatic deduction through your credit card or by direct debit. Julie in the Hobart office will be able to assist. You can ring her toll free on 1800 677 101. This method of giving does not suit everyone and your support, however you chose to give it, is what keeps us moving forward.

I am delighted to announce the wonderful donation of land by Judy Henderson that will add another property to the near contiguous reserves in northern Tasmania (see page 1). Bush Heritage is grateful for this generous gift.

I would like to acknowledge two gifts from the estates of Constance Dalziel and Keith Grieve who have passed away recently. They will be remembered with gratitude. Their gifts are a very special contribution towards buying back and caring for our precious bush.

Best wishes



Chereninup Creek Reserve

The 877 ha Chereninup Creek Reserve is now officially a Bush Heritage reserve. A legal covenant will soon be obtained to protect Chereninup Creek Reserve permanently.



Settlement of the property occurred on 30 April 2003 following the successful subdivision of a small section of cleared land. The adjacent property owners have purchased this cultivated area and it will be fenced from the new reserve. The option of revegetating this land was rejected due to the significant cost of undertaking the work for which there would be only a modest benefit for biodiversity or wildlife corridors.

Another 80 ha of cleared country on the Reserve will be rehabilitated, with part funding already provided by the Natural Heritage Trust's Envirofund. Local supporters have started seed collection and plan to start planting shortly, following the recent favourable weather.

Sunlight on Mallee regrowth at Chereninup Creek Reserve.

PHOTO: BARBARA MADDEN



