

# Conservation

BULLETIN

## PROTECTING AN ISLAND

**TIPS FOR BUYING A  
COVENANTED PROPERTY**

*History in the making at  
Neds Corner Station*

Why common species are special





**TRUST FOR NATURE**

**Trust for Nature (Victoria)** is a not-for-profit organisation that works with private landholders to protect native plants and animals. Two-thirds of Victoria is freehold, making the protection of habitat vital in preventing extinction. We work with landholders to place voluntary conservation covenants on properties and buy and sell land which has conservation values through our Revolving Fund.

**Patron:** The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria. **Trustees:** Gayle Austen (Chair), Nina Braid, Dr Sandra Brizga, Geoff Driver, Binda Gokhale, Dr Dominique Hes, Matthew Kronborg, Dr Charles Meredith, Nadine Ponomarenko, Jennifer Wolcott.

**Recognition of Traditional Owners:** Trust for Nature recognises the continuing spiritual and cultural connection of Traditional Owners to Victoria’s land, wildlife, freshwater and saltwater environments. The Trust is committed to helping Traditional Owners conserve, restore where possible and protect natural environments, wildlife and cultural heritage values.

**Front cover:** Eight year old Reggie Marett is one of our youngest fundraisers. He has been doing an amazing job promoting the importance of protecting homes for wildlife. Read more on page 31. Photo courtesy Simone Lea Photography.

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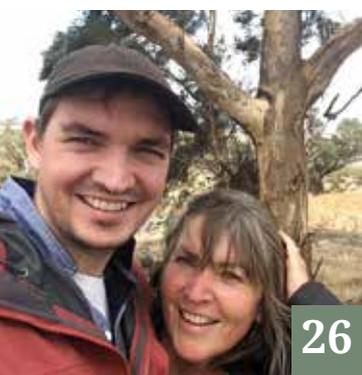
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# Significant increase in landholders volunteering to protect habitat

Welcome to our 72nd Conservation Bulletin where we share some of the happenings in the private land conservation space over the last six months.

As we all know two major crisis events have happened in this time. However during this same period there have been some amazing wins for the environment across Victoria. I'm delighted to tell you that Trust for Nature is in the process of negotiating 108 new covenants. This is incredibly encouraging and goes to show how much interest landholders have in protecting habitat on their property, forever. It couldn't happen without their generosity and it couldn't happen without supporters like you and the Victorian and Australian Governments which help to fund the covenants. Covenants can take months to finalise and we look forward to welcoming the new landholders over time. You can read more about some of the new covenants that have been settled on page 24.

Trust for Nature has also received two donations of land and one donation that has enabled us to purchase land that has environmental significance. We are incredibly grateful to the donors' generosity and it means more of Victoria's precious habitat will be protected.

Thank you to volunteer groups who manage Trust for Nature's reserves across the state. We made the difficult decision to close access to most of our bush reserves when 'stay home' restrictions came into force in March. As a small organisation, we are not resourced to ensure the reserves could be used in accordance with government directives during that time. Some of the reserves are now open through new restrictions and we continue to work with volunteer committees on how best to manage and access the reserves in the current environment. Thank you committees of management and friends groups for your patience and understanding during this time.

Like many organisations, we have postponed events or moved them online as of March this year. Perhaps you were one of the hundreds of people who tuned into our successful webinars featuring fire elder Dave Wandin, *Dark Emu* author Bruce Pascoe, and ecologists Lindy Lumsden, Ed McNabb, Dan Harley and Noushka Reiter. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and newsletters for upcoming webinars.

We have experienced a significant increase in interest about our Revolving Fund properties since March. Maybe more Victorians are making the move to regional and rural properties now that people have got used to working from home. People are also expressing a strong desire to make a difference. Interest in buying a property that has conservation values has been an unexpected consequence of the impacts of coronavirus and we welcome and congratulate new owners, such as those on page 26.

Finally, thank you for supporting our tax appeal which raised \$354,350 this year. We have been overwhelmed by your continued support during quite difficult times. The conservation successes you read about on the following pages are a credit to you.

Sincerely

Victoria Marles  
CEO, Trust for Nature

# Focus on habitat recovering from fires

Forty-six properties with conservation covenants, covering 1,400 ha of critical vegetation, were burnt by this year's summer bushfires that devastated parts of the north east and East Gippsland. It is difficult to comprehend the impact and emotional toll this is likely to have caused.

The Victorian Government estimates that more than 170 of Victoria's rare or threatened species have had over 50 per cent of their known habitat burnt.



Photo: The Hermans' property in East Gippsland was one of 46 covenanted properties that bore the brunt of the summer bushfires.

Trust for Nature was one of the many conservation and wildlife organisations that participated in the Victorian Government's roundtable about fire recovery.

We were preparing to increase our visits to impacted landholders in March, and were hoping to set up some volunteer teams in April, when the 'stay at home' directives were announced by the Victorian Government. Since restrictions eased slightly in June (and remain eased in regional Victoria at the time of publication), we have been, we have been offering our support to landholders as much as possible by phone and in-person (while adhering to physical distancing requirements) to monitor the natural response and start scoping possible conservation interventions needed.

We have been heartened to hear that some lyrebirds, wallabies, parrots, kookaburras, and bandicoots found refuge on covenanted properties in the weeks after the fires, and we were really buoyed by the response to our story, covered by *The Conversation* and some local newspapers, encouraging rural landholders to avoid the temptation of 'cleaning up' after fires and to leave as much burnt timber on the ground as possible for habitat which is desperately needed by surviving wildlife.

Thanks to your generous donations our [Bushfire Habitat Recovery Fund](#) raised \$55,000 to help us support landholders restore burnt habitat. As you can imagine, a disaster of this scale that affects so many covenants over 1,400 ha triggers the need for significant support over many years for things like fencing, weed control, fauna and flora surveys, weed distribution surveys and revised management plans. This is why we have applied for further funding from six different state and federal government bushfire grant programs to fund meaningful on-ground work. So far we have been successful in receiving \$245,000 to assist some covenants in north east Victoria and in East Gippsland where land adjoins other recovery work being done by Parks Victoria.

We are awaiting the outcome of further funding applications that would top up the support kick-started by the Bushfire Habitat Recovery Fund. The Victorian Government also made grants available for covenants in June and July aimed at habitat recovery and we worked with some covenants to help them with their applications.

Our thoughts are with everyone recovering from the impacts of the fires.

# Protecting a botanical icon

Tucked away on a property in Nagambie is a special 10ha stand of grass-trees. What is so encouraging about this patch of grass-trees is that they span across various ages—from the very young to the very old, with some more than two metres high.

Landholder Mike Davies is proud of these distinctive plants. He said, “The whole property is more than 100 ha and when I first saw them I was really surprised to see so many, and particularly to see some so old. They are incredible.”

The grass-trees are part of an extremely slow growing group of plants, which are endemic to Australia. Grass-trees (*Xanthorrhoea spp*) are easily recognisable with their long stiff triangular-shaped leaves and their unusual growth formations. They are thought to grow between 0.8-6cm a year. That means that some of the larger grass-trees on Mike’s property may be more than 200 years old!

In this genus, some grass-tree species develop a trunk where the base of old leaves compact together with the plant’s natural resin. Surrounding the trunk or base of the plant, the older leaves droop forming a ‘skirt’. The presence and length of this skirt can indicate time since the last fire.

Grass-trees need help to ensure their long-term survival. The longevity of grass-trees is impacted by land clearing, alterations in fire regimes, illegal removal and infection by the soil pathogen Cinnamon Fungus. This disease impacts grass-trees by restricting the movement of water and nutrients within the plant and spreads by foot or vehicles when the soil is damp.

Mike is conscious of his important role in protecting the species and has volunteered to register a conservation covenant on the property. The covenant will protect 28 ha of his property including the 10 ha area of grass-trees. Mike said, “I’m not worried about the conservation covenant—quite the contrary. It’s a relief to know that these grass-trees will be protected long into the future, even when I’m not here to watch over them.”

Funding is available to protect this property as a result of the Victorian Government’s Biodiversity Response Planning program, which is helping to ensure that Victoria’s natural environment is healthy, valued and actively cared for.

For information about projects in the north east region contact our Conservation Officer [Shae Brennan](#) on (03) 8631 5888 or [shaeb@tfn.org.au](mailto:shaeb@tfn.org.au).



## Tips to minimise spread of Cinnamon Fungus

- be alert for signs of dieback or unexpected plant death in grass-trees and other plant groups
- quarantine infected area
- avoid walking or driving between suspect areas and non-contaminated areas
- disinfect footwear after walking in contaminated sites with anti-bacterial products or a mix of 70% methylated spirits and water.

Any tips or advice about land management are general in nature. For specific advice, consult an expert who can advise about individual circumstances.

Mike Davies in the spectacular 10 ha area of grass-trees

# New grants protect precious birds

Standing near a very old Yellow Box tree, landholders Barbara McDonald and Rod Mann are part of the Bush for Birds project.

The critically endangered Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot birds are being further protected, with new environmental grants awarded to 24 landholders through the Bush for Birds project.

The project aims to protect, manage and increase habitat on private land for these precious birds. There are estimated to be fewer than 400 Regent Honeyeaters and 2,000 Swift Parrots left in the wild.

**Trust for Nature** and the North East Catchment Management Authority recently announced the recipients of the first round of the environmental grants after landholders submitted expressions of interest for funding for a range of activities including fencing remnant bushland, planting trees and shrubs, thinning dense regeneration and weed control.

The project attracted a lot of attention, with 90 expressions of interest, proving the importance of these iconic species to the local community and their interest in being involved in conservation in a practical way.

Twenty-four landholders were successful in receiving funding, collectively managing more than 500 ha of remnant bushland and undertaking more than 120 ha of revegetation.

Waldara landholders Barbara McDonald and Judy Bonwick's grant application was successful. The proposal included fencing a good quality patch of native woodland, managing invasive weeds to promote natural regeneration, and linking up areas of bush with strategic paddock tree plantings.

Barbara said, "We were thrilled to hear that our project got the go ahead. We think it's really important to strike a balance between farm productivity and conservation, and this project will help us to achieve that."

Barbara and Judy's farm project contributes greatly to protecting threatened species. The property sits between the Ovens River and the Warby Range, so it's a really important part of the landscape from a wildlife connectivity perspective.

The Bush for Birds Project is funded by the Australian Government through the National Landcare Program.

For information about projects in the north east contact our Regional Manager **Will Ford** on (03) 8631 5888 or [willf@tfn.org.au](mailto:willf@tfn.org.au).



# Protection underway for Gippsland island

A Victorian island is set to become the state's first freehold island to be legally protected under covenant. Flannagan Island, off Lakes Entrance, is 77 ha and is one of just a handful of large islands that are privately owned in Victoria.

The island is part of the Ramsar-listed Gippsland Lakes, recognised internationally for its environmental values. The owner of Flannagan Island has volunteered to place a conservation covenant on the property, an agreement that is tied to title and will remain in place even when the island changes hands. They see this as a unique and special opportunity to leave a legacy for wildlife, habitat, and endangered species.

Trust for Nature's Gippsland Area Manager Robyn Edwards said that it's commendable that the owner had the foresight to agree to put a covenant on the property ensuring it is looked after for future generations, joining more than 1,400 landholders across the state who have conservation covenants.

Robyn said, "This is an unusual covenant and it's the first time we've placed one on an island. The landholder is making a significant contribution to the protection of waterbirds and migratory birds on the Gippsland Lakes.

"Flannagan Island is extremely important because it provides habitat for water birds and migratory shorebirds such as the nationally threatened Hooded Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit, the state threatened Royal Spoonbill, Eastern Great Egret and Little Egret."

Much of the Island is covered with Swamp Scrub and Estuarine Wetland that are in good condition but the surrounding woodlands are degraded or cleared. Past goat farming has impacted on the island's plants, and vegetation is starting to recover now that they're been removed.

Robyn said, "The removal of livestock has changed the trajectory of the island's biodiversity, this is reflected in the regeneration of Swamp Paperbark and native tussock grasses. The degraded sections of the woodland have the potential to be restored, with the presence of mature Gippsland Red Gums and Southern Mahogany trees providing excellent foundations for potential revegetation works."

The covenant will protect a range of threatened plant communities including Coast Banksia Woodland, Swamp Scrub, Damp Sands Herb-rich Woodland, and Estuarine Wetland/Saltmarsh.

This project is funded by the Victorian Government. It enabled not only the permanent protection of the island but it also allowed for important weed control, providing an important start to habitat restoration in the cleared section of the Island.

For more information about projects in the East Gippsland region contact our Area Manager [Robyn Edwards](mailto:Robyn.Edwards@tfn.org.au) (03) 8631 5888 or [robyne@tfn.org.au](mailto:robyne@tfn.org.au).



# Murray River floodplains a hotspot for wildlife

The striking Regent Parrot. Photo courtesy Outside Four Walls

Landholders around the Murray River are permanently protecting their properties to give threatened plants and animals a home forever.

Tom Begley from Natya is one of the latest landholders in the region to negotiate a conservation covenant on his property. He said, “I got a letter from [Trust for Nature](#) about Regent Parrots, then a flock of about 50 of them landed in a tree next to my house! I’d never seen them before, so I thought I’d better let them know.”

More than 1,300 ha of land along the floodplains of the Murray River in the Mallee have been protected by conservation covenants. Trust for Nature’s Mallee Senior Conservation Officer Louise Nicholas said landholders can play such an important role in looking after the plants and animals that are in the area and making sure they are there for future generations to enjoy.

She said, “There are some amazing properties along the Murray River that have old stands of native trees and shrubs that are worth protecting.

“These old trees often have hollows that parrots will nest in. Tom’s property has great habitat and it also has Spreading Emu-bush which is a rare plant with a beautiful purple flower. We are lucky to have other important native species in this area, like Carpet Pythons, Lace Monitors and Fat-tailed Dunnarts, a very cute, pint-sized predator related to quolls and the Tasmanian Devil.”

These species rely on land like Tom’s which act as buffers around state and national parks, creating wildlife corridors between them and connecting the landscape.

“Much of the remaining native bush on the Murray River floodplain is now considered endangered, vulnerable or rare, which is why it’s so important to look after and protect what’s left,” Louise said.

For Tom, the covenant will give him peace of mind. He said, “The nature and the birds and wildlife is the whole reason I moved here, I love living amongst it. I think it’s a good idea to put this covenant on, it’ll make sure that whoever lives here in the future has the same interests at heart.”

## Tips for protecting the Regent Parrot

- avoid clearing dead or alive remnant trees such as mature River Red Gums, the parrots nest in their hollows
- establish vegetated corridors, this connects the parrots’ breeding sites (in River Red Gums) with their feeding areas (Mallee woodlands)
- retain a diverse ground layer of native grasses and saltbushes for the parrots to feed on.

For more information about projects in the Mallee region contact our Senior Conservation Officer [Louise Nicholas](#) on (03) 8631 5888, [louisen@tfn.org.au](mailto:louisen@tfn.org.au).



# Childhood connection grows conservation champions

The places we spend our childhood are precious. When we form a connection with a natural place from a young age, it becomes the source of our stories and the beginnings of our identity.

A childhood connection to land along the Wimmera River is part of what inspired Tim Inkster and his family to commit to protecting it forever. They recently placed a conservation covenant on 20 ha of their farm near Dimboola; however their conservation work on the land began long before teaming up with Trust for Nature.

“When we were kids we used to camp over here,” Tim said about the land, which is vulnerable to threats such as weed invasion, pest animals and species loss. “After we bought the place, our first thought was: How can we make it better than it currently was?”

When Tim and his brother Ben jointly bought the 2,700 ha of agricultural land in 2013, they quickly started the recovery work on riparian corridors along the river. Tim said, “Either end of the property had excellent riparian corridors so we knew with a bit of help we could link these up.”

The family teamed up with the Hindmarsh Landcare Network in 2015 and has since planted 10,000 plants including trees, understory and grasses, and excluded livestock.

Their work, coupled with a minor flood, has greatly increased the biodiversity of the native plant and animal species in the area. It also provides a refuge for animals moving south due to climate change.

The protection of this land also helps protect Aboriginal cultural heritage values. Many scar trees still stand along the Wimmera River, including on Tim’s property.

By placing a conservation covenant on the land, the Inksters have now ensured their hard work pays off long into the future. Tim said, “Putting a covenant on the place means it will be looked after, preserved and enjoyed long after we are gone, which is exactly what our families want.”



For more information about projects in the south west contact our Conservation Officer [Fiona Copley](mailto:fionac@tfn.org.au) on (03) 8631 5888 or [fionac@tfn.org.au](mailto:fionac@tfn.org.au).

## Tips for protecting riparian corridors

- prevent habitat destruction, which can occur through changes of ownership, with a conservation covenant
- reduce fox numbers to protect threatened animals
- plant local native prickly shrubs which provide refuge for small bush birds and reptiles.

Tim Inkster with the Wimmera River in the background.



# Bringing volcanic plain grassland back to life

When it comes to under-protected ecosystems in Australia, grassland communities on the Victorian Volcanic Plains are near the top of the list.

Clearing, land use changes and fragmentation have led to a severe decline in the size and quality of this ecosystem, threatening many grassland plants and animals once common in these landscapes including the Fat-tailed Dunnart, Grassland Earless Dragon, Spiny Rice-flower and Large-headed Groundsel.

But there is hope on the horizon. **Trust for Nature** has been working with the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative at *Wurdi Youang* near Little River (between Melbourne and Geelong) to rehabilitate areas of grassland and re-establish threatened plants. *Wurdi Youang* is 360 ha of freehold land and has grasslands in varying conditions, grassy woodlands, and areas of introduced pasture and cropping.

The Co-operative has been restoring native grasslands and exploring ventures such as harvesting indigenous grasses and other plants for food and medicine. Trust for Nature has been helping the co-operative to rehabilitate the land.

Rabbit-proof fencing and watering infrastructure have been established on two sites. Sites were selected which would cause minimal disturbance to existing grassland and increase the likelihood of indigenous vegetation spreading to nearby areas.

The sites were treated for weeds and a selection of threatened volcanic plain grassland species were



(L-R) Matt Barnes from the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, Chris Lindorff and Jo Day from Trust for Nature at one of the sites where weed control has been done and grazing exclusion fencing installed.

propagated and planted, including Basalt Podolepis, Button Wrinklewort, Clover Glycine, Large-headed Groundsel, Small Scurf-pea and Spiny Rice-flower. More than 600 plants have been planted so far, with another 2,000 being propagated ready to be planted in 2020.

Already, some species from the first planting have flowered, set seed and are naturally recruiting and native grassland species that were not planted are now establishing naturally including native millet, Walla-by-grass, Plume-grass, Australian Bindweed and Bluebell.

The owners are interested in continuing to work with us to look after the conservation values of the land.

For more information about projects in the Corangamite region contact **Chris Lindorff** (03) 8631 5888 or [chrisl@tfn.org.au](mailto:chrisl@tfn.org.au)



## Create your own grassland

A diverse suite of Victorian grassland plants can be established in a small area of your backyard or back paddock. Many grassland species are available from nurseries specialising in indigenous plants, and mass plantings can put on a spectacular show in spring and summer, as well as attracting native bees and butterflies.

# Covenants on increase in Greater Melbourne

An increasing number of people are wishing to place conservation covenants on their property. Encouragingly, this includes many landholders on Melbourne's fringes who are legally protecting their properties to save habitat for threatened species.

Trust for Nature has secured six new conservation covenants in the Greater Melbourne area, with 15 more being negotiated. In total, we have protected habitat on 268 private properties in this region forever. Many of the new covenants contain habitat for threatened species such as Helmeted Honeyeaters and Leadbeater's Possum, and were made possible due to the Victorian Government's funding for Trust for Nature's Faunal Emblems and Iconic Estates projects.

Most of the covenants are a one hour drive from Melbourne's CBD, but others are as close as Heathmont. The largest of the new covenants is about 300 ha, while the smallest is one hectare. Trust for Nature's Ben Cullen said, "To be that small they have to have something very special, like a really endangered species. Every covenant is a win for conservation."

"They are all really significant but protecting wetlands and critically endangered species has been the highlight," he said.

"Covenants, historic and new, protect some of the rarest and most endangered communities. In addition to this, they protect the things that we might think of as common now, but could be the rare species in future."

For more information about projects in the Port Phillip and Westernport region contact [Ben Cullen on 0407 044 821 or benc@tfn.org.au](mailto:benc@tfn.org.au).



Some of the new protected areas in Greater Melbourne includes Capel Sounds on the Mornington Peninsula.

# Every hectare counts in conservation

When it comes to looking after Victoria's most valuable ecosystems, every covenant makes a big difference—no matter how small. Kevin Garrett's property is proof of this.

The Rosedale landholder has covenanted 8.6 ha of his 265 ha property in West Gippsland on the Latrobe River floodplain, contributing to the permanent protection of the area's wetlands, the surrounding habitats and animals that use them.

His is one of six covenants on farms on the lower Latrobe River before it enters Lake Wellington and is ecologically significant for a variety of reasons. Kevin's covenanted land contains a permanent freshwater billabong as well as other areas of floodplain which have River Red Gums of mixed ages and an understory of smaller trees and shrubs. This provides habitat for a range of waterbirds including the Eastern Great Egret, Royal Spoonbill, and the threatened White-bellied Sea Eagle.

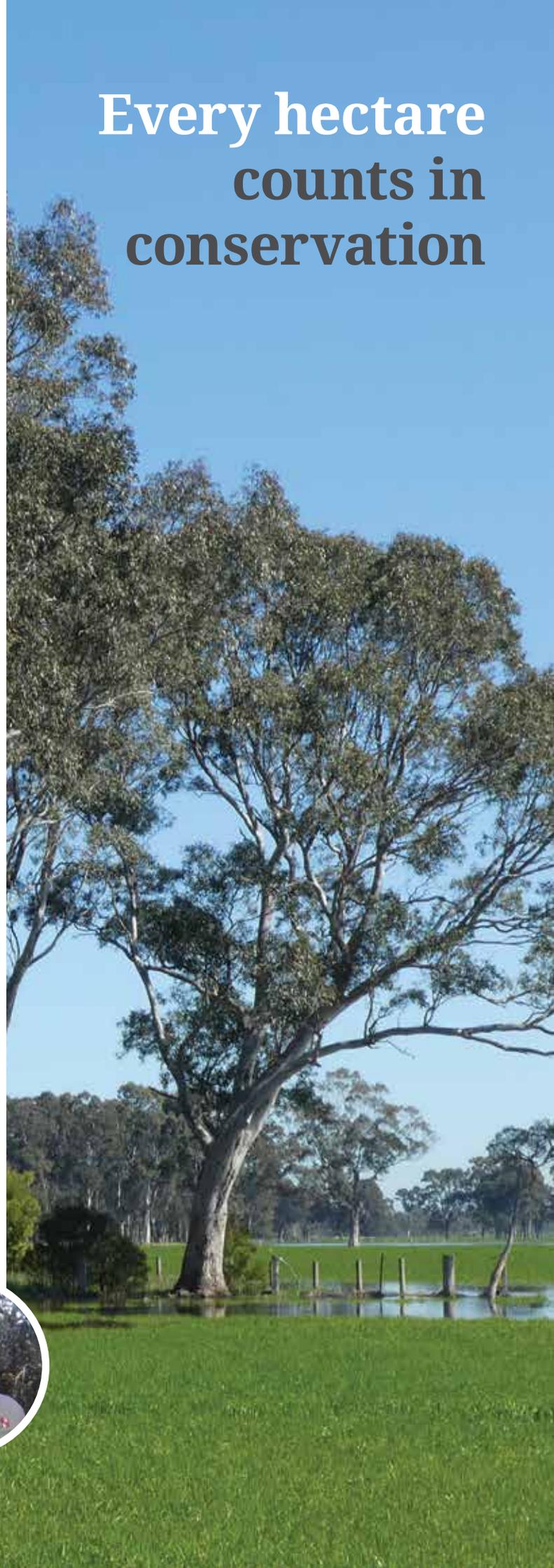
Kevin's on ground work isn't restricted to the covenanted area. As well as planting a habitat corridor, he's also looking after native plants by fencing them off or placing tree guards around them to protect them from cattle, planting six kilometres of shelter belts throughout the property and managing weeds. The absence of cats or dogs on his property is also beneficial for wildlife.

Kevin said, "Every little bit helps." Since fencing off the banks of the Latrobe River he has noticed lots of animals coming back, such as koalas and echidnas.

He said, "Although this is only a thin, narrow corridor, the birds have come back. All you need is narrow corridors linking up places, then lots of animals will start coming back because they can travel through corridors safely, and animals such as koalas aren't chased by cattle."

Kevin has worked hard to restore habitat on his property and create this network of corridors, some of which are covenanted and will remain protected forever. He said, "It just means I have set the small section aside for the environment but it also starts to provide shelter belts to break up the strong wind and give my farm animals some protection from cold wind and hot sunny weather."

For more information about projects in the West Gippsland region contact our Conservation Officer [Lauren Halstead](mailto:Lauren.Halstead@tfn.org.au) on (03) 8631 5888 or [laurenh@tfn.org.au](mailto:laurenh@tfn.org.au).



# Significant area protected forever

Nestled in the Box Ironbark forests, at the foot of one of the dramatic granite cliff faces that make up the north-face of Mount Kooyoora, is an area rich in natural and cultural heritage.

The landscape, which holds deep cultural and spiritual significance to the Dja Dja Wurrung people and is home to ecologically important plants, has been affected—and is still threatened by—clearing.

But now, thanks to funding from the Victorian Government and an ongoing partnership between Bush Heritage and [Trust for Nature](#), 16 ha of this land has been protected forever with a conservation covenant on Philip Williams' property.

Philip's property has three environmentally significant vegetation classes on it. His domestic area is nestled amongst grassy woodland, he has Box Ironbark forest below his house, and there is Hills Herb-rich Woodland stretching south to the base of the mountain.

Kooyoora (Guyura) means mountain of light in the language of the Dja Dja Wurrung People, and cultural heritage sites known in this landscape include larr (stone) features, many scarred galka (trees), rock art, rock wells, ochre blocks, numerous artefact scatters and a quarry<sup>1</sup>.

When Philip bought the property 13 years ago, about four hectares had already been mostly cleared. He relies on solar power and water tanks and doesn't collect fallen timber or firewood, preferring to leave it as habitat. "Nature likes it messy," he said.

Most of the neighbouring properties are similar in size and butt up against the Kooyoora State Park, forming a link between significant areas, acting as buffers against the encroaching agricultural land.

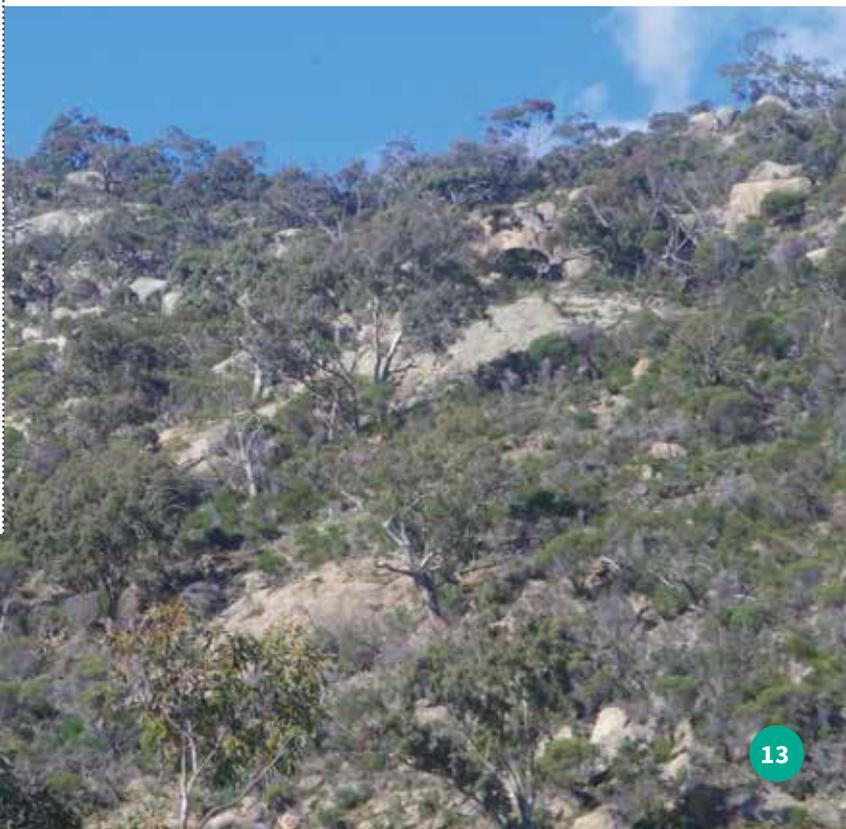
Thanks to Senior Conservation Officer James Nelsson for his work on this project. For more information about projects in the north central region contact us on [\(03\) 8631 5888](tel:0386315888) or email [deannam@tn.org.au](mailto:deannam@tn.org.au).



## Tips for protecting a culturally important site

- all Aboriginal artefacts are protected by law and should not be removed or interfered with
- Aboriginal Victoria is the Victorian Government agency responsible for Aboriginal places and cultural artefacts. If you think you have found a cultural heritage place or objects on public or private land you must report it to Aboriginal Victoria under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
- you can notify Aboriginal Victoria of a discovery by completing a preliminary report form on their website [aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au](http://aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au).

<sup>1</sup> Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board Joint Management Plan for the Dja Dja Wurrung Parks, October 2018, [dhelkunyadja.org.au](http://dhelkunyadja.org.au)





GLENELG-HOPKINS

# People power protecting an iconic bird

Ten covenantors in the Glenelg-Hopkins are working with Trust for Nature to protect one of Australia's largest flying and most iconic birds, the Brolga.

They have placed conservation covenants on parts of their land over the years in key locations scattered across the south west, adding to the habitat on [Trust for Nature](#) owned [Pallisters Reserve](#). This permanently protects a total of 758 ha of habitat and contributing to a bright future for the much-loved bird.

The Brolga is classified as vulnerable in Victoria, with fewer than 500 of the species remaining in the south west of the state. The main threats to the bird are loss of habitat and predators, including foxes and pigs which destroy nesting and foraging areas of wetlands and prey on eggs and chicks.

On Pallisters Reserve, Trust for Nature is protecting as many as three nesting sites across 254 ha of habitat, and while the exact number of breeding pairs protected isn't known, the collective effort of the 10 covenantors contributes significantly to the protection of protected foraging and nesting habitat for Brolga. Further, Basalt to Bay Landcare is helping to coordinate pest animal monitoring and control with landholders adjacent with and nearby the reserve.

These landholders are also protecting Brolgas and their habitat by ensuring the style and siting of fences is not a threat to the bird. Not only can young Brolgas get caught in netting fences, adults can injure themselves if they don't see fences close to wetlands.

As a wonderful example of people power contributing to conservation, Trust for Nature hopes these landholders will inspire others to join together and help protect our precious wildlife.



For more information about projects in the Glenelg-Hopkins region contact our Conservation Officer [Adam Merrick on \(03\) 8631 5888 or \[adam@tfn.org.au\]\(mailto:adam@tfn.org.au\)](#).

## Tips

- avoid fencing too close to wetlands, and consider using plain wire instead of prefabricated fences. A sight wire for the top of the fence (commonly used for horses) helps Brolgas see it when coming into nest in the evening
- Brolgas need nesting materials and vegetation near their nest to construct the mound in the water. They are easily disturbed when selecting a nest site, so try not to go near them when nesting
- Brolgas like to be able to visually search for potential threats at the nest, so avoid planting trees too close to wetlands. Trees also hinder their flight paths to and from the wetland.

# Buying a covenanted property

Buying a property that has a conservation covenant on it is a privilege. It's likely to have some really special features that are critical to the survival of threatened species in the area and you're joining a global community of people who have taken steps to protect biodiversity on private land.

Before buying a **covenanted property**, we recommend that you speak to your conveyancer about the terms of the deed, which should be included in the sales contract. For example, the deed of covenant will tell you if the whole property is covenanted, or a part of it. If there isn't an existing house on site, it will also tell you if there is a domestic area on the covenant where you can build.

The deed also outlines what can and can't be done on the property. The conditions of the deed are particular to individual pieces of land, so even if you have owned covenanted land before don't presume they are the same. It is common for deeds to have restrictions about domestic pets and firewood collection.

There is also likely to be a management plan that forms part of the deed of covenant. The management plan is a really useful document that has been developed in collaboration with the existing owner to help them understand the special ecological features of the property and how it should be managed for conservation. Some parts of the plan can be altered to suit the knowledge and experience of new owners. For example stipulations about how weed control is carried out could be changed depending on the preferred method of the new owners.

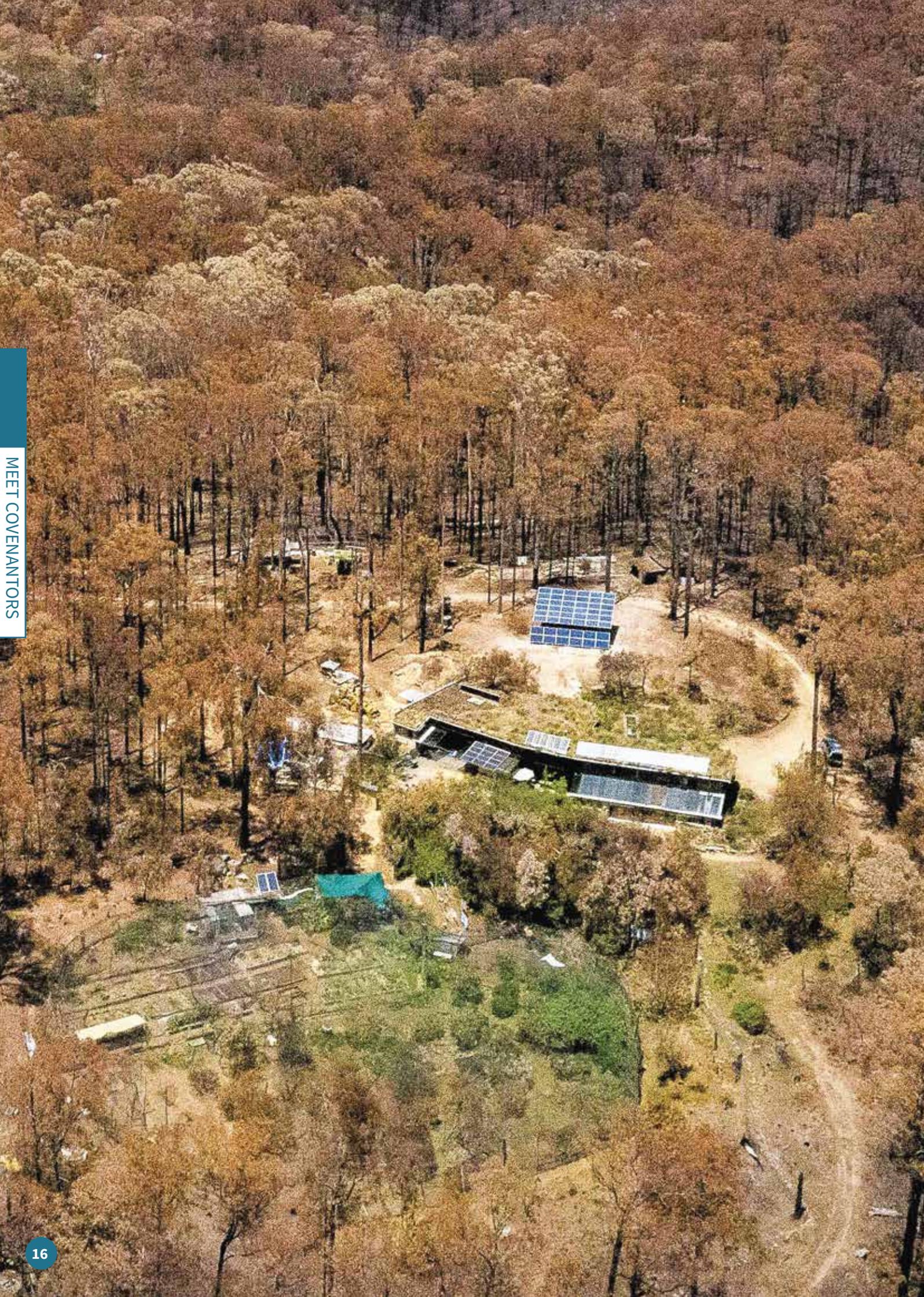
A 'letter of approval' could also accompany the purchase. Such a letter if agreed to by **Trust for Nature** may include an allowance for the current landholder to undertake an activity which would otherwise not be permitted under the terms of the covenant deed. The allowances that can be negotiated depend on how they will impact the conservation objectives of the covenant.

Unlike some states, conservation covenants in Victoria are permanent. This ensures the work landholders put into looking after the property leaves a lasting legacy for future generations.

Trust for Nature is there to support you when you buy a property with a **conservation covenant**. We have staff across every region of the state who can help you manage the land for conservation. They can help you understand if you are eligible for council rebates, provide advice about species identification and control, and funding opportunities. They might also be able to put you in touch with other landholders who have conservation covenants in your area. You can also expect to hear from one of our local staff after you buy the property to support you with any questions you have.

For information about buying a covenanted property call **Karen Tymms** on 0417 327 514, [karent@tfn.org.au](mailto:karent@tfn.org.au). Covenanted properties for sale can also be found on our website [trustfornature.org.au](http://trustfornature.org.au).







Relieved. John and Robyn Hermans with daughter Jill, her partner Gabe, and son Ben.

## Coming back from the brink

John Hermans spent the past 30 years preparing for fire.

“From the day we bought this property, I knew it would burn,” said the ecologist about the 40 ha of forest in East Gippsland where he lives a largely self-sufficient life with his family.

He said, “In November last year when lightning struck a tree near the headwaters of the Nicholson River, we knew this was the year the fire would come.” Five weeks later, it did. But John and his family were prepared.

While all of the forest on the Clifton Creek property—which is protected by a conservation covenant and is a refuge for animals such as Lyrebirds and Yellow-bellied Gliders—was ravaged by the flames, the house he shares with his wife, Robyn; grown daughter, Jill; and her partner, Gabe, remains.

An extensive sprinkler system, shutters over all windows and doors and a house made of pressed earth were some of the ways the home was protected (the large solar array was simply tilted to the horizontal position), allowing John and his family—including his son, Ben— to defend it. “It was never our intention to leave,” he said. “We were confident we could protect it.”

Unfortunately, the surrounding forest of stringybarks, ironbarks and Red Box, as well as other vegetation that made it important habitat, could not be spared. Most of the entirely-covenanted land, including the gallery rainforest along the Nicholson River, was badly impacted. John and Robyn’s property was one of 46 with conservation covenants in east Gippsland and north east Victoria affected by the bushfires which started in November 2019.

While the loss is devastating John remains somewhat hopeful, subscribing to the philosophy that every small action can make a difference when it comes to conservation. “The enormity of the loss from these fires is such that I don’t know if the biodiversity will ever be the same,” he said. “All we can do is try, so that’s what we’re going to do.”

John plans to build a deer exclusion fence and revegetate a south gully on his property that previously held some remnant rainforest plants, such as very old Musk Daisy-bushes. Lilly Pilly, Muttonwood and a variety of vine species are some of more than 100 warm temperate rainforest plants John intends to plant. Fire protection for this precious patch of land will also be a priority. “So much rainforest was damaged between here and Brisbane so I want to try and bring some of it back,” he said. “I will keep adding to and caring for this gully for the rest of my life.”

# History in the making at Neds Corner

Not only is **Neds Corner Station** one of the largest private conservation properties in Victoria, it is also a significant archaeological site for researchers.

It's hard to believe but after sea levels dropped, the Murray River—which flows alongside Neds Corner—used to be 20 to 30 times larger than it is now. From the air you can see the scroll-like patterns tracing the ancient meanderings of the Murray, its anabranches and billabongs. The area has the only occurrence of a 'scroll belt' landform in Victoria. The river was a very important food source for the First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee.

Situated on Ngintait Country Neds Corner has been the focus of La Trobe University archaeological studies for more than a decade as researchers try to understand more about past human behaviour and subsistence strategies. You can read more about their work at [latrobe.edu.au](http://latrobe.edu.au).

NEDS CORNER STATION



Stone tool artefacts.



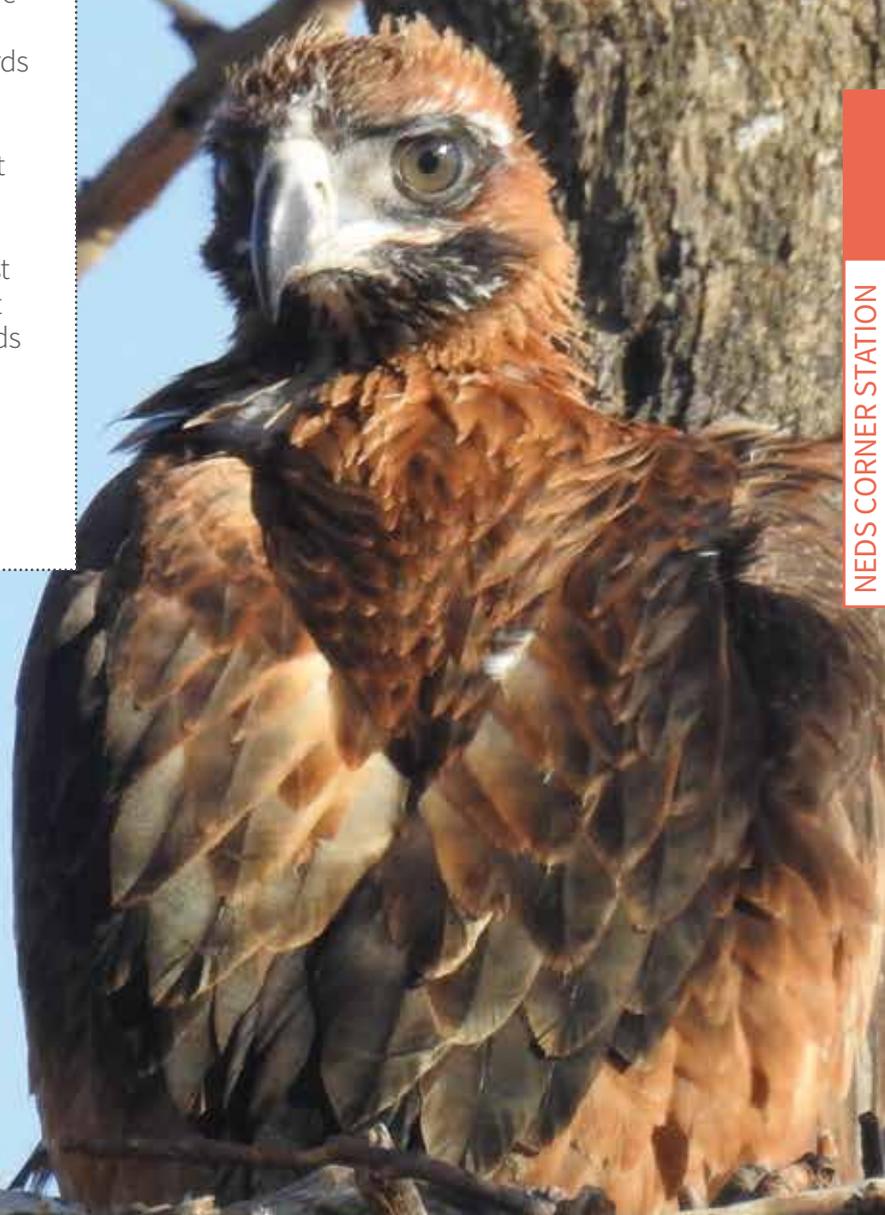
La Trobe University archaeological studies.



Researchers have found that the property features numerous significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites including ancestral burials; scar trees that provided bark for canoes, shields and other items; oven mounds; fireplaces; stone tool artefacts and shell middens. Ngintait Traditional Owners continue to have a spiritual and cultural connection to Neds Corner, as they have done since time immemorial. [Trust for Nature](#) and the First People of Millewa Mallee Aboriginal Corporation have been working together towards developing a shared vision for Neds Corner.

Research is uncovering information about what people in the area ate and where they found food. Shell middens formed from river mussel and aquatic snail shells are of particular interest to researchers and studies have unearthed that scientific evidence of human occupation at Neds Corner could go as far back as 20,000 to 40,000 years ago.

It truly is a very special place.



# WILD CARD

Many of us have had experiences with Shingleback Lizards as kids. They are a common backyard resident in regional and rural areas and can catch many a gardener by surprise because they are so quiet.

## Otherwise known as

Shinglebacks are known as Yoorn, Garrbaali and Manggaay in some Indigenous languages in Australia, they also go by the following names: Stumpy-tailed Lizard; Blue-tongue; Boggi; Sleepy Lizard; Bobtail Lizard; Two-headed Lizard; and Pinecone Lizard.

## Solitary

They live by themselves except in spring when they form pairs to mate, the same pair might come together again each year. They can live up to 20 years.

## Protecting Shinglebacks

The biggest threat to these creatures in the backyard are dogs and cats, so it's unusual for young Shinglebacks to make it to adulthood in urban areas.

In natural areas, the biggest threats are the same as those faced by many wildlife—loss of habitat and loss of particular habitat features they need to sustain them.

Shinglebacks eat plants (flowers are popular) and animals and given they don't move very fast their prey is also slow moving, such as snails and beetles. They need to sunbake to increase their body temperature so be aware of them on roads and sides of roads, particularly from September to November. Cars are a often killers of these lizards.

They are one of the common animals we want to keep common, playing an important role in the ecosystem. Make sure they have bushes to hide under and grow a diverse range of plants in your garden, including small flowering plants.

**Shingleback  
Lizard**  
(*Tiliqua rugosa*)



# Keeping common species common

By Dr. Doug Robinson, Conservation Science Advisor



**Let's aim to keep common things common, like this magnificent Orb spider.**  
Photo courtesy David Whelan

In the wake of the devastating summer bushfires, we have been overwhelmed by the destruction of millions of hectares of natural habitat, along with the incalculable loss of billions of individuals of native plants and wildlife.

This scale of loss, compounded by the impacts of long-term drought and climate change make the conservation of the remaining plants and wildlife ever more critical. The scale of loss also highlights the importance of keeping common species common so that even in these highly stressed landscapes, we still have some plants and wildlife performing fundamental ecological roles and 'ecosystem services'.

The Victorian Government's 20-year biodiversity plan *Protecting Victoria's Environment—Biodiversity 2037* describes how Victoria's ecosystems and their associated plants and animals deliver life-sustaining 'ecosystem services' by providing clean air and water, productive soils, pest control, pollination and so forth. The effectiveness of this ecosystem-service provision depends on the abundance of the species providing that service.

Positive relationships between the abundance of service-provider bird species and their respective ecosystem services have now been demonstrated for nutrient deposition, seed dispersal, insect pest control and carcass consumption. But as the abundance of these species declines, so does their capacity to

provide essential ecosystem services, leading to situations where species may become functionally extinct before they have actually disappeared.

Maintaining populations of common species will help ensure that ecosystem services continue to be provided as commoner and more widespread species, by the very nature of their relative abundance, will tend to contribute more to ecosystem-service provision than species which are uncommon or restricted in distribution (Baker et al. 2018).

Covenanted land and Trust for Nature reserves play an important role in helping sustain ecosystem services across the state, providing more than 1,450 protected habitat patches on private land where native plants and wildlife can survive. As land managers, our aim should be to make the habitat on our property as diverse as possible so that it can support more individuals of the species present.

So, on your next walk around your property, celebrate the common species: take pleasure in the Willie Wagtails catching insects; the fungi helping decompose wood; the wattles fixing nitrogen on a daily basis; the lichens keeping the soil crust intact. And think about ways to improve the health of your habitat for these unsung heroes—the common species that are keeping things ticking along.

For tips about improving habitat go to the climate change page of [trustfornature.org.au](http://trustfornature.org.au).

Baker, D.J. et al. (2018). Conserving the abundance of nonthreatened species. *Conservation Biology* 33:319-328.

# Nature bites

## Moyne Shire Council now offers rebates

The Moyne Shire Council, based in Warrnambool, is the latest council to offer rate concessions to landholders who have a conservation covenant and therefore recognising their valuable contribution to protecting plants and animals for future generations. For further information contact the Environment Officer [rhodgens@moyne.vic.gov.au](mailto:rhodgens@moyne.vic.gov.au), 5568 0553. Many of Victoria's 48 local councils offer some sort of rebate or concession to people with conservation covenants. To find out if yours does contact your local staff member or call Cecilia Riebl on 8631 5819.

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## Checklist for climate change

If you have a conservation covenant on your property, you have already done one of the most important things anyone can do to mitigate the impacts of climate change. We have developed a checklist which has some great tips about what anyone can do on their property to build resilience. See [trustfornature.org.au](http://trustfornature.org.au) for more information.

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## Trust for Nature contributes to global discussions

**Trust for Nature** staff featured in a series of webinars by the International Land Conservation Network in June and July. The events focused on topics such as conservation finance, law, policy and private land stewardship. You can tune into the recordings at [landconservationnetwork.org](http://landconservationnetwork.org).

## Neds tour

A planned curated tour of Trust for Nature-owned **Neds Corner Station** shifted online in June when supporters were treated to a presentation by managers Peter and Colleen Barnes, Conservation Science Advisor Doug Robinson and Mallee tour operator Peter Kelly. We look forward to letting you know when onsite tours to this 30,000 ha conservation property west of Mildura will be available again.

## 1,700 tune into Trust for Nature webinars



It was great to see so many join in the 'Stories from the forefront of conservation' webinars on May 7 and June 17. Thanks to guest speakers fire elder Dave Wandin, Royal Botanic Garden's Noushka Reiter, Zoos Victoria's Dan Harley, Trust for Nature's Ben Cullen, *Dark Emu* author Bruce Pascoe, and renowned ecologists Lindy Lumsden and Ed McNabb for making the webinars such a success.

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## Land management course kicks off

A new round of students are due to start the Warreen Beek Rangers land management course this year when restrictions allow. Running for the third year in a row it is offered for free to Indigenous people in the Greater Melbourne area. We're pleased to say that there is a greater participation from women this year.

The course is in collaboration with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and is made possible thanks to support from the Victorian Government.

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## Spring into Nature

Many of you would be familiar with a series of open days across Victoria we call Spring into Nature. The field days provide a great opportunity for the public to visit our reserves and private land that has been protected with conservation covenants. At the time of publishing this issue it was too soon to confirm if these special events will run again; however we will promote them in our bimonthly newsletter *Nature News* and on our Facebook page if we do.



Bridget Farmer makes beautiful artwork inspired by native birds. Etchings, prints, pins, gift cards, towels, all inspired by gorgeous peacocks, ibis, Swift Parrots, and finches. Part of her collection is a pin of the critically-endangered Plains-wanderer bird. Bridget generously donates proceeds from every pin sold to Trust for Nature. Go to [bridgetfarmerprintmaker.com](http://bridgetfarmerprintmaker.com) to shop her unique art.

## Artist donates proceeds



## Scholarships awarded

Two of the five awarded Scholes Student Scholarships will support Plains-wanderer conservation. The research scholarships are made available thanks to the generosity of the late Dr Alex Scholes and were available for projects that help in our quest to support landholders protect plants and animals. The projects include: the use of thermal scanning to detect grassland animals; investigating spatial and temporal dynamics of Plains-wanderer distribution; the role of covenants in native vegetation protection; the re-establishment of invertebrates to restored farmland; and the role birds play in providing ecosystem services in different types of farmland. Thank you to all applicants and congratulations to the recipients.



## Vale John Dahlenburg OAM

We are saddened by the passing of long-time Trust for Nature supporter John Dahlenburg. He was the inaugural chairperson of the Mt Elgin Swamp Committee of Management and his guidance of the committee for more than 12 years was greatly appreciated. In 2018 John was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia 'For service to conservation and the environment, and to the community'. Our thoughts are with his three daughters and their families.

# ADDING TO VICTORIA'S protected landscape



The last six months have seen increasing numbers of Victorians volunteering to put conservation covenants on their properties. It can take up to 12 months from the time a landholder agrees to a covenant to when the covenant is negotiated, approved by the Victorian Government and finally placed on the property's title. We are currently working with 108 landholders who are interested in protecting their properties with covenants.

Putting a conservation covenant on a property is one of the single most important things a landholder can do to protect plants and animals. It truly gives them a home forever and helps to fight extinction.

Properties eligible for covenants can be big or small. They have important plant and animal species or have the potential to support them. Commonly they are in regions that have been identified in [Trust for Nature's Statewide Conservation Plan](#) as priority habitat for protection.

If you have a property that you think is worth protecting call us on (03) 8631 5888 and ask to be put in touch with our local staff.

*Here are some of the properties that have been covenanted in the last six months.  
Congratulations and thanks to the landholders!*

**West Gippsland** ● Binginwarri, 14.3 ha

**Goulburn Broken** ● Avenel, 139.9 ha  
● High Camp, 51.3 ha

**East Gippsland** ● Wangarabell, 146.7 ha

**North East** ● Mt Bruno, 20 ha  
● Warnup, 118.7 ha

**Port Phillip and  
Westernport** ● Gembrook, 23.8 ha  
● St Andrews, 6.2 ha  
● Panton Hill, 4.7 ha

**Glenelg Hopkins** ● Chetwynd, 65.4 ha

**Corangamite** ● Scarsdale, 6.1 ha

**Mallee** ● Walpeup, 92.2 ha

**North Central** ● Gunbower, 19.7 ha  
● Tarrengower, 40.7 ha  
● Torrumbarry, 24.6 ha  
● Trentham East, 64.7 ha

**Wimmera** ● Ashens, 12.8 ha  
● Fyans Creek, 143.4 ha

# Feature covenant

*St Andrews, 6.2 ha  
Port Phillip & Westernport Bay*



At the foothills of the Yarra Ranges, picturesque St Andrews has many lifestyle properties inhabited by residents who love living in the bush. The owners of this newly covenanted 6.2 ha property have lived on it for more than 40 years, recording changes in its plants and animals and seeing the place through fires and droughts.

They now have peace of mind knowing that it will be protected forever, even when it changes hands.

The property forms a link between the Kinglake National Park and Trust for Nature's 81 ha Willis Nature Park. Most of the property is covered with Grassy Dry Forest which provides habitat for some rare and threatened species such as the Powerful Owl and Barking Owl—it is part of the home range for breeding pairs of Powerful Owl—and Brush-tailed Phascogale. The large old trees on the property also provide excellent hollows for many other animals.

The site's understorey is very diverse with lots of grasses and tufting graminoids (which includes plants such as Lomandras) and four orchids: Musk Hood-orchid; Hare Orchid; Red Beard-orchid; and Purple Beard-orchid.

We look forward to supporting the owners to look after this property into the future.

# Indulging a hobby and looking after nature

“We have not managed a conservation property before so this is all a learning experience for us but we are enjoying it so far.”

Liz and Warner Burrage are the proud new owners of a stunning property sold through Trust for Nature’s Revolving Fund program. ‘Yellow-Box Ridge’ near Wedderburn in north central Victoria is 70 ha with incredible 360 degree views. It is home to critically endangered woodland communities, making it environmentally very significant.

The new owners moved from Melbourne to the Macedon Ranges a few years ago and wanted to make a difference. Liz said, “We realised that we would have some money available to invest in another property. We had always had an interest in conservation, and the many stories of habitat loss and endangered species made us frustrated that more was not being done about this.

“We felt that we could help in a small way by buying some land and returning it to a natural habitat. There was also an on-again off-again interest in astronomy to consider. Melbourne was too bright and Macedon is a bit of a cloud magnet. A bush block with dark skies would be great for stargazing.”

As well as unhindered access to night skies, the property also has diverse bird life, including Australian Owllet-Nightjar, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and White-browed Babbler.

“Yellow-box Ridge ticked all the boxes and there was also a family connection to it as Warner’s mother grew up in the area. One walk around the property sealed it,” Liz said.

“Apart from just enjoying going to the property, we want to start making a photographic record so that we can track its progress. Then there is tree planting, erosion control, and of course building a small observatory! Our children (actually adults now) are also interested and are keen to visit the property, both for environmental study and astronomy.

“At this stage we have no plans to live on the property but with everybody working remotely these days, who knows.”

If you want to find a patch of paradise like Liz and Warner did, go to [trustfornature.org.au](https://trustfornature.org.au).



Liz Burrage with son Aidan Burrage at Yellow-box Ridge.



# Using covenants to protect nature and grow sustainable farming

By Cecilia Riebl, Policy Advisor, Trust for Nature



Native pasture on a farm in north west Victoria.

COLLABORATION

At [Trust for Nature](#) we have been thinking about how we could use our conservation covenant more effectively on farming land, to protect nature but also to support sustainable agriculture. It is becoming increasingly clear that to deal with our many environmental challenges—including soil health, erosion, biodiversity loss, and a changing climate—we need to be finding more ways to work with farmers, who steward well over half of Victoria’s land.

Supported by an innovation grant from the Victorian Government, Trust for Nature developed a model for a ‘farm covenant’, designed to protect working landscapes and support sustainable or regenerative agricultural practices. The covenant could cover part or all of the farm; and protect natural assets like shelterbelts, native pasture and riparian areas, or go further and protect built assets like fences and water points, all of which prevent the loss of sustainable infrastructure when ownership changes.

While new to Australia, the concept of a conservation covenant protecting agricultural assets is not novel internationally. It is used routinely by land trusts in the United States to protect farmland, and farmers there benefit from significant financial incentives such as tax concessions for protecting their land.

The model farm covenant could do more than just protect assets; it could also impose requirements on the landholder to use best practice sustainable land management practices. This may appeal to those who want to make sure their sustainable land management

approaches are maintained into the future—allowing enough flexibility for evolving best practices.

This approach may also appeal to farmers wanting to demonstrate best practice to investors. There is growing evidence that farms managed using sustainable or regenerative practices are more resilient, and at least as profitable as conventional farms. For these reasons they carry lower risk for investors, potentially delivering income, savings or market access for farmers. A covenant could provide the assurance needed by investors that their sustainable investment is secure and legitimate.

To support this approach, we adapted a framework to measure a farm’s condition, together with robust methods to assist farmers, investors and policy makers to measure the financial returns of conservation on farming land.

While sustainable farms may be more profitable in the long term, transitioning to more sustainable land management practices can be costly, and we are exploring a range of incentives, including carbon and biodiversity schemes, bridging finance and ‘protected habitat’ branding.

We have engaged with farmers to test the farm covenant concept for feasibility, and are now providing input into the Australian Government’s Farm Biodiversity Stewardship and Certification trial. Subject to funding and settling on the specific model to use, we may trial farm covenants on a number of farms in the next year.

# Many hands make lighter work

Trust for Nature has 44 conservation reserves across the state.

Conservation doesn't just happen and like all land that is managed to protect plants and animals in Australia, there's always work to do to control pest plants and animals.

Some reserves are managed by hard working and dedicated volunteers who are members of committees of management and friends groups which are separate to, but work with, Trust for Nature. Some have regular working bees, others go quietly about looking after plants and animals in the time they have available. Here is just a sample of the work that's being done.

If you would like to lend a hand visit 'volunteers' at [trustfornature.org.au](http://trustfornature.org.au) to find out more about working bees.



VOLUNTEERS



## Thinning on Burge Family Reserve

The 38 ha Burge Family Reserve in Gobur, north of Alexandra, is looked after by a Committee of Management featuring Janet and Justice Hagen, Cathy Olive, Sue and Jonathan Hayman, and Bertram Lobert. The group is incredibly dedicated to caring for the reserve and undertakes activities such as revegetation, pest plant and animal control, monitoring, ecological-thinning, ecological and cultural burning, and infrastructure management. Some of the work is supported by Landcare.



## Mount Elephant, part of Victoria's tourist trail

This reserve in Derrinallum, south west Victoria, has an extraordinary landform created by an ancient volcano thought to be 180,000 years old. Volunteers from the Mount Elephant Committee have spent years revegetating parts of the property with sheoaks and banksias, native herbs and grasses. They also maintain the walking tracks and run the newly built visitor centre. They recently met over Zoom with the Governor of Victoria, and patron of Trust for Nature, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC who was keen to learn about the mountain and the work by the Committee.



## Reducing weed spread at Harbury Reserve

Visitors to Harbury Reserve will be able to tour the site knowing they are helping to keep nasties out. The 21 ha reserve near Gembrook is managed by the Friends of the Harbury Reserve Group which recently installed a foot wash station. The \$3,000 wash station was made available thanks to a generous donor and is designed to remove pathogens and seeds from shoes to stop the spread of *Phytophthora*.

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## Gippsland reserve welcomes visitors

Uralla Nature Reserve in Trafalgar is 44 ha and managed by the Baw Baw Shire Council and the Friends of Uralla Nature Reserve. The Friends group has been involved in the Reserve for more than 19 years and have a strong focus on maintaining the reserve. They also do a great job encouraging the local community to enjoy its walking trails. The Reserve is open to the public and includes a boardwalk to a viewing platform and walking trails of varying degrees of difficulty. The volunteers hold working bees every second month and are always keen to attract new helpers.



VOLUNTEERS

## Protecting plants on Snape Reserve

The Snape Reserve Committee of Management has been very busy on the 846 ha Reserve near Dimboola in western Victoria, on the edge of the Little Desert. They have installed kangaroo - proof fencing over 1.5 ha to protect vegetation from kangaroos, revegetated with acacias and strategically planted and guarded Sweet Bursaria, Yellow Gum, and River Red Gum in key locations. They have also planted stringybarks—a major food source for Red-tailed Black Cockatoos—and carried out pest plant and animal monitoring and control across the whole reserve.

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## Exotic grass control at Nhill reserve

Mt Elgin Swamp Reserve is almost 300 ha north of the Little Desert. It contains a large and regionally important swamp for the Wimmera region. Its committee of management has undertaken strategic grazing to control biomass and invasive annual grasses, it has repaired and replaced nest boxes and monitored and controlled feral plants and animals.

# A big thank you for your support for nature

## Supporters rally behind Neds

Thank you to everyone who supported our tax appeal and helped raise \$354,350 protect and manage habitat on [Neds Corner Station](#). Neds Corner, west of Mildura, is one of the largest private conservation reserves in Victoria. Under the care of the Trust since 2002, Ned's bare sand hills and hard-compacted plains have been transformed and are now home to a rich diversity of plants and animals. Your support makes a difference, thank you! We asked you to write and tell us what Neds Corner means to you and it was heartwarming to see just how precious it is to so many people.



THANK YOU

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## Bushfire recovery

[Trust for Nature](#) launched a [Bushfire Habitat Recovery Fund](#) in response to the devastating summer bushfires during which more than 1,400 ha of covenanted land was impacted. Thank you for helping to raise \$55,000 to help landholders rehabilitate habitat. The Trust has also received \$245,000 from state and federal government bushfire grants, this helps to leverage donations and ensure we have enough funds to provide meaningful on on ground work to support landholders.





Black Shouldered Kites.  
Photo courtesy David Whelan.

## West Gippsland Fund reaches \$1 million!

We are delighted to announce that the **West Gippsland Conservation Fund** has reached its initial target of \$1 million on the basis of two very generous donations. This Fund was seeded by a donor who offered to match, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$500,000. The returns from the Fund will provide a consistent revenue stream for private land management and conservation in West Gippsland into the future.



## Trust for Nature endowment fund

An endowment fund has been established to provide an enduring and responsive fund for the future.

Trust for Nature's endowment fund aims to build a strong financial reserve and a critical ongoing income stream that will deliver us the flexibility and agility we need to respond to conservation priorities as they arise. Our aim is to build a sizeable capital base that will be preserved in perpetuity; the annual investment income of which will support **Trust for Nature's** highest strategic priorities in any given year. This guarantees that the endowment fund are always used to their best possible advantage.

We welcome one-off, annual and bequest gifts from individuals, corporations, trusts and foundations and private ancillary funds. Every donation brings us closer to achieving our two year target and ongoing work to secure the future of Victoria's natural places.



## Reggie is our hero!

A massive shout out to Reggie (pictured) who is raising funds for Trust for Nature via everydayhero.com. He is growing his hair long enough to be made into a wig to donate to someone in need. While he's growing his hair he also wants to make a difference by growing habitat for wildlife by raising money for Trust for Nature. Amazing effort, thank you!

To find out more about how you can help support Trust for Nature or to make a donation towards our conservation work, call (03) 8631 5888 or visit [trustfornature.org.au](http://trustfornature.org.au)

# Native kids crossword



Photo courtesy  
Beverley Van  
Praagh



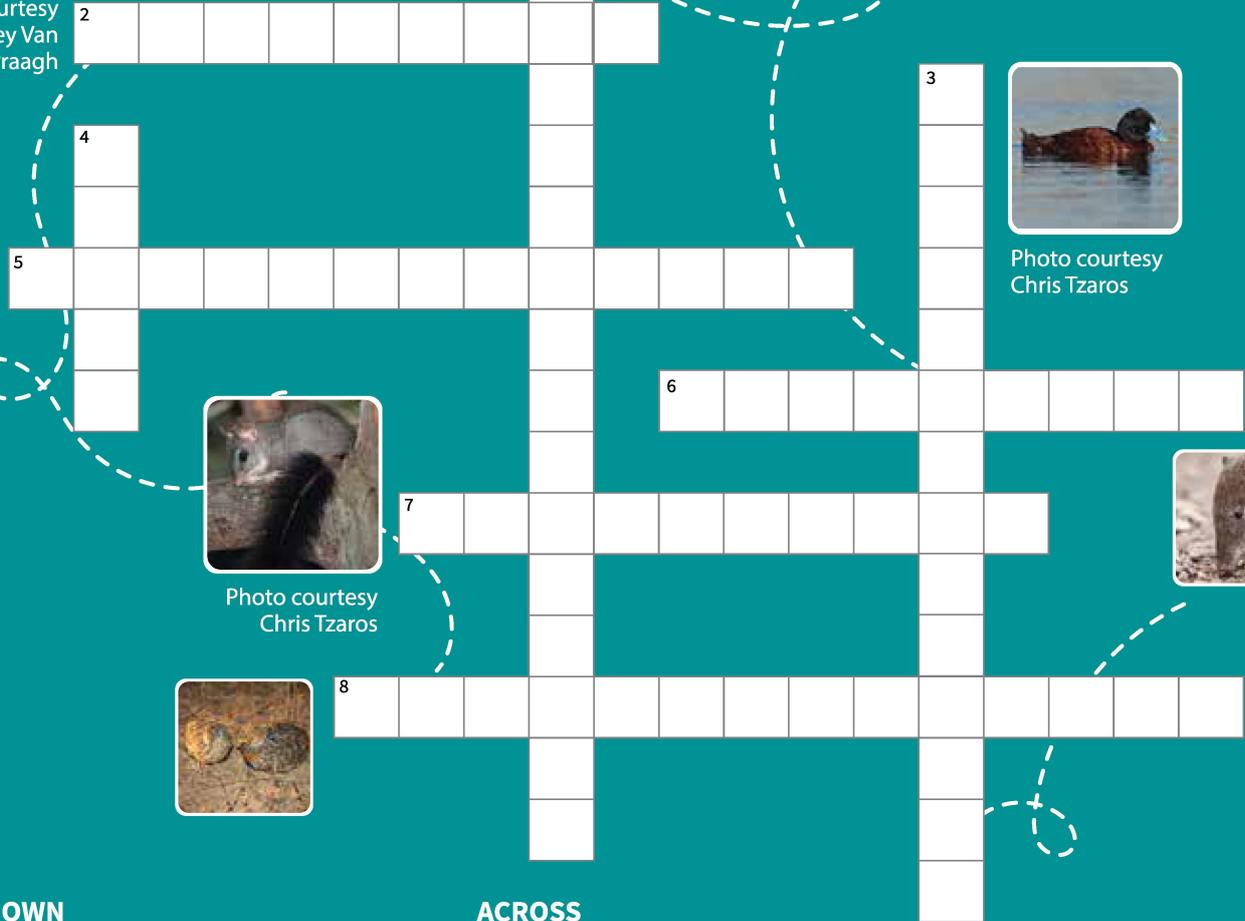
Photo courtesy  
Beverley Van Praagh



Photo courtesy  
Chris Tzaros



Photo courtesy  
Chris Tzaros



## DOWN

## ACROSS

1. This amazing creature lives in tunnels that go as far down as the water table and surfaces at night after heavy rain and in spring and summer.

3. An excellent diver with a striking bill, this duck is rarely on land. It prefers large groups and eats insects, flies, and a range of plants.

4. This large carnivorous marsupial grows to the size of a cat and is an excellent tree climber. It spends its days in caves, logs and rocks.

2. There are about 1,000 species of these long, thin creatures living in Australia's soils and under logs and leaves. They emerge at night and breathe through their skin.

5. Medium-size, day-flying insect, with bright orange and black hind wings. They feed on Wallaby Grass and live just 2-5 days.

6. This marsupial has a backwards facing pouch, digs and builds nests with soil and leaf litter. It eats spiders, fungi, slaters and fruits.

7. This carnivorous, elegant marsupial has a bottle-brush tail, lives in dry forests and nests in tree hollows.

8. This critically endangered bird can be mistaken for a quail. They rely on grasslands and are mainly sedentary and will run, rather than fly, away from danger.

 **TRUST FOR NATURE**  
*Habitat forever*

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As a not-for-profit organisation, Trust for Nature welcomes public support for its conservation work. All contributions of \$2 and more are tax deductible.