**2021 APPLICATION for**

**Dr Alex Scholes Student Scholarship**

**BACKGROUND**

The Scholes Student Scholarship is named to honour Dr Alex Scholes. Dr Scholes had a deep appreciation of the Australian landscape and left a bequest to Trust for Nature to enable young people to study the conservation of fauna, flora and habitat in an applied way. Trust for Nature’s Board has approved the use of part of his bequest funds to provide scholarships supporting post-graduate students working in the field of conservation where their research has relevance to private-land conservation in Victoria.

**TRUST FOR NATURE CONTEXT**

Trust for Nature is Victoria’s dedicated private land conservation agency. Our goal is to protect and restore places in Victoria where wildlife and native plants can thrive, using statutory, in-perpetuity covenants pursuant to the *Victorian Conservation Trust Act* 1972. We do this for the benefit of future generations by working now with private landholders, volunteers, government agencies and others with similar vision.

Trust for Nature occupies a unique role within Victoria’s natural resource management sector for the following reasons:

* It operates statewide and is Victoria’s primary authority for biodiversity and natural resource management conservation on private land.
* It has helped protect more than 100,000 hectares of important habitat on private land, principally by entering into voluntary legal agreements on title with more than 1400 committed landowners.
* It has prepared a Statewide Conservation Plan for all private land in Victoria which underpins its conservation work and provides an integrated framework for planning and operations across Victoria.

Trust for Nature’s research interests are focussed on how to improve the effectiveness of our conservation program. Research questions may help address knowledge gaps, assist with our strategic planning, assist with on-ground management or assist with decision-making about the best way to allocate resources to different aspects of our conservation program. We are also interested in research questions that help us understand our position in the broader Natural Resource Management sector and the broader rural landscape: these might include comparisons of different NRM programs or research into landholder attitudes and motivations.

**NOTES FOR APPLICANTS**

* The Scholes Student Scholarship is generally for $5,000. It is paid in three instalments: at commencement, at midway point (subject to review of progress by university supervisor and Trust for Nature); and on successful completion.
* The scholarships are for post-graduate students undertaking Honours or Masters projects over one or two years. We will also consider requests for ‘top-up funds’ to complement current PhD scholarships where those projects have particular relevance to our conservation work.
* Regular communications will be held with the student, their university supervisor and Trust for Nature’s Conservation Science Advisor or delegate during the project and will aim to coincide with the scholarship payment triggers: at the beginning, midway point and completion of the project.
* Applications will be considered that are relevant to private-land conservation, including from ecological, environmental, social, economic and policy perspectives.
* Trust for Nature Scholes Scholarship must be acknowledged in any publications, media, presentations or reports that arise from funded projects and that recipients will publicise the support they received from Trust for Nature and the Dr Alex Scholes bequest for their research.
* Where appropriate, it is required that Trust for Nature’s staff involved in the intellectual development and implementation of the funded projects will be included as co-authors in any publications arising from the funded research.
* As part of the receipt of a Scholes Scholarship, it is required that successful applicants will
* write a brief article about your project for the Trust’s publications including website
* be willing to give a presentation about their research to Trust for Nature staff and supporters
* write an abstract and two page summary of the project and its key findings
* publicise the support provided by the Trust in any external communications relating to the funded research
* Applications will be assessed by Trust for Nature and short-list interviews conducted if required.

**APPLICATION CRITERIA**

Applicants are to submit a research funding proposal of no more than 1000 words which outlines:

* their research proposal and its originality as research
* the proposed methodology
* its relevance and impact in terms of private-land conservation
* its relevance to Trust for Nature’s strategic conservation goals and conservation objectives, as described respectively in the Trust’s [Strategic Plan](https://trustfornature.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/TFN3489-StrategicPlan_2021WEB.pdf) 2016-2021 and [Statewide Conservation Plan](https://trustfornature.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Trust-for-Nature-Statewide-Conservation-Plan.pdf) 2013.

*Applications can be for projects already started or for projects planned to commence this year.*

Applications for funding will be assessed against the following criteria

* relevance and impact for private-land conservation in Victoria
* relevance to the six conservation objectives and associated priorities identified in Trust for Nature’s [Statewide Conservation Plan](https://www.trustfornature.org.au/images/uploads/conservation/SCP/Trust-for-Nature-Statewide-Conservation-Plan.pdf)
* proposed research design and methodology
* applicability to Trust for Nature’s conservation objectives beyond the defined scope of the project (i.e conservation leveraging capacity)
* existing funding support for their project

Specific research projects we are keen to support this year are:

* Investigating habitat suitability at Neds Corner Station for reintroduction of Brushtail and Ringtail possums
* Investigating habitat suitability at Neds Corner Station for reintroduction of Yellow-footed Antechinus
* Investigating habitat suitability at Neds Corner Station for reintroduction of Spotted Bowerbird
* Investigating causes of mature tree death and dieback in the semi-arid woodland community at Neds Corner Station
* Analysis of ecological thinning and grazing exclosure effects on understorey composition on the Gippsland Plains
* Cost-benefits and scale of herbivore exclosures needed to improve conservation outcomes on private land
* Use of exotic pastures and crops by grassland birds
* Investigating management options for the South African Weed Orchid in biodiverse remnants.

**APPLICANT CONTACT DETAILS**

**LAST NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **FIRST NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **POSTCODE:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **MOBILE:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**UNIVERSITY AND COURSE DETAILS**

**NAME OF UNIVERSITY:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**HONOURS/MASTERS/Ph.D COURSE IN WHICH CURRENTLY ENROLLED:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR CONTACT DETAILS**

**LAST NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **FIRST NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**2021 APPLICATION FORM**

**PROJECT TITLE**

**PROJECT BACKGROUND AND AIMS**

**PROPOSED METHODOLOGY**

**RELEVANCE AND IMPACT FOR PRIVATE-LAND CONSERVATION IN VICTORIA**

**RELEVANCE TO THE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES IN THE STATEWIDE CONSERVATION PLAN (**i.e how will this project help the Trust achieve its conservation priorities under the six conservation objectives)

**ADDITIONAL CONSERVATION BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT**

**FUNDING SUPPORT OR PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT**

**Applications for the 2021 Scholes scholarships close on Friday, March 26th, 2021.** Applications or preliminary proposals should be sent to Dr Doug Robinson, Conservation Science Advisor, at dougr@tfn.org.au