

BUSH HERITAGE NEWS

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The Barnetts' bush memory

A Black Saturday tragedy that unfolded in the Victorian bush has inspired a remarkable legacy, your newest addition to Bush Heritage's reserves.

Jenny and John Barnett's love of nature drove their commitment to their careers, their life as a couple and the legacy they wished to leave behind. It was this shared vision for both their lives and deaths that has led to the establishment of Bush Heritage's newest addition to our suite of reserves, near Wedderburn in central Victoria.

On September 21, family and friends of the couple gathered on the reserve's low-lying slopes of grassy woodland to celebrate its christening as the Barnett Block. The 190-hectare property, which was purchased in May, thanks to the Barnetts' joint bequest to Bush Heritage and Trust for Nature, will be combined with our neighbouring Nardoo Hills properties to create a 1000-hectare collection of reserves.

Doug Humann, a close friend of the couple and the executor of their estate, says it's a fitting tribute to a couple whose abiding love for the Australian bush was matched by a quiet determination and dedication to protect the environment and its creatures.

"A fitting tribute to a couple whose abiding love for the Australian bush was matched by a quiet determination and dedication..."

Doug Humann, close friend

Above: John and Jenny Barnett's Black Saturday legacy now protects rare woodlands in Central Victoria, in memory of a couple devoted to conservation.

Photograph by Peter Morris



BUSH HERITAGE
AUSTRALIA

Our heart & soul



The Barnetts, passionate Bush Heritage supporters, like you

“Jenny really liked the fact that through Bush Heritage they could get property into the conservation state,” says Doug. “It’s a wonderful thing that, thanks to the Barnetts and Bush Heritage’s many other passionate supporters across Australia, there will be another bit of protected bush, which will carry their name into the future and recognise their contribution, their commitment and their passion for nature conservation.”

Jenny worked for more than 25 years as a researcher for Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA), where she was known for her tireless campaigning and her extensive knowledge. She was also known for her quiet but pointed way of getting her message across.

“Jenny dug her heels in when she needed to but had a lovely gentle side that we saw with the T-shirts she painted with beautiful designs of plants and animals,” says Amanda Martin, a former VNPA executive director.

John worked for more than 30 years at Melbourne University’s Animal Welfare Science Centre, where the director, Paul Hemsworth, has lauded him for his “outstanding scientific efforts” in animal welfare.

The couple was no less dedicated on their days off. For 35 years, the two zoologists volunteered for the Mammal Survey Group of Victoria and conducted a number of mammal surveys on Nardoo Hills reserves.

Much of their spare time was also spent on their property at Steels Creek, where they planned to retire. Tragically, while the Barnetts saw their life and legacy in the Australian bush, they did not foresee that their death would be there too.

On 7 February 2009, Jenny and John perished in their Steels Creek home during the Black Saturday bushfires.

It is perhaps fitting that the purchase of the Barnett Block will now allow Bush Heritage to build firebreaks that will protect the entire Nardoo Hills reserves from bushfires approaching from the west.

Rare woodlands now protected

Jeroen van Veen, Bush Heritage’s Regional Reserve Manager, Victoria, says the block not only extends our conservation of threatened grassy woodland habitats at Nardoo Hills but it also provides a home for some rare plains woodland – the first of its kind in Bush Heritage’s portfolio of reserves.

“Plains woodland is very rare these days, so it is officially endangered as a vegetation community under the state of Victoria legislation,” says Jeroen.

Buloke trees are a feature of this community and, together with a sentinel of grey box and yellow gum trees lining the Barnett Block creek, they will provide a home for declining woodland birds such as the hooded robin, painted buttonquail, the chestnut-rumped thornbill and the endangered swift parrot.

According to Jeroen, the sheer size of the combined Nardoo Hills reserves will also lend greater weight to our conservation work in the area. “It means landholders pay attention to what we are doing and you can influence land management decisions that are made elsewhere in the district: on a council level and on a fire-management level,” he says.

Gerard O’Neill, Bush Heritage CEO, says the Barnetts have left behind them a legacy to the growing conservation network of Central Victoria. “Their contribution joins with the efforts of so many supporters and partners who love and help to care for the bush in this treasured part of Australia.”

For more about the Barnett Block, visit www.bushheritage.org.au/barnett-legacy



Bush Heritage Australia gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution of the R E Ross Trust, Judith Eardley Save Wildlife Association, the Australian Government’s National Reserve System Programme, the Estate of John and Jenny Barnett and Trust for Nature (Victoria).

Top: John and Jenny Barnett’s Black Saturday legacy now protects rare woodlands in Central Victoria, in memory of a couple devoted to conservation.

Above: Male rufous songlark, thirsty swamp wallaby, tussock moth

Photographs by Peter Morris, tussock moth and thirsty swamp wallaby by Jeroen van Veen



“Scottsdale is a property where on-ground conservation efforts can be shared and discussed, so it’s like a learning hub.”

Photograph by Graeme Chapman

Bush Heritage gratefully acknowledges Greening Australia and the Federal Government’s Caring for our Country and Biodiversity Fund schemes for their support of the Scottsdale restoration project. This project is supported through a generous private donation.

Scottsdale Reserve was purchased with the assistance of the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, David Rickards in memory of Helen Rickards, the Australian Government under the Natural Heritage Trust’s National Reserve System Programme.

A safe haven for the diamond firetail

New hope for declining woodland birds like the diamond firetail is emerging at your Scottsdale Reserve, thanks to Bush Heritage supporters like you, who are getting behind a visionary restoration project.

If you stand very still in the grassy woodlands on Scottsdale Reserve, you might get lucky enough to spot a diamond firetail. First, the brilliant crimson flash of the bird’s rump will catch your eye. Then you might stop to admire the black band across its face and neck, and white spots – or diamonds – that dot its black flanks.

This exquisite bird is now listed as vulnerable throughout New South Wales, but you, our supporters, are helping the diamond firetail and other declining woodland birds to recover and thrive through a major restoration project at Scottsdale. Bush Heritage, in partnership with Greening Australia, is transforming 300 hectares of cleared, weed-infested land back into the eucalypt grassy woodlands and native grasses that once covered the region.

As well as protecting endangered grassy box gum woodlands and temperate grasslands, Scottsdale Reserve is also part of the Kosciuszko to Coast (K2C) partnership, which brings landholders in the region together in a joint effort to conserve the landscape and its native species.

Lauren van Dyke, K2C Facilitator, has been involved with the K2C partnership for seven years, providing Bush Heritage with valuable support, and has witnessed

significant changes to the conservation network around Scottsdale during that time. She sees restoration efforts on Scottsdale as having widespread conservation outcomes across the region, not only for reconnecting bushland, but also for sharing vital conservation techniques. “Scottsdale is a property where on-ground conservation efforts can be shared and discussed, so it’s like a learning hub,” says Lauren.

In particular, if our efforts to reduce the invasive weed African lovegrass are successful, Lauren believes many landholders will use some of the techniques on Scottsdale to suppress the weed on their own land. African lovegrass is a major challenge to conservation and threatens the survival of vulnerable birds like the diamond firetail.

According to Bush Heritage ecologist Dr Matt Appeleby, firetails like to feed on native tussock grasses, like wallaby and kangaroo grass, in an open woodland scattered with a few shrubs. They prefer an open ground layer where they can forage for seeds and insects in the spaces between the tussock grasses and they use the grass to build their nests. When threatened by predators such as birds of prey, they seek refuge in shrubs, so it’s handy if there are a few close by. African lovegrass however, effectively renders the habitat unusable for firetails and many other ground-foraging birds.

Matt expects that planting an over-storey of eucalypts and shrubs will not only restore bushland but also outcompete the weed.

African lovegrass appears unable to grow under the canopy of yellow box trees, so it is expected that by increasing the density of yellow box, we will eventually exclude African lovegrass as well.

“The restoration work will benefit a wide range of birds,” says Matt, “– from foliage feeders within the first five years, to ground foragers like the diamond firetail in the next ten to fifteen years, and then to canopy feeders beyond that. Finally, in 100 to 150 years, when the eucalypts have grown into mature trees and begin to form hollows, hollow-dependent birds such as the threatened brown treecreeper will find a home for their nests.”

Your support means Bush Heritage can provide a safe haven for birds far into the future. For the diamond firetail, this is very welcome news indeed.

Help bring the bush back to health

Your support will help us fight African lovegrass, reduce pests and plant thousands of trees on Scottsdale Reserve. It will also support our work at your Monjebup North Reserve in WA, where our restoration project aims to restore 400 ha of habitat for native fauna, at the cost of \$2000 per hectare. **Please donate today and help bring the bush back to health.** www.bushheritage.org.au/donate

Around your reserves in 90 days

Your support makes a difference in so many ways. We take a look at what's been happening at your reserves around Australia – all made possible thanks to you.

Thanks for ten years at Charles Darwin Reserve

Ten years ago, Chris Darwin made a bold commitment to the Australian bush when he helped Bush Heritage purchase Charles Darwin Reserve, a 68,000-hectare property in one of the world's most biologically diverse regions, WA's Southwest Botanical Province. On 5 October, supporters and local community members gathered to celebrate the ten-year anniversary. Visitors toured the property, learning from Bush Heritage ecologists about the reserve's conservation achievements, made possible by supporters like you.

The anniversary also brought together landscape farmers, rural identities and scientists such as the University of Tasmania's Professor Ted Lefroy and CSIRO's Dean Revell, to discuss landscape management and rural renewal. Visitors also enjoyed bush poetry, face-painting and local music.

Charles Darwin Reserve's conservation achievements are reflected in a ten-year report, which shows how the reserve has developed into a healthier landscape, with an increase in species recorded on the property including the nationally vulnerable malleefowl.

For more about the Charles Darwin Reserve ten-year anniversary and report, visit

www.bushheritage.org.au/charles-darwin-10th-anniversary



Photograph by Jiri and Marie Lochman



Capital city



Bush Heritage reserve



Bush Heritage reserve actively engaged with traditional owners



Bush Heritage partnership



Greenhood robust growing strong

There could be no higher accolade for your conservation achievements at Nardoo Hills reserves than the triumphant comeback of the robust greenhood orchid. The orchid, which had not been seen for 50 years and declared extinct in 1999, was first spotted on Nardoo in 2009. And now, a recent survey by the Australasian Native Orchid Society has revealed that the orchid population is growing strong and spreading throughout the reserve, where your support has helped us to ensure its survival by eliminating the wheel cactus, stopping erosion and restoring ground cover. "The discovery of more orchids highlights that our conservation work is on track," says Jeroen. The addition of the new Barnett Block (see cover story) extends the area on which such conservation work will be carried out and provides increased habitat for the orchid.

Photograph by Jeroen van Veen





Your support at work at Naree Station

Your support for the protection of Naree Station has kept reserve managers David and Sue Akers busy during their first six months on the north-west NSW reserve. One early priority is renewing and upgrading the property's 65 kilometres of boundary fencing, to control the movement of stock and feral goats. David and Sue engaged traditional owners the Budjiti people to survey fence lines before any fencing work begins. "Naree has abundant wetlands ranging from small playa lakes to vast floodplains and these are important to the Budjiti people," says David. "Budjiti occupation sites and artefacts are abundant, especially on country adjacent to wetland areas." Budjiti elders spent a week identifying sites and protecting artefacts used by their ancestors, before giving David and Sue the nod to proceed.



Photograph by David Akers

Your first-ever World Heritage listed reserves

Reach for the champers and raise your glass... as a Bush Heritage supporter we welcome you to celebrate the granting of the highest level of environmental protection for two Bush Heritage reserves, the Liffey River and Coalmine Creek reserves in Tasmania! In August, the then-federal government announced the inclusion of these two founding reserves, as an extension of the existing World Heritage area. The purchase of these two reserves for conservation, in 1991, was made possible by the passion of our founder Bob Brown and the many Australians who supported his vision by donating towards the purchase. The reserves provide habitat for species like the spot-tailed quoll, grey goshawk and Tasmanian devil.

Photograph by Wayne Lawler / Ecopix





Photograph by Peter Morris

Sylvester Mangolamara: Wunambal Warrior

Bush Heritage marks the passing of Wunambal Gaambera elder Sylvester Mangolamara, a man who inspired his people and left a legacy for their traditional lands.

During the silence of an August Kalumburu morning, a solitary broлга appeared near the mourners who had gathered to pay their affectionate respects to Sylvester. The broлга was well known to the gathering, as ‘Lanky’, a bird that Sylvester had adopted as a chick years earlier. During the service Lanky approached, circled the grave, then left.

“It was a memory I think will stay with most who were there that morning,” says Tom Vigilante, Wunambal Gaambera Healthy Country Manager, supported by Bush Heritage, who worked with Sylvester and his people.

Sylvester was not only a director and cultural advisor for the Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporation (WGAC), but an inspiration to many. Sylvester offered his people leadership, inspiring them to look after the culture and country that means so much to them and to join forces with Bush Heritage and its supporters.

“We called Sylvester our Wunambal Warrior – he knew a lot about his law and culture and was out there teaching it to other people. He loved what he was doing for his people and country,” says Neil Waina, Uunguu Head Ranger, who works with a team of Uunguu Rangers responsible for caring for Wunambal Gaambera country.

That country is also known as *uunguu* – our living home – in the local language. It covers a vast 2.5 million hectares of diverse land and sea country, including islands, and encompasses spectacular scenery like Punamii-Uunpuu (Mitchell Falls) and extensive rock art galleries in remote Far North Kimberley, Western Australia.

Since 2006 your support has helped Bush Heritage work with the Wunambal Gaambera people to look after these precious ancient lands, which are now listed in Australia’s National Reserve system as the Uunguu Indigenous Protected Area. Sylvester was a passionate traditional owner of these lands for many years. In 2006, he became the first Head Ranger of the Uunguu Rangers, a new team established to monitor, manage and maintain the Wunambal Gaambera people’s traditional lands as part of our Healthy Country Partnership. The rangers are an essential part of the care of these lands today.

“Sylvester knew everything there is to know about the country and he was teaching everyone about their country. He told us whose country belonged to who and who speaks for that area,” continues Neil.

“He worked hard to leave his legacy for future generations,” says Bevan Stott, CEO of the WGAC. “He was a main writer of the Uunguu Plants and Animals book, which records traditional knowledge of important plant and animal species together with their names in Wunambal Gaambera languages and will be a great resource for future generations.”



“We called Sylvester our Wunambal Warrior... he loved what he was doing for his people and country.”

Neil Waina, Uunguu Head Ranger.

Bush Heritage CEO, Gerard O’Neill, remembers Sylvester’s charismatic nature. “Sylvester’s leadership has meant Wunambal Gaambera and Bush Heritage now have a solid partnership: a true relationship,” he says. “We will miss him and know that his enduring legacy lights our way forward.”

Above: Boab tree, Wunambal Gaambera country
Photograph by Annette Ruzicka



Left: Regional Reserve Manager Jeroen van Veen at the newest addition to your Nardoo Hills reserves, the Barnett Block in Central Victoria. www.bushheritage.org.au/barnett-legacy
Photograph by Peter Morris

Below: Flowering yellowgum at the Barnett Block
Photograph by Jeroen van Veen



Honouring an exceptional contribution: Phillip Toyne



Bush Heritage warmly acknowledges newly awarded honorary Bush Heritage life member, Phillip Toyne.

Life membership is an honour awarded by Bush Heritage to individuals who have made exceptional contributions toward our work protecting Australia's natural heritage.

Bush Heritage CEO, Gerard O'Neill, thanks Phillip for his inspirational leadership. "Phillip has made an exceptional contribution to Bush Heritage, not only during his time as President, from 2001 to 2009, but in his ongoing support of Bush Heritage. Phillip has made an incredible impact on the conservation and indigenous sectors, and I'm sure that our many supporters will join me and extend our personal thanks to him for his remarkable contribution."

Phillip becomes only the fourth Bush Heritage life member, joining founder Bob Brown, early and instrumental supporter Judy Henderson and volunteer ranger Don Royal.

www.bushheritage.org.au/life-members

Thank you

Bush Heritage thanks the many supporters that have donated in honour of friends or family members. A small selection of recent donations is below.

In memoriam

Friends and family donated in memory of Joye Maddison. We received a number of donations in memory of the late Moira Whiteside. Fiona Cooke and Chris Maron donated in memory of Hellen Cooke. Jane Paterson and Joan Bryan donated in memory of Coeli Geefhuysen. Friends and family donated in memory of Olivia Menz.

In celebration

Friends and family celebrated the wedding of Kristin Letts and Cameron Brown with a gift to Bush Heritage. Jenny Tyrrell donated in celebration of Fran Johnsons' birthday. Deborah and Michael Lehmann and Alpers celebrated Geoffrey Shellam's birthday with a donation, and Marelle Aumend donated for James Foggart's birthday.

Bequests

The Estate of John Frederick Turner, The Estate of Mary Griffith, The Estate of Heather Fairlie Gulline, The Estate of Douglas James Western

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