## **Annual Report**

2017-2018



BUSH HERITAGE

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the places in which we live, work and play. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their country, and we pay our respects to elders past, present and future.

Cover image: Scottsdale Reserve Manager Phil Palmer with his daughters Laila and Skye Palmer. Photo by Anna Carlile

This page: Seeds collected for jewellery making at Arafura Swamp, NT. Photo by Daniel Hartley-Allen

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THANK YOU

## From our Chief Executive and President

I'm fortunate enough to meet many amazing people through my work, but one meeting in the past year has stuck with me. I met Paul Hawken, the American environmentalist and Executive Director of Project Drawdown, a non-profit dedicated to researching when and how climate change can be reversed, and he said: "Nature is a great climate change solution."

What does Paul mean by that? From our lengthy conversation, he explained that the changing climate is direct feedback from the world, and we have the opportunity to listen and act. We have the power to help reverse some of the damage done to our environment if we heed this call.

Our vision of 'healthy Country, protected forever', is also a great climate change solution. Everything we do – every seedling we plant, every species we protect – helps to address threats to our environment. And our collective efforts are making a big difference.

Today, Bush Heritage is one of Australia's largest and most effective conservation organisations, helping to safeguard 8.86 million hectares of land across our reserves and our partners' lands. More than 33,635 supporters make our work possible, and 785 highly-skilled volunteers build our capacity both in the field and in the office.

The past year has yielded some exemplary landscape-scale results. Red-tailed Phascogales have expanded their reach at Kojonup Reserve in Western Australia; Night Parrots continue to breed at Pullen Pullen in Queensland; and rare orchids are springing up at our Nardoo Hills and J.C. Griffin reserves in Victoria. We hope you enjoy reading about these successes and more.

Bush Heritage is well respected for its collaborative approach. We are seeing real and inspiring change from our work with Traditional Owners. Whether it's conducting right-way fire programs on traditional lands or launching the Arafura Swamp Rangers Healthy Country Plan, we are committed to partnerships that honour the rich living culture of Traditional Owners.

As many of you know, this will be my final annual report before I step down from my role at the end of the year. It has been a wonderful journey, and it's clear that an organisation such as ours cannot exist without the contributions of many. Thank you to our staff around the country for helping to realise our bold vision, and to our wonderful supporters who have generously joined us in returning the bush to good health.

Gerard O'Neill Chief Executive Today, Bush Heritage is one of Australia's largest and most effective conservation organisations, helping to safeguard 8.86 million hectares of land across our reserves and our partners' lands.



Last year I was privileged to succeed Louise Sylvan in the President's role, following six years as a director. Louise provided outstanding leadership for close to a decade, steering the organisation through a period of impressive financial growth and stellar environmental outcomes. Louise embodied the Bush Heritage values of collaboration, rigorous science and respectful, effective partnerships, while maintaining the highest ethical standards. On behalf of all, I thank Louise for her very significant contribution to our mission.

Bush Heritage attracts supporters for many reasons. We are committed to buying or managing land here in Australia. We demonstrate a tangible benefit to the plants and animals in the landscapes we manage. We partner with landowners to leverage our reach and financial support to the greatest effect, and we utilise best practice scientific methods and management expertise. We will continue to expand these attributes and activities for the benefit of current and future generations. It is a credit to our management team and to the legions of loval Bush Heritage supporters that we are in a healthy financial and operational state. We have been able to effect landscape-scale change, while continuing to invest in our supporter base and funding innovative programs in such diverse areas as feral cat control and our awardwinning bequest program. A highlight again this year was the jointly-hosted Women in Conservation Breakfast, now a signature event for Bush Heritage and Trust for Nature. Renowned climate scientist Professor Lesley Hughes delivered the keynote speech - on the impact of climate change, now and in the future, and the profound contributions made by women in science.

The past year also saw growing international support for our work. We are especially delighted that our research on stromatolites at Hamelin Pool, in Western Australia, is now in partnership with the prestigious Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. I wish to thank my fellow Board members and our Board Committees for their selfless contributions. Particular thanks are also due to departing Board member June Oscar, AO, for her service, and a warm welcome to Melissa George who joined us earlier this year.

Despite considerable environmental challenges, I am reassured by the fact that, together with our supporters and partners, we are delivering on our shared vision of 'healthy Country, protected forever'.

Chris Grubb President

↑ Bush Heritage Chief Executive Gerard O'Neill and President Chris Grubb. Photo by Annette Ruzicka

## We work where we are needed most

Bush Heritage has identified priority landscapes for protection across Australia. These priority landscapes guide where we focus our investment in order to achieve the greatest conservation impact.

We have two main methods for achieving conservation impact: carefully selecting, purchasing and managing land; and working in partnership with others to help them manage their land for conservation outcomes.

As part of our landscape-scale approach to conservation, we prioritise the connection or expansion of existing protected areas.

We are currently contributing to the contiguous protection of 78.1 million hectares - nearly 10 percent of Australia's total landmass.



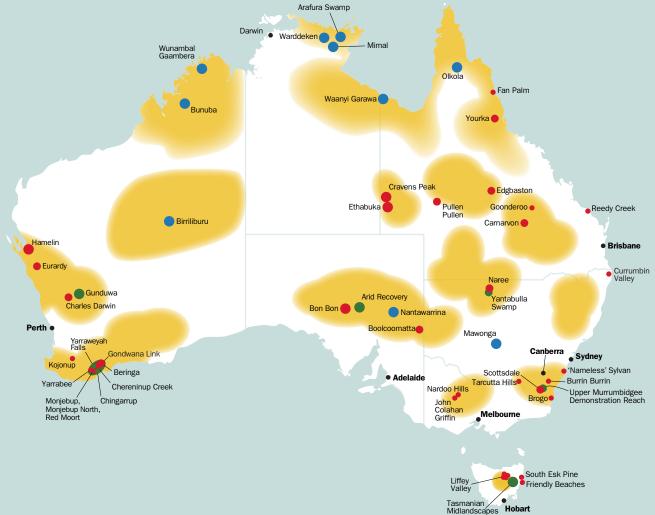
The international Aichi Biodiversity Targets state that, by 2020, countries should be protecting at least 10 percent of all existing ecoregions (areas that share similar environmental, climatic and geological traits) in order to adequately safeguard a range of different habitats and thus also the species that rely on them. This map shows ecoregions and sub-regions that are currently under-protected according to that goal.

ANNUAL REPORT

**59%** of our reserves are in under-protected ecoregions



we contribute to



#### **Our conservation reach**

Through our network of reserves, Aboriginal partnerships and regional partnerships, we are safeguarding the parts of Australia most in need of protection.

#### Our priority landscapes

These are areas that Bush Heritage has identified as requiring increased protection in order to safeguard nationally significant ecosystems and the species that call them home. They have been chosen for their conservation value, our capacity to help protect them, and the degree to which they are already protected through Australia's National Reserve System - a combined network of publically and privatelyprotected lands.

#### Reserves

Bush Heritage owns and manages 1.24 million hectares of land across Australia that we have protected, forever. We look after this country to ensure the vibrant living things that call these landscapes home remain healthy and thriving.

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#### Aboriginal partnerships

We work in partnership with 10 Aboriginal groups to plan and deliver conservation and socio-economic outcomes on their land and sea country, over a management area of 7.62 million hectares. We also work with Traditional Owner groups across our reserves to manage country and return the bush to good health (see p. 46-47 for a full list of our active Aboriginal partnerships).

#### Regional partnerships

Bush Heritage collaborates with private landholders, communities, and other conservation groups across Australia that share our vision of 'healthy Country, protected forever'. By engaging with and within communities, we achieve so much more than we could if we were working alone. THEME

## Landscape-scale conservation management

8.86M ha total area of land and sea that we help protect

## **2.66M** ha

the expansion of our conservation reach during the past year.

## 5932

of Australian species we are helping to protect 'Landscape-scale conservation management' means we are focused on returning entire landscapes to good health, rather than just isolated or fenced patches of forest or grassland, for example. This approach acknowledges that ecosystems are complex and interconnected, with no single element operating alone.

It also ensures that the species we are protecting are more resilient to change – such as drought, wildfires or climate change – because they have more space in which to find shelter, food, water and mates.

Our objectives under this theme are to: maintain or improve the health of the species and habitats we protect; manage, reduce or eliminate threats to the species and habitats we protect; and, expand our conservation impact by investing in national conservation priorities.

Luke Bayley, Executive Manager - West region, on Charles Darwin Reserve, WA. Photo by Kerry Trapnell

## Achieving real change

We are proud to be one of only a handful of conservation organisations using strategic indicators to measure, monitor and report on our conservation impact. This means we can make informed decisions about our management practices, and change them if necessary. It also means our supporters can see the real change that their generous donations have made possible.

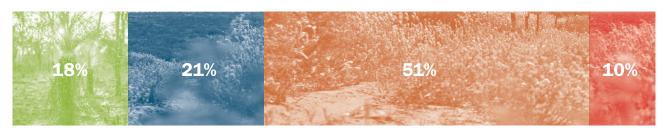
#### **Providing secure habitat**

8.86M ha **1.24M** ha 7.62M ha 44 land permanently protected land and sea country that total area of land and sea that we help protect through through our reserves we help protect our partnerships We are protecting at least 53% 5932 species, including 239 threatened species, of all Australian land mammal species of all Australian reptile species on land that we or our partners manage. This equates to: **59%** of all Australian bird species of all Australian freshwater fish species of all Australian amphibian species of all Australian plant species

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#### **Controlling threats**

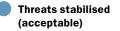
Managing, reducing or eliminating threats to our targets is one of the most effective ways of improving their health. When we initially invest in a reserve or partnership, we identify the biggest threats present and rate their severity, which we refer to as a 'baseline rating'. The following chart shows how the baseline ratings of the threats we manage compare to their current ratings\*.



#### Threats reduced

These threats have reduced in severity since they were first assessed.

Example: Siam Weed numbers on Yourka Reserve have reduced by over 90% (see page 11).



We have maintained these threats at a 'low' severity rating, and we are actively monitoring them to ensure their severity doesn't increase.

#### Threats unchanged

These threats have maintained the same rating. Sometimes, even just stopping a threat from getting worse takes a lot of resources.

#### Threats increased

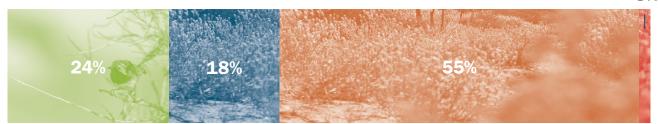
Threats may increase in severity due to a number of factors, such as changes to our targets.

Example: On Boolcoomatta, the threat rating for feral cats has increased (see page 15).

#### Improving the health of our targets

Whenever we commit to a reserve or partnership, we identify what our conservation priorities for that landscape will be (our 'targets') and we assess their health. The following chart shows how the baseline ratings of our targets' health compare to their current ratings\*:

2017-2018



#### Improved in health

These targets have improved in health since they were first assessed.

Example: Red-tailed Phascogales on Kojonup Reserve are expanding their range onto neighbouring properties (see page 10).

### Stable in health (acceptable)

We have maintained these targets at a 'good' or 'very good' level of health, and we are actively working to keep them at this level.

#### Stable in health

These targets have maintained the same level of health.

#### Worsened in health

Sometimes, external factors can cause our targets to decline in health despite our best efforts.

Example: A bushfire on Carnarvon Station Reserve last year damaged some fire sensitive vegetation despite our swift and well-coordinated response (see page 11).

\* These figures only include those ratings for which we have adequate data.

#### **Bringing phascogales back**

The endangered Red-tailed Phascogales that were translocated to Bush Heritage's Kojonup Reserve in Western Australia have successfully established a stable population on the reserve, and have even begun to move onto neighbouring reserves and private properties.

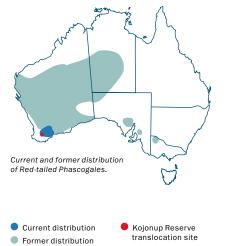
Once found across almost half of Australia, Red-tailed Phascogales now occupy less than 1 percent of their historic range. The Kojonup population began, from 2010 to 2011, with 30 animals translocated from several wild populations. At the time, it was the first species translocation that Bush Heritage had attempted, and one of the first ever 'wild-to-wild' translocations of phascogales. Seven years on, monitoring surveys have found the tiny marsupials are thriving, and our results are informing other phascogale conservation programs.

#### **Orchid rescue**

Being both incredibly sensitive to change and intricately connected to the environment around them, orchids are known as 'indicator species' in the conservation world. Monitoring their presence, or lack thereof, can help us determine and maintain the health of the landscapes we protect.

In 2008, Bush Heritage's John Colahan Griffin Reserve in Victoria was home to about 12 threatened Stuart Mill Spider-orchids. That number has now increased to about 186, contributing to one of the most successful orchid propagation and planting operations in Australia. This success is due to the work of Julie Radford from Amarylliss Environmental and staff at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, as well as our broader management of the reserve.









## Mitigating the threat of damaging bushfires

Large bushfires are a significant and ongoing threat to native species, assets and infrastructure on many Bush Heritage reserves. From September 2017 to January 2018, dry lightning storms sparked large bushfires across Carnarvon Station Reserve in Queensland.

These fires were brought under control after many weeks of hard work with assistance from National Parks staff, pastoralists and Bush Heritage staff from across the country. Their coordinated efforts prevented many thousands of hectares from being severely burnt, protecting countless native animals and fire sensitive areas of Brigalow forest (an ecosystem dominated by its namesake silverleaved wattle, Brigalow, and which has been widely cleared since European settlement) and rainforest.

## Preventing the spread of Siam Weed

After a decade of careful management, over 90 percent of Siam Weed in the priority management zone of our 43,500-hectare Yourka Reserve, in far north Queensland, has now been destroyed.

Siam Weed is one of the world's most invasive weeds, with a single plant being capable of producing around 80,000 seeds per year. It can rapidly smother habitats with devastating repercussions for the animals that call them home. Aside from itself protecting more than 500 native plant and animal species, Yourka sits adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, several national parks, and upstream of farmland. Bush Heritage's work towards eradicating Siam on Yourka therefore has widereaching benefits in preventing the weed from spreading into these critical environmental and economic areas.

Siam control work at Yourka Reserve was made possible through funding from the Australian Government.

Coordinated efforts prevented many thousands of hectares from being severely burnt, protecting countless native animals and fire sensitive areas.

- ← Red-tailed Phascogale. Photo by Meredith Spencer
- ← Stuart Mill Spider-orchid.
  Photo by Matthew Newton
- Fire management on Carnarvon, Qld. Photo by Richard Geddes
- Siam Weed control work. Photo by Martin Willis

THEME

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# Science and knowledge

71 science and research projects currently taking place on our reserves

24 Aboriginal groups we are actively working with across Australia The way in which we manage our reserves, and the expertise we offer our partners, is grounded in best-practice science and knowledge. As well as conducting our own research, we collaborate with Traditional Owners, universities and other research institutions to expand our knowledge base.

This knowledge is applied to our conservation projects around the country and incorporated into management plans, such as the Arafura Swamp Rangers' Healthy Country Plan, which was released in 2017. It helps us understand the complex relationships between species on the land we protect, and ensures we are using our supporters' funds in the most effective way possible. As experts in our field, we also leverage our knowledge to influence government policies and law wherever possible, with the aim of working towards a more secure future for the bush.

Our overarching objective under this theme is to build capacity in science, knowledge and research, resulting in better-informed land management activities.

Botanist Libby Sandiford (L) and Bush Heritage ecologist Angela Sanders (R). Photo by Jessica Wyld

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#### A plan to return Arafura Swamp to good health

*Gurruwiling*, or Arafura Swamp, is one of the largest freshwater ecosystems in Australia, and the largest paperbark swamp in the Northern Territory. When the wet season rains fall here, the swamp swells and becomes home to more than 300,000 birds.

There are numerous threats to *Gurruwiling* and the surrounding region, including feral buffaloes, weeds, rising sea levels, and damaging wildfires. Bush Heritage, the Northern Land Council and others have been helping the Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation to develop a long-term plan to manage those threats and return this country to good health. Last year, this culminated in the release of the Arafura Swamp Rangers' Healthy Country Plan for 2017-2027.

- ↑ *Gurruwiling*, or Arafura Swamp, NT. Photo by Daniel Hartley-Allen
- → Plains-wanderer. Photo by Lachlan Hall
- → Yantabulla Swamp, NSW. Photo by Justin McCann



## Reducing the threat of feral cats on Boolcoomatta

In 2017, a Bush Heritage science intern carried out the largest ever study of feral cats on Boolcoomatta Station Reserve in South Australia. Emily Mathews, a former student at Federation University, set up motionsensor cameras at 60 sites across the 63,000-hectare reserve, and found that feral cats were present at two thirds of the sites.

We are now targeting our feral cat control to those areas of the reserve. Emily also studied the stomach contents of 15 cats trapped on Boolcoomatta to help determine what native animal populations the predators are impacting. She found evidence of a wide range of native reptiles, birds and mammals, which has further highlighted the importance of Bush Heritage's continued feral cat control on this reserve.

> Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby (under high threat)

**Dusky Hopping-mouse** (under very high threat)

Plains-wanderer (under very high threat)

## Securing water for the Naree and Yantabulla swamps

The wetlands on Naree Station Reserve, Yantabulla Station Reserve, and the adjoining Yantabulla Swamp, in far northern NSW, are fed by water from the Warrego and Paroo rivers. Rain falls infrequently in this part of Australia, but when the floodwaters come, the wetlands spring to life, becoming a waterbird breeding site of international significance.

Bush Heritage scholarship recipient and PhD candidate Justin McCann has been modelling what the flow of water into these wetlands might look like under a changing climate, and how this could affect the species that call them home. His research has shown the wetlands face an uncertain future in terms of rainfall, highlighting the importance of securing the flow of water upstream for their continued health.

Part of our broader strategy for Naree and Yantabulla is to use direct and indirect actions, including engaging in policy discussions, to manage threats to these vital wetlands and ensure that enough water continues to flow into them in times of flood.

#### Advocating for change

This year, we entered into discussions with government representatives and submitted formal responses to 13 environmental initiatives at the state and federal government level. These initiatives include proposed action and invited comment on threat mitigation, broad-scale and strategic conservation, private land protection strategies, threatened species management and biosecurity. Bush Heritage has consistently taken a collaborative approach to interactions with government and has been invited to participate in key reference groups to help influence land and species conservation across Australia.

By 2090, modelling shows rain in the catchment area for Naree and Yantabulla will have decreased by 5-15% due to climate change.





тнеме 3.

# Engage and inspire

**33,635** financial supporters



Engaging and inspiring a conservation community is integral to achieving our vision of 'healthy Country, protected forever'.

We engage with our conservation community on many levels: through our network of dedicated volunteers; by listening to and learning from Traditional Owners; and by working collaboratively with our neighbours and the local communities in which we operate. We also strive to provide diverse opportunities for people to experience our reserves

Our communications are key to inspiring support for our vision and our work. The stories we share focus on the wonder and beauty of the bush, the people working to protect it and what we are doing to safeguard Australia's precious landscapes and native species.

Our objective under this theme is to see our reputation and profile generating significantly more support for conservation.

Bush Heritage volunteer Kymberly Robinson. Photo by Annette Ruzicka

2017-2018

## Celebrating science in the west

In August last year, almost 80 people gathered on the 202,644-hectare Hamelin Station Reserve in Western Australia to attend the second annual Hamelin Science Fair, an event aimed at engaging the public in science, research and conservation. Located on the Coral Coast tourist route, which attracts about 800,000 visitors a year, Hamelin is becoming a hub for public engagement and education in nature conservation.

The Hamelin Science Fair began with a Welcome to Country by Malgana Traditional Owners, followed by presentations from Bush Heritage staff as well as other researchers and Aboriginal students from Geraldton participating in 'Follow the Dream', a government-run mentoring and career development program. A final panel discussion highlighted the implications of climate change on the adjacent Shark Bay World Heritage Area, and the research required to adapt to this change. Located on the Coral Coast tourist route, which attracts about 800,000 visitors a year, Hamelin is becoming a hub for public engagement and education in nature conservation.

#### Stories that inspire

Another way Bush Heritage seeks to inspire our supporters is by sharing the stories of the people who are working to return country to good health. In March this year, we launched an e-newsletter that improved our capacity to do just that. *Bush Banter* features stories from the field; upcoming community events; and stunning photographs and videos. It's an important storytelling platform, complementing our existing quarterly newsletter, bush*tracks*, our blog, social media channels, and our media program.

**14.7M** people reached through

our media program

**106,908** social media followers

**293,293** unique website visits







**\$1.44M** 

the economic value of volunteer contributions over the past year\*

785 active volunteers

\*Based on the national standard hourly rate of \$35.21.

- Sharing stories after the Hamelin Science Fair. Photo by Ben Parkhurst
- ↑ Bush Heritage volunteer Yiqing Jin. Photo by Kate Thorburn
- Playing with traps on Carnarvon Reserve, Qld. Photo by Kayla Larson

#### Scottsdale: a volunteer hub

Located just an hour south of Canberra on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, Scottsdale is one of Bush Heritage's most accessible reserves and a hub of volunteer activity. In the past year alone, about 182 dedicated volunteers clocked up over 5650 volunteer hours, helping with everything from platypus monitoring to building maintenance, native seed harvesting, and, of course, tree planting; 300 hectares of Scottsdale are currently undergoing revegetation to help return the reserve to good health.

Scottsdale's incredible volunteer program is not only integral to the reserve's ongoing management, it also provides opportunities for our supporters and the wider public to reconnect with nature and experience Bush Heritage's conservation work firsthand.

## Distance education students go bush

Educating and inspiring the next generation of environmental champions is vital to ensuring the continued protection of our natural world. In September, Bush Heritage hosted 26 students from the Capricornia School of Distance Education, all of whom had travelled from remote stations along with their parents, teachers and tutors to Bush Heritage's Carnarvon Station Reserve in central Queensland.

They were there to attend a 'Bush Detectives' camp, designed to ignite a passion for conservation in the next generation. Run by ecologist Dr Alison Howes from Nature Aware, the camp taught students how to look for signs of animals in the environment such as scat (poo), scratch marks, and tracks, and gave them the chance to learn directly from experienced Bush Heritage scientists and land managers. THEME

# Resilience and capability

#### \$22.6M revenue raised in the past year

The bush needs to be managed for the longterm: achieving real change can take decades of work, and many threats require forwardplanning, such as climate change and rising sea levels. Yet as a not-for-profit organisation, our funding is often variable. In order to ensure that our work can continue for years to come, we are building a resilient income model that incorporates new and innovative incomeproducing opportunities.

We are also working to ensure Bush Heritage staff are supported by a positive workplace culture, technologies that allow them to work together and from anywhere, and opportunities for continued professional development. In this way, we are increasing our organisational capacity.

Our objectives under this theme are: to see our annual income exceed \$30 million by 2020 in a sustainable way, and to ensure our staff are supported by a strong culture, systems and resources.

Arafura Swamp country, NT. Photo by Daniel Hartley Allen

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#### **Role reversal**

ANNUAL REPORT

Each year, Bush Heritage's officebased employees have the opportunity to work remotely from our reserves, as part of our workplace culture of encouraging all staff to experience other roles. For Paul Young and Lucy Jones, who spent three weeks on Bon Bon Station Reserve in January, it was a chance to gain a greater understanding of how their work in Bush Heritage's Conservation Support Centre in Melbourne is having a real impact on the ground. Paul and Lucy continued their standard work duties while on the 216,700-hectare reserve in central South Australia, as well as carrying out reserve management tasks. Many people who work at Bush Heritage enjoy spending time in the bush, as well as protecting it. When staff return from opportunities such as this, they bring back stories, inspiration and a renewed commitment to our vision.

#### Going solar

Last year, an off-grid solar power system was installed at Bush Heritage's 215,500-hectare Ethabuka Reserve, on the edge of the Simpson Desert. This reserve is home to a remarkable collection of mammals, birds and reptiles. But with daytime temperatures regularly reaching upwards of 40°C, managing Ethabuka would be impossible without the right infrastructure. The new solar system, made possible through the generous support of Jord International, replaces Ethabuka's old, noisy diesel generator. Importantly, it also provides Ethabuka's live-in reserve manager and visitors with dependable power, which is essential in such a remote and extreme environment. As Bush Heritage continues its close working relationship with Jord International in the future, we look forward to the conversion of more of our reserves to renewable energy.

## 80%

of our powered reserves are run off solar, either entirely or in part.



- ↑ Solar panels on Ethabuka Reserve, Qld. Photo by Alex Kutt
- The Bush Heritage team. Photo by Craig Allen
- → Bush Heritage ecologist Dr Rebecca Diete. Photo by Annette Ruzicka

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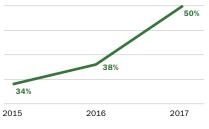


#### A family get-together

This past November, staff from around the country gathered in Rawson, Victoria, to share ideas, celebrate successes, discuss current topics in the conservation field, and deepen their relationships with other employees. By the very nature of our work, Bush Heritage staff are widespread across the country. About a quarter live on our reserves (most of which are in remote locations), and many others either work from home or in regional centres around Australia. In order to ensure we continue to work collaboratively and cohesively, we hold an all-staff National Gathering every two to three years. It is always a rare and important chance for us to come together in one place, and last year was no exception.

#### Finding a balance

In the past year, we have achieved gender parity in our Board and in the Executive Management team that reports to our Chief Executive. We also saw the representation of women in the field increase, filling roles such as 'field officer', 'ecologist' and 'reserve manager', which have traditionally been male-dominated. This shift reflects our deliberate effort to ensure the position descriptions for these roles are accessible to, or do not deter, female applicants. We also strive to accommodate flexible working arrangements, which have likely contributed to the retention of female staff in both office-and fieldbased positions.



Proportion of field-based roles filled by women

In order to ensure we continue to work collaboratively and cohesively, we hold an all-staff National Gathering every two to three years.





#### Message from the Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Financial contributions rose from \$19.9 million in 2016-2017 to \$22.6 million this year. Additionally, the economic value of volunteer contributions this year exceeded \$1.4 million. This powerful show of support has allowed us to further expand our vital work.

Financial stability is critical if we are to achieve sustainable and long-term change. As a wholly independent not-for-profit that relies on public donations, this means investing in high quality financial systems, and maintaining and growing our supporter base. We feel the responsibility of both our vision and your trust in us when we determine our expenditure mix.

The majority of our revenue is directly invested in returning the bush to good health, and looking after not one species, but all species. Our spending on core conservation activities has grown again this year, up 5.6% to \$10.5 million, supplemented by a further \$1.2 million in capital expenditure on equipment and infrastructure required to maintain our reserves.

Our corporate resilience and capability is also crucial to ensuring our ongoing conservation impact. We pride ourselves on being wellgoverned and transparent, and on having monitoring and reporting systems that allow us to accurately capture our conservation impact. The financial statements and auditor's report contained on the following pages attest to our commitment to robust financial controls and transparency over how your donations are applied in a responsible and effective way.

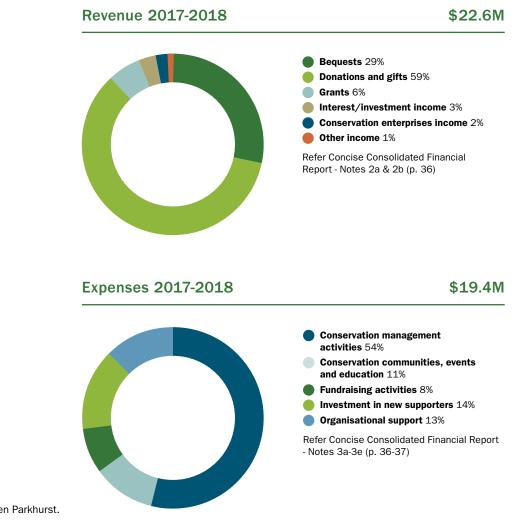
This financial year we have reported a net surplus of \$3.2 million. This is largely a timing matter and reflects the receipt of significant gifts and grants toward the end of 2017-2018, for which the matching project expenditures will be incurred in 2018-2019. All donations received are applied to our conservation mission and this current year surplus will be applied in the following year. Thank you to all of our supporters for your generosity and your ongoing commitment to improving the health of the bush.

Nick Burton Taylor, AM Treasurer

Rob Pratt Chief Financial Officer

Every dollar we receive and spend makes a real difference to the health of the Australian bush.





2017-2018

#### K Variegated Fairy-wren. Photo by Ben Parkhurst

↗ Bush Heritage ecologist Ben Parkhurst. Photo by Annette Ruzicka

## **Directors' Report**

Bush Heritage is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) under the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012.

Bush Heritage's board is responsible for the governance of the company and for ensuring that business activities are directed towards achieving the company's purpose and vision.

Your directors present their report for the 12 months ended 31 March 2018.

## Short-and long-term strategy and objectives

Bush Heritage's vision is for 'healthy Country, protected forever' and its purpose is 'to return the bush to good health'.

The 2017-2018 financial year was the first year under the 2017-2022 strategic plan, which will guide investment and reporting during those five years. The objectives of Our Plan for 2017-2022 are arranged under four themes to the right.



Landscape-scale conservation

- The health of the species and habitats we protect (our conservation targets) will be maintained or improved.
- The threats to the species and habitats we protect will be managed, reduced or eliminated.
- Our conservation impact will have grown through targeting investment to national conservation priorities.

THEME 2. Science and knowledge • Our credibility and collaboration have built capacity in science, research and knowledge and better-informed land management activities.

THEME **3**. Engage and inspire • Our reputation and actions are generating significantly more support for conservation.



- Our annual income will exceed \$30 million and be both sustainable and poised for further growth.
- Our people are supported by our strong culture, systems and resources.

#### **Principal activities**

Bush Heritage's principal activities, consistent with its constitution, are to:

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, or significant parts of it, for the long term by acquiring and preserving land or water that is of high conservation value or environmental significance
- Obtain funds or other property through donations, bequests, public appeals, special events and sponsorships
- Work with, provide assistance to, or engage others to protect and enhance the natural environment
- Advise and educate others about how to protect and enhance the natural environment
- Buy or sell, for the benefit of the company, any trading credits, sequestration rights or other similar property or interests in land, air, water or carbon
- Pursue strategic, operational, business and other appropriate relationships with the public and private sector to achieve the objectives of the company.

#### **Performance measures**

Bush Heritage recognises the importance of key performance measures in monitoring organisational performance and this is reflected in our annual reporting.

Our peak organisational performance measure is our conservation impact. To measure and report this, we have adopted the Global Impact Investing Networks 'Impact Reporting and Investment Standards'.

Bush Heritage has also adopted the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation as our core business process. Our adapted version, the Bush Heritage Conservation Management Process, is used to guide our conservation strategy, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Bush Heritage uses 'conservation scorecards' as a key tool for monitoring and reporting on the conservation outcomes we have achieved on our reserves or partnership properties. Goals or targets are set within our five-year strategic plan and are reported upon periodically to the board, and externally within our Annual Report. These goals or targets relate to both our core conservation work and our supporting business activities, including marketing, fundraising, and financial and human resource management. Key examples of our periodic internal reporting include:

- Quarterly KPI and progress reporting against the five-year strategic goals and annual business priorities
- Monthly financial reporting
- · Quarterly marketing KPI reporting
- A biennial organisational effectiveness report
- Annual staff diversity reporting.

Bush Heritage's vision is for 'healthy Country, protected forever' and its purpose is 'to return the bush to good health'.

↓ Volunteers set up a camera trap.
 Photo by Annette Ruzicka



## **Board of Directors**

The board sets the strategic direction of the company and oversees its systems of accountability and control. The following people have served as directors on the board during the year and to the date of this report:



Chris Grubb, President B.A, B.Comm. Joined the board in 2011,

elected President in August 2017

Chris is a non-executive director of several Asian investment management companies, Chairman of Boardroom Pty Ltd and a business coach. He was a director of Asian investment bank Jardine Fleming and has served as Chairman of ASX listed companies and as a director of several public and not-for-profit organisations. He is a keen birdwatcher and naturalist.



#### Nick Burton Taylor, AM, Vice President and Treasurer

BEc (Syd), F Fin, FCA, FAICD, FCPA. Joined the board in 2013, elected Vice President in August 2017

Nick has a longstanding commitment to rural communities and extensive experience in the Australian agricultural sector. He owns Hillgrove Pastoral Pty Ltd and Kenny's Creek Angus. Nick is currently the Chancellor of Southern Cross University, Chair of the Country Education Foundation of Australia, and Delta Agribusiness, and has served on the boards of several listed companies with a rural focus.



**Prof. Sarah Bekessy** PhD, BSc (Hons). Joined the board in 2017

Sarah teaches Sustainability and Urban Planning at RMIT University, with a particular interest in the intersection between science and policy in environmental management. She is involved in an interdisciplinary range of research and consulting projects, including an ARC Future Fellowship titled 'Socio-ecological models for environmental decision making'. Sarah leads the Interdisciplinary Conservation Science research group. Her interests include threatened species management and the role of science in environmental policy.



Phillip Cornwell

BA LLB (Hons). Joined the board in 2015

Phillip is a Senior Finance Counsel at the commercial law firm Allens. Previously a partner there, Phillip headed its Project Finance practice and chaired its Pro Bono and Footprint committees. Phillip is also a director and deputy chair of Suicide Prevention Australia and chairs its governance committee, and he is a director and the chair of the Australian Pro Bono Centre. Phillip is a long-term Bush Heritage supporter.



Melissa George Joined the board in 2018

Melissa is the CEO of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and has a background in Cultural Heritage and Protected Area Management. A Wulgurukaba woman, she is passionate about Indigenous stewardship of land and sea and has advised the Commonwealth and Queensland governments on issues ranging from threatened species management to carbon farming. She also serves on the board of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the board of the Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia.



#### Dr Alexander Gosling, AM

FTSE FIEAust DEng MA(Hons). Joined the board in 2016

Alexander was the founding director of Invetech and worked in the field of product development and technology commercialisation. He received an Order of Australia for services to industry, technology and the community, and has an honorary Doctorate of Engineering. Alexander sits on a number of boards and is an active supporter of Zoos Victoria's 'Fighting Extinction' program.





Distinguished Professor Michelle Leishman BSc (Hons), PhD.

BSc (Hons), PhD. Joined the board in 2015

Michelle is a plant ecologist with over 25 years research experience focused on invasive plants, vegetation response and adaptation to climate change, restoration ecology and plant conservation. She leads a research group in the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University and is currently Head of Department. Michelle is a Trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Chair of their Scientific and Conservation Committee. She is also an elected council member of the Australian Flora Foundation.



#### Dr Rebecca Nelson

J.S.D., J.S.M., B.E. (Env.Eng.)/LL.B. Joined the board in 2014

Rebecca is a lawyer with a strong interest in water management, regulation and policy. She is a Senior Lecturer at the Melbourne Law School at the University of Melbourne, and a Fellow (Non-Resident) of the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University. Rebecca combines this work with independent consulting. In 2014, she was named the Australian Young Environmental Lawyer of the Year for her significant contributions to environmental law.



June Oscar, AO BBus, HonDUniv ECowan. Joined the board in 2016, concluded October 2017

June is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Australian Human Rights Commission. She is a proud Bunuba woman from Fitzroy Crossing and a champion for Indigenous Australian languages, social justice, women's issues and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. June was awarded an Order of Australia for distinguished service to the Indigenous community of Western Australia and the Global Reconciliation Foundation's 2016 Desmond Tutu Reconciliation Fellowship award.



#### Company Secretary Gerard O'Neill

February 2013 – present

Gerard is Company Secretary and Chief Executive. With support from legal advisors, the Company Secretary advises the board on the appropriate procedures for the conduct of meetings and the affairs of the Company, as required by the Constitution and by charity and company law.



Louise Sylvan, AM

BA MPA. Joined the board in 2009, concluded August 2017

2017-2018

Louise is: Adjunct Professor, Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney Medical School; Chair of Energy Consumers Australia; Non-executive Director of Social Enterprise Finance Australia; Non-executive director of Impact Investing Australia; Vice-Chair of the Australian Advisory Board on Impact Investing; Non-executive director of the Risk Policy Institute; and Member of the Economic Development Committee of the NSW Land Council. She was previously the CEO of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, a Commissioner of the Productivity Commission and Deputy Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

↑ Bush Heritage President Chris Grubb and Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation Chair Trent Nelson. Photo by Annette Ruzicka

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#### **Board meetings**

Six board meetings were held during 2017-2018. Details of the directors' meeting attendance are outlined in the table below. Where the director was not in office for the whole of the financial year, the number of meetings held during the part-year period of office is shown in the first column. The Bush Heritage Constitution (Section 50) permits decisions to be taken by the board in written resolution form. In 2017-2018, the board made no decisions using this alternative method.

Board meetings held during the period that each director was in office	Board meetings attended
6	6
6	6
6	5
6	6
2	1
6	6
6	5
6	6
2	0
2	2
	meetings held during the period that each director was in office 6 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 2 2 6 6 6 7 8 7 8 7 8 7 8 7 8 7 8 7 8 7 8 7

## Responsibilities of management

The board has formally delegated responsibility for Bush Heritage's day-to-day management of operations to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive provides leadership to the organisation and is responsible for achieving the results set out in the five-year strategic plan, and the annual business plan and budget. The Chief Executive is authorised by the board to put in place policies and procedures, take decisions and actions and initiate activities to achieve those results in line with the delegations of authority.

Our Senior Management team includes the Chief Executive and all executive managers with direct reporting responsibility to the Chief Executive. This includes managers both who are and who are not included within Key Management Personnel as defined in the Notes to the Full Consolidated Financial Report. As at the date of this report, the Senior Management team comprised Gerard O'Neill (Chief Executive) and executive managers with the following areas of responsibility:

- Dr Rebecca Spindler, Science and Conservation
- Robert Pratt, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer
- Melinda Warnecke, Marketing and Fundraising
- Dr Jody Gunn, South East Region Conservation Operations, and National Health, Safety and Environment Program
- Robert Murphy, North Region Conservation Operations, and National Fire Management and Community Engagement programs
- Luke Bayley, West Region Conservation Operations, and National Aboriginal Engagement Program.

## Board oversight and board committee structure

The board meets at least quarterly to oversee and monitor the organisation's performance. During these meetings it receives detailed reports from management and provides direction on key matters. Further to this, committees of the board have been established to review, provide advice and make recommendations to the board and management on particular aspects of Bush Heritage's operations and administration. Each committee operates under a charter approved by the board that sets out the committee's purpose, membership and responsibilities. Several committees currently support the board, with membership consisting of directors and non-directors who are external specialists in their field.

All director and committee roles are non-executive positions and no remuneration is payable. However, out-of-pocket expenses such as travel may be paid to enable fulfilment of duties. As at 31 March 2018, the committees' structures and duties are as follows:

#### Aboriginal Engagement Committee

Acting Chair: Phillip Cornwell

Members: Nick Burton Taylor, Melissa George, Trent Nelson\*, Peter Peckham\*, Avelina Tarrago\*

Provides strategic guidance on Aboriginal engagement strategy and policy and monitors the development and performance of on-country programs.

#### **Capital Fund Committee**

#### Chair: David Rickards\* Members: Chris Grubb,

Nick Burton Taylor

Provides strategic guidance on the Bush Heritage Capital Fund's management and investment objectives and performance, including appointment and review of the Investment Manager.

#### Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

#### Chair: Nick Burton Taylor

Members: Jay Bonnington\*, Alexander Gosling, Rebecca Nelson, Bill Starr\*

Provides strategic review and oversight on overall financial management, annual and longerterm budgets and financial results, investment strategies and business modelling and management of financial assets. Monitors auditing, risk management policy and procedures, and legislative and regulatory responsibilities.

#### **Gift Fund Committee**

#### Chair: Nick Burton Taylor Members: Gerard O'Neill, Chris Schulz\*

Monitors compliance with the rules of the Bush Heritage Australia Fund and those of the Register of Environmental Organisations to ensure deductible gift recipient status is retained.

#### **Governance Committee**

Chair: Chris Grubb

Members: Phillip Cornwell, Michelle Leishman

Provides strategic advice on matters relating to the effectiveness of the board, its committees, the role of the Chief Executive and Company Secretary, and oversees the membership register.

## Marketing and Fundraising Committee

Chair: Chris Grubb

Members: Sandra Davey\*, Alexander Gosling

Provides strategic advice and monitors the performance of Bush Heritage's marketing and fundraising strategies including engagement, and fundraising growth and development.

#### **Operations and Safety Committee**

Chair: Alexander Gosling

Members: Sarah Bekessy, Allan Holmes\*, Angus Holden\*, Leanne Liddle\*, Ewan Waller\*

Provides strategic advice on and monitors Bush Heritage's Health, Safety and Environment strategy and management, reviews health and safety incidents arising from Bush Heritage operations, impacts from natural disaster events, preparation for planned burning and management of Bush Heritage assets.

#### Science and Conservation Committee

Chair: Michelle Leishman

Members: Sarah Bekessy, Phillip Cornwell, Sarah Legge\*, Rebecca Nelson, James Watson\*

Provides strategic advice on science and conservation strategies and policies, including acquisition proposals, reserve and partnership planning, scientific research, and conservation outcomes and impact.

\*Denotes a non-director member of the committee during the reporting period.

#### **Risk management**

Bush Heritage manages its organisational risks in line with current Australian Standards AS/ NZS ISP 31000:2009. Each risk is assigned a 'risk owner' who is responsible for identifying and implementing appropriate treatment strategies to mitigate the risk, realise related opportunities and report on that risk to the relevant committee(s) and board.

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee oversees the execution of the Risk Management Policy across the organisation. The board is responsible for ensuring that risks and opportunities are identified in a timely manner and considered against the organisation's objectives, operations and appetite for risk.

#### Health, Safety and Environment

Bush Heritage operates in a variety of working environments, including some of the most remote parts of Australia, and the safety of all people who come into contact with our operations is paramount. Bush Heritage's Health, Safety and Environment Management System is reviewed by a staff-based Health and Safety Committee representing each team, location and level within Bush Heritage, thereby ensuring a system that can be consistently applied and fulfils all relevant Work, Health and Safety legislation. Our board's Operations and Safety Committee provides strategic advice on, and monitors, Bush Heritage's Health, Safety and Environment Strategy and management, and reviews any incidents arising from Bush Heritage operations. The board also reviews and addresses health, safety and environment matters at each board meeting.

#### Workplace Gender Equality

Bush Heritage recognises the importance of supporting diversity within its workforce, including with regard to gender. In accordance with the requirements of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, Bush Heritage has lodged its 2017-2018 Workplace Gender Equality public report, which may be accessed on the Workplace Gender Equality Agency website.

#### Members' guarantee

As at 31 March 2018 the number of members was 73. In accordance with the company's constitution, each member is liable to contribute a maximum of \$10 in the event that the company is wound up. Therefore based on this number the total amount that members of the company would be liable to contribute if the company is wound up is \$730.

#### Auditors' independence

The Auditors' Declaration of Independence appears on page 41 and forms part of the Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2018.

#### Rounding

The company is of a kind referred to in ASIC Class Order 98/100, dated 10 July 1998, and in accordance with that Class Order, amounts in the Financial Report have been rounded off to the nearest thousand dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors made pursuant to Section 298(2) of the *Corporations Act 2001*.

Ulms

Christopher Grubb President

7 June 2018

## **Financial Report**

#### Concise consolidated financial report for the year ended 31 March 2018

This Concise Consolidated Financial Report should be read in conjunction with the Directors' Report and the Annual Report, which provide details of the achievements and activities of Bush Heritage Australia (Bush Heritage) and its controlled entity (Midlands Conservation Fund) during the financial year ended 31 March 2018.

The Concise Consolidated Financial Report is an extract from the Full Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2018. The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the Concise Consolidated Financial Report have been derived from the Full Consolidated Financial Report in accordance with the Accounting Standards.

The Concise Consolidated Financial Report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of Bush Heritage and its controlled entity as the Full Consolidated Financial Report. Further financial information can be obtained from the Full Consolidated Financial Report which is available, free-of-charge and on request, from Bush Heritage. Further details of Bush Heritage's conservation activities can be found in the Annual Report.

### Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 March 2018

		2018	2017
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue			
Supporter contributions and grants	2(a)	21,334	18,826
Interest and investment income	2(b)	720	421
Conservation enterprises income		450	399
Other income		92	207
Total Revenue		22,596	19,853
Expenses			
Conservation management activities	3(a)	10,469	9,911
Conservation communities, events & education	3(b)	2,145	2,133
Fundraising activities	3(c)	1,563	1,548
Investment in new supporters	3(d)	2,600	2,120
Organisational support	3(e)	2,574	2,406
Total expenses		19,351	18,118
Surplus before tax		3,245	1,735
Income tax		-	-
Net surplus after tax		3,245	1,735
Other comprehensive income			
Realisation of net fair value gains previously brought to account		(132)	(53)
Net fair value gains brought to account during the financial year		183	487
Income tax on items of other comprehensive income		-	
Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax		51	434
Total comprehensive income for the period		3,296	2,169

The Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

#### Discussion and analysis – Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

Trends in revenue and net surplus

Bush Heritage's mission and activities continue to be well supported with a significant increase in financial contributions received from our supporters in financial year 2017-2018. Total revenue from supporter contributions and grants rose by 13.3% from \$18.8 million in 2016– 2017, to \$21.3 million in 2017–2018. Increased revenues were recorded in all donation categories, and in particular bequests revenue increased by 21.0%.

Increased revenues have been applied during the year to expand our practical conservation activities and to ensure the ongoing viability of our fundraising operations. A net surplus of \$3.2 million was recorded in 2017-2018 (compared to a net surplus of \$1.7 million in 2016-2017), which will be used to fund operational activities in 2018-2019 financial year.

### Effects of significant economic or other events

There were no significant economic or other events that impacted the financial results for the 2017-2018 financial year.

#### Dividends

Bush Heritage is a company limited by guarantee and does not have issued share capital. As such, Bush Heritage does not pay dividends. All surpluses are reinvested in the company to be used for conservation purposes in future financial years.

## Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2018

	Notes	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
ASSETS	Notes	000	<b>\$ 000</b>
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		4,221	593
Trade and other receivables		192	208
Assets held for sale		1,269	2,307
Other assets		336	252
Total current assets		6,018	3,360
Non-current assets			
Investments	4	10,288	9,968
Property, plant and equipment		33,667	33,336
Intangibles - computer software		870	1,082
Other assets		534	534
Total non-current assets		45,359	44,920
TOTAL ASSETS		51,377	48,280
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables		972	934
Provisions		1,005	1,114
Interest-bearing liabilities	5	325	455
Total current liabilities		2,302	2,503
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions		230	206
Interest-bearing liabilities	5	1,733	1,755
Total non-current liabilities		1,963	1,961
TOTAL LIABILITIES		4,265	4,464
NET ASSETS		47,112	43,816
EQUITY			
Equity funds and reserves	6	47,112	43,816
TOTAL EQUITY		47,112	43,816

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

#### Discussion and analysis – Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

Changes in the composition of assets and liabilities

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Position shows that Bush Heritage has a strong capital base with \$47.1 million in net assets (up from \$43.8 million as at 31 March 2017), representing the accumulated supporter contributions and other net earnings that Bush Heritage has received since its inception and which have been applied to the acquisition of land and other capital assets for conservation purposes.

The significant changes in the overall composition of assets and liabilities from 2016–2017 to 2017–2018 arose from changes in the following items:

- \$3.6 million increase in cash due to the operating surplus made for the year, which is to be used to fund operational activities in 2018-2019
- \$1.0 million decrease in assets held for sale due to the sale of listed shares from bequests offset by the addition of a property bequeathed that will not be retained in our conservation property portfolio
- \$0.3 million increase in investments due to favourable movements in investment markets
- \$3.3 million increase in equity due to the operating surplus.

#### Debt and equity

Bush Heritage continues to have obligations for a \$1.4 million loan taken out to fund a property acquisition in 2015-2016 and also a number of motor vehicle finance leases totalling net \$0.6 million.

Total equity of \$47.1 million within the consolidated entity reflects the carrying value of all Bush Heritageowned properties as well as the value of Bush Heritage investments, working capital and the Midlands Conservation Fund. The \$3.3 million increase in equity from the prior year was due to the 2017-2018 operating surplus.

## Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 31 March 2018

		Accumulated Surplus	Equity Reserves	Total
		2018	2018	2018
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At 1 April 2017		-	43,816	43,816
Surplus for the period		3,245	-	3,245
Other comprehensive income		-	51	51
Total comprehensive income for the period		3,245	51	3,296
Net transfer to Bush Heritage General Reserve		(2,202)	2,202	-
Net transfer to Bush Heritage Restricted Funds Reserve		(707)	707	-
Net transfer to Midlands Conservation Fund Reserve		(336)	336	-
At 31 March 2018	6	-	47,112	47,112
		2017	2017	2017
		\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
At 1 April 2016		-	41,647	41,647
Surplus for the period		1,735	-	1,735
Other comprehensive income		-	434	434
Total comprehensive income for the period		1,735	434	2,169
Net transfer to Bush Heritage General Reserve		(2,790)	2,790	-
Net transfer from Bush Heritage Restricted Funds Reserve		1,147	(1,147)	-
Net transfer to Midlands Conservation Fund Reserve		(92)	92	-
At 31 March 2017	6	-	43,816	43,816

The Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

#### Discussion and analysis – Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

Changes in the composition of the components of equity

The consolidated equity of Bush Heritage and its subsidiary, the Midlands Conservation Fund, is maintained within four defined equity reserves, being the Bush Heritage General Reserve, the Bush Heritage Restricted Funds Reserve, the Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve and the Midlands Conservation Fund Reserve. These individual equity reserves are detailed and further described in Note 6. The Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity illustrates that the reported surplus or deficit for each financial year is firstly recognised within Accumulated Surpluses and then allocated out of Accumulated Surpluses and into the relevant equity reserves according to the amounts applicable to each reserve. Other comprehensive income, being entirely comprised of the net fair value gains or losses on financial assets recorded for the financial year, is directly allocated to the Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve.

## **Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows**

for the year ended 31 March 2018

	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
Operating activities		
Receipts from supporter contributions and other sources	19,695	17,119
Payments to suppliers and employees	(18,149)	(16,378)
Proceeds from the sale of assets held for sale	3,286	-
Interest paid	(76)	(75)
Interest and dividends received	510	139
Net cash from operating activities	5,266	885
Investing activities		
Purchase of investments	(1,982)	(1,210)
Purchase of buildings, plant and equipment	(1,199)	(540)
Purchase of software	(18)	(631)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	1,974	1,855
Proceeds from the sale of buildings, plant and equipment	4	11
Net cash to investing activities	(1,221)	(515)
Financing activities		
Payment of finance lease liabilities	(328)	(326)
Repayment of borrowings	(89)	(312)
Net cash to financing activities	(417)	(638)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	3,628	(268)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	593	861
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	4,221	593

The Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

#### Discussion and analysis – Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

Changes in cash flows from operating activities

The increase in net operating cash inflows for 2017-2018, compared to the prior year, reflects an increase in donor receipts, proceeds from the sale of security investments held for sale and investment income exceeding an increase in operating expenditure. Some expenditure was deferred in 2016-2017 due largely to the delays in some bequest receipts and the receipt of non-cash gifts in the form of shares, particularly in late March 2017, which were subsequently sold in early 2017-2018. Changes in cash flows from investing activities

The major investment activity in 2017–2018 was the purchase of buildings, plants and equipment, and the maturity of term deposit investments in Midlands Conservation Fund, the proceeds of which were reinvested in other security investments.

# Changes in cash flows from financing activities

During 2017-2018, Bush Heritage continued to make repayments of motor vehicle finance leases and insurance premium funding facilities as required.

#### Notes to the Concise Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2018

# Note 1. Corporate information and basis of preparation

Bush Heritage is a not-for-profit, public company limited by guarantee. Members are nominated and determined in accordance with the company's Constitution. If the company is wound up then each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the company. As at 31 March 2018 the number of members was 73. Bush Heritage is listed on the Commonwealth Government's Register of Environmental Organisations, certifying it as a Deductible Gift Recipient, which authorises Bush Heritage to issue tax-deductible receipts for donations over \$2.

This Concise Consolidated Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with the presentation and disclosure requirements of AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports for distribution to the members. The Concise Consolidated Financial Report is presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$'000) unless otherwise stated, using the option available to Bush Heritage under ASIC Class Order 98/100. Bush Heritage is an entity to which the Class Order applies.

# Note 1(a). Significant accounting policies

The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 are an extract of, and have been derived from, Bush Heritage's Full Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2018. Other information included in the Concise Consolidated Financial Report is consistent with Bush Heritage's Full Consolidated Financial Report.

A full description of the accounting policies adopted by Bush Heritage is provided in the Full Consolidated Financial Report.

The current financial period is the year ended 31 March 2018. Comparative amounts for the year ended 31 March 2017 have been re-stated where necessary to be consistent with the accounting policies adopted in the current financial period. The consolidated financial statements in this Concise Consolidated Financial Report comprise the financial statements of Bush Heritage and its subsidiary, the Midlands Conservation Fund Ltd (MCF).

- MCF is a separate public company limited by guarantee, jointly managed by Bush Heritage and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy. MCF has its own Board of Directors and constitutional objectives.
- Under the MCF Constitution, Bush Heritage has the capacity to control MCF and therefore is required by Accounting Standards to consolidate MCF into this Concise Consolidated Financial Report.
- Under the Accounting Standards, control is said to exist because Bush Heritage has the right to direct the activities of MCF and through that right has the ability to affect the returns it derives from MCF. The returns to Bush Heritage are non-financial returns that arise because MCF's conservation objectives contribute directly to Bush Heritage's conservation objectives. Under the MCF Constitution, MCF cannot pay financial dividends to Bush Heritage or to any other member.

#### Note 2. Revenue

	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Note 2(a). Supporter contributions and grants		
Donations and gifts	13,432	12,976
Grants	1,349	433
Bequests	6,552	5,417
Total supporter contributions and grants	21,334	18,826
Note 2(b). Interest and investment income		
Dividends	385	272
Interest	212	69
Realised gains	123	80
Total interest and investment income	720	421

#### Note 3. Expenses

Note 3(a). Conservation management Conservation management expenses include the following key items:

- · On-reserve costs, including for practical conservation purposes such as fire management, feral animal control, weed control, revegetation, species recovery and protection, expenses related to ecological survey, monitoring and evaluation, cultural values assessment and protection, staff costs, managing conflicting land use proposals and external rights, associated ownership costs such as rates and taxes, expenses associated with operating each reserve's infrastructure, preparing management plans for reserves, organising volunteer support, organising field trips to reserves, building and managing relations with other land owners.
- Development of conservation science, policy and strategy including staff costs, expenses relating to assessment of potential new reserves and partnerships, and expenses relating to development and maintenance of landscapescale plans and partnerships.
- Supporting land management partnerships including staff costs, expenses associated with preparing management plans, and expenses associated with conservation actions such as fire management, feral animal control, weed control, revegetation, species recovery and protection; and expenses related to ecological survey, monitoring and evaluation and cultural values assessment and protection.

Note 3(b). Conservation communities, events and education

Covers expenses associated with building conservation communities, including via online and newsletter communications, media engagement and the management of the website, bequest supporter and other events, management of the supporter database, supporter enquiries and other conservation-related communications.

#### Note 3(c). Fundraising activities

Covers expenses incurred in establishing the case for and then seeking donations and gifts from existing supporters to support Bush Heritage's conservation activities. Includes fundraising staff and other associated costs.

# Note 3(d). Investment in new supporters

Covers the cost of recruiting new financial supporters to ensure the ongoing viability of Bush Heritage's conservation activities.

#### Note 3(e). Organisational support

Covers activities that ensure the Company is resilient, well-operated and lasting. This includes in the areas of governance and compliance, finance, information technology, employee development, worker safety and day-to-day administration of Bush Heritage. All Bush Heritage directors provide their time on a pro-bono basis; however some costs are incurred in travel and communications expenses to facilitate meetings of the Board.

#### Note 3(f). Capital expenditure not included in the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

In addition to the operating expenses recognised in the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income, Bush Heritage directs donated funds toward items of capital expenditure, the most significant being the purchase of freehold and leasehold properties for the establishment of Bush Heritage's conservation reserves. Plant and equipment is also purchased by Bush Heritage for use in its conservation operations, which represents further capital expenditure not included in the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income.

#### Note 4. Investments

	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
(a) Investments held by company		
Bush Heritage Australia		
Bush Heritage Capital Fund	6,400	6,247
Other investments	56	47
	6,456	6,294
Midlands Conservation Fund	3,832	3,674
Closing balance	10,288	9,968
(b) Investments held by class		
Fixed interest	2,135	1,890
Property trusts	138	144
Shares Australian	4,166	3,692
Shares international	2,005	1,858
Term deposits	800	1,521
Cash and cash equivalents	988	816
Other	56	47
Closing balance	10,288	9,968
(c) Reconciliation of movement in investments		
Opening balance	9,968	9,283
Additions	4,214	648
Disposals	(3,945)	(397)
Realisation of net fair value gains previously brought to account	(132)	(53)
Net fair value gains/ (losses) brought to account during the financial year	183	487
Closing balance	10,288	9,968

Bush Heritage actively raises funds in addition to the purchase price and operating costs of our conservation reserves, in order to build an endowment for the long-term financial security and independence of the properties we manage. This fundamental strategy has led to the creation of the significant investment portfolio currently held. The Bush Heritage Capital Fund was established by Board Resolution on 27 February 2015, with the opening balance being drawn from Bush Heritage's existing investment portfolio. The Capital Fund has been established with the aim of further enhancing the long-term financial security of our properties. Investments in the Capital Fund are professionally managed by an external manager, overseen by the Capital Fund Investment Committee of the Bush Heritage Board and subject to the Capital Fund Charter.

Investments held in the Midlands Conservation Fund are directly overseen by the Midlands Conservation Fund Board of Directors and as at 31 March 2018 are held in Australian managed investment funds or term deposits placed with Australian banks.

#### Note 5. Interest bearing liabilities

	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Finance leases	<b>+</b> 000	<b>\$ 000</b>
Repayable within one year	352	391
Repayable after one year but not more than five years	336	365
Total minimum lease payments	688	756
Less amounts representing finance charges	(46)	(51)
Present value of minimum lease payments	642	705
Loans		
Repayable within one year	-	89
Repayable after one year but not more than five years	1,416	1,416
Total loan payments	1,416	1,505
Total interest bearing liabilities	2,058	2,210
Included in the financial statements as:		
Current	325	455
Non-current	1,733	1,755
	2,058	2,210

Bush Heritage has 18 finance-leased vehicles with a carrying value of \$640,936 (2017: \$697,132). Interest on the leases is fixed and each vehicle acts as security for the lessor. These lease contracts expire within one to four years. At the end of the term, ownership is retained by Bush Heritage if all obligations under the contract have been met.

In January 2017, \$84,000 was repaid of the initial \$1,500,000 loan with National Australia Bank (NAB) taken out for the purposes of acquiring the Pullen Pullen, Queensland conservation reserve. The balance is due in December 2020. Interest is charged on the loan at variable rates and NAB holds a registered mortgage over the Pullen Pullen property as security for the loan.

#### Note 6. Equity reserves

1.12		
	2018	2017
	\$'000	\$'000
Bush Heritage General Reserve (i)		
Opening balance	38,524	35,734
Net surplus attributable to Bush Heritage	2,909	1,643
Net transfer from/ (to) Bush Heritage Restricted Fund	(707)	1,147
Closing balance	40,726	38,524
Bush Heritage Restricted Funds Reserve (ii)		
Opening balance	1,192	2,339
Additional restricted funds received	1,607	2,531
Restricted funds expended or acquitted	(900)	(3,678)
Closing balance	1,899	1,192
Midlands Conservation Fund Reserve (iii)		
Opening balance	3,736	3,644
Net surplus attributable to Midlands Conservation Fund Reserve	336	92
Closing balance	4,072	3,736
Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve (iv)		
Opening balance	364	(70)
Realisation of net fair value gains previously brought to account	(132)	(53)
Net fair value gains/ (losses) brought to account during the financial year	183	487
Closing balance	415	364
Total Equity Reserves	47,112	
10301705	47,112	43,816

(i) The Bush Heritage General Reserve represents the accumulated supporter contributions and other net earnings that Bush Heritage has received since inception and which have been applied to the acquisition of land and other capital assets for conservation purposes. (ii) The Bush Heritage Restricted Funds Reserve represents funds received by Bush Heritage that have been tied by the company to specific future conservation-related purposes and which are yet to be applied to those purposes as at the date of these financial statements.

(iii) The Midlands Conservation Fund (MCF) Reserve is held separately within MCF Ltd as a capital fund, the earnings from which are to provide for annual stewardship payments to landholders for long-term protection and management of the Tasmanian Midlands.

(iv) The Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve records netmovements in the investment portfolioarising from ongoing revaluations ofthe portfolio assets to market values.

#### Note 7. Subsequent events

No circumstance has arisen since the end of the financial year which is not otherwise dealt with in this Concise Consolidated Financial Report or in the Full Consolidated Financial Report that has significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the company, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the company in subsequent financial periods.

#### ↓ Supporter Olivia Barratt. Photo by Kim Thomsens Photography

# Note 8. State and Territory government fundraising legislation requirements

As a national organisation, Bush Heritage conducts fundraising operations in all States and Territories. Several State and Territory governments have specific licensing and reporting requirements aimed at informing and protecting the interests of donors. Bush Heritage holds the following licences:

Australian Capital Territory	Charitable Collections Act 2003, Licence not required as Bush Heritage Australia is registered with Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission	
New South Wales	Charitable Fundraising Act 1991, Charitable Fundraising Authority 17412	
Queensland	Collections Act 1966, Certificate of Sanction No. CP 4954	
Tasmania	Collections for Charities Act 2001, Approval 10/02/09 F1A-320	
Victoria	Fundraising Act 1998, Registration Number 9971-18	
South Australia	Collections for Charitable Purposes Act 1939, Licence not required	
Western Australia	Charitable Collections Act 1946, Licence No: 21446	
Northern Territory	There are no applicable fundraising licensing requirements in the Northern Territory.	

The complete declaration required under the *Charitable Fundraising Act* 1991 (*NSW*) is available in the Full Consolidated Financial Report.

#### **Directors' declaration**

In accordance with a resolution of the directors of Bush Heritage Australia, we state that:

In the opinion of the directors:

- (a) the financial statements and notes of the Company have been prepared in accordance with AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports; and
- (b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

On behalf of the Board

Ulmss

Christopher Grubb, President

Melbourne, 7 June 2018

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Rebecca Nelson, **Director** 





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## Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Bush Heritage Australia

### Report on the Concise Financial Report

#### Opinion

The Concise Financial Report, which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 March 2018, the consolidated statement of comprehensive income, consolidated statement of changes in equity and consolidated statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited Financial Report of Bush Heritage Australia and its subsidiary for the year ended 31 March 2018. The Concise Financial Report also includes discussion and analysis and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying Concise Financial Report including the discussion and analysis and the directors' declaration complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports.* 

#### **Concise Financial Report**

The Concise Financial Report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards. Reading the Concise Financial Report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited Financial Report and the auditor's report thereon.

#### The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited Financial Report in our report dated 7 June 2018.

#### Responsibility of the Directors for the Concise Financial Report

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the Concise Financial Report in accordance with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*, and the *Corporations Act 2001*, and for such internal controls as the directors determine are necessary to enable the preparation of the Concise Financial Report.

#### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the Concise Financial Report complies, in all material respects, with AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports* based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

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Ernst & Young

Kester Brown Partner Melbourne 7 June 2018

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## Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Directors of Bush Heritage Australia

In relation to our audit of the concise financial report of Bush Heritage Australia for the financial year ended 31 March 2018, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of any applicable code of professional conduct.

Ernst Hours

Ernst & Young

Kester Brown Partner 7 June 2018

2017-2018

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# Thank you

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who have supported Bush Heritage over the past 12 months. Without you, our work would not be possible.



↑ Wildflowers on Hamelin Station Reserve, WA. Photo by Ben Parkhurst

#### **Patron and founder**

Bob Brown

#### Ambassadors

Chris Darwin John Williamson, AM Phillip Adams, AO Roger Woodward, AC, OBE Steve Parish, OAM Tim Fischer, AC

#### Leading benefactors

Elizabeth Xipell Lotterywest The Ian Potter Foundation The Miller Foundation Ltd

#### Key benefactors

Chris and Gina Grubb Gordon Douglas Jaramas Foundation JB Hi-Fi 'Helping Hands Program' and staff Jord Environment Trust Margaret and Michael Williams Margaret Dawbarn Foundation, managed by Perpetual Maxwell Family Foundatio Michael Tichbon

#### Major benefactors

Annelie Holden, in memory of George Dalton Carrawa Foundation Flight Centre Foundation Geoff Giles Helen Macpherson Smith Trust Michael J.S. Collins Pamela and Robert Knight Terry and Caroline Bellair The Scully Fund Vivienne Court Trading Pty Ltd

#### Supporting benefactors

Dr Alexander Gosling, AM, and Wirat Sukprem Andrew and Belinda Isles Andrew Danks Andrew Keayes and Vanessa Lansdown Andyinc Foundation Annabel Anderson Anne Miller Australian Geographic Society Besen Family Foundation Beth and Phill Schultz Biophilia Foundation Brian Snape, AM, and Diana Snape Bruce Kennett

# Supporter spotlight Native by nature

Philanthropist Michael Tichbon has a passion for native species, and his generous donations have made Bush Heritage's first ever purpose-built field station, on Red Moort Reserve in Western Australia, a reality.

"I don't feel that we - non-Aboriginal Australians - have done a very good job of looking after the plants and animals in this part of the world," says Michael. He is referring to a part of Noongar Country, between the Fitzgerald River and Stirling Range national parks in southwest Western Australia, home to hundreds of plant and animal species found nowhere else. This region has been heavily cleared in recent decades, putting the future existence of many species there at risk. "Given that I'm in a position to be able to make a difference here, I feel it's my responsibility to do so," says Michael. "That's why I support activities like the construction of this field station."



Michael, who is a long-term Bush Heritage supporter, first became involved in our Fitz-Stirling work in 2013. Three years later, he visited the region looking for a project to support in memory of his late brother and fellow conservationist, Neville Tichbon. At the time, Bush Heritage had just purchased two new reserves in the region, and it was becoming increasingly clear that we needed an operational and research base there. It was a perfect match.

Due to be completed in late 2018, the Michael Tichbon Field Station will feature sleeping quarters, laboratories and meeting spaces so that researchers can spend extended periods of time in the field, as well as educational displays, an off-grid solar system, and a rainwater collection and reticulation system. Ultimately, it will allow for more in-depth research and better conservation outcomes for the 10,000 hectares under our care in the Fitz-Stirling region.

↗ Photo by Jon Gellweiler/WestPix

Bush Habitat Restoration Co-Op Ltd Clifton and Clara Laing Charitable Trust Coupland Family David Rickards, in memory of Helen Rickards David Slack Diversicon Environmental Foundation Eva Palmer Fiorina Gabba Future Generation Investment Company Greengib Ltd Greg Burns Harris Estate Charitable

Heather Doig and Rob Koczkar Ian and Stephanie Hardy Ian Sharp on behalf of Irene Stone J. Permsew Foundation Jane Oldfield Janene Robinson Kathy Gollan Kennards Hire Foundation Leith Hope Memorial Foundation Macquarie Group Foundation Henry Maas Marich Foundation

Morphic Asset Management Naylor-Stewart Ancillary Fund Pavetta Foundation Phillip Cornwell and Cecilia Rice PW Foundation Pty Ltd Reece Australia Ltd Regal Funds Management Robert and Sue Read Roslynne J. Milne Shirley Parkes Stephanie Miller and Martin Pool The Abercrombie Family Foundation The Dynamic Supplies Endowment, managed by

Thelma Elizabeth Heyde Warwick Nott Wavish Family Trust Wildlife Volunteers Association Inc. Wright Family Bequest, managed by Equity Trusts

## Bequest spotlight Remembering Julianne Bell: protector of our public lands

In 2017, Victoria lost one of its most passionate defenders of public lands, but the legacy she left to Bush Heritage will help ensure that generations to come can continue to enjoy the bush.

Described variously as "a force of nature", "tough as nails" and "an invincible spirit", one thing is clear about Julianne Bell: she was not someone to underestimate. Over the course of her life, Julianne was instrumental in preventing the destruction of many public spaces in the face of encroaching development and population growth. Her political astuteness, intellect and gift for both oral and written communication made her a formidable opponent.

In 2003, Julianne set up Protectors of Public Lands (Victoria), a coalition of groups that protect or care for public



spaces, and in doing so she gave their cause a coordination it had not before seen. She was also a founding member of the Royal Park Protection Group, which is dedicated to preserving the iconic park in Melbourne's inner north.

In 2014, Julianne experienced one of her proudest moments when a joint campaign by both groups successfully halted the East-West Link, a freeway that would have cut through the heart of Royal Park, resulting in the destruction of much green space. In 2016, after being a supporter for almost seven years, Julianne informed Bush Heritage that she would be leaving the organisation a gift in her will. A fighter to the very end, her significant and generous bequest serves as a final reminder of Julianne's selfless commitment to safeguarding Australia's natural and cultural environment for the enjoyment of all.

Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld. Photo by Terry Cooke

#### **Government grants**

Australian Government's National Landcare Program

Gascoyne Development Commission, through the Government of Western Australia's Royalties for Regions Fund

Government of Western Australia, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

Government of Western Australia's NRM Program, supported by the Royalties for Regions Fund

Murray Darling Basin Authority

Northern Agricultural Catchment Council NSW Government, Local Land Services

NSW Government, through the Environmental Trust Queensland Government, Department of Environment

and Science Rangelands NRM

South Coast NRM South West NRM

Victorian Government, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

#### Pro bono partners Allens

Arnold Bloch Leibler Daniel Gauchat, The Adelante Group Environmental Defender's Office of Western Australia Environmental Systems Solutions Johanna Villani Design Jord International Mills Oakley Porter Novelli

#### **Bequests**

Bush Heritage gratefully received bequests from the estates of the following supporters:

Ann Gormley Ann Monica Murphy Audrie Ruth Tetley Barry Phillip Moore Brian Edward Reycraft Pullen Colin Hutchinson Donald Blair Mackay Edward Albert Beer Elizabeth Constance Carr Grace Finlayson Jane Scragg Jean Edgecombe

## Volunteer spotlight The regular visitors

Tony and Meredith Geyer have volunteered on Boolcoomatta Station Reserve in central South Australia seven times, with each visit lasting up to four weeks. As they become more familiar with the pastoral station-turned conservation reserve, they are noticing how it is changing.

"If you drive around the reserve now, you can see lovely stands of very young Native Apricot, Plum Bush, Purple-wood and Bush Bananas popping up," says Meredith. "Whereas before, sheep and rabbits would have nibbled up those little seedlings before they had a chance to grow."

Meredith and Tony first heard about Bush Heritage through Meredith's father, John Weightman, who left a gift to Bush Heritage in his will. As someone who spent much of his working life travelling through the Outback, John knew the mulga and saltbush country well, and Meredith says



his legacy to Bush Heritage reflects his belief in the organisation's practical approach to conservation.

Meredith describes the 63,000hectare reserve as a "vast and varied landscape" – a far cry from her and Tony's home on Kangaroo Island, off the coast of South Australia. In the time that she and Tony have spent on Boolcoomatta they have helped with everything from caretaking to weed control, maintaining pitfall traps, and surveying old rabbit warrens for signs of recent activity. On their most recent trip, they recorded a species of bird that had never before been sighted on Boolcoomatta: a Striped Honeyeater, enjoying a small bird bath. Meredith and Tony have since noticed three Striped Honey-eaters frequenting the bird bath – as Tony says, "They're regular visitors to the backyard now, and with a bit of luck, they're not just passing by."

▷ Photo by Simon O'Dwyer/The Age↗ Photo by Kurt Tschirner

John David Adams Julianne Bell Kathrin McMiles Kenneth Alfred Iles Kenneth Bell Kwok Paul Lee Margaret Munro Esson Nathalie Kulakowski Patricia Annesley Naylor Robert Foster Ruth Christensen Sheila Brown, in memory of her husband George Lancelot Trenery Brown Sheila Forbes Micholson Yvonne Joan Viner

#### Volunteers

We sincerely thank everyone who volunteered their time to support our work over the past 12 months, including those who were able to contribute the greatest amounts of time to our work:

Alec Kerr Alistair Bestow Annie Didcott Australian Deer Association Birdlife Northern Queensland Bob and Karolee Wolcott Brian Crute Cliff and Cilla Jerret Dan and Wendy Johnston Frank and Ann Ingwersen Garry McDonald Ian Haverly IROOS - University of Queensland Janet and Joe Rosa John Adams John Rideout and Barbara Howard Jonathon Marsden-Smedley Michael and June Uhrig Norma Gates Richard McLellan Richard McLellan Richard Thomas Ronald McInnes Tony and Meredith Geyer Trevor Jones Wildflower Society of WA Inc.

#### **Research partners**

ACT Government Amaryllis Environmental Arid Recovery Australian Institute of Marine Science Australian Museum Australian National University BirdLife Northern Queensland BirdLife Western Australia Charles Darwin University Charles Sturt University Colorado State University (USA) Conservation Council of Western Australia

## Research partner spotlight Wings of change

Located on the edge of the Simpson Desert, in south-west Queensland, are the red sands of Bush Heritage's Ethabuka and Cravens Peak reserves. Our partners at the University of Sydney's Desert Ecology Research Group have been studying these landscapes since 1990, providing one of Australia's longest-running ecological datasets.

"The Ratcatchers', as they're affectionately known, head out to Ethabuka and Cravens Peak up to four times a year under the guidance of Professors Chris Dickman and Glenda Wardle. Their team works closely with Bush Heritage staff and includes students, volunteers and researchers such as Australian Research Council fellow Dr Ayesha Tulloch.

For Ayesha, the Ratcatchers' long-term dataset offered an ideal point from which to start her research into early-warning



detection systems for ecosystem decline. With a focus on birds, Ayesha's aim is to understand how different species within an environment coexist, and then monitor changes in those associations over time.

"If you can get that information on enough species, then you can start to form a picture of: 'well, these two species used to share the same patch, but now in this landscape they're only found in separate patches.' And that tells us there's actually been some underlying change in the ecosystem," explains Ayesha.

If her methods prove successful, they will not only help us to identify and respond to ecosystem declines before it is too late, they will also make monitoring for those declines easier. As Ayesha says: "there are a lot of people who like birds, and there are a lot of people who monitor birds... That's really important, because it makes it a lot easier and cheaper for us to track change."

↑ Cravens Peak Reserve, Qld. Photo by Wayne Lawler

Conservation Drones CSIRO Curtin University Deakin University Desert Wildlife Service Edith Cowan University Fitzgerald Biosphere Group Government of Western Australia, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Greening Australia James Cook University Murdoch University NASA (USA) National Environmental Science Program Threatened Species

Recovery Hub (UoM)

Recovery Team National Red-finned Blue eye Recovery Team Olkola Aboriginal Corporation Smithsonian Institution (USA) South Coast NRM Tasmanian Land Conservancy Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (Snain)

National Night Parrot

iversidad Rey Juan rlos (Spain) iversity of Canberra iversity of Florida (USA) iversity of Melbourne iversity of New England

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University of New South Wales University of Queensland University of Sydney University of Tasmania University of the Sunshine Coast University of Western Australia Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach Victorian Plains-wanderer Recovery Team

# Aboriginal partnerships (off-reserve)

We currently have active partnerships with the following organisations and Traditional Owner groups on land that is Aboriginal-owned and managed:

Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation; Djinang, Djinba, Ganhalpuyngu, Mandhalpuyngu, Ritharrngu and Wagilak speaking Yolngu people, and Rembarrnga speaking Bininj people (Arafura Swamp, NT)

Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation; Bunuba people (Bunuba, WA)

## Aboriginal partner spotlight Healing Country

The Victorian gold rush of the mid-1800s is often celebrated as a period of great economic growth for Australia. But as our population and pockets grew, the gold-flecked country of central-Victoria was suffering: trees were felled, waterways diverted, soil unearthed, and many Traditional Owners displaced.

The scars from that era remain today, and healing them lies at the heart of the Dja Dja Wurrung people's *Dhelkunya Dja Country Plan for 2014-2034*. Their journey on this path is one that Bush Heritage is proud to support.

"There's an understanding there that Bush Heritage's aspirations for country align with our own, and that's pretty cool," says Trent Nelson, Chair of the Dja Dja Wurrung Aboriginal Corporation and a member of Bush Heritage's Aboriginal Engagement Committee.



Bush Heritage works with Trent and the wider Dja Dja Wurrung community on the 1207-hectare Nardoo Hills group of reserves, and neighbouring landscapes, in north-central Victoria. These reserves are intrinsically connected to the stories, songs, ceremonies and spirits of Dja Dja Wurrung people, for whom maintaining these values is a cultural responsibility.

Recently, Dja Dja Wurrung re-established *Djandak Wii* (traditional fire management) on the Nardoo Hills reserves, working alongside Bush Heritage staff. When applied at the right time and place, this millennia-old cultural practice helps to improve biodiversity and the health of native species. Today, it also provides an opportunity for Traditional Owners to spend time on country and learn new skills.

"You've got your cousins and family out there with you, and that's a big part of it. It's not just about burning country; it's about being out there with your family."

↗ Photo by Annette Ruzicka

Central Desert Native Title Services Ltd; Martu people (Birriliburu, WA)

Winangakirri Aboriginal Corporation; Ngiyampaa Wangaaypuwan people (Mawonga, NSW)

Mimal Land Management Aboriginal Corporation; Dalabon and Rembarrnga clans (Mimal, NT)

Nepabunna Community Council; Adnyamathanha people (Nantawarrina, SA)

Olkola Aboriginal Corporation; Olkola people (Olkola, Qld)

Ganalanga-Mindibirrina IPA Advisory Committee and the Northern Land Council Waanyi Garawa Rangers; Waanyi Garawa Rangers and Traditional Owners (Waanyi Garawa, NT)

Wardekken Aboriginal Corporation; Bininj Kunwok clans (Wardekken, NT)

Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporation; Wunambal and Gaambera peoples (Wunambal Gaambera, WA)

#### Aboriginal partnerships (on-reserve)

Thank you to the following Traditional Owner groups who work with us so that, together, we may better understand and manage the land under our care.

Adnyamathanha and Wilyakali peoples (Boolcoomatta Station Reserve, SA)

Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people (Bon Bon Station Reserve, SA)

Badimaya people (Charles Darwin Reserve, WA)

Bidjara people (Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld)

Budjiti people (Naree Statior Reserve, NSW)

Dja Dja Wurrung people (Nardoo Hills reserves, Vic.) Jirrbal and Warrangu peoples (Yourka Reserve, Qld) Maiawali people (Pullen Pullen Reserve, Qld)

Malgana people (Hamelin Station Reserve, WA)

Nanda people (Eurardy Reserve, WA)

Ngunnawal people (Scottsdale Reserve, NSW)

Koreng peoples (Fitz-Stirling reserves, WA)

Tasmanian Aboriginal Community/Palawa people (Liffey Valley reserves, Friendly Beaches Reserve, South Esk Pine Reserve and the Tasmanian Midlands, Tas.)

Wangkamadla people (Cravens Peak and Ethabuka reserves, Qld) We do not inherit the bush from our ancestors. Rather, we borrow it from our children.

Scottsdale Reserve Manager Phil Palmer, his daughters Laila and Skye Palmer, and volunteer Will Douglas. Photo by Anna Carlile A

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