

BUSH HERITAGE NEWS

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Managing a summer scorcher

*Prescribed burning on Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld.
Photograph by Emma Burgess*

Bushfires during the long hot summer are an expected part of land management in Australia. This summer, on Carnarvon Station Reserve in Queensland, wildfires burnt for several weeks. Changing climatic conditions are making fire planning and preparation, to handle such events, more important than ever.

When dry storms and lightning strikes led to wildfire on Carnarvon Station Reserve, Manager Chris Wilson sprang into action, joining colleagues, members of the Rural Fire Brigade, neighbours and teams from adjacent National Parks to deal with it.

The fire started in grasslands, and was soon crowning (burning up into tree canopies) to the south of the reserve.

Working around the clock they carried out back burns and upgraded firebreaks to contain the spreading flames.

“As the weather conditions are so intense, back burns have to start at midnight with teams working through until the early hours,” says Executive Manager North, Rob Murphy, who fills in while Chris has a much-deserved rest. “Those are the coolest times and therefore the safest and most effective times to burn.”

Carnarvon Station abuts Queensland’s spectacular Carnarvon National Park. The reserve’s sandstone hills, narrow valley floors and high escarpments create a dramatic setting that’s home to hundreds of animal and plant species.

Some, such as the northern quoll, are nationally threatened and sensitive to fires that could remove their shelter of low shrubs and fallen logs, as well as interrupt their food supply.

Continued on page 3

“At Carnarvon we’ve had fires on every point of the compass – north, south, east, west – over the past month.”

Rob Murphy, Executive Manager North, Carnarvon Station Reserve



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AUSTRALIA

Right: Woodlands, Carnarvon Station Reserve.

Photograph by Cathy Zwick

Below: Gerard O'Neill, CEO.

Photograph by Peter Morris



From the CEO

Out on the reserves fire always plays a role over the warmer months, especially in the south. So far our preparation and planned burning strategies are working. The expertise of our Reserve Managers and science staff has either extinguished bushfires or used fire to enhance ecological conditions for priority habitats and species.

This is skilled work requiring a strong commitment to safety. We specialise in working with volunteer fire services, station owners, and traditional owners to get the best possible outcome from any fire situation.

Our responses to wildfires usually involve working closely with neighbours. Chris Wilson, Reserve Manager at Carnarvon and Thornton Kerr, Field Officer, have been tackling a number of fires with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Rangers and Station Managers. Fires have burnt for nearly a month in the hills, though recent rains are helping suppress their intensity and we expect a good result.

Such collaborations, whether written down or sealed with a handshake are part of the way we operate. By working together, we are building conservation into communities as a natural part of the Australian landscape.

Speaking of partnerships, I am pleased to say we have extended a key partnership with the Warddeken Aboriginal Land Management in west Arnhem Land recently. The agreement sees us supporting conservation work on the Arnhem Land plateau.

The escarpment is home to the white-throated grasswren, short-eared rock wallaby, black wallaroo, giant cave geckos and diadem horseshoe bats along with many endemic or vulnerable threatened species. Feral cats and unplanned fires are key issues.

We are working with the Warddeken traditional owner group and others such as The Nature Conservancy, The Pew Environment Group, Northern Territory Government, NAILSMA and Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, among others, to secure this priceless heritage.

Another partnership with Balkanu Land Development Corporation on Cape York is featured, alongside the Warddeken agreement, on page 10. These are among 11 established or emerging partnerships with Aboriginal people across the country.

Working together in this way is vital in order to be relevant and influential in the great challenges of protecting Australia's priceless natural heritage.

All this, of course, is not possible without your support. Through you we are making a difference and I see that in the 'reserve scorecards' we produce to report on ecological conditions. They provide a great insight into our work. However, as Chris Wilson and the team know, we have to be vigilant. The next challenge may be just over the hill.

Cheers,
Gerard O'Neill, CEO

Bush Heritage Australia

Who we are

Bush Heritage Australia is a leading conservation organisation, protecting millions of hectares of ecologically important land for the benefit of nature and all Australians.

Why we're successful

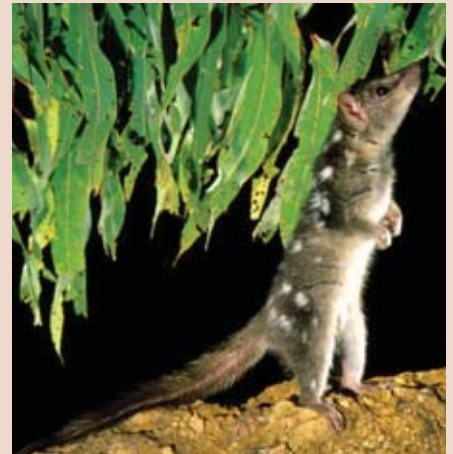
It's **our way of working** that makes Bush Heritage Australia so successful – and makes us optimistic that we can expand our great conservation work to meet the challenges ahead:

- We pursue **non-confrontational, pragmatic solutions** to conservation challenges.
- We work closely with our neighbours and local communities to **share the outcomes and knowledge** gained for the benefit of all.
- Everything we do is built on **good science** – aided by our staff ecologists and science partners.
- We have more than 20,000 (and growing) **committed supporters** who enable us to work on a scale that matters and to implement solutions that endure.
- **We partner** with Aboriginal communities, other land owners, non-profits, businesses and governments, because we know that by **working together** we can achieve so much more.
- **We invest in the land**, in our partnerships and in our growing number of supporters. Our mission is **for the benefit of all Australians, forever.**



Left: Sunset, Carnarvon Station Reserve.
Photograph by Wayne Lawler / Ecopix

Below: The threatened northern quoll is sensitive to fires.
Photograph by Jean-Paul Ferrero



Continued from cover

Planning for wildfires

So far the intensity of the main blaze has been reduced by patches of land with recent burn histories – including some burnt in a similar 2013 wildfire – which wouldn't easily burn again. As Ecologist Murray Haseler explains, evaluations of the 2013 fire confirmed that our best defence is a mosaic of controlled burns conducted over many years.

“These strategically reduce fuel in priority areas, and greatly reduce the impact of unplanned fires,” he says.

Like any reserve, Carnarvon has a diversity of vegetation types, which all respond differently to fire and climatic conditions. Careful planning goes into recording rainfall and temperature, monitoring vegetation growth and mapping the fire history of the area to feed into controlled burn planning.

“Fire sensitive vegetation, such as brigalow, vine scrub, belah and lancewood, mostly occurs in small patches, often within natural fire barriers, such as rocky areas,” explains Murray. “Their dense canopies provide some protection by naturally preventing the growth of ground-level fuel.”

“It's the open grasslands and grassy woodlands that need to be most intensely managed by controlled burns,” he says. “They also have the highest density and diversity of small mammals that respond to changes in rainfall, temperature and vegetation. Controlled burning removes cover and biomass (grass), meaning the animals must move to find food and shelter. However, cool burns also promote growth so they return following increases in edible biomass.”

“We burn when there's good soil moisture, low temperatures and higher humidity,” says Rob. “This enables us to create a mosaic effect with various burn histories and reduced fuel loads that can help to slow and decrease the intensity of any wildfire that does alight through there again.”

The cooler months are also a time for preparing and maintaining firebreaks and access roads, and ensuring equipment and safety plans are up-to-date in preparation for what can be long episodes working with wildfires over summer.

A 2013 report by the recently formed Climate Council (formerly the Climate Commission) titled *Be Prepared: Climate Change and the Australian Bushfire Threat*, outlines some of the factors working against land managers. It reports that climate change is making hot days hotter and heatwaves longer and more frequent, reducing the opportunity for controlled burns.

The report suggests that Australia will experience an increase in the number of days with extreme fire ratings and that prescribed burning activities in some areas will need to increase two- to three-fold to counteract increased fire activity.

“At Carnarvon we've had fires on every point of the compass – north, south, east, west – over the past month,” says Rob. “There have been more lightning strikes since the first, and fires are burning in the neighbouring properties and the National Park, so we're helping out with those too.”

“Carnarvon is quite amazing country,” he adds. “It's very rugged and broken, which means it's fairly inaccessible. When fire gets up into the high country it can kick around for weeks on end.”

At the time of writing some significant recent rains had fallen and it looks like we've avoided any significant damage to the ecology on the reserve.

“There are no guarantees with any fire. You need a bit of luck as well as careful planning,” says Rob. “But these wildfire events have become more frequent and intense over the past ten years, so we really need to make sure we're as well prepared and resourced as we can be.”

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



We couldn't do it without you

Being adequately prepared for ongoing fire management is an expensive but essential part of managing your reserves. That's why we continue to need your support – donate today: www.bushheritage.org.au/donate

*Above: A dingo pup hunts crickets after a controlled burn.
Photograph by Emma Burgess*



Left: The black-chinned honeyeater has been found in declining numbers on Carnarvon Station. Photograph by Wayne Lawler / Ecopix

Below: Emma Burgess at Carnarvon Station Reserve. Photograph by Donna Oliver



Mosaic burning research

Through the support of a Bush Heritage AndyInc Foundation Environmental Research Scholarship, Emma Burgess has been investigating the ecological effects of mosaic burning at Carnarvon Station as part of her PhD studies.

In 2011 I was lucky enough to receive scholarship funding to conduct some fire management research that would contribute to Bush Heritage's work. Since then I've spent several extended periods on Carnarvon Station Reserve, staying with the Wilson family who manage the property.

Their home on the reserve is in a beautiful elevated valley in the Carnarvon Ranges of the central Queensland sandstone belt. Climbing up one of the many lookouts you can really appreciate the range in altitude that supports a diverse array of ecosystems.

My research involved both vegetation and bird surveys, predominantly in the lowland woodlands of the valley floor. The aim was to better understand and be able to predict biodiversity responses to fire management work.

Controlled burns (or mosaic burns) have been frequently used as a land management tool in fire-prone ecosystems since well before European settlement. This approach has been used on Carnarvon Station since 2001, to reduce the spread of wildfires and restore variation in vegetation structure.

The idea that pyro diversity (creating patches with different fire histories) should support biodiversity has a simple appeal, but to date my results suggest long unburnt areas still support the greatest diversity of plants – particularly in the mid-storey strata – which in turn support the greatest diversity of bird species.

However, conducting regular controlled burns in strategic areas actually helps to preserve such long unburnt habitats. Planned burns work to reduce the extent of individual wildfires, the completeness of their burn area and their intensity.

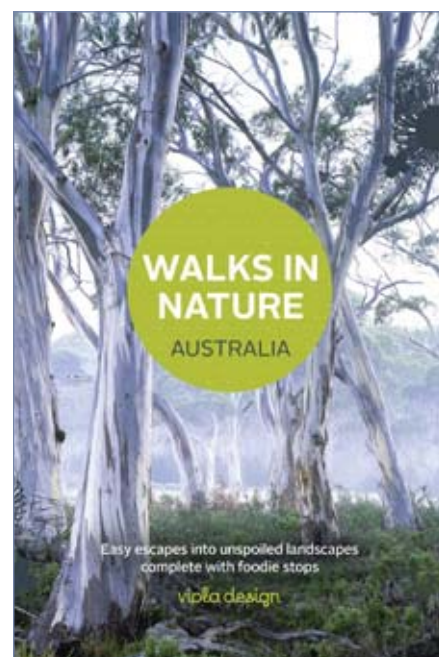
“Conducting regular controlled burns in strategic areas actually helps to preserve long unburnt habitats.”

Emma Burgess

The next steps in this research will be examining the different impacts of various sized fires on bird species so we can start to identify the optimal scale for fire management work.

I'm very much indebted to Bush Heritage for enabling this research and to staff for backing me up with their local knowledge and mechanical wizardry. Fieldwork in such a remote and rugged area always has its challenges!

The AndyInc Foundation was established in 2002 by Bush Heritage board member Andrew Myer. It provides strategic investments in community organisations and its focus includes environmental sustainability.



Walks in Nature Giveaway

A beautiful new guidebook has just been released as part of the Explore Australia series, and 10% of profits go to supporting our work – thanks to Anna Carlile from Viola Design.

To celebrate the launch we have five copies to give away to supporters.

For a chance to win, visit our Facebook page and tell us about your favourite walk or the place you feel most connected to nature.



Reserve scorecards

We evaluate the progress of our environmental work based on an open standard developed by The Conservation Measures Partnership – a collective comprising international environmental groups such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and The Nature Conservancy.

As part of the best practice process we've adopted, periodic 'reserve scorecards' are produced, summarising each reserve's condition based on an ecological review. These are conducted every five years on a staggered timescale.

The two most recent evaluations were of our Carnarvon Station and Edgbaston Reserves in Queensland. Although these reports demonstrate that there are still plenty of challenges ahead, the news so far is generally good.

Carnarvon Station, Qld

The condition of most key conservation targets, particularly the lowland grasslands, grassy woodlands and springs, have improved or remained stable since Bush Heritage bought this property.

The threat of livestock, cultivation and clearing has been removed, feral herbivore grazing has been reduced, and fire management promotes a mosaic of fire-age classes and mitigates the intensity and extent of bushfires. Nonetheless, many brigalow patches were burnt in 2013 reducing condition (at least temporarily) and increasing susceptibility to buffel grass infestation. Weeds continue to pose a challenge, especially after recent wet years.

The first five years of management on Edgbaston have focused on preventing the extinction of the Red-finned Blue-eye.

Edgbaston, Qld

The first five years of management on Edgbaston have focused on preventing the extinction of the red-finned blue-eye.

To date we have successfully increased the number of red-finned blue-eye occupied springs on Edgbaston from four to six through relocation trials and eradication of the invasive mosquito fish. We will need to continue this work, as well as begin captive breeding programs, to ensure the survival of the species.

The endemic plants, *Eriocaulon aloefolium* and *E. giganteum* are both persisting, with small increases in the former and decreases in the latter. Total ground cover and cover of perennial grasses has generally increased due to increased rainfall, removal of livestock and pig control. However, this was accompanied by increases in buffel grass, which presents an ongoing management challenge.



Top of page: The view from the high country on Carnarvon.

Photograph by Wayne Lawler / Ecopix

Above top: Freshwater Ecologist Adam Kerezsy amongst the water springs on Edgbaston.

Photograph by Alison Wheeler

Above centre: The endangered red-finned blue-eye. Photograph by Adam Kerezsy

Above bottom: Netted gambusia (mosquito fish). Photograph by Adam Kerezsy



Find out more

Read the full report:
www.bushheritage.org.au/reports

Around the reserves in 90 days

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

Northern Territory

We've reached agreements to extend our partnership with the Wardekken people in the West Arnhem Plateau, and the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, Queensland for five years. See page 10 for more about what this means for conservation in Northern Australia.

Western Australia

Summer fires touched our Eurardy Reserve after a lightning strike on the remote boundary at the end of a particularly sweltering week. Thankfully it burnt away from the reserve and only a relatively small 80 hectares in adjacent crown lands were affected.

Recent animal surveys in the Fitz-Stirling ranges area have uncovered two carpet pythons (Western Australia listed threatened species), and we recorded the first local sighting of the crested shrike-tit (a priority-listed bird in Western Australia). In habitat revegetated just two years ago on Monjebup North, honey possums were found – a great indicator of bushland health!

Honey possums, Eurardy Reserve.
Photograph by Reg Morrison



South Australia

Mapping rabbit warrens has been a focus on Bon Bon Station Reserve, under a project funded by South Australian Native Vegetation Council. Rabbits are the only feral herbivore on the property and represent one of the biggest threats to the biodiversity.

Rabbit warren, Boolcoommatta Reserve.
Photograph by Bronwen Willis



Capital city



Bush Heritage reserve



Bush Heritage reserve actively engaged with traditional owners



Bush Heritage partnership





Queensland

After five years on the property Reserve Managers Paul and Leanne Hales celebrated their first sighting of a red goshawk (probably Australia's rarest bird of prey) on Yourka Reserve.

'Reserve scorecards', which summarise ecological conditions every five years, have been completed for our Carnarvon Station and Edgbaston Reserves.

Read the full reports at: www.bushheritage.org.au/reports

*Red goshawk, Yourka Reserve.
Photograph by David Baker-Gabb*



New South Wales

The NSW government has recognised the value of our work as part of the Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach improving fish habitat and river health. They've provided a grant to support volunteers working on willow control in priority areas, including Scottsdale Reserve, describing it as a 'wise investment' in the health of the river.

Victoria

Melbourne Birding Tours will soon be offering personalised guided birding tours of our Nardoo Hills Reserve. For more opportunities to experience our reserves first hand, see page 12.

Tasmania

The endangered Tunbridge Buttercup has been recently discovered on a property involved with our Tasmanian Midlandscapes Project. This perennial mat-forming herb with brilliant yellow flowers is endemic to Tassie and grows on the margins of wetlands. Its major threats are land-clearing and over-grazing by sheep, and it's been previously recorded at only seven sites in Tasmania.

*Tunbridge Buttercup, Tasmanian Midlands Partnership.
Photograph by Matt Appleby*





Songs of the **Bush**

John Hutchinson
Long-term supporter



Meet one of our long-term supporters, John Hutchinson, whose early interest in electronics and his love of the Australian bush has led him to create the world's pre-eminent collection of Western Australian bird songs.

For over 50 years John Hutchinson has cut a solitary figure, traversing vast tracts of Western Australia in pursuit of what he calls his life's work.

John's grand passion – his *raison d'être* – is capturing the extraordinary range of Western Australian bird songs, and it has earned him an international reputation.

John says his love of birds, and the Australian bush, harks back to his childhood growing up in Wyalkatchem, a town about 200 km north-east of Perth. "I was in the bush a lot from an early age," says John. "The Jarrah forest then had big, shady trees and there was wildlife all around you – almost within touching distance."

John's other early passions included classical music and electronics, in particular early tape recorders. In 1953, after pouring over issues of *Radio and Hobbies* magazine, he decided he would build his own.

The resulting machine was a masterpiece of early engineering incorporating not just a tape recorder, but also a turntable with two arms that played and cut records, and a radio. Hailed by his contemporaries as the most comprehensive machine of its time in Australia, this early 'radiogram' still works today.

To pursue his other love, classical music, John decided to pack up his state-of-the-art recorder and head to Bunbury. Here he spent seven years both performing and recording classical music, enabling him to indulge simultaneously in two of his grand passions.

"Then I joined the Department of Agriculture doing noxious weed control and was posted to the town of Carnarvon in Western Australia," says John. "I was made responsible for a huge area including the Kimberleys and the region now known as the Pilbara. I was in my element, traversing that huge region with all its wildlife. Of course I took my recorder with me and operated it from the car battery."

Finding himself now far removed from his beloved classical music, John began looking for something else to record. It didn't take him long to discover the captivating sounds and rhythms of Aboriginal corroboree music. Working with several tribes, including the Waroora and Wunambal people (Bush Heritage also has a long-standing relationship with the Wunambal Gaambera people in the Kimberley) John made dozens of original recordings.

However, as many Aboriginals across the region began dispersing to cities, towns and settlements, it became harder and harder for John to find any corroborees to record.

In need of a new recording passion, the next sound to catch John's ear was the symphony of native bird song surrounding him.

Having stumbled quite accidentally across what he now calls his life's work, John has spent close to 60 years criss-crossing the outback in pursuit of the most beautiful and elusive songs.

At times he has gone to extraordinary lengths (including 'staking out' a single rufous whistler for days on end) to amass over 300 tapes – and what is now regarded as the world's pre-eminent collection of Western Australian bird songs.

John doesn't hesitate to name his favourite bird. "The sandstone thrush in the Kimberleys," he says. "It's a magnificent songster and two or more will get together and sing duets and it's just superb."

"It's a magnificent songster (the sandstone thrush). Two or more will get together and sing duets and it's just superb."

John Hutchinson

Of course, recordings of such significance cannot remain on old tapes forever. After investigating his options both here and overseas, the good news is that John's entire bird songs collection is being copied and digitised by the State Library of Western Australia, where it will be held in perpetuity.

John Hutchinson has spent more time in the bush than most Australians are ever likely to. Over the course of his life he's seen a lot of change – none of it good he says.

Far left: A male rufous whistler.
Photograph by Robert McLean

Left: The sandstone thrush likes
to sing duets with company.
Photograph by Wayne Lawler

Below: John's invention incorporated a
tape recorder, a radio and a turntable with
two arms that both played and cut records.
Photograph by Angie Smashnuk



“When I was young the bush was ‘natural’. It wasn’t as badly affected as it is today. We’ve lost most of our real bush, and our wildlife, and what remains is mainly on private land.”

It was out of his own deep concern for the Australian bush and his admiration of Bob Brown’s vision in creating Bush Heritage that he decided many years ago to become an ongoing supporter. “I’ve taken a keen interest in Bush Heritage because they’re doing the sort of thing I support. They are trying to bring the wildlife back into the bush – and they are trying to bring back the bush itself.”

With two records, four CDs, seven audio cassettes and two books under his belt, what lies ahead now for John Hutchinson? “I’m planning a DVD on birds and wildflowers and I’m going to rewrite one of my books. That should keep me busy for the time being.”



Hear the dawn chorus

Jump online to experience the early morning music of the bush.

John has graciously shared some fantastic recordings of the dawn chorus at various locations around Australia:

www.bushheritage.org.au/dawn-chorus

Supporter surveys

A big ‘Thank you’ to the many thousands of you who took the time to respond to our supporter survey in January.

With your feedback we can communicate with you better and improve our service to all our supporters. If you updated your contact details or communication preferences in your response, we’ll make sure these changes are made.

What you told us

You told us that you share our values and that you like to know your support is making a tangible difference in conserving habitats and protecting biodiversity.

We found plenty of you were willing to recommend us to others and had no complaints. Many were also interested in visiting our reserves and seeing more opportunities to engage online. We’re excited to say these are areas we have been looking at for improvements too.

See opposite for the launch of our Bushie Blog and the back page of this newsletter for new and improved access opportunities in 2014. As we continue to collate all the feedback, we’ll be analysing how it can help us improve our work.

More details of the results are available online at www.bushheritage.org.au/survey

Above left: Ecologist Matt Appleby with a lizard found on Charles Darwin Reserve, WA. Photograph by Catherine Hunt

Above right top: Science and Monitoring Manager Jim Radford with a dusky hopping mouse. Photograph by Peter Morris

Above right bottom: Simon Smale, Gondwana Link Landscape Manager and Ecologist Angela Sanders at Monjebup Reserve, WA. Photograph Jessica Wyld Photography

Bushie blog launched

With the launch on our website of a new blogging platform you can now connect directly with our staff out on the land.

You will be able to access fresh posts from reserves of your choice and post questions or comments directly to Ecologists and Reserve Managers about their work.

You will be able to access fresh posts from reserves of your choice and post questions or comments directly to Ecologists and Reserve Managers about their work.

The blog will give you access to the latest news, notes and images as they’re recorded. Learn about projects in progress, our connections with local communities, results from monitoring work and reflections about life on the land.

What changes do the seasons bring in different parts of the country? Which animals are most prevalent? What’s in flower?

You can follow us for specific types of updates and access the blog from your phone for the latest information wherever you are.



Stay in touch

www.bushheritage.org.au/blog or get updates via Facebook or Twitter.



Left: Flatback turtle hatchlings.
Photograph by Jean-Paul Ferrero

Below: Emma Ignjic (second from left) coaching Healthy Country Planning at a workshop in Coen, Cape York.
Photograph by Ellie Austin

Right: Naomi Hobson (second from left) and Joanne Omeenya (fourth from left) facilitate Healthy Country Planning with Umpila families.
Photograph by Stuart Cowell



Support behind Caring for Country

Late at night the feral pigs appear, snuffling and pawing at the pristine white sand on the beaches near Amban, Cape York. They come in search of buried treasure: olive ridley and flatback turtle eggs that are waiting patiently to hatch and whose numbers across the peninsula are being decimated by such predators.

But on Amban beaches these pigs are facing their last meal as rangers from the nearby community of Aurukun conduct ‘ground truthing’ surveys of the turtle nests and distribute deadly grain that targets such scavengers. The local program has dramatically reduced predation rates from 100% in 2012 to 23% last year.

This project is one of many indigenous conservation initiatives supported by the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation – an umbrella group working on the Cape York Peninsula, a vast area that covers 137 000 km². Their community development work supports around 50 indigenous language groups to manage and work on their traditional lands and seas.

Cape York is also home to a mosaic of largely unspoiled ecosystems: from wetlands, monsoonal rivers, heath lands and dune fields to extensive tropical savannah woodlands and the largest remaining tract of unlogged tropical rainforest on the continent.

Since 2006, thanks to your generous support, Bush Heritage Australia has partnered with Balkanu to help fund strategic positions in their Caring for Country Program and support indigenous communities on Cape York to implement Caring for Country activities focused on conserving their distinctive natural and cultural landscapes.

Since working together we’ve helped the Balkanu Corporation meet one of its biggest priorities: the addition of 50 new ranger positions across Cape York.

During the past six months, Bush Heritage has developed new partnership agreements with two of our key indigenous partners – the Warddeken people of Western Arnhem Land and Balkanu, an Aboriginal owned incorporated organisation for Cape York Peninsula.

Through these partnerships and others across Australia, Bush Heritage has helped Aboriginal people to identify some of the conservation threats they face on their estates, plan their strategies, source federal funding, and develop some of the skills and resources that they need for the long-term sustainability of country.

But with recent agreements to extend these two partnerships for another five years we hope to achieve much more – and we couldn’t do it without your help.

Warddeken Country

High up on the Northern Territory’s West Arnhem Plateau lies the ‘stone country’ of the Warddeken people.

Its heart-stopping escarpment and rocky gorges encompass sandstone rainforests, mixed eucalyptus woodlands and floristically rich sandstone heathlands, making it a home for threatened species such as the northern quoll, black wallaroo and the Arnhem Land rock rat.

Bush Heritage began working with the Warddeken people in 2007 after recognising the need for our organisation to move beyond the acquisition and restoration of land to the establishment of partnerships that would help indigenous landowners to manage estates that were often vast, remote and rich in biodiversity.

For the Warddeken people, this support helped lead to the declaration of their almost 1.5 million hectare estate as an Indigenous Protected Area in 2009.

Now extended for a further five years, we hope our agreement will continue to support the conservation of this spectacular country.



Thank you

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

In memoriam

Mrs Alison J Cox donated in memory of her mother Violet Southgate. Ms Heidi Samytowski remembered Rita Kerkman with a gift to Bush Heritage. Mrs Anne Marks donated in memory of her father, Charley Morris, who loved the bush. Mr Paul Sutton gave a gift in memory of his Mum, Mary Ellen (Molly) Sutton, who would be pleased to know a small portion of the Australian bush she so loved would be protected in her name. Mark Venosta donated in memory of James Peter Egerton Human and several donations were received in memory of Ray Williams.

In celebration

Alan and Dawn Beck donated to mark the occasion of their son Jason Beck's marriage to Anna Deykin. Dr Lawrence Johnson celebrated the birthday of his granddaughters, Phoebe and Mirana Bowen, with a gift to Bush Heritage. Mrs Leonie Voorhoeva celebrated her eightieth birthday with a donation and several gifts were made for **Anthony** Tenney's birthday.

Bequests

We gratefully acknowledge the estate of Jennifer Mary Morrison, the estate of Clement Skevington, the estate of Judith Catherine Iltis, the estate of Donald Murray Hart and the estate of Thomas Kenneth Macdonald.

Below: Red gum flowers, Yourka Reserve. Photograph by Wayne Lawler / EcoPix



“Indigenous people have finally regained title to significant tracts of their traditional lands in Australia and they have this huge job of looking after country.”

Emma Ignjic, Indigenous Partnerships Manager Northern

“Indigenous people have finally regained title to significant tracts of their traditional lands in Australia and they have this huge job of looking after country and dealing with new threats – weeds, wildfire, feral animals, mining activity and climate change,” says Emma Ignjic, Bush Heritage’s Indigenous Partnerships Manager Northern.

According to Emma, these new threats and management challenges mean that unique partnerships combining Aboriginal knowledge with western scientific know-how can help to achieve the ecological, cultural and social imperatives of indigenous people.

Bush Heritage worked hard with other groups to develop a conservation-planning process that met the needs of Aboriginal people. With this process we work with Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups like the Umpila people of Cape York, to create Healthy Country Plans which include clear action plans and monitoring programs.

“Country is an Aboriginal term that means the land, the water, the air, the spirit, the language and everything that exists within your estate.

It’s a more personal and spiritual relationship,” says Emma. “When we’re working with Aboriginal people, we have to keep in mind that they are not doing just land management – they’re caring for country. Healthy country includes the plants and animals, education and employment, the relationships between old and young people, and people’s physical and spiritual wellbeing,” she says.

It is our cultural adaptability and willingness to work with others, combined with conservation know-how, which has led Balkanu and Warddeken to continue their partnerships with Bush Heritage.

“Bush Heritage is an organisation that shares many of our aspirations and is willing to engage in terms suitable to indigenous people,” says Terry Piper, Balkanu’s Chief Operating Officer.

It’s a long-term relationship that Terry says will help indigenous communities to manage their land, create economic independence and to develop resilience. “People ultimately want to work on and manage their own land,” he says.

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This publication uses 100% post-consumer waste recycled fibre, made with a carbon neutral manufacturing process, using vegetable-based inks.



Visiting Bush Heritage reserves

To really appreciate the value of our reserves, there's nothing like experiencing them first hand.

This year we are proud to announce a range of new and improved opportunities to visit. There's something for everyone from self-guided trips, overnight camps and guided tours to personalised birding experiences and mountain bike adventures. As more opportunities become available we will continue to update our website.

Camping

If you're self-sufficient with your own equipment, vehicle and supplies, camping is available on:

- Charles Darwin Reserve, WA
- Boolcoomatta Reserve, SA
- Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld.

See www.bushheritage.org.au/visits for details. Bookings are required as campsites are limited.

Self-guided day visits

You can visit some of our smaller less remote reserves as a self-guided day trip.

See www.bushheritage.org.au/visits for details. Available at:

- Chereninup Creek Reserve, WA
- Kojonup Reserve, WA
- Liffey River and Oura Oura Reserves, Tas
- Currumbin Reserve, Qld.

Tag along tours

We'll be offering several guided trips to some of our more remote reserves this year. Travellers will need to be fully self-sufficient with their own vehicles and gear, camping equipment, food and fuel. Bookings are essential and spaces limited. Fees apply.

See www.bushheritage.org.au/visits for details or contact Katrina Blake: kblake@bushheritage.org.au (03) 8610 9100

- Cravens Peak / Ethabuka Reserves, Qld, 22–26 July 2014
- Yourka Reserve, Qld, 7–10 August 2014
- Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld, 11–14 August 2014
- Bon Bon Reserve, SA, 25–29 August 2014
- Naree Station Reserve, NSW, 12–14 September 2014

Birding tours

We are excited to announce Melbourne Birding Tours will be offering personalised guided birding trips to Nardoo Hills Reserves. They are a great way to learn more about bird habitats and see as many species as possible.

For details and bookings see MelbourneBirding.com or call 0414 355 146

CAFNEC wilderness bike tour

For a reserve visit that's a bit more adventurous you can join the Far North Wilderness Bike Tour. This eight-day mountain bike trip – scheduled for September 27 to October 4 – will visit some spectacular areas including two nights on Yourka Reserve with Managers Paul and Leanne Hales. The tour is an annual fundraising event for the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) and is organised and run by them.

For more information and to make a reservation call CAFNEC on (07) 4032 1746 or visit www.wildernessbiketour.com

Top left: A tag along visit to Ethabuka Reserve, Qld. Photograph by Katrina Blake

Top right: The spotted pardalote is amongst the birds inhabiting Nardoo Hills Reserves, Vic. Photograph by Wayne Lawler / EcoPix

Bush Heritage is a not-for-profit organisation, funded entirely by donations from generous supporters like you.

Yes, I want to help protect Bush Heritage reserves from wildfire.

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All donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

Please send me information about including a gift to Bush Heritage in my Will

Please return to: Bush Heritage Australia, Reply Paid 329, Flinders Lane VIC 8009

You can also donate online at: www.bushheritage.org.au/donate

We sometimes work closely with other like-minded organisations. Occasionally we may allow these organisations to send you information that we believe may be of interest to you. These organisations usually allow us to do the same, which helps us reach more people with vital information. Please tick this box if you would prefer not to receive such mailings.

