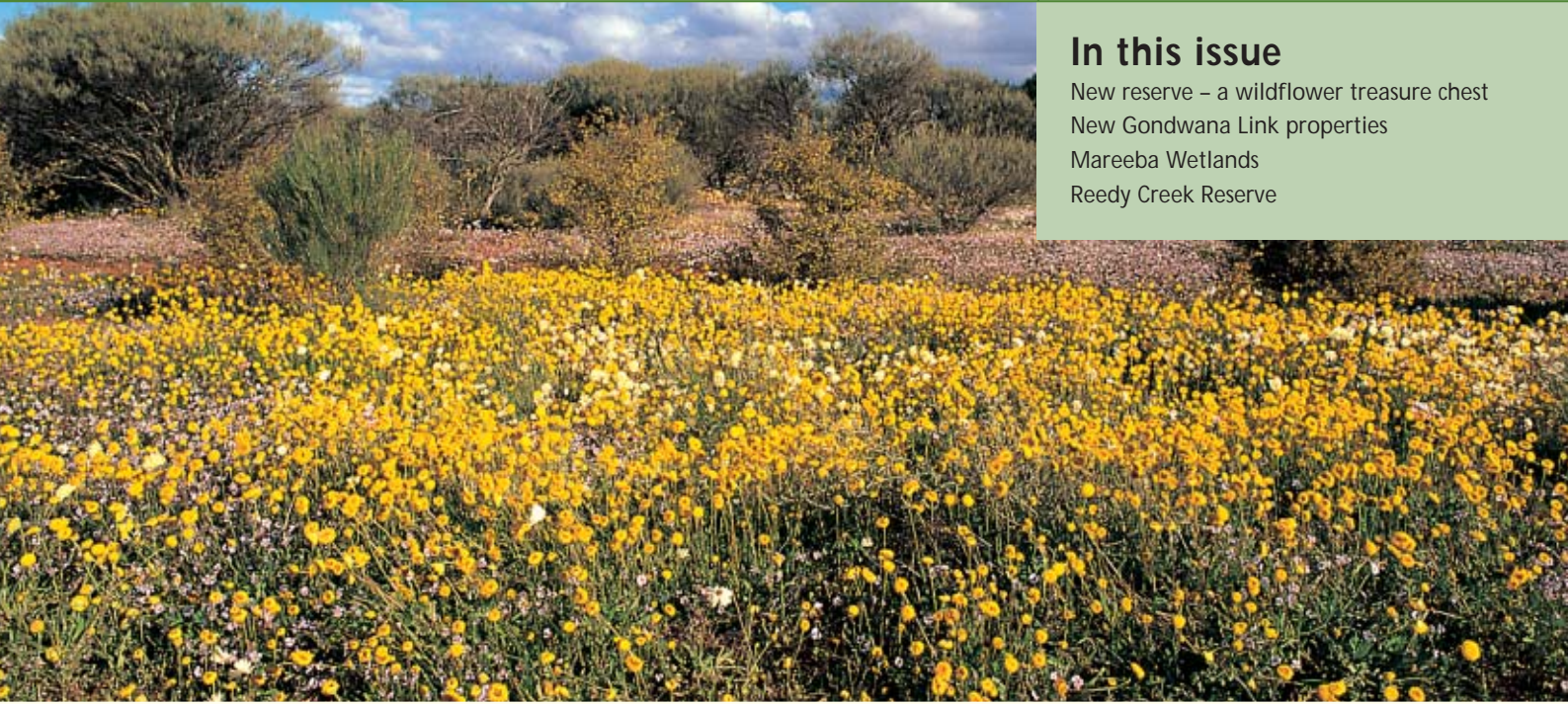




## In this issue

- New reserve – a wildflower treasure chest
- New Gondwana Link properties
- Mareeba Wetlands
- Reedy Creek Reserve



## A wildflower treasure chest will be the next reserve

Conservation Programs Manager **Stuart Cowell** describes what will soon be a Bush Heritage reserve

The spring wildflower displays in south-west Western Australia are legendary. The plant diversity is awe-inspiring, even for those of us who have roamed this part of the country for years. When this floral abundance is seen alongside the vast areas that have been cleared throughout the wheat belt, the properties that retain their 'original' landscapes can only be regarded as fabulous, rare treasures.

The South-West Botanical Province, as it is called, is recognised as one of the most biologically diverse regions in the world. Tragically, it is also one of earth's threatened biodiversity hotspots. Land clearing and spreading salinity have devastated much of the region. The areas of native vegetation that remain are now very precious.

Bush Heritage's next reserve will protect one of Australia's most extraordinary treasures of biodiversity. The property lies on the northern edge of this botanical province and the sheep-wheat belt. At over 30 000 hectares it will be one of our larger purchases and protect a variety of vegetation associations and hundreds of species of plants. Incredibly, although only about half the property has been surveyed, we know that there are at least five nationally endangered or vulnerable plants and at least 29 species that are a priority for conservation in the state. The threatened malleefowl is also among them.

Clockwise from top: Fields of everlastings. Nationally vulnerable malleefowl. Twining fringe lily. *Leschenaultia* sp. A blaze of spring colour. PHOTOS: MARGARET QUICKE Inset: Fat-tailed dunnart. PHOTO: JIRI AND MARIE LOCHMAN/LOCHMAN TRANSPARENCIES





**LANDSCAPE**

The land is part of an ancient landscape in an old continent. Its great geological age is revealed by the absence of relief, its former hills worn down by wind and water over the aeons. It is relatively flat to undulating country, dissected by ephemeral drainage lines and breakaways, with rocky soapstone outcrops and the occasional 'high dune' on the sandplains. When you stand on one of these high points, looking north across the large but shallow drainage basin that characterises the property, the 'micro' relief starts to emerge and the landscape ceases to be simply 'flat'. It is the complexity of these large landscapes at this fine scale that gives rise to their abundant diversity.

Red loamy sands and yellow sandplains support the low kwongan heath, sandplain scrubs and york gum.

**VEGETATION**

Shrublands and scrub-heath are the dominant vegetation types. These are very dull names for what are some of the most spectacular and



remarkable plant communities in the west. There is also a mix of *Acacia* thicket, scattered york gum and red mallee, *Casuarina*, *Banksia ashbyi* and other mixed-species thickets. Protecting the property will significantly increase the reserved area of four of these vegetation associations that are important for conservation.

Some recent plant surveys, which were conducted over a total of six days and covered only about a third of the property, recorded over 600 species of plants. Thirty of these were as yet undescribed. The current owners have photographed over 900 plant species on the property as a whole.

**WILDLIFE**

Little is known about the wildlife on the property as no formal surveys have been undertaken. However, we know that the nationally threatened malleefowl is there and species such as the tiny fat-tailed dunnart, spinifex hopping mouse, western grey kangaroo and euro. Other species that we expect to find include the sandy inland mouse, honey possum and a significant number of bat species. So far there are 97 species of birds on the bird list. Insects are in abundance, which reflects the remarkable diversity of plants.



**THREATS AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Most of this region has been cleared for wheat and sheep production. However, by anyone's definition it is marginal agricultural country. The current owners of the property have cropped only about ten per cent of the land. Another 20 per cent has been grazed lightly and intermittently over the past fifteen years and has not been seriously impacted by the grazing pressure. The current owners have maintained much of the property for its wonderful wildflower show and its rare species.

The greatest risk to the property comes now that the owners need to sell. If sold on the open market, new owners are





likely to consider goat production as an alternative to wheat and sheep farming. This would be a disaster for the landscape and the plants in particular.

Grazing and soil disturbance by feral goats, inappropriate fire regimes, predation of native animals by foxes and cats, and weed invasion, are the major threats. The threat from feral goats is high; they have seriously degraded other pastoral leases in the region. Effective management of these threats would be a key component of Bush Heritage's management plan for the reserve.



## THE FUTURE

With your help Bush Heritage will buy and protect this extraordinary place. Once purchased, this new reserve will add to and link existing conservation areas creating an extensive corridor of protected land. Building up the size, and thus the resilience, of conservation areas is very important if we are to ensure that all their plant and animal species and the integrity of their ecosystems are to be maintained and enhanced for the long term. Creating this new reserve will be a major step forward in protecting some of the extraordinary diversity in this biodiversity hotspot.

Once the new reserve is established you will be able to visit and marvel at the extraordinary variety of our plants. How gratifying to know that you have helped to protect this dazzling natural 'garden' for the long term.

Facing page, clockwise from top: Carpets of white flowers bloom on the red soils. PHOTO: MARGARET QUICKE Tiny honey possums on *Calothamnus* flowers. PHOTO: JIRI AND MARIE LOCHMAN/LOCHMAN TRANSPARENCIES A profusion of wildflowers in pastel colours. PHOTO: MARGARET QUICKE Inset: Thorny devil. PHOTO: JIRI AND MARIE LOCHMAN/LOCHMAN TRANSPARENCIES

This page, clockwise from top: *Verticordia etheliana* being admired by renowned botanist Alex George (centre) and international visitors. *Grevillea dielsiana*. Vibrant pink of *Verticordia* sp. PHOTOS: MARGARET QUICKE A palette of colour with blue *Dampiera* and yellow *Glischrocaryon*. PHOTO: MARGARET QUICKE Geralton wax. PHOTO: JIRI AND MARIE LOCHMAN/LOCHMAN TRANSPARENCIES



# Gondwana Link: your new reserve

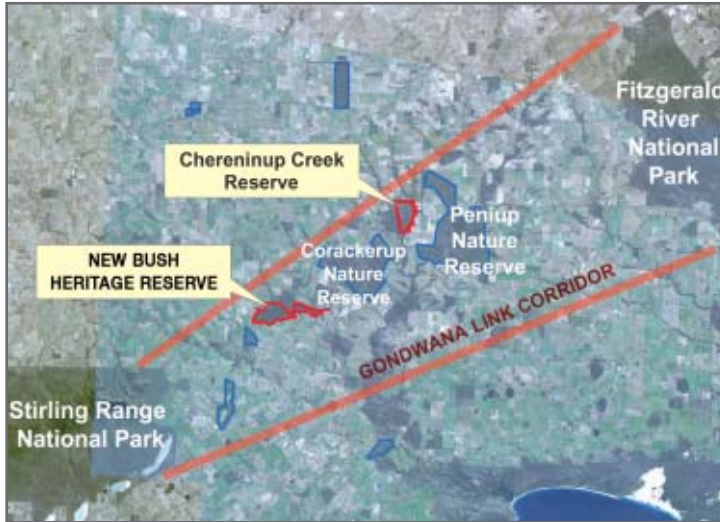
Your gifts have helped Bush Heritage to buy and protect two new properties in Australia's only internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot in south-west Western Australia. These properties are in the hotspot's south-eastern sector and were profiled in the *Bush Heritage News* of Spring 2004, when negotiations for their purchase were still under way. They are key areas needed to achieve the Gondwana Link vision.

Bush Heritage, together with Greening Australia, Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, Friends of the Fitzgerald and The Wilderness

Society, are working towards realising this Gondwana Link vision. The ultimate goal is to reconnect 500 kilometres of remnant bushland from the Karri to Kalgoorlie to save the unique and diverse animals and plants of the region. The project will also support and help to revive the region's ailing rural communities.

The 70-kilometre stretch of land between the Fitzgerald River and Stirling Range national parks, where Bush Heritage is concentrating its efforts, is the logical starting point for this vast-scale project. Key parcels of remnant habitat and disused adjoining agricultural land have been identified as the first priority for acquisition and revegetation. With your help, two more of these key properties have now been purchased. They lie

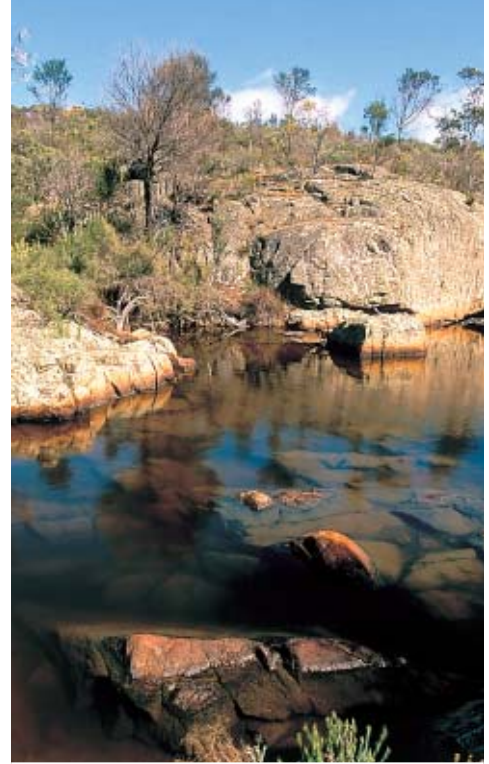
south-west of the Corackerup Nature Reserve and help to form the foundation on which the extensive habitat corridor will be rebuilt. The purchase of even more land is currently being negotiated. Ultimately, the Gondwana Link pathway



will create an extensive belt of native vegetation throughout the region. It will allow the wildlife, now trapped in small, isolated habitats, to repopulate. New ecologically sustainable farming methods and businesses producing new products and services will buffer this belt of linked habitats, while providing employment opportunities for the local people.

This is a whole-community effort and your gifts are a critical part of its success. Thank you.

Clockwise from top: Deeply incised creek line running through the heart of the reserve. *Comesperma scoparium*. *Petrophile divaricata*. Diverse shrubland.  
PHOTOS: JIRI AND MARIE LOCHMAN/LOCHMAN TRANSPARENCIES



## AVEDA

The art and science of pure flower and plant essences

Earth Month is an annual event that Aveda, international plant-based hair- and skin-care company, conducts to raise awareness and funding for the environment. This year Aveda has chosen Bush Heritage to be its conservation partner in Australia, with a focus on threatened and endangered species. During April, one of Aveda's worldwide goals is to raise US\$1 million for Earth Month partners.

There will be product offers and the opportunity to donate to Bush Heritage, and a portion of profits from the sale of selected products will go directly to Bush Heritage. For more information on Aveda visit [www.aveda.com](http://www.aveda.com)



## Mareeba Wetland Foundation and Bush Heritage

### Conservation Programs Manager **Stuart Cowell** explains a new partnership for Bush Heritage

One of the privileges of being a part of Bush Heritage is having the opportunity to be inspired by people around Australia who are getting involved and are prepared to give money and time to act on their beliefs. These people are achieving great conservation work for their communities.

The Mareeba Wetland Foundation (MWF), my source of inspiration in this case, is a non-profit environmental organisation in the town of Mareeba in far-northern Queensland. It was set up by Tim Nevard and a group of locals in 1995 to create wildlife habitat from 2000 hectares of land that was originally earmarked for the growing of sugar cane. The complex soils and geology of the area meant that there was a risk of downstream

salinity if the sugar cane development proceeded. An environmental alternative was proposed for the land and the Mareeba Tropical Savannah and Wetland Reserve became a reality. It is now one of Queensland's top ecotourist destinations.

The Mareeba Wetland Reserve is a unique environment that supports a remarkable array of tropical and wetland species. It has returned vital wetland habitats to the region, habitats that were lost when existing wetlands were drained for agriculture.

The reserve protects regionally important numbers of cotton pygmy geese, pink-eared ducks, brolgas, sarus cranes and rufous owls. The globally threatened buff-breasted button-quail has been seen there regularly. These are among 204 bird species recorded on the reserve to date. It is also the site of a reintroduction project for gouldian finches being conducted with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The gouldian finch, arguably Australia's most exquisite bird, is endangered, with a population of fewer than 2000 birds remaining in the wild.

The MWF and Bush Heritage signed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2004 to cooperate in the conservation management of this important regional habitat. Conservation and sustainable tourism are compatible activities for Bush Heritage, and working with MWF will build our knowledge of both non-government nature conservation in far-north Queensland and how tourism may be developed on Bush Heritage reserves. We will also assist MWF by encouraging our volunteer rangers to visit the Mareeba wetlands to

work on the reserve. Those wanting to volunteer should contact Joelle Metcalf at [volunteers@bushheritage.asn.au](mailto:volunteers@bushheritage.asn.au) or phone her on 03 8610 9102 for details.

The MWF is highly regarded and has a national reputation as an important contributor to conservation in north Queensland. The land under its care is in good health and in good hands and its future is secured. Community-led conservation initiatives such as this will help to establish a network of habitat 'anchors' throughout Australia. They will help to ensure the survival of our native plants and animals both for their intrinsic value and for the enjoyment and education of the community.

Through its Conservation Partnerships Program, Bush Heritage will continue to support exciting community ventures such as this and learn from and share knowledge with the experts involved.

Clockwise from top: Bird watching from the visitor centre. Gouldian finches. Brolgas in the wetlands. PHOTOS: COURTESY MAREEBA WETLAND FOUNDATION. Pink-eared ducks. PHOTO: GRAEME CHAPMAN. Tropical savannah woodland. Morning mist over the woodlands. PHOTOS: COURTESY MAREEBA WETLAND FOUNDATION





# Work begins at Reedy Creek Reserve

**Mel Sheppard and Steve Heggie, Reserve Managers at Reedy Creek Reserve in Queensland, are now on the job**

October 2004 saw us begin the on-ground management work at the Bush Heritage Reedy Creek Reserve and the adjacent common lands of the 'Sunrise at 1770' housing development near Agnes Water on the Queensland central coast.

We were welcomed on our first day by a familiar face from our previous home in Kakadu National Park, a frill-necked lizard that we promptly added to the reserve's species list.

Reedy Creek is a very different management proposition to that which we faced at the huge Bush Heritage Carnarvon Station Reserve and in Kakadu. We have gone from landscape-scale 'macro' management to hands-on 'micro' management of land for conservation. The relatively small size of the reserve means that we will develop an intimate knowledge of its plants and animals.

Many of the on-ground conservation issues at Reedy Creek are the same as those we faced in Carnarvon and Kakadu, but here there are a few more challenges thrown in. Working with the state and local authorities and residents of the intensive housing development adjoining the land make for an exciting work environment both inside and outside the reserve.

Our work so far has largely involved working to blend Bush Heritage and ourselves into the local community and creating an awareness of the organisation's objectives.

The turtle nest monitoring has been a real management highlight. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service volunteers have, for a number of years, been carrying out turtle monitoring along the beaches that abut the common lands managed by the reserve. We have worked alongside the local team leader in the enjoyable early morning job of recording the night's nesting events. In the dark, green, flatback and loggerhead turtles have toiled up the beach to scrape holes in

which they have laid their eggs. Their characteristic tracks identify which species have visited in the night. By recording the locations of the nests of each species, the researchers can monitor the fate of the eggs and watch for the emergence of the young turtles 50 to 80 days later (depending on the species).



The foreshore and headlands that are managed by Bush Heritage go a long way to preserving the habitats essential for the long-term survival of these endangered turtles. As part of our work, we have collaborated with the local Landcare group to replant parts of the dunes to help prevent lights from the development from disturbing the nesting turtles.

The Reedy Creek fire plan is now ready to be implemented and we are looking forward to carrying out the first of the series of conservation burns planned for 2005. The aim of these burns is threefold: to begin the pattern of burning appropriate to the management of the various vegetation types, to protect the infrastructure of both the reserve and our neighbours, and to create firebreaks around those vegetation communities from which fire should still be excluded.

At the moment, opportunities to volunteer on the reserve are limited but, once we begin to undertake capital works, we will be eagerly seeking volunteers to help us. We hope then to see you in the sun and warmth at Reedy Creek Reserve.

Clockwise from above: Loggerhead turtle. PHOTO: WAYNE LAWLER/ICOPIX. *Corymbia* woodland. PHOTO: CARL MOLLER. Mel recording the location of a loggerhead turtle nest. Mel and Steve with the new sign. PHOTOS: STEVE HEGGIE. Sunrise beach. Pandanus wetland. PHOTOS: CARL MOLLER.

The land at Reedy Creek Reserve, at Agnes Water in coastal Queensland, was donated to Bush Heritage in 2003 by Michael and Dellarose Baeviski. The common lands that form part of the adjacent housing development at 'Sunrise at 1770' are also being managed by Bush Heritage.

## From the CEO

The one thing that we continue to strive for at Bush Heritage is to protect and properly manage Australia's diminishing high conservation areas. You, the supporters of Bush Heritage, through your loyalty and generosity, enable us to do this. Thank you.

Many of you donate regularly. Some people give their time. You have helped us to establish an enviable group of reserves in diverse landscapes and climates around Australia. You also support our expert conservation managers who are, in turn, exchanging skills and expertise with a growing number of volunteers and partners to ensure that we manage our reserves well.

The work of reserve managers and volunteers is very diverse, ranging from mustering feral goats (at Charles Darwin Reserve, WA) and rescuing heat-affected motorists stranded in the Simpson Desert (at Ethabuka, Qld) to injecting herbicide into invading wheel cactus with specially made syringes. Stabbing cactus is apparently a great way to release the tensions of the week, a satisfying job for volunteers with whom I spoke recently at the new Judith Eardley Reserve in Victoria. You can visit the reserves and see the management work under way by joining one of our field trips (see Page 8).

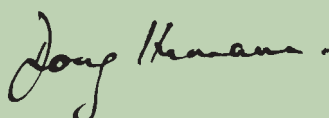
We have begun 2005 with the confidence to expand our conservation work. We are currently considering for acquisition six properties in four states. It will be a thrill to announce these new properties over the course of the year and I encourage you

to give your support to our three newest additions announced in this newsletter, as well as to the continuing management of our eighteen existing reserves.

I would particularly like to acknowledge a very significant gift from the estate of Gay Bell, who had an enduring interest in the work of Bush Heritage. Her gift will help us to buy and manage one of our new reserves this year.

In seeking your continued support, I reflect on the overwhelming response of the Australian community to the disaster wrought by the tsunami in the Indian Ocean. I share the sadness that I'm sure all our readers feel about the impacts of this and other human tragedies. I extend sympathy on behalf of Bush Heritage to those affected by these events. It has been tremendous to see Australians give so generously. This disaster and other events have focused attention on sound financial management by charities. You can see our full financial details in the Annual Report on the web at [www.bushheritage.org](http://www.bushheritage.org) or in printed form, a copy of which can be mailed to you on request. Please contact me if you require further information.

Finally, Kalina Koloff has greatly assisted our supporter programs and hosted many of our reserve field days with enthusiasm and warmth. We thank her and wish her well as she moves to new employment.



## In celebration

Heatherbell Mellor donated to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of **Bruce and Daphne Mellor**. Gillian Moore celebrated the 70th birthday of her sister **Mrs Ygraine Loof**.

Daniel Hirschfeld commemorated the birth of his son **Owen**, making 'a small contribution to his future', and Dr Roslyn Brooks, the birth of **Alexander James Rowland** to Frieda and Martin. Pauline McEwen donated for the christening of her great-nephew **Thomas Porter**.

Many friends and family gave to celebrate the weddings of **Roy Leeman and Deb Kinnon**, **Ben and Carly McMillan**, **Ian McBurney and Clare Flanagan-Smith**,

**John Humann and Jani Kerr** and, from the United Kingdom, **Rachel Keyter and Josh Thompson**. Rachel and Josh also donated to Bush Heritage instead of buying an engagement ring.

Kate and Ross Consterdine and their sons Matt and Dave 'sat under the Christmas tree on Christmas morning and gave towards a better world'. Glenys and Graham Pearce celebrated the lives of **Jennie and David**, **David and Renate** and **Jeff and Niki** 'to provide a lasting and living Christmas gift'.

Aileen Cameron sent a birthday gift for **Rodney van Proctor**. The van Beurden family donated generously to celebrate birthdays and Christmas. We thank Bev and Eric van Beurden, Linda van Beurden, Melanie Cariola, Evan Cariola and Zoë.

## In memory

Bush Heritage has received many gifts in memory of **Eleanor Stodart** from her family and friends.

Jenny Stokes remembered her mother **Jean Stokes**, and Jenny Whyte, her mother **Constance Kelson**. **Thelma Surridge** was remembered by her daughter Rosemary Surridge, and **Ann Norris** by her daughter Bronwen Gutner. Lizzie Hill gave for her mother **Sheila Hill**.

Jeanette Dennison sent a donation for her father **Alfred Button**, 'a gentle caring man who loved nature'. Glenys Pearce remembered her father **Ralph Knowles**.

Sandra Rosenbrock gave in memory of her husband **Peter Rosenbrock**, as did many of his friends. Don Weger remembered his wife **Helen**.

J Eltham, Elizabeth Smyth and staff of the Cairns office of the Environmental Protection Agency sent donations in memory of **Douglas Clague**. **Evol Knight** was remembered by those at the School of Environmental and Information Sciences at Charles Sturt University.

Mr and Mrs Osborne donated in memory of their daughter **Marjorie Anne Osborne** who 'loved all things green'. Viv Donovan sent a gift for her son **Paul Donovan**. Andrea Beel donated in memory of **Eve Boyle** and **Robert Boyle**, 'my guardian angels: children of mine that did not make it to be born alive'.

**Janice Caroline Mann** was remembered by Gillian Watkinson, and **Rae Lee** by Janice Bird. Jean Barrie gave for **Dr Rex Betheras**. Alison Currie sent a donation in memory of **Inge Cumberland** and **Ellen Bird**, 'two of my dearest friends'.

Margaret Cromb sent a gift to remember **Professor Chris Wallace**. Norma Hooton donated for her nephew **Mark David Hooton** and Alex Hodges honoured **Phyllis Martin-Potter** 'who loved her garden'.

## Thanks

Our sincere thanks to Hunter Hall for their generous gift made through the innovative Hunter Hall Shareholder Nominated Charitable Donations Scheme.

