

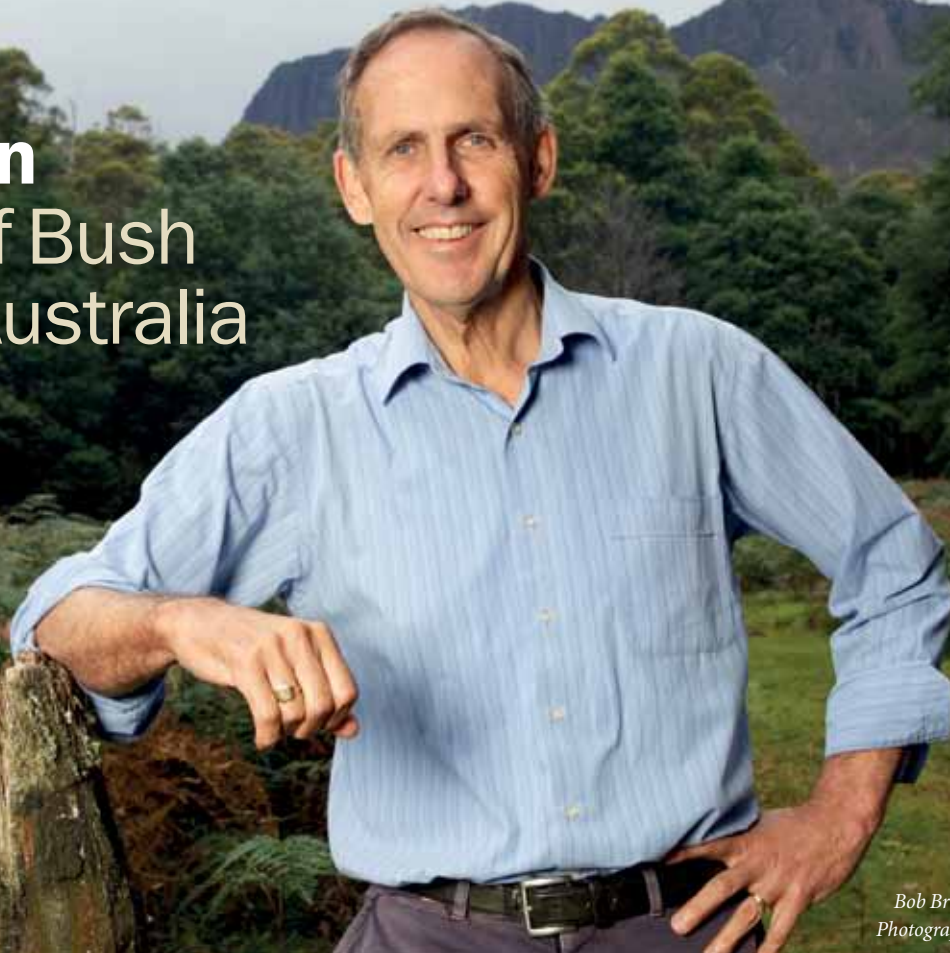
BUSH HERITAGE

Thank you for 20 years of conservation



Special edition Spring 2011
www.bushheritage.org.au

Bob Brown Founder of Bush Heritage Australia



Bob Brown at Oura Oura
Photograph by Peter Morris

“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for 20 years”

“I was walking in Tasmania’s Liffey Valley on a sunny day in 1990 when I made a decision that began the journey we now know as Bush Heritage Australia.

I often walked in the bush to collect my thoughts – I still do. On that day, I was walking high above two beautiful bush blocks that had come up for sale and that logging companies were keen to buy. I thought about what might happen if someone didn’t protect that land. I imagined a scene of grey tree skeletons and burning stumps.

I walked through a gully dense with rainforest and carpeted by ferns. A small creek bubbled away nearby. I found some hand-worked shards of stone – a reminder of the Aboriginal people who’d been going there for thousands of years, to enjoy the morning sun. I felt a connection with humanity that stretched back to generations past, and forward to generations yet to come. I couldn’t stand by and watch that spirit die. With encouragement and support from a group of like-minded friends, I decided to go into debt to buy this natural part of the Australian bush.

It was the beginning of something very special, something that you, as a Bush Heritage supporter, are now part of.

Thanks to you, Bush Heritage has weathered the seasons along the road to today, our 20th anniversary.

I’d like to invite you to celebrate your part in those 20 years. In this newsletter, you’ll see stories of others who love our bush just like you do.”

“These are your stories – the stories of our bush, our creatures and our people, from 20 years of conservation.”

Happy 20th anniversary, Bush Heritage

Bob Brown.



BUSH HERITAGE
AUSTRALIA

Our heart & soul



“Supporting Bush Heritage is my way of helping to ensure that my grandchildren can enjoy the natural environment of Australia, its fauna and flora, as I have come to love it.”

**Margrit Lack, Friend of the Bush
Coochiemudlo Island, Queensland**

Thanks to Margrit and all our wonderful supporters who filled out our survey in July and shared their stories of the Australian bush. Read more of your stories at: www.bushheritage.org.au/supporter-survey.html



Alistair Dermer Reserve Manager

“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for 8 years”

“I still remember the day I first arrived at Ethabuka Reserve with my wife Karen in 2004. We rolled up in our ute and all around us we could see the sparse and stunted spinifex, the coolabah trees, standing with their roots exposed a foot above the earth, where the grazing, the wind and the rain had eroded the soil.

We felt a huge sense of responsibility – we were the first reserve managers at Ethabuka and it was by far the largest property we had ever owned – but also a huge sense of possibility. That was a big step for Bush Heritage.

I’ve always had a connection with the land, but at Ethabuka, the land become our life. Our first daughter, Asha, was born while we were there. She spent the first year of her life absorbing the spirit of Ethabuka. The energy of the desert is with you, all around you. Often at night, under the stars, I felt a presence around me, of the people that had cared for this land before me.

I imagined an old Aboriginal man, his spirit watching me, a custodian of the land.

My life with Bush Heritage has taken me to many places and recently it has brought us back to Ethabuka, after five years away. Now we are a family of five. The kids understand what we are there for – they know Mum and Dad are looking after the plants and animals. Asha learnt to walk in the desert sands of Ethabuka and now our youngest, Zavier, is taking his first steps with his toes in the red dust too.

Now we look around us at Ethabuka and the coolabahs are healthier. The land has seen rain recently, but when the drought comes, as it always does in the Simpson Desert, it will be more resilient. There are honeysuckle in flower and other grevilleia. We used to get excited when we saw a few flowering shrubs at Ethabuka but now there are so many of them they overtake the track. The spinifex seedheads are so tall in places, that they’re higher than the roof of the car.”

Ethabuka Reserve was acquired in 2004 with the assistance of the Australian Government’s National Reserve System program, The Nature Conservancy and Diversicon Environmental Foundation.





Top: Alistair Dermer at Ethabuka
Photograph by Karen Dermer

Above: Coolabahs at Ethabuka Reserve

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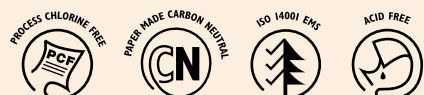
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Ellie Sobey Volunteer at Scottsdale



Top: Ellie Sobey at Scottsdale
Photograph by Matthew Hollingworth

Above: Hooded robin
Photograph by Jiri Lochman
/ Lochman Transparencies

**“I’ve supported
Bush Heritage for
two-and-a-half years”**

“When I was little, my mum gave me a Bush Heritage t-shirt but it wasn’t until I grew older that I came to know what it meant.

The conservation ethos was threaded through my family, so when I was looking for a practical way to put my environmental science studies to use, Bush Heritage was a natural fit.

When I first saw Scottsdale Reserve, I thought Bush Heritage really had their work cut out for them. The valley floor was dominated by weeds and where rabbits had dug their warrens, the ground looked like a moonscape.

I mapped the locations of rabbit warrens on Scottsdale’s upper slopes. This involved covering every square metre on foot to find and plot all the warrens using a GPS – so that others could come back later and treat them. You have to work very slowly, so you see some amazing things. One particular day I was working along a creekline and noticed a hooded robin building a nest. I stopped and watched through my binoculars. The male robin

was perched nearby, keeping guard, as the female flew back and forth to the nest.

Scottsdale is home to a lot of threatened species. Near the old shearing shed you can see small flocks of diamond firetails and hear the calls of stubble quail.

It makes you realise the potential of the place. In the early mornings, a rolling mist can settle on the valley floor. If you’re up high, all you can see are the mountain peaks, the drifting clouds and the slanted, windswept trees.

“I’ll be celebrating the 20th anniversary by getting out there and enjoying it.”

It’s fantastic to return to Scottsdale and see new vegetation beginning to grow over the warrens I worked on last year. It’s the reason I choose Bush Heritage to volunteer for – I know the hours I put in are backed up by a strategic, scientific approach. I’m proud to say that in the last year, rabbit numbers have dropped by 80 per cent, especially since rabbit numbers elsewhere in Australia are exploding as a result of the recent wet years. That keeps me motivated to get out to the reserves again and continue to contribute – I’ll be celebrating the 20th anniversary by getting out there and enjoying it.”



**Douglas Broughton
Friend of the Bush**

“Medicine usually comes in a bottle, but medicine to me is the lovely Australian bush.”

White Beach, Tasmania

Right: Sylvester on Wunambal Gaambera country
Photograph by Peter Morris

Below: Photograph by Annette Ruzicka



Sylvester Mangolomara Partner

“I’ve supported Bush
Heritage for **5 years**”

“I learned about my country from my grandfather, my father and my aunties.

They taught me and my brothers and sisters about dreaming and hunting and burning the land to keep it healthy. My grandfather Wilfred Goonack was our strictest teacher. He used to give me a jab in the guts with his stick and say, “You wanna listen while I’m telling you this story”.

“We don’t want any of these things to leave us, because otherwise we’re lost.”

My people are from Mitchell Plateau, and my brothers and sisters still live up there in the Kalumburu community. When I was young, my family told me the story of the rainbow serpent who burst through the rocks to make Mitchell Falls and the Mitchell River. It’s a special place, it’s got dreaming, but a lot of people try to put things there. We don’t want big roads going through our special places. We don’t want any of these things to leave us, because otherwise we’re lost.

We approached Bush Heritage five years ago because we wanted someone to listen to what we wanted, and to make other people realise how much this country means to us. We wanted someone to help us to take care of our land, so together we made a ten-year Healthy Country Plan.

We’ve now got native title over more than 26 000-square kilometres and an Indigenous Protected Area of over 340 000 hectares of beautiful beaches and gumtree country. Now our special dreaming places are just for conservation. Hopefully once we’re fully set up here, our people will start to come back to their homeland.

These days I show young rangers from the area how to look after their country. I tell them the stories and teach them how to approach the rock art and the burial sites. I got hooked on the stories my grandfather taught me, so I decided this was what I wanted to do.

What we’re doing is taking care of our land and our stories for the next generation, and Bush Heritage is helping us do that. Now we’ve got this protected area, we’re really taking care of our country.”



**Elisabeth Buckley
Friend of the Bush**

“As a child living in suburban Melbourne I was delighted in trips to the country to visit relatives. The bush and the sky above it were sources of dreams for me. What I love about the bush, anywhere in Australia, is its ancientness and stillness, no matter what is going on around. I’m still a city dweller and I can’t survive without that heart beating beside me.”

Beaumaris, Victoria



Photograph by Wayne Lawler / Ecopix

Anna Howard

Friend of the Bush



“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for **1 year**”

“I will never forget the smell of the gum trees, the day we first arrived in Australia in August 1990.

We’d left my beloved UK behind and together with our two-year old son, my husband and I had flown to Melbourne to start a new life.

Even from that very first day, the bush fascinated me. It was so different from what we knew. We expected everything to be barren, like the UK during winter, but we soon realised that gum trees are not deciduous, they’re evergreen.

We hired a car from the airport and the very next day we drove along the Great Ocean Road. We drove towards Johanna Beach and I was absolutely transfixed. The road itself was not so amazing – it was the bush that really got to me. I could not believe how beautiful the gum trees were.

Life was difficult when we first arrived and although I didn’t realise it at the time, I was suffering from depression. I sought out nature for comfort and I remember going for walks, thinking “as long as I can keep looking at these beautiful flowers,

I will get through this”. Then the jacarandas came out, literally overnight. And I saw the green of the snowgums pushing through the whiteness of the snow.

All that time I’d never heard of Bush Heritage, but when a young woman approached me in the street last year and told me about their work, I told her “this is exactly what I’m looking for”. I don’t believe we own the land – I believe that we are its guardians, for the next generation. But I know that’s the way our world works, so if we’re going to preserve the land, we have to own it, which is just what Bush Heritage does. Plus, I thought, if Bob Brown has anything to do with it, I know it’s going to be good.

“I don’t believe we own the land – I believe that we are its guardians, for the next generation.”

I’ve been in Australia for 21 years and I understand the bush now. I love its uniqueness and the way the plants and animals have learnt to survive. I’ve learnt to appreciate the quality of the light, and the fact that when you move away from the city lights and you see the Milky Way in the night sky, you know you’re a long, long way from anywhere.”

Thank you
for 20 years
of conservation



20 years of Bush Heritage

Bush Heritage reserves and partnerships

June 2011 - 34th reserve purchased

The John Colahan Griffin Nature Reserve, a 96-hectare property in central Victoria, becomes Bush Heritage's newest and 34th reserve, thanks to a generous bequest.



Photograph by Matthew Newton

- Bush Heritage anchor regions ■
- Bush Heritage partnerships ■
- Bush Heritage reserves ●



Our first 20 years

11 October 1991

The Australian Bush Heritage Fund is founded, a year after Bob Brown purchased and saved two bush blocks destined for woodchips.
Liffey Reserve, Tasmania



1993

Bush Heritage elevates its profile from local to national with the purchase of **Fan Palm Reserve, Queensland**.



1998

Bush Heritage's role as a conservation group that complements the national parks system is endorsed by the extension of the federal government's National Reserve System to non-government organisations like Bush Heritage.

1999

Bush Heritage first explores the conservation potential of partnerships with other landowners, through its role as a founding partner in **Gondwana Link, Western Australia**.

2001

Purchase of Carnarvon Station Reserve, Queensland. **(see boxed text above)**



2001 - Carnarvon Station Reserve purchased

Bush Heritage solidifies its national approach to conservation with the purchase of Carnarvon Station Reserve, its first large-scale property. The purchase brings our reserve portfolio to a total of 12 and increases our reserve estate thirty-fold to 61 345 hectares. The organisation's first full-time reserve managers arrive at Carnarvon.

*Right: Carnarvon Station Reserve
Photograph by Wayne Lawler / Ecopix*



2004 - Bidjara partnership

Bush Heritage initiates its first partnership with indigenous landowners, the Bidjara people at Carnarvon Station Reserve, recognising the role of traditional owners in conservation. The Bidjara people dance on their traditional lands for the first time in decades.



The Bidjara dance group, inspired by founders Rusty and Lionel Fraser, dance a welcome ceremony, marking a return to their traditional homelands at Carnarvon Station Reserve in 2004.

Photograph by Kent Womack

Thank you

None of this would have been possible without Bush Heritage's donors and partners. Your visionary and steadfast support has ensured that almost a million hectares of our prime bush are now protected, that endangered species have a safe home and that these priceless resources will not be lost to future generations.

2004

Partnership with the Bidjara people at Carnarvon Station Reserve, Queensland. **(see boxed text above)**

2005

Bush Heritage outlines its strategic approach to conservation through "Anchors in the Landscape", a strategy which prioritises specific "anchor" regions for protection.

Bush Heritage opens its head office in **Melbourne** with a national staff of 15 employees, including 4 on-site reserve managers and 2 on-ground scientists, with 17 reserves and 375 118 hectares under its management. The organisation is renamed Bush Heritage Australia in 2006.

2006

Bush Heritage sets out its vision of protecting 1% of Australia by 2025.



July 2011

Bush Heritage signs a ten-year agreement with the Wunambal Gaambera people in the remote Kimberley region, a ground-breaking partnership for Australian conservation.

11 October 2011

Bush Heritage Australia celebrates its 20th anniversary with a staff of 76 employees, an operating budget of more than \$10 million and a portfolio of 34 reserves which protect 947 493 hectares.



Doug Humann CEO of Bush Heritage

Photograph by Bec Walton

Below: Black striped wallaby
Photograph by Wayne Lawler



“There I was, standing on the street with the cheque in my hand, unable to comprehend what had just happened.”

“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for 14 years”

“There are some moments I will remember all my life: meeting my wife Jill for the first time; the birth of our three children; and star-filled nights under a big Australian sky. Alongside those memories is a July night at a Brunswick cafe in 1999, when one woman changed the future of Bush Heritage forever.

I’d flown from Hobart to meet with this young woman, who was interested in supporting our work. We met in Smith Street, drinking coffee in the waning hours of a winter’s evening.

We talked for a while and then she reached into her bag and wrote a cheque. She told me she didn’t mind what Bush Heritage did with it, but she gave it in the hope that it would help us to become an organisation more than it was that day. She wanted her donation to remain anonymous and she didn’t much want to be thanked. I looked down at the cheque. It was for 1.3 million dollars.

I was completely and utterly taken away. At the time, Bush Heritage was a small organisation struggling in a year-by-year existence. We owned less than 3000

hectares, had four staff and were operating on a shoestring budget. The woman got on her bicycle and rode off down the hill. There I was, standing on the street with the cheque in my hand, unable to comprehend what had just happened.

The gift was transformational for Bush Heritage. It allowed us to purchase Carnarvon Station Reserve, a 60 000-hectare property in central Queensland, which until then was beyond our wildest dreams and imaginations. Until then, we had one staff member responsible for property assessments and land management of our then nine reserves. Now we had the resources to employ one person, full-time, just to manage this vast reserve.

Carnarvon holds a special place in my heart. So many different images come to mind when I think of it: the different shades of green; the chatter of birds and the dancing brolga; the glow of the grasslands as the sun sets and the dingoes start to howl. Every time I visit Carnarvon, I reflect on the people who’ve helped to make it and Bush Heritage what we are today – our supporters, our staff and volunteers, and our partners.”

Carnarvon Station Reserve was acquired in 2001 with the assistance of the Australian Government’s National Reserve System program.



Elizabeth George Supporter

Photograph by Frances Andrijich
Right: *Verticordia x eurardyensis*
Photograph by Elizabeth Lescheid

“Verticordias come in almost every colour.”



“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for 20 years”

“I remember visiting Liffey Falls as a child – what a special place that valley is.

Years later, I heard about Bob Brown trying to buy the bush blocks nearby, to save them from the loggers. I thought I would try to help. I couldn’t bear the thought of that beautiful area being lost. I always had a love for nature, which comes from my childhood.

Later in my life, my connection with Bush Heritage found a new thread. I had moved to Western Australia, where I was introduced to a beautiful, delicate-looking flower called verticordia, or featherflower as it is known. Verticordias come in almost every colour. I became so fascinated by their beauty and diversity that I spent ten years compiling a reference collection about them, with the help of more than 250 other volunteers, and wrote a book. I also helped to instigate the Wildflower Society of WA’s flora and vegetation survey at Eurardy, a comprehensive field herbarium which is still referenced regularly today.

In 1992, I had a call from Margaret and Bruce Quicke, who owned Eurardy Station

at the time, asking me to help identify an unusually maroon-magenta coloured verticordia. The flower was new and intriguing. It was half way between two very different species. It was given species rank and named verticordia x eurardyensis. I was blown away by the wildflowers at Eurardy.

Margaret and Bruce had long ago decided not to crop the area because of the beautiful garden of flowers and bushland that had regenerated there, still known today as Margaret’s Garden. Over the years we made several trips to see how the verticordias were surviving.

When Margaret and her family decided to sell Eurardy, I heard some potential buyers wanted to run horses or goats on it. Needless to say, I was not thrilled about that, so I rang Bush Heritage and asked if they could be interested in buying it.

I am so pleased Eurardy has been saved. I think Bush Heritage has succeeded in reaching their 20-year anniversary because of the properties they’ve chosen and the way they have managed them. I’ve been very privileged to see the bushland in good times and bad. It has been a wonderful adventure.”

Eurardy Reserve was acquired in 2005 with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy.



**Jenny Wightman
Friend of the Bush**

“I identify with the patience and courage this land symbolises, and draw strength from its enduring vitality and beauty. I am privileged to be its custodian. I believe similar feelings lie behind the efforts of Bush Heritage people to protect as much as possible of our unique Australian heritage, a heritage which gives us gifts beyond price.”

Kingston Park, South Australia

Simon McKeon Australian of the Year

“I’ve seen that everyone involved in the organisation is striving towards a big goal, but their decisions are not made hastily.”



Photograph by Annette Ruzicka

Top right: Simon at Mornington Peninsula

Photograph by Bec Walton

**Thank you
for 20 years
of conservation**



“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for 5 years”

“I’d never heard of Bush Heritage until one day in the early '90s when I took a flight to Perth and happened to sit next to Doug Humann. When I asked Doug what he did, he told me about this new organisation he was leading, called Bush Heritage. They had a vision of the Australian people taking part in conservation by helping to buy back the bush. I got it immediately and loved the idea, but I did think to myself, “Good luck though!”

About ten years later our paths crossed again. I saw how far he and his organisation had come towards that vision, which was incredible. He’d brought together a wealth of good people and had built up an organisation that had serious hectares under its management right throughout Australia.

I’ve always thought big business should look to the passion that people in the not-for-profit sector have for their work – the kind of passion I’ve seen in Bush Heritage staff and volunteers.

I’ve seen that everyone involved in the organisation is striving towards a big goal, but their decisions are not made hastily. The planning is done from a solid basis of knowledge.

I work with a lot of organisations that deal with poverty, and I think Bush Heritage deals with that too. I have a very broad definition of poverty. I think if we don’t have wild places, where land is dominated by nature, then we’re impoverished.

We all need those kinds of places. For me it’s the Mornington Peninsula, a beautiful piece of land that separates Port Phillip from the ocean. It’s only about an hour from Melbourne. After I’ve been there I feel reinvigorated, ready to get back to the city grind.

The days when governments handed over large tracts of land for the public or for conservation are over. What Bush Heritage is doing, especially in this era, is very significant. Australians are incredibly well served by the fact that Bush Heritage has connected people who’ve been willing to donate very big sums with the machine in Bush Heritage that identifies, purchases and manages land, while planning for the future. That’s an amazing achievement.”



*Apsley River at South Esk Pine Reserve
Photograph by Wayne Lawler*

Joan Anderson Friend of the Bush

“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for **20 years**”

“I visited South Esk Pine Reserve just the once, in 2004. I remember those lovely, South Esk pine trees hanging over the river. I suppose eventually the river feeds out into the sea, near the Freycinet coastline. It’s such a lovely little place.

It’s the kind of place where my daughter would have been very comfortable. Rosslyn loved the east coast of Tasmania. She died when she was nineteen, in a rafting accident on the Denison River, while taking part in the Franklin campaign. They were taking photographs of the damage that had already been done to the forests.

She died protecting what she loved, what she believed in. It was everything to her.

The idea just came to us, to offer a memorial gift to Bush Heritage, to buy the reserve in Rosslyn’s memory and save it forever. We just decided that was what we ought to do. It’s a continuing, living thing that will be there for future generations. That’s what she would have wanted.

Rosslyn had been studying environmental science in Armidale, New South Wales, but she decided to transfer to university in Tasmania, so she could be totally dedicated to keeping the Franklin flowing free. I used to get letters, really great letters from her, about how many tiger snakes she had seen that day and where they had to sleep, and how wet it was. It was worrying for a mother to hear that.

The world is a worse place without her. I would have been interested to see how far she could have gone, working to protect what she believed in. She would have been a formidable protector of the environment.

I support all sorts of conservation organisations, but Bush Heritage was the only one buying pieces of land. They have the experience to know what land to buy and how to look after it. We were comfortable trusting in Bush Heritage.

I hope to get back there to the reserve one of these days. But I don’t need to go there to know what a special place it is. Just the fact that it’s there is very special to me. It gives me a sense of peace, of satisfaction. It’s the perfect way to remember Rosslyn.”



Matt Appleby by Liffey River
Photograph by Peter Morris

Matt Appleby

Ecologist

“I’ve supported Bush Heritage for **5 years**”

“As a botanist, I’m amazed by the diversity at Charles Darwin and Eurardy reserves. In one small area there are so many different plant species. Then you walk ten metres further and you’ve got another dozen species. They’re both stunning places – the reserve managers would kill me if I chose one over the other!

When you drive past nearby pastoral properties you see so much bare ground. But when you come onto our places and look under the york gums, you see greenery and carpets of flowers. It’s overwhelming this time of year – huge areas of bold pinks, whites, yellows and blues all mixed together.

Recently I sat down and went through the first five years of surveys and research done on Eurardy to see how we were going. The bird life has increased dramatically, which is a great indicator of how the reserve is improving. The activity of honeyeaters has nearly doubled right across the reserve.

In the heathlands at Eurardy and Charles Darwin, waxflowers, leschenaultias and grevillea are flourishing. The wildflower display this year is one of the best ever following good rains over summer and into winter. At Charles Darwin, we’re already seeing honey-myrtles bouncing back after the extremely dry weather last year, and in the acacia shrublands, there is an impressive display of everlastings and small herbs.

It’s a great thing to be able to say, “Yes, we’re doing well.” It’s our supporters who help us get these results – our donors and our volunteers, who help with the painstaking work by hand. I think we’ve reached this 20th anniversary year because so many people continue to support us, in whatever way they can.”

“The bird life has increased dramatically, which is a great indicator of how the reserve is improving.”



Tim Mulligan
Supporter

“It was Bob Brown’s purchase of the Liffey blocks, at much personal expense that inspired me to want to help. I wrote to Bob offering an interest-free loan of several thousand dollars, which rolled over to Bush Heritage when it began. The financial arrangement with Bob, strangers as we were, was in the form of two handwritten letters and without security. It was nonetheless entirely secure through honour.”



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