



BUSH HERITAGE

AUSTRALIA



Annual Report 2014-2015





Our purpose

We secure and protect Australia's biodiversity and natural landscapes.

*Cover: Regional Reserve Manager Jeroen van Veen on John Colahan Griffin Reserve, Vic.
Photograph by Matthew Newton*

Our values

Conservation goals are paramount.

Our people's health and safety are absolutely critical.

We are pragmatic, collaborative and creative.

Our supporters are fundamental to our success.

We recognise and respect the traditional owners of the land.



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Spinifex grasslands on Hamelin Station, Shark Bay, WA. Photograph by Cineport Media

The Bush Heritage Australia financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Chief Executive's report



“There are many of you who daily champion our cause and give generously so this important work can continue. Thank you.”

Gerard O'Neill
Chief Executive

Photograph by Peter Morris

Bush Heritage Australia continues to play a very important role within the conservation sector and indeed the broader Australian community and I am very pleased that we are making significant advances towards our strategic goals.

In reporting on our work I am indebted to all of the local and regional communities with whom we collaborate and to our wonderful donors, volunteers, pro bono supporters, partners, staff and the Board. You have all made an invaluable contribution to our work of protecting native species and the habitats they depend upon. I hope you enjoy reading about some of the year's highlights in the following pages.

Problems caused by pest species, notably feral cats, have been heavily covered in the media, and pest species are recognised nationally as a major threat to many of our native animals and plants. Our efforts to manage these various pests are ongoing. With new techniques and greater knowledge, along with the resolute commitment of our reserve managers and the unwavering support of our donors, we have seen an exciting return from our investments: the beginning of population recovery for threatened animals and plants.

New conservation partnerships and land acquisitions have also been a feature of our year. The 202 000 ha Hamelin Station in Shark Bay, WA, has recently been added to our portfolio and we look forward to bringing you more information about the property and the funds needed for our management work. We also secured a smaller property in the Fitz–Stirling region of Gondwana Link, a prize that has been in our sights for over eight years. Most of this 1000 ha block of near-pristine native vegetation has never been cleared. It supports a treasure trove of plant communities largely unaffected by post-European influences.

The story of Monjebup Creek and our ongoing landscape restoration work in the Fitz–Stirling is well worth reading and is featured on Page 10.

Our partnerships and alliances continue to grow in number and scope. This year a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Bunuba people of the Western Kimberley, and we continue to support and develop new partnerships with Aboriginal groups across Cape York, Arnhem Land and the Kimberley. By providing ongoing support to these groups who are protecting their lands, our partnerships are delivering conservation outcomes and social and cultural benefits for Aboriginal people through employment and opportunities to be out on Country.

Our investment in promoting our cause throughout the community has seen the number of financial supporters of Bush Heritage rise to record highs. Each one of our supporters plays a significant role in enabling our work. Collectively, you have helped us to conclude the year in a very healthy financial position, with a rapidly expanding number of inspiring projects. We have increased the opportunities for our supporters to get involved and actively engage in our work by providing greater access to our reserves and more volunteering opportunities, and by sharing the many and varied conservation success stories via the website and our 'Bushie Blog'.

There are many of you who daily champion our cause and give generously so this important work can continue. Thank you. Your dedication to our mission encourages and strengthens us as we meet the ongoing challenges of protecting our remarkable natural environment for the generations that follow.

President's report



“None of us – whether individuals, organisations or even governments – can achieve a healthy natural environment alone. Only by working together will we be effective.”

Bush Heritage performs a critical role in bringing people together to protect our natural environment.

Neither constrained by state boundaries nor subject to political agendas, we can champion those universal human desires for clean air and water, and a healthy, functioning natural environment. Every Bush Heritage supporter I talk to wants to secure a shared and healthy environment for future generations. None of us – whether individuals, organisations or even governments – can achieve this alone. Only by working together will we be effective. For this reason the Bush Heritage Board is a strong advocate for building partnerships across all sectors. We encourage our staff to be bold, explore new opportunities, trial new models for protecting land and consolidate existing partnerships and build new ones. In parallel, we continue to buy land and manage it well as we have done now for 24 years.

Our engagement with regional communities is consequently getting stronger each year. For example, at Charles Darwin Reserve, WA, our involvement with the Gunduwa Regional Conservation Association and its Young Leaders program is enriching the local community. In New South Wales our investment in building a dynamic volunteer and engagement program to restore Scottsdale Reserve has created a strong community network. In Tasmania the Midlands Conservation Fund, which provides stewardship payments for the protection of native grasslands, has seen interest from farmers grow to a level greater than the fund can currently support. We have significantly expanded our reach through such partnerships and have achieved so much more than by working alone.

As foreshadowed in our Annual Report 2013–14, we delivered a significant financial surplus this year due to the ongoing generosity of our existing contributors and by investing in bringing new supporters into our organisation. Your generosity has enabled us to expand our portfolio of properties with confidence, continue to actively manage pests and threats, invest in species recovery programs and advance existing partnerships and initiate new ones, particularly with Aboriginal people. By working alongside our nation's first people, sharing techniques in conservation planning, surveying and monitoring, and learning from their extensive knowledge of the land, we are helping to deliver both environmental and community benefits. Underpinning our growth is a strong, professional and dedicated staff, and sound business and conservation management systems.

As Chair of the Board and of our Governance Committee, I'm also acutely aware of the importance of the ongoing renewal of the Board. Bush Heritage directors retire after nine years of service and so it is with immense gratitude and sadness that we will farewell David Rickards and Dr Sue McIntyre at our 2015 Annual General Meeting in August. Through their voluntary contributions of time and expertise, both David and Sue have contributed greatly to Bush Heritage's success and we know they will remain close to our cause. We have also been delighted to recently welcome Dr Rebecca Nelson and Dr Michelle Leishman as incoming directors. I extend my sincere thanks to all our directors for their dedicated and insightful work this year.

Finally, on behalf of the Board I extend our gratitude particularly to you, our supporters. Whether through financial gifts or by donating time and skill, your contributions are vital and they are greatly valued. It has been often said, and remains true, that our supporters are our most important asset. Thank you.

Louise Sylvan
President

Photograph by Steve Lovegrove



What we do

Our challenge

The plight of many of Australia's native plant and animal species has now reached the point where they are fighting for their survival. One in five of Australia's surviving mammal species and 12 per cent of Australia's bird species are now threatened with extinction. There remains an estimated shortfall of 70 million ha of habitat across Australia if we are to secure a comprehensive, adequate and representative national reserve system. And this alone will not be enough. We also require more effective management of the extensive and pervasive threats impacting the viability of ecosystems and populations of native animals and plants. We urgently need a community-wide commitment to act, and targeted, effective and well-resourced strategies to prevent further extinctions and habitat decline.

Our response

Since 1991 Bush Heritage Australia has applied a proven, practical approach to protecting our natural environment and unique biodiversity. This approach has two main strategies – buying and managing land of outstanding conservation value, and working with partners to improve conservation outcomes on their land.

Our activities take us from the western deserts to the eastern shores and from the tropical woodlands of Cape York to the temperate forests of Tasmania. Working alongside the community, building respectful relationships with partners and collaborating across all sectors is central to our approach.

Science is vital to our work. We use science to inform, monitor and adapt our conservation strategies and actions, as well as to advance solutions to key conservation problems. Our ecologists work hand in hand with land managers to plan and deliver effective conservation management for Australia's species. Our work helps to restore functional ecosystems in degraded landscapes so they can once again fulfil their vital role as providers of fresh water, healthy soil, pollination, nutrient cycling, carbon storage and wildlife habitat and will continue to do so for the long term.

Our history

Bush Heritage Australia grew out of the fledgling environment movement of the early 1990s. The organisation was the inspiration of Dr Bob Brown and its early focus was on raising the money to pay for the first two properties he purchased, in the Liffey Valley of Tasmania.

Bob Brown's action saved the land from being clear-felled and these properties are still protected by Bush Heritage today. Bush Heritage grew in impact and influence as it gathered more and more support from the Australian community and expanded its operations into all states.

Today

Today we work across more than 5 million ha of land and sea, including on our reserves and on land owned by our partners. Our commitment to engaging with the community and collaborating respectfully with others means that Bush Heritage is frequently invited by Aboriginal groups and other organisations to provide support for their endeavours.

We continue to buy more land for conservation. Our reserves protect threatened ecosystems and populations of animal and plant species, including at least 208 species listed as threatened. Our conservation work contributes to building the health of wider landscapes as we reduce threats such as weeds, feral predators and erosion, restore the functioning of ecosystem processes and reach out to local communities. We also invest in encouraging new people to support us.



Who we are

Bush Heritage is a national not-for-profit organisation committed to protecting Australia's natural environment.

Our work brings together a community of committed people striving to protect our natural environment. These people participate as donors, volunteers, pro bono service providers, partners, collaborators and/or staff.

Donors

The generosity of our donors empowers Bush Heritage to set ambitious goals and work steadily towards achieving them. Their support enables us to invest not only in buying more land and expanding our work with partners, but also in spreading our message to the wider community and improving our business operations so we have an increasingly efficient and effective organisation able to meet the challenges ahead.

Our donors, who give through individual gifts, regular direct debits and bequests, have contributed on average 90 per cent of our funding over the past five years. We have received federal government support for land acquisition in the past and currently receive federal and state government support for specific land management programs.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of the Bush Heritage team. They bring their skills, energy, time and experience to all aspects of our work. They contribute to activities as varied as database development, advising on corporate governance, repairs to infrastructure on reserves, mapping, ecological monitoring and weeding. Volunteer caretakers manage our reserves while staff are on leave.

Partners

Our partners include Aboriginal groups, property neighbours and other land owners, conservation management networks, natural resource management agencies and other not-for-profit organisations. University and science partners work closely with us to research the ecology of our reserves and land owned by partners. In the past financial year, Bush Heritage continued to focus on working with partners and in communities in order to expand the reach of our conservation activities and bring more people to our cause.

Staff

Bush Heritage employs people across Australia. Our staff are highly skilled and have extensive experience, including in ecology, land management, conservation planning, Aboriginal engagement, financial and business management and systems, fundraising and marketing.

The growing Bush Heritage presence in the bush is helping us to expand and consolidate our regional and Aboriginal partnerships. The Conservation Support Centre in Melbourne is the hub for staff and volunteers working on conservation strategy and planning, community engagement, marketing and fundraising and in corporate services.

Patron

Dr Bob Brown (Founder)

Ambassadors

Phillip Adams, Chris Darwin, Tim Fischer, John Williamson, Roger Woodward

*Opposite page: Northern golden moths orchid, Nardoo Hills Reserve, Vic. Photograph by Peter Morris
Top: Collecting Dryandra tenuifolia seeds for propagating. Photograph by Jessica Wyld Photography*



Our year at a glance

In 2014–15 Bush Heritage's conservation achievements included:

- acquiring Monjebup Creek Reserve, 1042 ha of near-pristine native vegetation in the Fitz–Stirling section of Gondwana Link, WA
- signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation to develop a Healthy Country Plan for Bunuba Country in the central-west Kimberley
- consolidating our partnership with Olkola Aboriginal Corporation, Cape York, to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate an Olkola Healthy Country Plan
- acquiring Hamelin Station, 202 000 ha abutting Shark Bay World Heritage Area, WA
- consolidating our partnership with the Martu people on the Birriliburu Indigenous Protected Area in the Western Desert, WA, to develop a program of two-way science and support the ranger program
- building foundational knowledge through eight major ecological surveys on reserves and partnership properties
- completing two Ecological Outcomes Performance reports with scorecards for Yourka Reserve, Qld, and Kojonup Reserve, WA
- implementing targeted feral animal and weed control programs on our reserves
- entering into a Cultural Heritage Agreement with the Wangkamadla people, traditional owners of Cravens Peak and Ethabuka reserves, Qld
- completing two major reserve restoration and rehabilitation projects at Monjebup Reserve, WA, and Scottsdale Reserve, NSW
- signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Arid Recovery to establish the South Australian Rangelands Alliance
- playing a leading role in the Gunduwa Regional Conservation Association and Gunduwa Young Leaders Program, WA
- supporting 12 young scientists from universities across Australia in conducting ecological research projects on our reserves
- trialling the use of wildlife detection sniffer dogs to survey for quolls on Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld
- joining the National Environmental Science Program's Threatened Species Hub and Northern Australia Environmental Resources Hub
- establishing a Community Engagement Team to focus on increasing the involvement of regional communities in our work
- co-hosting two major events, Blues for the Bush and Community Open Day at Charles Darwin Reserve, WA, and the Women in Conservation Breakfast in Melbourne
- receiving four awards that recognised innovation in conservation and supporter engagement activity
- participating significantly in the IUCN World Parks Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Sydney
- being supported by 308 volunteers who contributed over 23 500 hours of work either on our reserves or in the Conservation Support Centre, Melbourne. Seventeen community groups contributed 3000 hours of work on our reserves.

2 new reserves purchased

4 new partnerships with Aboriginal groups

175 additional species recorded on our reserves

Top: White-lipped tree frog. Umpila Country, Cape York. Photograph by Nic Gambold



Our strategy – looking ahead to 2017

Bush Heritage grew strongly during 2014–15, across all areas of the organisation.

Conservation activity, supporter and community engagement and revenue levels all exceeded expected targets.

Bush Heritage is on track to meet the targets in our Strategic Plan 2012–17. We expect to reach some of these targets by the end of 2015–16.

During 2015–16 Bush Heritage's work continues to be underpinned by our Strategic Plan 2012–17 framework outlined below.

We continue to focus on achieving our purpose to ensure that we *secure and protect Australia's biodiversity and natural landscapes*.

Goal 1

Double the area secured for conservation, by direct acquisition and partnership, from 3 million to 6 million ha

- 1.1 Acquire new properties and enter new partnerships within an agreed strategic priority landscape framework
- 1.2 Develop innovative ways to secure and protect biodiversity and natural landscapes
- 1.3 Actively support the development of Indigenous Protected Areas

Goal 2

Maintain and improve conservation management outcomes

- 2.1 Utilise the Conservation Management Process in all conservation projects
- 2.2 Engage with and apply traditional and scientific knowledge to enable implementation of high-quality landscape restoration and delivery of good conservation outcomes
- 2.3 Ensure effective long-term protection and management of reserves and partnership properties

Goal 3

Demonstrate leadership and innovation in nature conservation

- 3.1 Use our properties and partnerships to leverage additional conservation outcomes
- 3.2 Work with leading research institutions to advance the practice of land conservation
- 3.3 Influence the identification and protection of plants, animals and landscapes of high conservation value
- 3.4 Promote the use and development of leading conservation standards and tools

Goal 4

Increase to 30 000 the number of people we engage with and who support our work

- 4.1 Recruit and maintain a supporter base that financially sustains our operations
- 4.2 Engage, inspire and empower people to support our purpose
- 4.3 Engage with and be an active part of the communities in which we work

Goal 5

Build the financial sustainability and operational capacity of Bush Heritage

- 5.1 Increase the annual revenue to \$20 million, while closely managing costs
- 5.2 Design and implement sustainable revenue streams to support our growth
- 5.3 Manage an efficient and effective business, capable of delivering our goals

Goal 6

Ensure an organisational culture of collaboration and commitment

- 6.1 Invest in recruiting and supporting a skilled and diverse workforce
- 6.2 Foster effective communication and linkages within Bush Heritage
- 6.3 Develop an outreach culture to build effective engagement and influence

*Top: Artesian spring, Edgbaston Reserve, Qld.
Photograph by Wayne Lawler/Ecopix*

Progress towards our strategic goals



Our priorities for the five years from 2012 to 2017 are organised under six strategic goals. Here, we describe these goals and report on our progress.

Goal 1

Double the area secured for conservation, by direct acquisition and partnership, from 3 million to 6 million hectares

Bush Heritage secures and protects Australia's biodiversity and restores ecosystem health.

This is achieved using three complementary strategies: directly purchasing land that has outstanding conservation values, purchasing and revegetating land that will reconnect fragmented landscapes, and building partnerships with other land owners, particularly traditional owners.

We recognise that using these complementary strategies is critical if we are to achieve effective landscape-scale conservation.

During 2014–15 we have made significant progress towards achieving Goal 1. Bush Heritage acquired two new properties in Western Australia – as part of Gondwana Link, and in the mid-western rangelands – securing just over 203 000 ha.

A new partnership is developing to secure an additional 17 000 ha adjacent to Naree Station in the Paroo–Warrego region, NSW. We have continued to invest strongly in developing our partnerships with Aboriginal groups to protect nationally significant places in Arnhem Land, the Kimberley and Cape York. At 31 March 2015, Bush Heritage was working across more than 5 million ha.

Monjebup Creek – a gem for Gondwana Link

In mid-2014 the vigilance of an alert neighbour, nimble work by Bush Heritage staff and the generosity of a West Australian donor meant we secured Monjebup Creek, a priority property for protection in the Fitz–Stirling section of Gondwana Link in south-west Western Australia. The land is an outstanding addition and contributes to the restoration of a continuous extent of native vegetation across this heavily fragmented landscape.

A 2014 botanical survey of our nearby 1200 ha Monjebup Reserve revealed a plant diversity of more than 570 species. The purchase of Monjebup Creek secures another 1000 ha of extraordinary vegetation in this global biodiversity hot spot. Derelict buildings have already been cleared, road access rationalised and the ecological restoration of 15 ha of cleared country completed. A field station will be constructed to serve as the base for our expanded presence in the region. It will provide accommodation for staff, volunteers, contractors, researchers and other associates, and be a destination for day visitors.

A full botanical survey is scheduled for 2015 and the findings will guide the development of marked trails allowing visitors to enjoy this rare example of untouched native bush.

Olkola Country to get a Healthy Country Plan

In December 2014 a resolution of tenure over five former pastoral leases returned 800 000 ha of Olkola Country to the traditional owners, the Olkola people of Cape York. The return of this land prompted Olkola to invite Bush Heritage to work with them in the protection of this vast and spectacular estate in central Cape York.

Bush Heritage and the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation have now developed a Memorandum of Understanding that sets out the framework for a partnership between the two organisations. Our partnership will help to protect the ecological and cultural values of Olkola Country, which, in its entirety, encompasses over a million hectares of central Cape York. Olkola Country has good ecological integrity, connectivity and critical habitats, and provides seasonal wildlife refuges associated with wetlands and riparian environments. We will work together to develop an Olkola Healthy Country Plan and Bush Heritage will provide ongoing support for the implementation of the plan, ecological monitoring and project evaluation. Most of the range of the endangered golden-shouldered parrot occurs in Olkola Country and Bush Heritage will also support the Golden-Shouldered Parrot Recovery Program.



Working with Bunuba people

Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation and Bush Heritage entered into a formal partnership in 2014 to deliver a Healthy Country Plan for Bunuba Country (Bunuba refer to this as their Jalangurru Muwayi Plan). Bunuba Country lies in the central-west Kimberley, surrounds the township of Fitzroy Crossing and includes Geikie Gorge, Tunnel Creek and Windjana Gorge national parks. Bunuba are the custodians of the nationally significant Jandamarra story.

The Bunuba Healthy Country project will involve numerous supporting partners, with Bush Heritage helping to bring together specialist expertise, funding partners, government agencies and the Bunuba community to make this project a success. Bush Heritage is funding the two-year development of the Healthy Country Plan, which will be facilitated by a project coordinator based in the West Kimberley. The coordinator's role will be to establish relations with the Bunuba community, oversee 'return to Country' trips, and actively support the community to realise their vision.

Using the Healthy Country Planning methodology (an adaptation of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation), Bush Heritage has helped Bunuba to develop the Jalangurru Muwayi Vision and Values Statement that has provided a clear, positive community focus for this Healthy Country project.

Western Desert work with Birriliburu

Bush Heritage is working with Aboriginal rangers from the Birriliburu Indigenous Protected Area and Central Desert Land and Community to develop a program of two-way science that draws on both traditional ecological knowledge and Western science to better protect 6.6 million ha of desert country in central Western Australia.

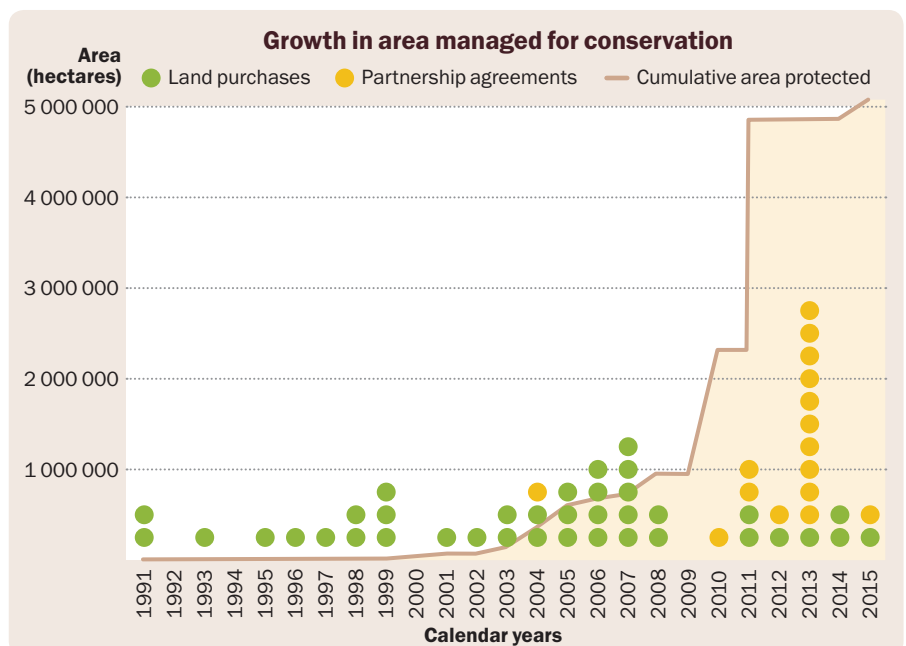
Opposite page: Pied cormorants roost on stromatolites, Shark Bay, WA. Photograph by Jiri Lochman/Lochman Transparencies

Top: An Olkola ranger points out a golden-shouldered parrot nest hollow in a termite mound. Photograph by Allana Brown

Hamelin Station – a new reserve in WA

In 2014 Bush Heritage signed a deed to purchase an outstanding property of 202 000 ha in Shark Bay, WA. The property abuts the Shark Bay World Heritage Area, increasing the region's landscape connectivity. Hamelin Station will become a hub for our activities in the Western Rangelands.

More news on fundraising for Hamelin Station will follow in 2015–16.





Goal 2

Maintain and improve conservation management outcomes

Bush Heritage protects threatened plants and animals and restores their habitats using the best available science. We actively manage the threats they face.

We measure our effectiveness, trial new and innovative techniques, learn from others and adapt our methods to get the best results. We engage with the traditional owners of our reserves to ensure that both cultural and environmental values are protected.

During 2014–15 we continued to protect the gains we have made on our reserves, including through building new local and regional partnerships to manage threats such as bushfire, feral animals and weeds. We continued to use existing mechanisms to protect land in perpetuity, including by placing protective covenants on reserves, influencing government policy and proactively managing threats from mining and forestry.

As at 31 March a further 175 species had been identified on our reserves, 21 of which are listed as nationally threatened. This demonstrates the importance of our survey work in both informing the focus of our management activity and highlighting the national significance of our reserves, and the properties of our partners, in providing safe havens for many species.

Tracking our progress

Ecological performance on reserves is tracked and reported in detail every five years.

Yourka Reserve, Qld (2007–2013)

Use of herbicide and fire has reduced infestations of invasive Siam weed in Yourka's lower valleys but infestations remain in the upper catchments. Track maintenance and summer burning to reduce Siam weed may be facilitating the spread of invasive grader grass. The interaction between fire, Siam weed, grader grass, vegetation structure and woodland birds requires further scrutiny. Shrub cover in the dry forests and woodlands is gradually increasing and likely to benefit small woodland birds and other fauna. Numbers of small passerine birds and other species that are sensitive to disturbance are slowly increasing in riparian areas.

Kojonup Reserve, WA (1996–2013)

Cessation of farming, establishment of deep-rooted vegetation, and ongoing weed, fox and rabbit control have improved the health of the reserve's habitats. Since monitoring began in 2005, bird activity and species richness have been steady. Western Australia's Department of Parks and Wildlife and Bush Heritage translocated 30 nationally vulnerable red-tailed phascogales to the reserve between 2010 and 2012. Success in re-establishing a population was confirmed when we captured second- or third-generation phascogales: 11 animals in May 2013 and 12 animals in May 2014.

“We measure our effectiveness, trial new and innovative techniques, learn from others and adapt our methods to get the best results.”

Top: Bush Heritage Ecologist Angela Sanders with a red-tailed phascogale, Kojonup Reserve, WA. Photograph by Annette Ruzicka



Building foundational knowledge

In 2014–15 our varied biological survey program built knowledge of the ecosystems and species that occur on our reserves and partnership properties. This information informs our conservation management and contributes to broader scientific understanding of species' distribution and status. It also provides opportunities for capacity-building with Aboriginal partners through training in ecological survey techniques.

Umpila rangers, visiting scientists and Bush Heritage staff and ecologists camped at Rocky Lake on Umpila traditional lands on Cape York in September 2014. The team undertook baseline wildlife surveys to discover the conservation values of, and assess any threats to, the area. 'The ranger team got training in the use of pitfall traps, funnel traps, hair traps, cage traps, Elliott (box) traps, camera trap stations, bat detectors and spotlighting,' said Emma Ignjic, Bush Heritage Partnerships Manager for North Australia. Over the four-week survey 108 bird species, 30 mammal species (excluding micro bats), and 15 amphibian and 40 reptile species were recorded.

A second major survey with Aboriginal partners took place on the West Arnhem Plateau, traditional land of the Warddeken people. Our longstanding partnership with the Warddeken people has helped to protect threatened species including the Australian bustard, northern quoll, black wallaroo, Arnhem Land rock rat and Oenpelli python.

The partnership has also helped to create job opportunities. Last year more than 100 Aboriginal people worked full time or part time as rangers or in related land management positions.

In October a team of scientists from the national Bush Blitz program joined us to search for new species on Carnarvon Station Reserve in central Queensland. Hundreds of flora and fauna samples were collected, including eight undescribed species of land snail and two plants not previously recorded on the reserve. Simultaneously, another team of Bush Heritage staff, consultants and volunteers were surveying small vertebrates on Yourka Reserve in north Queensland. This effort turned up 20 species, including the common planigale and eastern pebble mouse, not previously recorded on Yourka.

Queensland Field Naturalists assisted our ecologists with repeat surveys at Naree Station, the first since our baseline 'bioblitz' in April 2013. The capture rates of small mammals were five times higher than in 2013, though species diversity was still low.

On the other side of the country, flora surveys on Monjebup Reserve and its neighbouring partner property Yarrowayah Falls identified 570 native plant species, including 15 species of conservation significance, a large and healthy population of the rare poison pea *Gastrolobium humile* and an unnamed sheoak species.

Top: The Umpila survey team with scientist David Fell, Rocky Lake, Cape York. Photograph by Emma Ignjic



Gungoandra Creek rock wall

Following nearly four years of ongoing works, the Gungoandra Creek rock weir and fish way on Scottsdale Reserve have been completed.

The construction is part of an erosion control plan produced with the assistance of volunteer soil consultant Peter Fogarty and funded by Local Land Services – South East. Its purpose is to stop erosion from cutting into several kilometres of creek wetland. A large rock wall was installed into each bank, and a fish ladder created in the original stream course by building a series of steps that reduces the water drop to ten centimetres for every 80 centimetres of flow.



Goal 2 (continued)

Maintain and improve conservation management outcomes

“We are delighted to have entered into this agreement with Bush Heritage to ensure that the cultural heritage of the Wangkamadla people is acknowledged, respected and protected for future generations.”

Controlling feral animals

New techniques, greater knowledge of the ecology of feral species and significant financial support from Bush Heritage donors are making Bush Heritage’s feral animal control programs increasingly effective.

At Nardoo Hills Reserve in Victoria and Scottsdale Reserve in New South Wales, using GPS technology to map rabbit warrens has enabled control measures to be systematic and thorough. At Nardoo, rare orchids are thriving as a result. On Boolcoomatta Reserve in South Australia, no foxes have been seen for six years. This is testament to the effectiveness of region-wide collaboration on intensive aerial and ground baiting. On Naree Station in New South Wales, closure of artificial water points has assisted the control of feral pest animals such as goats and pigs. Cooperation with our property neighbours saw them take 940 goats from Naree in return for grading our fence lines, airstrip and reserve tracks, and providing other support.

The Upper Murrumbidgee River in New South Wales provides critical habitat for three nationally threatened fish species – Macquarie perch, Murray cod and trout cod. The impact of introduced carp on these species has been devastating. An exciting new research program to track carp movements and trial control methods on the river at Scottsdale Reserve is merging science with community engagement.



Rare orchids reintroduced

The John Colahan Griffin Reserve in central Victoria is notable for its diversity of orchids.

Some species are increasingly rare in the wider landscape due to land clearing, feral animal grazing and weed invasion. Bush Heritage works closely with Victorian government agencies to propagate rare orchids for planting on the reserve to boost the survival chances of these rare species. In June, Victorian orchid expert Julie Whitfield and a small team of volunteers reintroduced 30 Stuart Mill spider orchids (*Caladenia cretacea*) to the reserve, planting them in special enclosures to protect them from grazing by rabbits, hares and wallabies.

Top: Healthy Landscape Manager Peter Saunders electrofishing for carp, Scottsdale Reserve, NSW. Photograph by Annette Ruzicka



Hunting for northern quolls

New techniques to find the endangered northern quoll are being trialled at Carnarvon Station Reserve in central Queensland. One individual was photographed via remote sensing on the property in 2008 but the species has not been detected since. Loss of the best quoll habitat to intensive agriculture and the invasion of feral predators and cane toads – that are toxic as prey – have devastated quoll populations. The formerly reliable quoll locations on Mount Moffat have ceased to be reliable over the past decade, and a number of wet years have increased toad numbers and allowed them to spread to the top of the Carnarvon Range.

Guided by habitat and by the characteristics of known refuges (elevation, rugged terrain, and at least seasonal access to water), our search for quoll scats and use of motion sensing cameras have been unsuccessful to date. Last year we brought in Amanda and Lloyd Hancock and their quoll dogs, which are trained to detect the odour of quolls. The dogs exhibited quoll-positive behaviour in some areas, but so far there have been no confirmed sightings. The dogs will be back in 2016 and we hope that quolls will be discovered and that we can support their ongoing conservation.

Top: Trialling quoll dogs, Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld. Photograph by Alison Wilson

Building partnerships with traditional owners of reserves

Over two days in early March, 15 Tasmanian Aboriginal community elders, cultural heritage officers, parents and children visited the Liffey and Oura Oura reserves. They gathered with Bush Heritage staff, volunteers, local Liffey community members and Bob Brown and Paul Thomas to develop relationships, share stories and begin an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment of the reserves. Tasmanian Aboriginal culture is strong and the community has put in place knowledge and language (*palawa kani*) revival programs to support reconnection to Country and cultural practices.

Bush Heritage and Wangkamadla, the traditional owners of Bush Heritage's 450 000 ha desert reserves Ethabuka and Cravens Peak, have signed a Cultural Heritage Management Agreement. The agreement establishes Bush Heritage's commitment to cooperative management and ongoing consultation to achieve cultural and conservation outcomes on their lands.

'We are delighted to have entered into this agreement with Bush Heritage to ensure that the cultural heritage of the Wangkamadla people is acknowledged, respected and protected for future generations,' said Wangkamadla woman Avelina Tarrago.

Bush Heritage looks forward to further developing Aboriginal partnerships that deliver conservation, cultural and Healthy Country management outcomes.

Numbers of species recorded so far on Bush Heritage reserves





Goal 3

Demonstrate leadership and innovation in nature conservation

Bush Heritage has a collaborative approach to conservation.

We share knowledge and learn from others. We trial and demonstrate innovative techniques in conservation management and inspire and support others to implement the most effective strategies.

During 2014–15 we continued to protect the gains we have made across the landscape. We further developed or built new local and regional partnerships to manage environmental threats at the landscape scale and thus improve the viability of species and habitats.

Our conservation work continues to be underpinned by the practice of 'learning by doing' as we pursue a greater understanding of the ecology of our reserves and partners' properties. Our research is guided by our ten-year Science Plan and supported through collaborative projects with universities.

In 2014 our innovation and leadership was recognised with two national awards.

Strengthening our science partnerships

During the past year we have reviewed and recast the direction of Bush Heritage's science program to ensure that it remains relevant, innovative and collaborative. This means consolidating existing partnerships through developing new projects (for example, with Edith Cowan University, researching birds in shrublands with different fire histories), forging new relationships (such as with Arid Recovery) and creating new opportunities.

We are supporting young scientists by providing postgraduate scholarships, logistical support and internships. Bush Heritage supported 12 students who worked on a wide range of topics, from describing tree health on Nardoo Hills (Ruth Wishart) to studying the diet, resource use and impacts of feral cats on native fauna in south-west Western Australia (Sarah Comer), and assessing changes in the cover of saltbush on Boolcoomatta (Kate Cranney).

Science support for our partners increased. We supported the Rocky Lake biodiversity survey on Umpila Country, Cape York, and strengthened ties with the Birriliburu rangers in the Little Sandy Desert.

Our involvement in programs such as the National Environmental Science Program's Threatened Species Recovery and Northern Australia Environmental Resources research hubs will facilitate new research collaborations and enable us to better conserve Australia's native plants and animals.

Midlands Conservation Fund

The Tasmanian Midlands Conservation Fund won the 'Natural Capital' category of the 2014 Banksia Foundation Sustainability Awards that recognise leadership and innovation in the sustainable management of renewable and non-renewable resources.

The support of participating land owners and their families has been crucial to the success of the scheme. Midlands Conservation Fund stewardship agreements recommend a management regime that ensures that the land will continue to benefit native plants and animals into the future. For each agreement to roll over into a subsequent five-year term, it is necessary for the land owner to ensure that their grasslands attain, and are maintained in, good condition. All participating landholders have fulfilled the requirements of the agreements to date.

New irrigation infrastructure in the Midlands opens the way for expanded agricultural activities on land that was previously considered not worth cultivating. To combat this threat to our endangered grasslands and woodlands, Bush Heritage and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy aim to raise funds to grow the Midlands Conservation Fund by over \$6.7 million during the next two years to reach the total of \$10 million.

This will allow us to increase the number of land owners who can join the stewardship program, thus extending the area under protection.



Opposite page: Austral storksbill on stewardship property, Tasmanian Midlands. Photograph by Matt Appleby

Left: Greater bilby. Photograph by Jiri Lochman/Lochman Transparencies

Below: Bush Heritage Chief Executive Gerard O'Neill and Arid Recovery Chief Executive Officer Kylie Piper sign a Memorandum of Understanding. Photograph by Irene O'Neill



South Australia Rangelands Alliance

Bush Heritage has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Arid Recovery to establish the South Australian Rangelands Alliance. This partnership covers the vast landscape that encompasses the Arid Recovery Reserve and Bush Heritage's Bon Bon Station and Boolcoomatta Station reserves, including the iconic Lake Eyre and Flinders Ranges regions.

For Arid Recovery, this partnership means working outside their feral-proof exclusion fence and taking knowledge and research practices into the broader landscape. For Bush Heritage, it means opportunities to work closely with Arid Recovery's partners, such as Adelaide University, to pursue research activities into wildlife management including of threatened and invasive species, behavioural studies, reintroduction programs of locally extinct fauna, and conservation land management across the region with the Aboriginal, pastoral, government and mining sectors.

Sharing knowledge and resources will also deliver efficiencies to both organisations. Dr Aaron Fenner was jointly employed to oversee the ecological monitoring and research programs for the partnership. Consequently, monitoring of fauna across Bon Bon and Boolcoomatta will increase and, in an exciting development, locally extinct mammals such as burrowing bettongs and greater bilbies will be reintroduced. This is a major step for threatened species recovery in Australia and for Bush Heritage Australia and its supporters.

Gunduruwa Regional Conservation Association and Young Leaders program

Bush Heritage has chaired the Gunduruwa Regional Conservation Association over the past three years and championed its development as a key regional partnership through which to deliver significant biodiversity and sustainability benefits for the region around Charles Darwin Reserve in the Avon wheat belt of Western Australia. In 2014 the association funded four projects: on the impacts of fire on semi-arid shrubland, on sustainable farming through improved understanding of soil quality, on malleefowl, and the Gunduruwa Young Leaders program.

The Gunduruwa Young Leaders program aims to bring together local government, pastoral and agricultural businesses, Aboriginal landholders, the state government and the minerals sector to develop leadership in young people from the shires of Morawa and Perenjori.

This program connects young people with the land, teaches them important life skills, and encourages them to play a part in conserving our environment.

Between June 2014 and March 2015 twelve young locals, selected for their leadership potential among their peers or community, were involved in activities, including on Charles Darwin Reserve, to connect them with the environment, cultural history and heritage while enhancing their teamwork and leadership skills.

Fulbright Scholar, Annette Stewart

Bush Heritage's leadership in the implementation and development of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation has been recognised with the 2015 Fulbright Professional Scholarship in Non-Profit Leadership being awarded to staff member Annette Stewart.

Annette's work in improving and developing our systems through the implementation of the Open Standards and its supporting Miradi software has greatly helped us to plan, implement, monitor and report on our conservation work. Her research in the United States will examine the barriers facing conservation groups that want to implement similar systems, and her work has the potential to influence conservation globally.



Goal 4

Increase to 30 000 the number of people we engage with and who support our work

People support Bush Heritage for many different reasons and demonstrate this support by becoming donors, volunteers, pro bono supporters, partners, advocates and/or participants in conservation networks.

Bush Heritage actively reaches out and gives back to the communities in which we work. As we inspire and involve more people, we build our capacity to achieve greater results for the conservation of our natural environment.

During 2014–15 we made significant progress towards achieving our goal to engage with many more people around the country. We provided more opportunities for people to engage with us on reserves and in regional centres and capital cities.

In 2014–15 we attracted over 20 000 new donors to Bush Heritage. Although not all of these people may choose to stay with us for the long term, we will work hard to earn their loyalty, as we do with all of our donors. Our goal for 2017 is to have more than 30 000 people who want to support us financially into the future. In addition, Bush Heritage now has over 300 active volunteers and 17 community groups supporting our operations across the country.

Media coverage reached an estimated nine million Australians. Visits to our website and Bushie Blog increased significantly with over 100 000 visitors to the site. Facebook friends now number over 15 500.

During the past 12 months nearly 1500 people visited our reserves, including volunteers and researchers, and a further 800 participated in events around the country.

Bush Heritage in 2014–15

15 500 Facebook friends

23 500 volunteer hours

40 000 financial supporters

100 000 website visitors

Volunteers and community at the core of Bush Heritage

Bush Heritage reserves have active community engagement and volunteering programs. Grassroots community groups such as the Friends of Charles Darwin Reserve and Eurardy, WA, continued to support Bush Heritage, as they have done for many years. Our Blues for the Bush event at Charles Darwin Reserve attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd this year with 900 people attending the event. Locals and the broader community enjoyed tours of the reserve and great music under the stars.

Our community ties continued to strengthen. We received increased support from groups such as Birdlife Australia, Field Naturalists clubs, Buffel Busters in South Australia and local four-wheel drive, scout and school groups.

Our work with neighbours, natural resource management groups and catchment management authorities helped to find solutions to landscape-scale challenges such as weed infestations, habitat loss and the impact of pest species. We attended and hosted field days and provided input into pest and weed forums, species recovery teams and catchment care groups. We increased our visibility in regional areas by staffing information stalls at local events such as the Gladstone Ecofest and the Tablelands Folk Festival at Yungaburra, Qld, where we introduced like-minded people to our work and recruited volunteers and new supporters.

Top: Bush Heritage supporters take in the sunset at Dome Rock, Boolcoomatta Reserve, SA. Photograph by Rebecca Passlow



Left: Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld.
Photograph by Terry Cooke

Below: Healthy Landscape Manager Glen Norris briefing visitors, Boolcoomatta Reserve, SA.
Photograph by Rebecca Passlow



Getting onto reserves

Bush Heritage continues to develop the visitor experience at all of our reserves. This year we offered tag-along tours to four remote reserves (see table). Opportunities for self-guided tours increased with the completion of the newly established Paperback Walk at Reedy Creek Reserve at Agnes Water, Qld. The walk provides year-round access to the wetter areas of the reserve. Work has been completed to upgrade the walking track at Liffey River Reserve and install new interpretive signs at both Liffey River and Oura Oura reserves, Tas.

With the help of skilled volunteers, we began work on a suite of interpretive materials for reserves with self-guided access or with high numbers of visitors. Information brochures about all reserves that are open for day trips or camping are now available for download from our website.

Our camping reserves continue to be popular with long-term and more recent supporters. Charles Darwin Reserve, WA, hosted 31 campers and a further 700 people for the annual Open Day and Blues for the Bush concert. Boolcoomatta Reserve, SA, hosted 80 campers in 2014. Numbers of campers on Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld, were low for its first year back in operation following the devastating floods of 2010 but we expect numbers to increase again.

World Parks Congress

Bush Heritage Chief Executive Gerard O'Neill led a delegation of staff from Bush Heritage to the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney in November 2014. This once-in-a-decade event brought together our peers from around the world and we were very proud to present our work on home soil while standing on a global stage.

The congress brought together conservation leaders with a refreshing range of perspectives. There was a call to action to increase the numbers and connectivity of protected areas, and to develop diversified investment models. There was a strong representation and incredible traditional knowledge offered by Indigenous peoples, and a much stronger presence than previously from private conservation groups.

Women in Conservation breakfast

Each year, Trust for Nature and Bush Heritage Australia co-host a breakfast for International Women's Day. We invite a prominent woman to speak. In 2015 internationally recognised sustainability leader Molly Harris Olson and moderator Tanya Ha discussed the topic of investing for social and environmental good. Our 360 guests represented over 112 organisations. We are grateful to the National Australia Bank (principal sponsor), our long-term supporter Flight Centre for donating a prize, and for additional support from Johanna Villani Design, Sanctuary Magazine, Sandhurst Club, Viola Design, Harvest Box and Heart of Chocolate.

Reserves open to visitors in 2014–15

Visit type	Reserves
Self-guided day visits	Kojonup, WA
	Chereninup Creek, WA
	Liffey River and Oura Oura, Tas
	Currumbin Valley, Qld
	Reedy Creek, Qld
Camping	Charles Darwin, WA
	Boolcoomatta, SA
	Carnarvon Station, Qld
Tag-along touring	Ethabuka/Cravens Peak, Qld
	Naree Station, NSW
	Carnarvon Station, Qld
	Bon Bon Station, SA
Other	Cairns and Far North Qld wilderness bike ride Yourka, Qld
	Melbourne Birding Tours Nardoo Hills, Vic
	Images of Australia photography workshop Boolcoomatta, SA



Bush Heritage received two awards from the Fundraising Institute of Australia: for bringing news from the bush to our supporters through Bush Chat events, and for encouraging 9000 new supporters to help us to protect land to save Australia's unique plants and animals.



Our partners and supporters

“I think Bush Heritage is doing a wonderful job. I like knowing my donation is going straight to work at a grassroots level. I am passionate about the Australian bush and donating to Bush Heritage makes me feel I am being useful. I wish I could give more.”

Debon Dwyer, Friend of the Bush since 2012

The Miller Foundation

“The Miller family have a long connection with and respect for the Australian bush through our farming and conservation interests. The desire for open spaces and the unique spirit of the Australian landscape continue to be passions of ours”, says Chris Miller. “We have endeavoured to restore sensitive areas on our properties by re-establishing vegetation corridors. My own childhood memories are of planting thousands of native trees and restoring habitats for local wildlife.

“Since learning of the mandate of Bush Heritage in 2005 the Miller family has considered it a privilege to support the organisation and its important work. We are thrilled to partner with Bush Heritage and support the expanding portfolio of reserves and projects.

“We recently visited Yourka Reserve and Olkola Country in far north Queensland observing the amazing work of the Bush Heritage team. This was important for Chris, who spent years living and working with Aboriginal communities in western Cape York. It is critical to take a multi-decade view of working with Aboriginal communities as they hold the answers to managing and preserving these significant landscapes.

“We are committed to the mandate of Bush Heritage to work proactively on the land and in partnerships to ethically protect the legacy of future generations of Australians.”

Places receiving the greatest volunteer contribution

Reserves	volunteers	hours
Bon Bon Station	37	1300
Boolcoomatta	17	1930
Charles Darwin	26	2259
Cravens Peak & Ethabuka	13	2266
Eurardy	20	1209
Gondwana Link & Kojonup	16	783
Nardoo Hills	26	740
Naree Station	9	750
Scottsdale	51	4201
Tasmanian reserves	8	1354
Yourka	20	1522
Conservation Support Centre	49	4478

*Some volunteers helped at multiple sites and so have been recorded more than once in these tables.

“I have supported Bush Heritage for over 20 years and have left them a gift in my will.”

Top: Cluster of butterflies, Edgbaston Reserve, Qld. Photograph by Wayne Lawler/Ecopix



Left: Chris Miller (The Miller Foundation) on Olkola Country with traditional owner Mike Ross. Photograph courtesy The Miller Foundation



Arnis Dzedins

‘At first sight a degree in nuclear physics and a career in IT project management might not seem a natural fit with volunteering at Bush Heritage. However, all my life I have gone camping with my wife Robin at every opportunity and since retiring have spent much time on mammal surveys with the Fauna Survey Group (Field Naturalists Club of Victoria) and as part of my PhD research with Deakin University.

‘My work on ecological monitoring brought home to me the vulnerability of our biodiversity and the crucial importance of preserving – and equally importantly, managing – areas of high natural value. What most appeals to me about Bush Heritage is the rigorous and disciplined approach to reserve selection and science-based land management. Also, I particularly like the community-based model of financing. In spite of the challenges of being reliant on supporter generosity, it makes our work independent of shifting political winds.

‘I feel honoured that in the eight years I have been an active volunteer I have been able to contribute my IT skills in developing systems that support the administrative procedures and scientific monitoring that make the Bush Heritage approach so effective, including working on systems to make the capture of ecological data more streamlined.’



Pamela Fiala

‘As long as I can remember I’ve loved plants and visits to the bush. I spent the 50s living and working in Tasmania, walking in that wonderful wilderness with so many interesting plants to discover. This strengthened my love for wild lands.

‘I became involved in environmental campaigns in the 70s and 80s when so many special places were being destroyed all over Australia. The word “fight” was always associated with those campaigns. So when Bob Brown made his great decision to buy two beautiful forest blocks in Tasmania’s Liffey Valley, saving them from woodchipping and the idea grew into Bush Heritage, it came as a welcome, peaceful, alternative, complementary to the campaigning groups, a practical, permanent way of saving land into the future.

‘I have supported Bush Heritage for over 20 years and have left them a gift in my will. It has been very satisfying to watch the organisation’s progress, slowly building up reserves of land, adding more habitat types all over Australia, helping animals in danger of extinction to survive. To me Bush Heritage has a vitally important role in preserving a healthy environment for the future of this country.’



Eleanor Sobey

‘For me the Australian bush represents a place of exploration, solace and reflection – a place where I feel most at home. For this reason, the decline in ecosystems, observed as bird species disappear, “dieback” claims habitat remnants and invasive weeds become the norm, is something that impacts me personally and emotionally, and is my motivation for volunteering with Bush Heritage.

‘My “real” job is in environmental policy development, and while it is empowering to influence national policies, it is also easy to feel disconnected from what is happening on the ground. Volunteering with Bush Heritage enables me to donate my time and skills to practical actions that contribute real and immediate wins for the environment.

‘The opportunity to visit beautiful and remote parts of Australia, meet like-minded people and give something back that helps these places become more resilient and diverse is the elegantly simple concept behind the Bush Heritage volunteering program. I can connect with the bush and feel empowered to help protect it. Looking for quolls, carrying out dawn bird surveys and controlling rabbit numbers are just some of the amazing experiences I’ve had as a volunteer and I look forward to many more in future years!’

More achievements around the country

Northern Territory

Warddeken traditional owners continued to implement their Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan, undertaking training programs, fencing rock art sites, managing fire and controlling feral pest species, supported by Bush Heritage.

Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation and Bush Heritage worked together on Healthy Country planning and capacity-building activities.



Warddeken stone country.
Photograph courtesy Warddeken Land Management Ltd

Western Australia

Volunteers contributed 4 434 hours of work and one community group was involved on WA reserves.

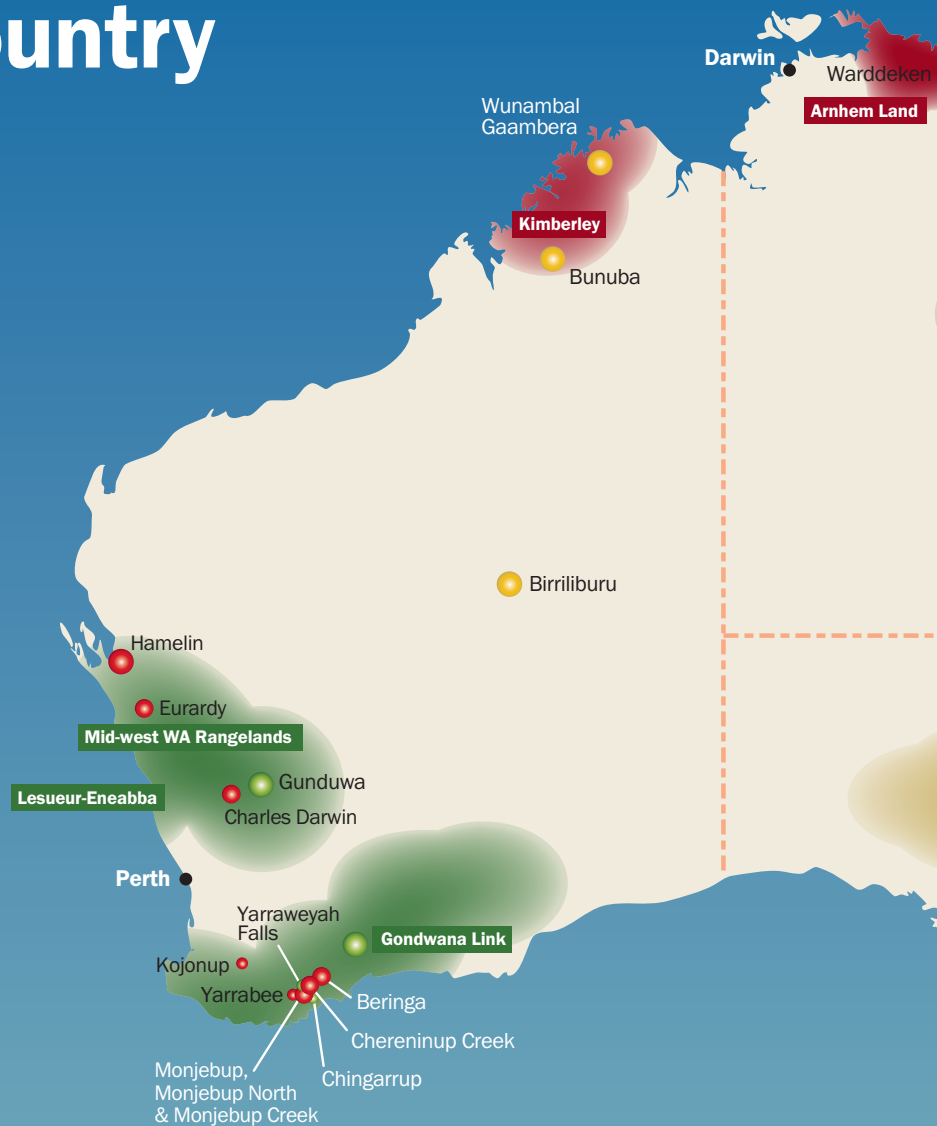
The owner of Wanarra Station (neighbour to Charles Darwin Reserve) joined Bush Heritage and worked on joint conservation management activities across both properties.

Feral cat control with 'Eradicat' baits continued at Charles Darwin Reserve.

Red-tailed phascogale translocations on Kojonup Reserve had increasing success. A stable breeding population has been established.



Putting up nest boxes for red-tailed phascogales.
Photograph by Angela Sanders



South Australia

Volunteers contributed 3 675 hours of work and five community groups were involved on SA reserves.

Buffel grass control was stepped up on Bon Bon Station Reserve, with assistance from Roxby Downs Buffel Busters.

Adnyamathanha rangers at Nantawarrina Indigenous Protected Area in the Flinders Ranges worked with Bush Heritage to develop a monitoring program.



- Geographic regions**
- Northern Savannah
 - Arid Riverine
 - Grassy Ecosystems North
 - Spencer
 - Southwest Floristic
 - Grassy Ecosystems South
 - Southeast Coastal and Highlands

- Bush Heritage reserves**
- up to 1000 ha
 - up to 100 000 ha
 - up to 300 000 ha
- Bush Heritage partnerships**
- Aboriginal partnership
 - Regional partnership

Queensland

Volunteers contributed 5 355 hours of work and six community groups were involved on Qld reserves.

Fox control continued at Reedy Creek Reserve to protect loggerhead turtle nests along the neighbouring coastline.

Volunteers made major improvements to Ethabuka Reserve's accommodation and the Field Officer took up residence to facilitate easier management of the reserve.

The Red-Finned Blue-Eye Recovery Team continued to be led by Bush Heritage to work on preserving this endemic species at Edgbaston Reserve.

Nature Refuge agreements (covenants) were settled over Yourka and Edgbaston reserves. Bush Heritage now holds the majority of land under Nature Refuge agreements in the state.

New South Wales

Volunteers contributed 6513 hours of work and five community groups were involved on NSW reserves.

South Endeavour Trust and Bush Heritage formed a partnership to manage Yantabulla Station, a 17 000 ha property abutting Naree Station. Together, we now protect Back Creek Swamp and the Yantabulla Swamp delta.

Greening Australia and Bush Heritage worked together to undertake 300 ha of revegetation on Scottsdale Reserve.

Tasmania

Volunteers contributed 1 354 hours of work on Tas reserves.

Tasmanian Aboriginal community members visited Liffey River and Oura Oura reserves to further build relationships, share stories and begin Aboriginal cultural values assessments.

Towering swamp gum, South Esk Pine Reserve, Tas. Photograph by Wayne Lawler/Ecopix

Victoria

Volunteers contributed 740 hours of work on Vic reserves and 3 306 hours at Bush Heritage's Conservation Support Centre in Melbourne.

Bush Heritage worked with the Dja Dja Wurrung people to protect culturally important places on Nardoo Hills Reserve.

Volunteers continued their dedicated work to control cactus on Nardoo Hills Reserve.



Goal 5

Build the financial sustainability and operational capacity of Bush Heritage

Bush Heritage implements a business model that is sustainable, supports expansion of our work and uses our supporters' contributions as effectively as possible.

We use every dollar that is donated to achieve the best possible return on investment, and aim to be an exemplar in effective and transparent reporting.

During 2014–15 we continued to build a more sustainable organisation by implementing new fundraising activities and investment strategies, supported by improvements in business systems and processes. We finished the year with an income of over \$17 million, a significant step towards our goal of having our conservation work underpinned by \$20 million of annual revenue by 2017.

We have continued to develop and strengthen our internal capacity in business systems, corporate governance and financial management, accessing and leveraging expertise through skilled volunteers and pro bono support where possible.

Strengthening our governance – review and update of the Constitution

At the AGM in August 2014 our members voted to adopt a revised Constitution for Bush Heritage Australia. This followed the first comprehensive review of the Constitution since 2000, made possible through the pro bono guidance and support of law firm Russell Kennedy Lawyers and the contribution of our volunteer Board and Governance Committee members. The new Constitution does not change our objectives or mission but it significantly strengthens our governance processes, including in the composition of our Board of Directors and the criteria for membership and honorary life membership. The Board also adopted a revised complementary Board Charter and sub-committee charters.

Specialist volunteers strengthen our corporate systems and land management

Bush Heritage is fortunate to have a cohort of highly skilled volunteers who contribute their particular expertise to the further development of the organisation.

Efficient and effective corporate systems are critical to Bush Heritage's success. We must be able to ensure worker safety through efficient communications, reliably manage and report transparently on our finances, ethically and professionally manage our interactions with over 40 000 supporters and volunteers, plan our work programs to ensure maximum conservation outcomes

and manage our business risks through strong systems of governance and sound legal advice. Our corporate systems are therefore continually being improved, and in 2014–15 we were greatly assisted by many skilled volunteers working in our Melbourne offices, including Paul Hermecz and Michael Coleman.

Paul Hermecz is an experienced senior IT executive manager in the health and not-for-profit sectors. During 2014 he directed our IT systems and strategies to ensure that they were innovative and contemporary.

Michael Coleman is a senior lawyer and executive in the telecommunications industry. While on a twelve-month sabbatical, Michael supported us by contributing legal expertise to finalise contract agreements and land acquisitions, and gave extensive support to our governance team.

A number of our volunteers have made outstanding contributions on our reserves.

Peter Fogarty runs his own successful soil and land conservation business in Canberra. Peter was fundamental in the planning, project management, design and sourcing of government funding for major erosion works on Scottsdale Reserve (see Page 13).

Dr John and Vanessa Hunter recently completed their second stint at Naree Station where they have identified hundreds of plant species. John manages an environmental consultancy and is Adjunct Senior Lecturer in botany and ecology at the University of New England.



Building an ambitious and sustainable organisation

The ambitious vision of Bush Heritage inspires others in the community and encourages them to support our work however they can, including through cash gifts and bequests. As we strive to expand our partnerships and buy more land for conservation reserves, we need also to invest in building broader community support to ensure that our ambitious conservation work can continue, underpinned by a robust and sustainable organisation. As a result, since 2012 we have prioritised investment in recruiting new donors and increasing the reach of our conservation message – and with great success.

We currently have more than 40 000 supporters. More than 9000 of these people give monthly as Friends of the Bush. These wonderful people help us to spread our message through the community, and with their donations help to ensure the sustainability of our vital conservation work. We are grateful for their generosity and will keep working to increase our community support so that the imperative of preserving Australia’s unique biodiversity is understood by people of all ages across Australia.

Opposite page, top: Katie Wilson, daughter of Reserve Manager Chris Wilson, with Dr John Staniscic (Curator of Molluscs, Qld Museum) at the Carnarvon Station Reserve bioblitz, Qld. Photograph by Alison Wilson

Top: Limacella piterika, J C Griffin Reserve, Vic. Photograph by Jeroen van Veen

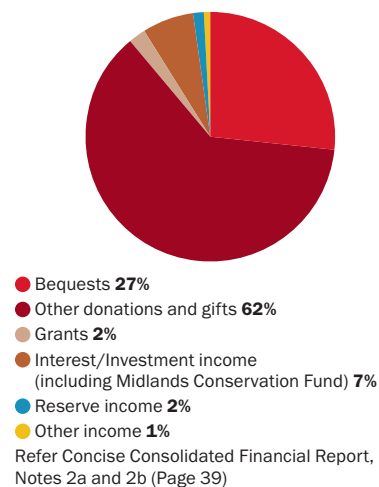
Bush Heritage Capital Fund

The new Bush Heritage Australia Capital Fund was formally established by our Board in February 2015. It adds value to generous contributions by supporters and enhances our long-term capacity to protect Australia’s unique natural heritage.

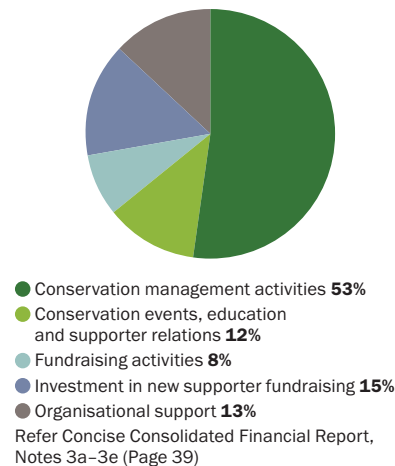
The three overarching aims of the Capital Fund are: a) to establish an endowment for the long-term financial security and independence of Bush Heritage and the properties it manages; b) to allow Bush Heritage to act independently and decisively when an outstanding opportunity emerges to either buy a new property or support a partnership; and c) to provide Bush Heritage and its supporters with the ability to leverage multiple land purchases or conservation partnerships with a single donation.

In many ways, the Capital Fund formalises our longstanding practice of setting aside endowments for our properties. Thus we were able to start the fund with an initial balance of \$6 million and our long-term target is to reach \$50 million through donations and investment earnings. The fund is professionally managed by an external manager, overseen by the Capital Fund Investment Committee and subject to the Capital Fund Charter. Donations to the Capital Fund are tax-deductible and may be made through gifts of money, bequests or donations of other assets such as shares or property.

Sources of income 2014–15



Breakdown of expenditure 2014–15





Goal 6

Ensure an organisational culture of collaboration and commitment

Bush Heritage provides and promotes a safe and healthy working environment.

We invest in our people to ensure that they have the right skills and tools to succeed in their roles. The unique abilities and experience they bring create a diverse, flexible, creative and inclusive working environment that fosters collaboration and commitment.

Bush Heritage continues to invest in the development of its Health, Safety and Environment systems and strengthen the safety culture across all our operations. Organisational development programs, including professional development and career planning, internal secondment opportunities, service awards and staff awards recognising outstanding achievement, have supported our people in line with our values. Training opportunities have been further developed and strengthened to ensure that we attract and retain a highly skilled, inspired and committed workforce.

Health and safety

The safety of all workers and others affected by our operations is absolutely critical. For this reason, Bush Heritage's Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) management system undergoes continuous review and improvement. In the past year, workplace HSE inspections were conducted across all reserves and this enabled many safety improvements. We implemented our decision to remove quad bikes from all of our operations and developed improved resources for our staff, addressing the handling of fuel, chemicals and other materials. Our HSE Committee studied all reported safety incidents and hazards and ensured that safety lessons were identified, learned and acted upon.

There has also been a continued emphasis on HSE training and in 2014 the Bush Heritage Board, management team and HSE Committee members undertook training with the National Safety Council of Australia to strengthen our knowledge of safety systems. Staff from all parts of the organisation have also participated in basic vehicle training, 4WD training and outback survival training. Additionally, safety culture experts and Bush Heritage pro bono supporter Sentis continued to provide invaluable training and support for all of our staff to assist us to achieve an ingrained and sustainable safety culture. We are extremely grateful for Sentis's ongoing commitment to Bush Heritage.

Looking after our people

Over the past year Bush Heritage has been implementing strategies to build levels of trust, respect, knowledge and collaboration across the organisation. The National Gathering at Toolangi in Victoria provided a wonderful opportunity for staff and their families to meet face to face and learn more about the exciting work that is going on across the regions and within our national programs. The gathering was a great success (see adjacent text).

We have also provided more opportunities for staff to broaden their understanding of the business by encouraging them to work within different sections of the organisation. This includes opportunities for Conservation Support Centre staff to work out on reserves. The organisation has also placed greater focus on the individual career aspirations of staff and reflected this in the performance and career development process. We introduced service awards for staff that recognise significant periods of service (at five, ten, 15 and 20 years).

Staff retention improved to 93.4 per cent in 2014–15 compared to the previous year's figure of 85.6 per cent. This was in part due to increased stability following a period of greater change during the previous eighteen months.

Top: Bush Heritage Ecologist Dr Vanessa Westcott at Hamelin Station, WA. Photograph by Cineport Media



National Gathering

As an organisation with staff who are widely dispersed, getting together regularly is important. In December 2014 the entire Bush Heritage staff gathered at Toolangi, Vic, to participate in our biennial national gathering where we discussed new initiatives, built camaraderie and friendships, and celebrated achievements. Staff from remote reserves were encouraged to bring their families, and all families were invited to our celebratory dinner.

The gathering allowed staff to meet colleagues in a relaxed setting, and to participate in essential training, which included an expert presentation on the psychology of safety. A program of ‘TED-like talks’ enabled staff to present innovative ideas for new initiatives or projects to the rest of the team. Each idea was put to a staff vote and the winner received a guarantee of seed funding in our next budget. A diversity of presentations covered regional programs, Aboriginal partnerships, fundraising and the science and monitoring program. Guest speakers, Bush Heritage patron Bob Brown and acclaimed landscape photographer Richard Green, also gave inspirational talks. The gathering was a great success and further consolidated our mission to work together to protect Australia’s precious natural heritage.

“Bush Heritage has been implementing strategies to build levels of trust, respect, knowledge and collaboration across the organisation.”

Top: Reserve Manager Chris Wilson (left) and Bush Heritage Ecologist Murray Haseler, Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld. Photograph by Alison Wilson



Our Conservation Support Centre moves downstairs

In November 2014 the Melbourne Conservation Support Centre moved down four flights of stairs to new premises on Level 1, 395 Collins Street.

The new office was officially opened by Bush Heritage President Louise Sylvan in February 2015 and provides a lighter, more open workplace for our staff, our dedicated volunteers and supporters, and other visitors to our office.

The entrance area now proudly features new honour boards recognising our donors and bequestors, and a beautiful painting by Deanne Gilson, a Wadawurrung artist living on Country in Ballarat, Victoria.

The painting, *Waddawurung Cultural Tree of Knowledge*, represents the stories and interconnection of people and Country and reflects Bush Heritage’s dedication to working with, and alongside, Aboriginal people across Australia.



*Desert wetland, Ethabuka Reserve, Qld.
Photograph by Alistair Dermer*

Governance report

Governance statement

Bush Heritage is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee, incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001*. The purpose of the company is to secure and protect Australia's biodiversity and natural landscapes. The Board of Directors is responsible for the governance of the company and for ensuring that business activities are directed towards achieving the company's purpose. This governance statement outlines how the Board meets that responsibility.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

The responsibilities of the Board include:

- setting the direction, strategies and financial objectives of Bush Heritage
 - overseeing Bush Heritage, including its accountability and control systems
 - appointing, reviewing the performance of and, where appropriate, removing, the Chief Executive
 - monitoring compliance with regulatory requirements and ethical standards
 - reviewing and approving management's strategy and performance objectives
 - monitoring the implementation of the policies, strategies and objectives of Bush Heritage
 - identifying the principal risks faced by Bush Heritage and taking reasonable steps to ensure that appropriate systems of risk management and internal compliance and control are in place to manage and, to the extent reasonably possible, reduce the impact of these risks
 - establishing corporate governance and legal compliance systems, as well as monitoring compliance with those systems
 - monitoring performance of senior management staff and their implementation of strategy and budgets
 - overseeing the overall fundraising strategy
 - determining who may become a member of Bush Heritage in accordance with the Constitution
 - approving and monitoring the progress of major capital expenditure, capital management and conservation acquisitions
 - approving the budget and monitoring financial and other reporting so that financial results are appropriately and accurately reported on a timely basis in accordance with all legal and regulatory requirements
 - deciding on any matter that is in excess of the discretions or limits that have been delegated from time to time to senior management and
 - reviewing succession planning and development activities for directors and the Chief Executive
- In performing its responsibilities and functions the Board may delegate any of its powers to a Board committee or to other persons in accordance with the Constitution.

Responsibilities of Management

The Board has formally delegated responsibility for Bush Heritage's day-to-day operation and administration to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive and the management team provide leadership to the organisation and are responsible for achieving the results set out in the Strategic Plan and annual Business Plan and are authorised by the Board to put in place policies and procedures, take decisions and actions and initiate activities to achieve those results.

Board oversight and Committee structure

The Board oversees and monitors the organisation's performance by meeting at least quarterly, when it receives detailed reports from Management and provides direction on key matters and oversight of business performance. Board committees are established to provide advice and recommendations to the Board and Management on particular aspects of Bush Heritage's operations and administration. Each committee operates under a charter approved by the Board that sets out the committee's purpose, membership and responsibilities. The Board is currently supported by the following committees, with membership consisting primarily of directors with support from specialist advisers. In 2014–15 the Board Charter and standard Committee Charter were reviewed and updated by the Board to strengthen their alignment with Bush Heritage's purpose and strategy and the updated Constitution, which was adopted by the members at the August 2014 Annual General Meeting.



As at 31 March 2015 the committee structure and duties are as follows.

Science and Conservation Committee

Chair: Dr Sue McIntyre

The Science and Conservation Committee reviews and recommends the development and implementation of Bush Heritage's approach to biodiversity conservation. It reviews all science and conservation strategies and policies, and acquisition proposals, and monitors reserve and partnership planning, implementation, outcomes and achievements.

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

Chair: David Rickards

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee reviews and then recommends approval of the annual Business Plan and associated operating budget, and monitors the organisation's longer term business modelling, investment strategies and financial sustainability, security and prosperity. It reviews financial results, forecasts and overall financial management, monitors the management of financial assets including performance of the investment portfolio, and monitors auditing and risk management policy and procedures, and legislative and regulatory responsibilities.

Gift Fund Committee

Chair: David Rickards

The Gift Fund Committee monitors compliance with the Rules of the Bush Heritage Australia Fund, including requirements for listing on the Register of Environmental Organisations and for retaining Deductible Gift Recipient status. It reviews the Annual Report from Management, including the transaction types and internal controls used to manage the Gift Fund and associated bank accounts.

Marketing and Fundraising Committee

Chair: Andrew Myer

The Marketing and Fundraising Committee reviews and monitors the performance of Bush Heritage's marketing and fundraising strategies, including supporter and community engagement, and provides strategic guidance and recommendations for further fundraising growth and development.

Aboriginal Engagement Committee

Chair: Leanne Liddle

The Aboriginal Engagement Committee advises on the development and implementation of Bush Heritage's Aboriginal Engagement Strategy and policy, partnership frameworks and on-Country programs. Its responsibilities include monitoring, evaluating, providing advice and recommending key areas for improvement in Aboriginal engagement. It also provides information and advice on matters of Aboriginal engagement relating to Bush Heritage's conservation programs.

Governance Committee

Chair: Louise Sylvan

The Governance Committee advises on matters relating to the effectiveness of the Board, its committees and the role of the Chief Executive and Company Secretary. It periodically reviews the performance of the directors and Chief Executive, including recommending the appointment, re-election or removal of directors and committee advisors, succession planning and the terms of employment and remuneration of the Chief Executive. The committee also reviews applications for membership of Bush Heritage and oversees the membership register.

Operations and Safety Committee

Chair: Nicholas Burton Taylor

The Operations and Safety Committee provides advice on and monitors implementation of the Health, Safety and Environment Strategy, and maintains and reviews metrics for organisational safety reporting. It also provides advice on areas relating to fire management, and property acquisitions as they relate to infrastructure, staffing requirements, neighbour relations and integration of new activities into existing operations. It provides advice on strategy and the effectiveness of activities relating to land management, procurement, employment, visitation, access to reserves and sustainability.

Directors

All directors are non-executive positions and receive no remuneration for their services. However, out-of-pocket expenses such as for travel may be paid to enable them to fulfil their duties. Bush Heritage's Constitution provides an indemnity to directors, auditor, secretary and other officers. Appropriate director and officer indemnity insurance has been put in place.

Risk management

Bush Heritage manages its organisational risks in line with current Australian Standards AS/NZS ISP 31000:2009. Each risk is assigned a risk owner who is responsible for identifying and implementing appropriate treatment strategies to mitigate the risk or realise opportunities, and who is responsible for reporting on that risk to the relevant committee(s) and Board. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee oversees the execution of the Risk Management Policy across the organisation. The Board is responsible for ensuring that risks and opportunities are identified in a timely manner and considered against the organisation's objectives, operations and appetite for risk.



Risks are identified and then scored against measures of ‘likelihood’ (the probability of the risk eventuating) and ‘consequence’ (the impact, should the risk eventuate). To ensure that the ratings are appropriately chosen, the measures cover a range of impact categories including:

- health, safety and environment
- conservation
- financial
- legal and compliance
- strategic
- environment/pollution
- service delivery
- reputation and image
- stakeholder relations.

In accordance with Bush Heritage’s Risk Management Policy, a register of risks and their associated current controls, treatment strategies and status are reviewed regularly. These reviews are undertaken by the Executive Management Team and at each meeting of the various committees and Board. The Board must oversee the risk management of the organisation and must establish, enforce and update as necessary appropriate policies and procedures for identifying, assessing and dealing with risk. The Board considers all relevant risks when making decisions.

Health, safety and environment

The safety of all people who come into contact with our operations is the highest priority for Bush Heritage management and the Board of Directors.

Bush Heritage’s Health, Safety and Environment management system is reviewed by a Health and Safety Committee, which has representation from every team, location and level within the organisation. Bush Heritage thereby ensures that it develops and monitors a system that can be consistently applied and fulfils the requirements of all relevant Work, Health and Safety legislation.

The Operations and Safety Committee is responsible for reviewing and maintaining metrics for safety reporting, which is then reviewed by the directors at each Board meeting.

Bush Heritage continues to review and seek ongoing improvements to its safety systems via the mechanisms described above, and via consultation with external experts, with the aim of minimising the risks to workers associated with our activities.

Independent advice

The Board and committees have access to independent advice on legal, ecological, scientific, investment and taxation matters as required.

Code of conduct and ethical standards

Each director and staff member is expected to comply with relevant laws and the codes of conduct of relevant professional bodies. Directors must act with integrity in a professional and reputable manner appropriate to their position as directors of Bush Heritage, and consistent with Bush Heritage’s Code of Conduct policy. Taking professional advice when necessary, directors must actively determine whether any conflicts of interest exist and must disclose such conflicts to the Board as soon as they become apparent. A register of these matters is recorded and reviewed by the Board at every meeting.

Environmental regulation and performance

Bush Heritage’s operations are subject to significant environmental regulation under the law of the Commonwealth and states. All our activities are conducted in accordance with the relevant statutes. All relevant permits and licences required for aspects of ecological and land management activities are obtained for the relevant jurisdiction.

Stakeholder engagement

Bush Heritage’s activities are conducted within broader communities of interest and we seek to actively engage with all stakeholders within those communities in order to ensure, as much as possible, a high level of consultation, mutual understanding and cooperation. This approach directly benefits our conservation purposes as greater outcomes may be achieved through community-based action. Regular communication with our stakeholders takes place through direct meetings and interaction, and via communication channels such as the newsletter *Bush Tracks*, website and blog, email and social media, as well as via the Annual Report.

Opposite page: Bush Heritage Ecologist Murray Haseler and volunteer Ellie Sobey monitoring birds, Carnarvon Station Reserve, Qld. Photograph by Terry Cooke

Top: Flock of budgerigars, Edgbaston Reserve, Qld. Photograph by Wayne Lawler/Epocix



Treasurer's report

Without the generous support of our donors, pro bono supporters and volunteers, we could not fulfil our conservation promise.

We are now the custodians of habitats on more than 1.2 million ha and are conservation partners in many further diverse landscapes around Australia. We need to be well funded and well managed in order to maintain our practical programs and expand our areas of influence. The generosity of our supporters has been outstanding over the past financial year and we remain in a sound financial position.

Given the ongoing nature of our commitment, we also need to be highly conscious of future uncertainties, ensuring that we remain well placed to continue our work should financial circumstances change. This means wisely allocating our resources across our current practical conservation programs, our expansion into new properties and partnerships and our endowment for the future.

The Board and staff of Bush Heritage continue to be guided by the five-year strategic framework we've set ourselves for 2012–17. As I've previously reported, within this framework we've taken a deliberate decision to invest significantly in expanding our base of financial supporters. This means investing in spreading the word right across Australia and asking more and more people if they would like to support our cause. We are starting to see very positive outcomes from this strategy, both in terms of expanding our community of supporters and also in the associated increases in revenue. Total revenue from supporter contributions and grants rose from \$11.8 million in 2013–14 to \$16.1 million in 2014–15, with increases seen across all of our main fundraising sources.

These increased revenues have been applied during the year to expanding our practical conservation activities as well as to associated conservation events and education, and on ensuring the ongoing viability of our operations, while also contributing to a significant operating surplus for the year. Operating surpluses can assist in the initial funding of new conservation reserves and, as reported elsewhere in this Annual Report, we are very pleased to have acquired two new properties for conservation during 2014–15.

Of course each time we expand the reach of our work through acquiring a new reserve or entering a new partnership, we also increase our ongoing future commitments. The security of Bush Heritage and that of the habitats we protect were therefore key drivers in the Board's decision to create the Bush Heritage Capital Fund in February 2015. The Capital Fund is a formal endowment fund for Bush Heritage. Moreover, it allows for quick temporary access to internal capital should we need to act rapidly to secure a target property on the open market or other significant conservation outcomes. We have seeded the Capital Fund, which will remain on our Balance Sheet, with an opening balance of \$6.1 million drawn from our existing investments.

Aside from our own preparations for the future, another source of confidence for the Board is our significant bequests program. With an expanding number of generous supporters advising us that they have provided a gift to Bush Heritage in their wills, we can continue to plan for a bright conservation future. All of us at Bush Heritage are extremely grateful for the far-sighted support offered by those who generously leave us bequests.

Finally, on a personal note, this will be my last Treasurer's Report. With compulsory retirement from our Board after nine years' service, I will conclude my term at the coming August 2015 Annual General Meeting. I will do so with absolute confidence that the financial security of Bush Heritage is now systematic and not reliant on individual voices. Our fundraising programs, our systems of financial control and transparency, our budgeting and business planning processes and our conservative yet confident culture will all ensure our ongoing success. I will be succeeded as Treasurer by my Board colleague Nick Burton Taylor, who has outstanding credentials for the role and who I know will make an extremely positive contribution.

In closing I would like to thank all of the directors with whom I have served over almost a decade, all of the talented Bush Heritage staff with whom I've been fortunate to work and, in particular, Chief Financial Officer Rob Pratt and his team who have revolutionised the financial management of Bush Heritage. But, of course, of greatest importance are the wonderful Bush Heritage supporters who really give us the inspiration and the resources for our work.

David Rickards
Treasurer

*Red lacewing, Umpila Country, Cape York.
Photograph by Nic Gambold*

Directors' report

Your Directors present their report for the 12 months ended 31 March 2015.

The following people have served as directors during the year and to the date of this report:

Louise Sylvan – President

Appointed to the Board in 2009

Louise is currently the Chair of Energy Consumers Australia and has previously served in a number of other senior roles including as Chief Executive Officer of the Australian National Preventive Health Agency, as a Commissioner of the Productivity Commission and as Deputy Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Louise also currently serves as a Board Member of Social Enterprise Finance Australia.

Andrew Myer – Vice President

Appointed to the Board in 2007

Andrew is principal of the AV Myer Group of Companies. He has extensive experience in investment, property development and management, film production and philanthropy. He is a Director of the Myer Family Company Ltd, a Trustee of the Sidney Myer Fund and Deputy Chair of the Melbourne International Film Festival.

David Rickards – Treasurer

Appointed to the Board in 2006

David is the co-founder of Social Enterprise Finance Australia. He previously served as the Executive Director and Global Head of Research at Macquarie Securities. David has served as Bush Heritage Australia Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and the Gift Fund Committee and will retire from the Board at the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Nicholas Burton Taylor AM

Appointed to the Board in 2013

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

Chris Grubb

Appointed to the Board in 2011

Chris is currently a non-executive Director of several Asian investment management companies, Chairman of Boardroom Australia and a Trustee of the Australian Museum Foundation. He has previously served as Chairman of ASX-listed companies and was a director of investment bank Jardine Fleming for 22 years as well as serving as a director of other public and not-for-profit organisations. He is a keen birdwatcher and naturalist.

Leanne Liddle

Appointed to the Board in 2009

Leanne is a passionate scientist and lawyer who has worked in many senior positions within government. She has also delivered specialised lectures both nationally and internationally, with a particular focus on restoring and protecting threatened plant and animal species in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY) in South Australia using traditional scientific skills. Leanne currently works as the Senior Policy Advisor at the Northern Land Council based in Darwin. She is a strong advocate for applying traditional Aboriginal use of fire in the landscape.

Dr Sue McIntyre

Appointed to the Board in 2007

Sue is a plant ecologist with over 30 years' research experience in academia and CSIRO, focusing on the management of native vegetation. Her published work has been influential academically and has informed policy development and land management for conservation. Sue has served as Chair of the Science and Conservation Committee and will retire from the Board at the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Dr Rebecca Nelson

Appointed to the Board in 2014

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

Keith Tuffley

Appointed to the Board in 2006

Keith is the Managing Partner of The B Team, a New York-based non-government organisation of business leaders who are driving better business practices. He is also the Founder and Chairman of NEUW Ventures SA, a Swiss-based impact investing company focused on the creation and financing of start-up sustainability businesses. He was previously Managing Director and Head of Investment Banking at Goldman Sachs in Australia.

Prof Michelle Leishman

Appointed to the Board in 2015

Michelle is a plant ecologist with over 20 years' research experience focused on invasive plants, vegetation responses to climate change, restoration ecology and plant conservation. She leads a research group in the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University. Michelle is a member of the Scientific and Conservation Committee, Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Sydney, and of the Australian Flora Foundation Council. She is an Associate Editor of *Journal of Ecology* and past Chair of the NSW Scientific Committee.

Company Secretary

Gerard O'Neill – February 2013 – present

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

Your Directors (from left to right, top to bottom):
 Louise Sylvan, Andrew Myer, David Rickards, Nicholas Burton Taylor AM, Chris Grubb,
 Leanne Liddle, Dr Sue McIntyre, Dr Rebecca Nelson, Keith Tuffley, Prof Michelle Leishman



Directors' meetings

Nine directors' meetings were held during the financial year. Where the Director was not in office for the whole of the financial year, the number of meetings held during the part-year period of office is shown in the first column. Details of directors' meeting attendance are as follows.

	Directors' meetings held while in office	Directors' meetings attended
Louise Sylvan	9	9
Andrew Myer	9	8
David Rickards	9	9
Nick Burton Taylor	9	9
Chris Grubb	9	8
Michelle Leishman (from June 2015)	0	0
Leanne Liddle	9	6
Sue McIntyre	9	8
Rebecca Nelson (from 5/12/2014)	2	2
Keith Tuffley	9	7

Short- and long-term objectives and strategy

Bush Heritage's long-term objective is to secure and protect Australia's biodiversity and natural landscapes.

In the shorter term our strategies and objectives are to:

1. double the area secured for conservation, by direct acquisition and partnership, from 3 million to 6 million ha
2. maintain and improve conservation management outcomes
3. demonstrate leadership and innovation in nature conservation
4. increase to 30 000 the number of people we engage with and who support our work
5. build the financial sustainability and operational capacity of Bush Heritage
6. ensure an organisational culture of collaboration and commitment.

Principal activities

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

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

Performance measures

Bush Heritage recognises the importance of key performance measures to monitor and gauge organisational performance. In accordance with the Bush Heritage Australia Strategic Plan 2012–17, the organisation has clear goals and objectives that it will work towards achieving over the life of the plan.

Currently Bush Heritage utilises a range of performance measures. These measures have been developed at a variety of levels within the organisation and in response to a range of drivers.

Some of the tools and reporting methods used currently in the organisation, which will be continually reviewed and further integrated into future performance reporting, include:

- Conservation Scorecards, for reporting on conservation outcomes achieved at reserves or with partners. Scorecards are derived from our central conservation management system (Miradi) utilised by Bush Heritage as part of our adoption of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, which is an international planning and adaptive-management methodology
- monthly financial reporting
- quarterly progress reporting against the key strategic priorities from the Strategic Plan 2012–17
- quarterly marketing KPI reporting
- a biennial organisational effectiveness report
- annual reporting on staff diversity.

Members' guarantee

In accordance with the company's Constitution, each member is liable to contribute a maximum of \$10 in the event that the company is wound up. As at 31 March 2015 the number of members was 68.

Auditors' independence

The Auditors' Declaration of Independence appears on page 41 and forms part of the Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Rounding

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

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

Louise Sylvan
 President
 11 June 2015



*Zebra finches, Ethabuka Reserve, Qld.
Photograph by Linda Rogan*

Concise consolidated financial report

for the year ended 31 March 2015

This Concise Consolidated Financial Report should be read in conjunction with the Directors' Report and the Annual Report, which provide details of the achievements and activities of Bush Heritage Australia (Bush Heritage) and its controlled entity (Midlands Conservation Fund) during the financial year ended 31 March 2015.

The Concise Consolidated Financial Report is an extract from the Full Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2015. The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the Concise Consolidated Financial Report have been derived from the Full Consolidated Financial Report in accordance with the Accounting Standards.

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

Discussion and Analysis – Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

Trends in Revenue and Net Surplus

Bush Heritage's mission and activities continued to be very well supported during the financial year with a significant increase in financial contributions received from our supporters in 2014–15. Total revenue from supporter contributions and grants rose from \$11.8m in 2013–14 to \$16.1m in 2014–15, with increased revenues received from all of our significant fundraising sources. Our supporter base has grown as a direct result of our continued investments in attracting new supporters to Bush Heritage's cause.

Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 March 2015

	Notes	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Revenue			
Supporter contributions and grants	2(a)	16,110	11,795
Interest and investment income	2(b)	1,200	662
Reserve income		283	246
Other income		133	153
Total Revenue		17,726	12,857
Expenses			
Conservation management activities	3(a)	8,420	7,261
Conservation events, education and supporter relations	3(b)	1,835	1,452
Fundraising activities	3(c)	1,217	1,297
Investment in new supporters	3(d)	2,394	1,696
Organisational support	3(e)	1,988	1,778
Total Expenses		15,854	13,484
Surplus/(Deficit) Before Tax		1,872	(627)
Income tax		–	–
Net Surplus/(Deficit)		1,872	(627)
Other Comprehensive Income			
Net fair value gains/(losses) on available-for-sale financial assets		745	486
Income tax on items of other comprehensive income		–	–
Other comprehensive income for the period, net of tax		745	486
Total comprehensive income for the period		2,617	(141)

The Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes. Any single year surpluses are reinvested into the future expansion of the company's conservation activities.

While no major capital campaigns were undertaken in 2014–15 (a typical source of one-off increased revenues), Bush Heritage did receive a high level of bequest donations in 2014–15, which has significantly contributed to the overall increase in revenue. Bush Heritage continues to be extremely grateful for the generosity and far-sightedness of all of our bequest supporters.

The increased revenues have been applied during the year to expanding our practical conservation activities as well as to associated conservation events and education and on ensuring the ongoing viability of our operations, whilst also contributing to a significant operating surplus for the year. Any single year surpluses are reinvested into the future expansion of Bush Heritage's

conservation activities, including through the purchase of additional land and infrastructure for conservation purposes.

Effects of Significant Economic or Other Events

There were no material impacts on performance as a result of external events. The gains in the fair value of the Bush Heritage investment portfolio have again exceeded the relevant industry benchmarks.

Dividends

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

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2015

	Notes	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		1,171	2,939
Trade and other receivables		455	454
Total Current Assets		1,626	3,393
Non-Current Assets			
Investments	4	11,768	11,059
Property, plant and equipment		31,095	26,691
Intangibles – computer software		73	67
Total Non-Current Assets		42,936	37,817
TOTAL ASSETS		44,562	41,210
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables		1,066	758
Provisions		775	652
Interest-bearing liabilities		206	133
Total Current Liabilities		2,047	1,543
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions		197	182
Interest-bearing liabilities		311	95
Total Non-Current Liabilities		508	277
TOTAL LIABILITIES		2,555	1,820
NET ASSETS		42,007	39,390
EQUITY			
Equity funds and reserves	5	42,007	39,390
TOTAL EQUITY		42,007	39,390

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

Discussion and Analysis – Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

Changes in the Composition of Assets and Liabilities

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Position shows that Bush Heritage retains a strong capital base with \$42,007,000 in net assets, representing the accumulated supporter contributions and other net earnings that Bush Heritage has received since its inception and which have been applied to the acquisition of land and other capital assets for conservation purposes.

The significant changes to the overall composition of assets and liabilities from 2013–14 to 2014–15 arose from two property acquisitions in Western Australia that were finalised during the latest financial year.

Firstly, Monjebup Creek Reserve was purchased early in the financial year, being the new addition to our existing Gondwana Link portfolio of properties in the Fitz–Stirling region. Secondly, Hamelin Station Reserve was acquired in March 2015, being a significant leasehold property near Shark Bay in Western Australia.

Relationship between Debt and Equity

Bush Heritage does not have any borrowings other than equipment finance leases. Total equity within the consolidated entity reflects the carrying value of all Bush Heritage-owned properties as well as the value of Bush Heritage investments, working capital and the Midlands Conservation Fund.

Discussion and Analysis – Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity

Changes in the Composition of the Components of Equity

The consolidated equity of Bush Heritage and its subsidiary, the Midlands Conservation Fund, is maintained within four defined equity funds and reserves, being the Bush Heritage General Fund, the Bush Heritage Restricted Fund, the Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve and the Midlands Conservation Fund. These individual equity funds and reserves are detailed and further described in Note 5.

The Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity illustrates that the reported surplus or deficit for each financial year is firstly recognised within Accumulated Surpluses and then allocated out of Accumulated Surpluses and into the relevant equity fund according to the amounts applicable to each fund. Other comprehensive income, being entirely comprised of the net fair value gains or losses on financial assets recorded for the financial year, is directly allocated to the Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve.

Discussion and Analysis – Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows

Changes in Cash Flows from Operating Activities

The increases in operating cash inflows and outflows, compared to the prior year, reflect the increased revenue and operating expense reported in the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income within this Concise Consolidated Financial Report. However, cash inflows from operating activities did not grow as significantly as our operating revenues due to the receipt during the year of a significant amount of non-cash revenue in the form of donated Australian listed shares.

Changes in Cash Flows from Investing Activities

The major investment activities in 2014–15 were the purchases of Hamelin Station and Monjebup Creek conservation reserves (including land and associated infrastructure) as described in the Discussion and Analysis of the Consolidated Statement of Financial Position within this Concise Consolidated Financial Report. A significant donation of Australian listed shares was added to our investment portfolio during 2014–15, leading to higher than usual proceeds from sales of investments as portfolio securities were redeemed to assist in funding capital and operational requirements.

Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 31 March 2015

	Notes	Accumulated Surplus 2015 \$'000	Equity Funds 2015 \$'000	Total 2015 \$'000
At 1 April 2014		-	39,390	39,390
Surplus/(deficit) for the period		1,872	-	1,872
Other comprehensive income		-	745	745
Total comprehensive income for the period		1,872	745	2,617
Net transfer to Bush Heritage General Fund		(2,540)	2,540	-
Net transfer to Bush Heritage Restricted Fund		716	(716)	-
Net transfer to Midlands Conservation Fund		(48)	48	-
At 31 March 2015	5	-	42,007	42,007

		2014 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2014 \$'000
At 1 April 2013		-	39,532	39,532
Surplus/(deficit) for the period		(627)	-	(627)
Other comprehensive income		-	486	486
Total comprehensive income for the period		(627)	486	(142)
Net transfer to Bush Heritage General Fund		837	(837)	-
Net transfer to Bush Heritage Restricted Fund		(39)	39	-
Net transfer to Midlands Conservation Fund		(170)	170	-
At 31 March 2014	5	-	39,390	39,390

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

Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2015

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts from supporter contributions and other sources	13,418	11,923
Payments to suppliers and employees	(14,390)	(12,360)
Interest and dividends received	253	272
Net cash from/(to) operating activities	(719)	(165)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of land	(2,150)	(222)
Purchase of investments	(174)	(1,233)
Purchase of buildings, plant and equipment	(2,720)	(467)
Purchase of software	(32)	(6)
Proceeds from the sale of land	-	450
Proceeds from the sale of investments	4,178	1,065
Proceeds from the sale of buildings, plant and equipment	62	-
Net cash from/(to) investing activities	(836)	(413)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Payment of finance lease liabilities	(213)	(215)
Net cash from/(to) financing activities	(213)	(215)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(1,768)	(794)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	2,939	3,733
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	1,171	2,939

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

Servicing and Repayment of Borrowings

Bush Heritage does not currently hold any borrowings, other than for finance leases on equipment.

Notes to the Concise Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015

Note 1. Corporate Information and Basis of Preparation

Bush Heritage is a not-for-profit, public company limited by guarantee. Members are nominated and determined in accordance with the company's Constitution. If the company is wound up then each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the company. As at 31 March 2015 the number of members was 68. Bush Heritage is listed on the Commonwealth Government's Register of Environmental Organisations, certifying it as a Deductible Gift Recipient, which authorises Bush Heritage to issue tax-deductible receipts for donations over \$2.

This Concise Consolidated Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001*, *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and Regulations 2013 and Australian Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports. The Concise Consolidated Financial Report is presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars (\$'000) unless otherwise stated, using the option available to Bush Heritage under ASIC Class Order 98/100. Bush Heritage is an entity to which the Class Order applies.

Note 1(a). Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements and specific disclosures required by AASB 1039 are an extract of, and have been derived from, Bush Heritage's Full Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2015. Other information included in the Concise Consolidated Financial Report is consistent with Bush Heritage's Full Consolidated Financial Report.

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

The current financial period is the year ended 31 March 2015. Comparative amounts for 2013–14 have been re-stated where necessary to be consistent with the accounting policies adopted in the current financial period.

The consolidated financial statements in this Concise Consolidated Financial Report comprise the financial statements of Bush Heritage and its subsidiary, the Midlands Conservation Fund Ltd (MCF).

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

Note 2. Revenue

Note 2(a). Supporter Contributions and Grants

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Donations and gifts	10,984	8,428
Grants	411	317
Bequests	4,715	2,730
Total Supporter Contributions and Grants	16,110	11,795

Note 2(b). Interest and Investment Income

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Dividends	427	359
Interest	252	303
Realised gains	521	-
Total Interest and Investment Income	1,200	662

Note 3. Expenses

Note 3(a). Conservation Management

Conservation management expenses include the following key items:

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

Note 3(b). Conservation Events, Education and Supporter Relations

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

Note 3(c). Fundraising Activities

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

Note 3(d). Investment in New Supporters

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

Note 3(e). Organisational Support

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

Note 3(f). Capital Expenditure Not Included in the Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income

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

Note 4. Investments

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
(a) Investments held by company		
Bush Heritage Australia		
· Bush Heritage Capital Fund	6,118	-
· Other Investments	2,159	7,597
	8,277	7,597
Midlands Conservation Fund	3,491	3,462
Closing balance	11,768	11,059
(b) Investments held by type		
Fixed interest	726	946
Property trusts	782	831
Shares Australian	3,412	3,682
Shares international	1,141	874
Term deposits	4,841	4,004
Other	866	723
Closing balance	11,768	11,059
(c) Reconciliation of movement in investments		
Opening balance	11,059	10,059
Additions	3,549	1,472
Disposals	(3,584)	(958)
Unrealised gain/(loss) in fair value of investments	745	486
Closing balance	11,768	11,059

Bush Heritage actively raises funds in addition to the purchase price and operating costs of our conservation reserves in order to create an endowment for the long-term financial security and independence of the properties we manage. This fundamental strategy has led to the creation of the significant investment portfolio currently held.

The Bush Heritage Capital Fund was established by Board Resolution on 27 February 2015, with the opening balance being drawn from Bush Heritage's existing investment portfolio. The Capital Fund has been established with the aim of further enhancing the long-term financial security of our properties. Investments of the Capital Fund are professionally managed by an external manager, overseen by the Capital Fund Investment Committee of the Bush Heritage Board and subject to the Capital Fund Charter. The equity in the Capital Fund is included within the Bush Heritage General Fund in Note 5.

Investments held in the Midlands Conservation Fund are directly overseen by the Midlands Conservation Fund Board of Directors and as at 31 March 2015 are entirely held in term deposits placed with Australian banks.

Note 5. Equity Funds and Reserves

(i) The Bush Heritage General Fund represents the accumulated supporter contributions and other net earnings that Bush Heritage has received since its inception and which have been applied to the acquisition of land and other capital assets for conservation purposes.

(ii) The Bush Heritage Restricted Fund represents funds received by Bush Heritage Australia that have been tied by the company to specific future conservation-related purposes and which remain unspent as at the date of these financial statements.

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

(iv) The Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve records net movements in the investment portfolio arising from ongoing revaluations of the portfolio assets to market values.

Note 5. Equity Funds and Reserves

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Bush Heritage General Fund (i)		
Opening balance	31,904	32,742
Net transfer to Bush Heritage General Fund	2,540	(837)
Closing balance	34,444	31,905
Bush Heritage Restricted Fund (ii)		
Opening balance	2,582	2,544
Additional restricted funds received	2,380	3,246
Restricted funds expended or acquitted	(3,095)	(3,207)
Closing balance	1,867	2,583
Midlands Conservation Fund (iii)		
Opening balance	3,567	3,397
Net surplus attributable to Midlands Conservation Fund	49	170
Closing balance	3,616	3,567
Net Unrealised Gains/(Losses) Reserve (iv)		
Opening balance	1,335	849
Net valuation gains/(losses) taken to equity during the period	745	486
Closing balance	2,080	1,335
Total Equity Funds and Reserves	42,007	39,390

Note 6. Subsequent Events

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

Note 7. State and Territory Government Fundraising Legislation Requirements

As a national organisation, Bush Heritage conducts fundraising operations in all states and territories. Several state and territory governments have specific licensing and reporting requirements aimed at informing and protecting the interests of donors.

Bush Heritage holds the following licences:

Australian Capital Territory	Charitable Collections Act 2003, Charitable Collections Licence No. L19000280
New South Wales	Charitable Fundraising Act 1991, Charitable Fundraising Authority 17412
Queensland	Collections Act 1966, Certificate of Sanction No. CP 4954
Tasmania	Collections for Charities Act 2001, Approval 10/02/09 F1A-320
Victoria	Fundraising Act 1998, Registration Number 9971.15
South Australia	Collections for Charitable Purposes Act 1939, Licence not required
Western Australia	Charitable Collections Act 1946, Licence No: 21446

There are no applicable fundraising licencing requirements in the Northern Territory.

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

Directors' declaration

In the opinion of the directors of Bush Heritage Australia the accompanying Concise Consolidated Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2015:

- (a) has been derived from and is consistent with the Full Consolidated Financial Report for the financial period; and
- (b) complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 Concise Financial Reports.

Made in accordance with a resolution of directors.



Louise Sylvan, President



David Rickards, Treasurer

Melbourne 11 June 2015

Auditor's declaration

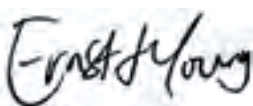


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Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Directors of Bush Heritage Australia

In relation to our audit of the financial report of Bush Heritage Australia for the financial year ended 31 March 2015, and in accordance with the requirements of Subdivision 60-C of the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012*, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012* or any applicable code of professional conduct.



Ernst & Young



Kester Brown
Partner

11 June 2015

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Independent auditor's report to the members of Bush Heritage Australia

Report on the Concise Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying concise financial report of Bush Heritage Australia which comprises the consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 March 2015, the consolidated statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended and related notes, derived from the audited financial report of Bush Heritage Australia for the year ended 31 March 2015. The concise financial report also includes discussion and analysis and the directors' declaration. The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by the Australian Accounting Standards.

Directors' Responsibility for the Concise Financial Report

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

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the concise financial report based on our audit procedures which were conducted in accordance with ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*. We have conducted an independent audit, in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, of the financial report of Bush Heritage Australia for the year ended 31 March 2015. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the financial report in our report dated 11 June 2015. The Australian Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report for the year is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the concise financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the concise financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation of the concise financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls. Our procedures included testing that the information in the concise financial report is derived from, and is consistent with, the financial report for the year, and examination on a test basis, of audit evidence supporting the amounts, discussion and analysis, and other disclosures which were not directly derived from the financial report for the year. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the concise financial report complies with AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports* and whether the discussion and analysis complies with the requirements laid down in AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001*.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis and the directors' declaration of Bush Heritage Australia for the year ended 31 March 2015 complies with Accounting Standard AASB 1039 *Concise Financial Reports*.

Ernst & Young

Kester Brown
Partner

Melbourne
11 June 2015

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Thank you

Without the generosity and support of thousands of people none of our work would be possible.

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Lesley Cunningham and Elisabeth Stephens, Geoff Giles, Greening Australia, Chris and Gina Grubb, JB HiFi and staff, Michael Tichbon, Michael and Margaret Williams

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ACT Government, Andyinc Foundation, Terry and Caroline Bellair, The E Robert Hayles & Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust managed by Perpetual, Daniel and Helen Gauchat, Jord Environment Trust, Margaret Dawbarn Foundation managed by Perpetual, Maxwell Family Foundation, Regal Funds Management, Rosalie Schultz, Yulgilbar Foundation

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Amaryllis Environmental, Australian Deer Association, Barbara Baird, Birdlife Australia – Northern Queensland, Greg Burns, Canberra Ornithologists Group, Canberra Recreational Fishers Association, Carrawa Foundation, Centre for Environment – University of Tasmania, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Phillip Cornwell and Cecilia Rice, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (Tas), Dick and Pip Smith Foundation, Heather Doig and Rob Koczkar, endota spa, Elizabeth Gabler Charitable Trust managed by Trust Company, Fenner School of Environment and Society – Australian National University, Friends of Grasslands, Alexander Gosling and Wirat Sukprem, Haly and Company, Ian and Stephanie Hardy, Harris Estate Charitable Gift, Hill Family Conservation Foundation, Institute of Applied Ecology – University of Canberra, Institute of Wildlife Research – University of Sydney, James N Kirby Foundation, Andrew Keayes and Vanessa Lansdown, Elizabeth Law-Smith, Letcombe Foundation, Keith Lethlean, Bruce and Ann McGregor, The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, The Mundango Charitable Trust, Murray–Darling Basin Authority, The Myer Foundation, National Australia Bank, Netspan Pty Ltd, NSW Department of Primary Industries, NSW Trade and Investment, Dr Teri O’Brien, Paterson family in memory of Iain Paterson,

Porter Novelli, Reece Australia Limited, Michael Rose and Jo D’Antonio, Margaret S Ross AM, Russell Kennedy Lawyers, Sentis, Soil and Landscape Conservation Services, South West Catchments Council through funding from the Australian Government’s Caring for our Country and the Government of Western Australia, Wright Family Bequest

Bequests

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

John Lawrence Barnett and Jennifer Mary Barnett, Sheila Mary Box, Margaret Mary Cowper, Ruth Eileen Devenney, Judith Gaskin, Hilde Jung, Dora Vaughan Lee, Violet Lynch, Merlie Ivy Merchant, Allan John Rogers, Mollie Vindin Rowell, Neil David Smalley, Joan Viner, John Weightman, Brian Williams, Terence Cornthwaite Wollaston.

Volunteers

Volunteer effort is a vital part of Bush Heritage’s capability. Of special mention are the contributions of:

Bill Alcock, Richard Alcorn, David Berg (USA), Andrew Black, Michael Coleman, Brian Crute, Arnis Dzedins, Norma Gates, Paul Hermezc, Brett Howland, Mary Hutchinson, Bill James, Vipin Mehta, Tarna Osborn, Scottsdale Volunteer Network, Jane and Bill Thompson, Len and Valerie Warren.

Top: Pulchera Waterhole, Ethabuka Reserve, Qld.
Photograph by Wayne Lawler/Ecopix

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Our work needs to continue. Your gift will ensure it can.

Bush Heritage is a national not-for-profit organisation funded by donations from generous supporters.

Please return to:

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You can also donate online at: BushHeritage.org.au/donate

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BUSH HERITAGE AUSTRALIA

Bush Heritage Australia

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Bush Heritage Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation committed to protecting Australia's biodiversity and the capacity of ecosystems to deliver the 'services' on which all living things depend. Bush Heritage has a proven and practical method for achieving these goals: we carefully select, purchase and manage land with outstanding conservation values and work in partnership with others to protect ecosystems and species.

Bush Heritage Australia has Deductible Gift Recipient status.