

# Conservation

BULLETIN



Another  
1,800 ha  
of Victoria  
protected  
forever

The global effort:  
**what the  
US is doing  
to protect  
private land**

Meet the tiny,  
endangered  
**Brown Toadlet**



22



17



# Inside



16



**TRUST FOR NATURE**

*Habitat forever*

**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, Binda Gokhale, 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:** Hugh Horsfall (left) gets some help planting trees on the property that the Horsfalls recently purchased. Find out more on page 26. Credit: Katherine Horsfall.

## 04 Nature bites

News and events.

## 08 Regional updates

What landholders have been doing to improve habitat around the state.

## 18 Meet a covenantor

90-year-old Maisie Enders is a lifelong conservationist.

## 20 Global conservation

The US is leading the way to an unprecedented deal to protect nature.

## 22 Wildcard

Tiny Brown Toadlets are highly dependent on private land conservation.

## 23 Conservation science

An ecological approach to managing weeds.

## 24 Stewardship

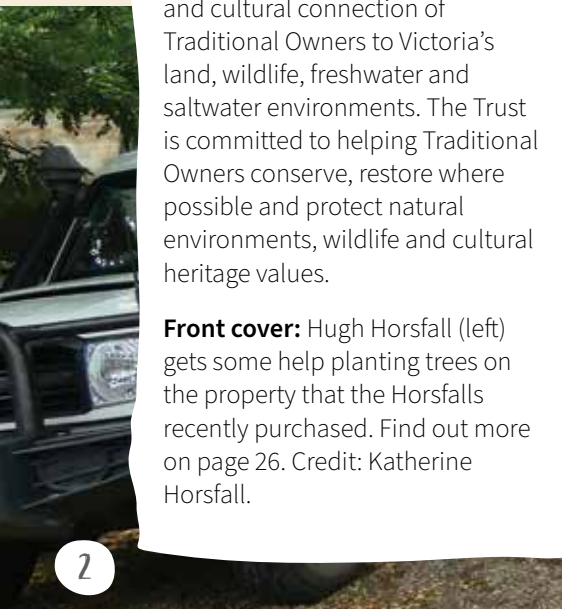
How does a conservation covenant work?

## 25 New covenants

A snapshot of some of the properties across Victoria that have been newly protected.

## 27 Snapshot

Meet Dr Barbara Baird, and the sugar gliders that live on her property.





# The big picture

**Welcome to our 74th Conservation Bulletin where we share the happenings in the private land conservation space in Victoria over the last six months.**

**“In 2020-21 we worked with landholders to place 41 new covenants on properties around the state. That’s an extra 2,830 ha protected forever.”**

Sometimes it’s good to take a step back and acknowledge that what we do is part of a global effort. Even though we’ve been dealing with a global pandemic over the past year, the urgency of protecting the world’s biodiversity and addressing climate change has not gone away. In October nations from around the world will meet for the 15th UN Biodiversity Conference. The hot topic will be a target to protect 30 per cent of the world’s land area by 2030. US President Joe Biden has already committed to the goal, and you can read more about the US is doing about it on page 20.

Protecting habitat on private land is a big part of addressing climate change. As a supporter of Trust for Nature, you’re part of this global effort to protect more habitat for wildlife, no matter how big or small your contribution. I’m pleased to report that in 2020-21 we worked with landholders to place 41 new covenants on properties around the state. That’s an extra 2,830 ha protected forever, and it’s an incredibly generous contribution by landholders who do this voluntarily.

We’re still lending our support to covenantors who were impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires and who are continuing to recover from the disaster. Habitat recovery efforts have been given a big boost by the Australian Government, with \$1 million granted to Trust for Nature to protect and restore habitat in fire-affected areas in East Gippsland over the next eight months.

We appreciate our partner organisations around the state, who we continue to work with to protect wildlife. Whether it is Zoos Victoria, who we worked with to release captive-bred Plains-wanderers on covenanted properties, or the committees of management who look after many Trust for Nature reserves, these partnerships are vital to the work we do. Across the state we work with many Traditional Owner and Aboriginal groups to protect and enhance habitat, including some cultural burns that have taken place last autumn. I’m pleased to report that we have taken a further step towards deepening these relationships with Aboriginal Victorians and Traditional Owners with our first Reconciliation Action Plan.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, our tax appeal this year raised \$310,692. With a focus on covenants and stewardship, the funds will go towards improving and expanding homes for wildlife across the state. This work will be guided by our new Strategic Plan, which aims to protect another 35,000 ha by 2025.

I am always so impressed by the generosity of landholders who volunteer to protect their land in the name of conservation. You can read some of their stories in the following pages. I hope you find them as inspiring as I do. Stay safe, and I wish you well for the rest of the year.

Sincerely

**Victoria Marles**  
CEO, Trust for Nature

# Nature bites

## \$310,692 raised to protect Victoria's wildlife

Because of your incredible support we were able to raise \$310,692 through our tax appeal to protect plants and animals on private land across Victoria. With more than 100,000 ha across Victoria already protected, we are looking towards the future—and without your support, we could not continue to make such a significant and lasting impact. Thank you!



## 35,000 ha by 2025

By 2025 Trust for Nature aims to have protected an additional 35,000 ha of habitat on private land. That's one of the five goals of our new Strategic Plan, which will guide our work over the next four years. Another goal is restoring 5,000 ha of land through revegetation programs. The new plan aligns with our soon to be finalised Statewide Conservation Plan Update, which is refining our strategic priorities for conservation, based on new information available since the publication of the initial Plan in 2013. Other priorities in the strategic plan include deepening our partnerships with Aboriginal Victorians and making sure our work continues to be guided by climate science.

## Back on the plains

Earlier this year Trust for Nature was involved in a trial release of Plains-wanderers on Victoria's northern grasslands. Working with Zoos Victoria; the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning; Parks Victoria; Taronga Conservation Society Australia; and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, eight birds reared in captivity were released at a national park, a Trust for Nature reserve and a covenanted property—a world first. With more than 95 per cent of these truly unique birds' remaining habitat found on private land, working with landholders is essential to the species' future. Stay tuned to our social media for a documentary on Plains-wanderers filmed by Remember The Wild.

# Nature bites

## Homes for wildlife protected

In a big year for protecting private land in Victoria, Trust for Nature has worked with landholders to place 41 new covenants on private land (2,830 ha). Significantly, this is more than a 50 per cent increase on last year. Many of the additional covenants were generated through support from the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Response Planning program for our flagship Iconic Estates project. These new conservation properties include nearly 550 ha near Edenhope and over 400 ha in the Corangamite region. We couldn't do this work without the generosity of landholders who volunteer to protect their land forever under conservation covenants, and the Victorian Government's ongoing support. Thank you.

## Love for Gariwerd/Grampians

Although much of Gariwerd/Grampians is protected by national park, there is still a lot of high-quality habitat on private land in the surrounding area, as recognised in the new Statewide Conservation Plan Update which classifies this area as one of eighteen focal landscapes to target for additional protection across Victoria. Thanks to a generous donor, Trust for Nature will be able to increase its capacity to support new and existing covenantors in the area, protecting even more of this special landscape and its wildlife and plants forever.

## Meet a supporter: Jenny Rolland

Like many of us, Jenny Rolland credits her parents for her love of nature.

"We had a holiday house at Mount Martha and I loved exploring the surrounding bush," she said. "We kept lists of the birds and other creatures that visited the property and were excited by sightings of rare plants. I rapidly became aware of how precious natural bush areas were disappearing as development slowly crept into the region."

These days she shows that love by donating to Trust for Nature, as well as protecting her bush block with a conservation covenant, where she monitors the comings and goings of the local birds, particularly Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.



On travels around Victoria, Jenny was confronted by the threats to native habitat. But she took heart from the contributions of landholders and organisations like Trust for Nature coming together to protect homes for wildlife on private land.

"Although of enormous importance, it is very clear that our public reserve system alone cannot meet the targeted proportion of different ecosystems requiring protection to avoid the extinction crisis," she said. "Protection of native flora and fauna on private land will help bridge this gap. Trust for Nature is a wonderful organisation that works to protect remnant bushland on private properties and to assist landowners with managing the biodiversity values of their properties". Thank you Jenny!

## Nature bites

### Liz Dexter's legacy

One of Melbourne's great conservationists and a Trust for Nature supporter sadly passed away in July. An agricultural scientist by trade, Liz Dexter dedicated much of her life to looking after the bush. Liz and her husband Mick worked tirelessly to protect Dexter's Bush, a wonderful nature reserve in Melbourne's East which they donated to Trust for Nature and has since been transferred to Maroondah City Council as a permanent reserve the public can enjoy. Our thoughts are with Mick and their family.

### Protecting West Gippsland

After achieving our fundraising goal of \$1 million in 2020, the West Gippsland Conservation Fund is ready to go to work. Over the coming months and years, interest from the fund will be used to increase stewardship on covenanted properties in the West Gippsland region which have priority species or landscapes. There are so far 146 covenants in the region, protecting more than 6,000 ha and species like the Strzelecki Koala, Powerful Owl, Platypus and Lace Monitor. To donate to the fund, and find out more, head to [trustfornature.org.au/campaign/west-gippsland-fund](https://trustfornature.org.au/campaign/west-gippsland-fund).



### In the spotlight

Trust for Nature's Port Phillip Area Manager Ben Cullen has had a busy year in front of the cameras. In June he featured in ABC TV's flagship program Landline in an episode on cultural burning alongside Indigenous experts Professor Marcia Langton and Professor Michael Shawn-Fletcher. Ben helped support a cultural burn at Coranderk with Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin, and spoke about the scientific support for Indigenous land management. Stay tuned also for a Gardening Australia episode featuring Ben and a Phillip Island property that was gifted to Trust for Nature by Helen McDonald and her late husband John Clarke.

# Nature bites

## Steps towards reconciliation

We are pleased to announce that we have produced our first Reconciliation Action Plan. Guided and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, our 'Reflect' plan outlines the steps Trust for Nature will take towards Reconciliation, and will be updated each year. Trust for Nature recognises Victoria's Traditional Owners' past and continuing spiritual and cultural connection to this wonderful land, wildlife, fresh water and salt water environments. We share with Victorian Traditional Owners a deep appreciation for native wildlife and habitats on both public and private land and in aquatic environments. We recognise that all Victorians share in the benefits of the custodianship and caring for Country that Traditional Owners have practised for centuries. Trust for Nature is committed to assisting Traditional Owner aspirations; to conserve, restore where possible, and protect natural environments, wildlife and cultural heritage values. Find out more at [trustfornature.org.au/resources](https://trustfornature.org.au/resources).



## More help for East Gippsland

Over the coming months Trust for Nature will be working with landholders across East Gippsland to protect more habitat following the devastating 2019-20 bushfires. Thanks to a \$1-million grant from the Australian Government, Trust for Nature will partner with interested landholders in fire-affected areas to permanently protect homes for wildlife with conservation covenants, and improve habitat by controlling weeds, deer and foxes on burnt and unburnt properties. Contact Catherine Crowden for more information at [catherinec@tfn.org.au](mailto:catherinec@tfn.org.au) or 0439 999 026.

## Water for orchids

Thanks to the generous support of Alistair Ingliss, threatened orchids at Trust for Nature reserve Willis Nature Park near St Andrews will get a boost to survive. With Alistair's support, a water tank has been purchased and installed in the reserve. The water will aid the survival of threatened orchids when they are reintroduced to the site later this year with the help of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

## Funding for fire recovery

We also thank Perpetual for their support for bushfire recovery in the North East and East Gippsland. Trust for Nature was successful in Perpetual's Impact Philosophy Grant, and has been awarded \$119,000 to restore fire-damaged habitat and do conservation works on covenanted properties in the east of the state. Thank you.



## ‘Wild country’ celebrates significant milestone

One of Victoria’s largest covenants is celebrating two special milestones this year. It’s been 25 years since Carrillo Gantner made the decision to permanently protect 800 ha of his 4,450 ha property on the northern slopes of the Strathbogie Ranges, a property that has now been in his family for 80 years.

“My grandmother bought the property in 1941 and it has been passed down through the generations,” Carrillo said. “The covenanted area was wild country then and it still is now.”

The grassy dry forest and riparian shrubland on Taungurung Country is home to 154 species of plants such as Yellow Box, Blue Gum and Purple Coral-pea, and 76 species of animals, including a wide range of birds such as the threatened Speckled Warbler, Scarlet Robins and Wedge-tailed Eagles. A creek that runs along the edge of the covenant also protects a population of the nationally threatened Macquarie Perch.

Carrillo made the decision to covenant part of the property when he saw native bushland in the area being cleared for pine plantations. He said, “I was very concerned about this because pine plantations are unsympathetic to birds and animals, and following their removal it’s hard to grow anything else there. I didn’t want to ever see that happen, so that was my motivation. My sons, being young conservationists, happily agreed to the idea.”

Since being covenanted, the land has essentially been left to itself. “We’ve just been keeping an eye on the feral animals such as goats and deer, but they seem to have reduced in number over the years,” Carrillo said. “Otherwise, it’s untouched.”

Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Joshua Graf said 25 years of permanent protection of 800 ha of habitat is well worth celebrating when one considers what might have happened to this bush

otherwise. He said, “This is such a healthy ecosystem. A really great patch of bush and a good example of how a place can thrive when protected and allowed to flourish on its own.”

For Carrillo, who is also a donor to Trust for Nature, there is a ‘great sense of satisfaction’ knowing this special part of his family’s property will be protected forever. He said, “Covenanted the land with Trust for Nature has been a great experience and I’m so glad we did it when we did.”

The much-loved land will continue to be a part of Carrillo’s family’s legacy and enjoyed in its natural state for many years to come.

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For more information on our stewardship program in the Goulburn Broken region contact Conservation Officer Joshua Graf on (03) 8631 5888 or [joshg@tfn.org.au](mailto:joshg@tfn.org.au)

*Pictured: The Gantner covenant protects an extensive area of grassy dry forest in the Strathbogie Ranges.*

# Threatened bird habitat coming back from the brink

Tom O'Toole is on a mission to make a difference. With the support of Trust for Nature and the North East CMA through the Bush for Birds project, the passionate nature lover is creating habitat for Swift Parrots and Regent Honeyeaters on his 40 ha property at Gooramadda, near Rutherglen.

"It's small in the scheme of things, but even if we can improve the habitat on this piece of land I think it will make a difference," Tom said.

Tom, who grew up on the Murray River and is the founder of the Beechworth Bakery chain, bought the property almost 30 years ago. At the time, it was severely overgrazed to the point of being almost bare. All that remained were a few mature Grey Box trees.

Keen to 'put something back into nature' Tom and his family began planting native trees in order to revegetate the landscape, allowing animals to return. "We started seeing goannas and Squirrel Gliders on the property," Tom said. "It's just magic."

Unfortunately, the trees were too numerous to grow to their full size, which is ideal in order to produce enough nectar for threatened bird species. "We were flying blind a bit," Tom explained. "We didn't really know what to do and we needed some guidance."

That's when he saw an advertisement for the Bush for Birds project which offered landholder support with management and applied for a grant. "Trust for Nature came out and they were just fantastic," Tom said. "Now we've started thinning the trees with their guidance and oversight to give the habitat a better chance."

Trust for Nature North East Regional Manager Will Ford said ecological thinning for habitat improvement will assist the landscape to provide critical resources such as nectar and hollows for birds and other wildlife that rely on large, old trees to thrive. "This strategy, which occurs under planning approval from Council and DELWP, will fast track



the development of the trees Tom has already planted and fast-track their value as habitat for the birds, goannas and gliders we are trying to protect," Will said.

For Tom, the chance to 'leave the world a better place' is not just about his love for the environment but also about his family. "It's one of the great legacies I can leave for my four kids, grandkids and for nature," he said. "It's one of the greatest things I've ever done."

The Bush for Birds Project is supported by Trust for Nature and the North East Catchment Management Authority through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

For more information about projects in the North East region contact Regional Manager Will Ford on (03) 8631 5888 or [willf@tfn.org.au](mailto:willf@tfn.org.au)



*Pictured top inset: Tom O'Toole on his property pointing out a nest. Above: Tom's property before (left) and after (right) reforestation works.*



## Improving habitat for wildlife in East Gippsland

When Michael Veerman was looking for a place to escape the city, he found the perfect spot in East Gippsland.

“East Gippsland is like a second home to me,” he says. “I have a lifelong interest in nature. As a kid I was always bushwalking with my dad.”

That interest led to a desire to help protect Victoria’s wildlife and plants. Michael, who works as a butcher in Forest Hill, bought his 18 ha block at Kalimna West five years ago on Gunaikurnai Country, already protected by a conservation covenant through Trust for Nature. Now it’s the perfect spot for him to spend some quiet time, and Michael is hoping to build a shack on the area reserved for a domestic dwelling.

The property, which was fortunate not to be impacted by the 2019-20 bushfires, protects several threatened ecosystems, including endangered Plains Grassy Forest, vulnerable Limestone Box Forest and rare Warm Temperate Rainforest. These provide important habitat for the endangered Lace Monitor, as well

as White-bellied Sea Eagles, which are classified as vulnerable to extinction in Victoria.

“It’s great because any conservation work that I do to assist in conservation will be ongoing. I won’t have it forever; we are only custodians of the land. The covenant ensures that it will be protected by whoever owns it next,” he says.

Recently Trust for Nature has been helping Michael manage weeds and foxes on the land, and build a fence across the front of the property to prevent trespassing. “Some of the threats to wildlife and plants on Michael’s property are foxes and weeds. As part of a broader program in the area we’ve laid baits on the property, as well as controlling the highly invasive weed Bridal Creeper,” says Trust for Nature East Gippsland Senior Conservation Officer Catherine Crowden.

Michael is just one of the East Gippsland landholders Trust for Nature has been working with to improve habitat for wildlife. Supported by the Victorian Government’s Biodiversity Response Planning Program



over the past three years, Trust for Nature has undertaken fox control on 1,200 ha across 15 covenants, 3,000 ha of weed control across 25 properties and fencing to protect 380 ha of significant habitat.

“Fox control has been really critical in the areas affected by the 2019-20 bushfires,” Catherine says. “Conservation covenants in these areas are refuges for ground-dwelling fauna species such as the Long-nosed Potoroo and Long-nosed Bandicoot so it’s essential we try our best to make sure they’re a safe place for them to live.”

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For more information about projects in the East Gippsland region contact our Senior Conservation Officer Catherine Crowden on 0439 999 026 or [catherinec@tfn.org.au](mailto:catherinec@tfn.org.au)

*Pictured: White-bellied Sea Eagles, classified as vulnerable in Victoria, are found on Michael’s property. Inset: Trust for Nature officer Catherine Crowden admiring a large tree on the property.*



## Rare bat find only second confirmed record in Victoria

A Little Pied Bat has been found at Neds Corner Station for the first time, proving once again the significance of this reserve for conservation and the importance of continuing to actively manage it.

The distinctive black and white bat was discovered on Neds Corner Station, which is Ngintait Country, by Manager Peter Barnes in December 2020 while salvaging timber from a disused building on the property.

“It was a very lucky find!” Peter said. “I was removing a door and this dried up little bat fell out of a cavity above it, between the plaster in an internal wall.”

Because it had been shielded from the elements, the bat was extremely well preserved - so much so that its fur was still soft.

Peter said, “I knew I hadn’t seen a bat like that before because it was black and white. I knew what it was, but we had to send it away and wait for confirmation.”

Melbourne Museum recently confirmed the exciting discovery as the second formal record of this species in Victoria. Little Pied Bats (*Chalinolobus picatus*) were first



confirmed in Victoria in 2014 when the Fauna Survey Group of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria carried out a fauna survey in the Yarrara and Mallanbool Flora and Fauna Reserves (about 25 km south of Neds Corner Station). While this was the first time the species had been caught and confirmed to occur in the state, recordings of its echolocation call had previously been made in Murray-Sunset National Park in 2008 and at Neds Corner Station in 2011.

Peter said, “We’d like to think there are more of this species in the area, at least in small numbers, thanks to the improved biodiversity at Neds.”

The discovery of the Little Pied Bat, considered vulnerable across the Murray River in New South Wales, is one of many ‘firsts’ for Neds Corner Station since it became a conservation reserve in 2002 – emphasising this property’s unique landscape position in Victoria’s far northwest corner and its capacity for recovery since stock-grazing and cropping has been stopped.

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For more information about projects at Neds Corner Station contact Manager Peter Barnes on (03) 8631 5888 or [peterb@tfn.org.au](mailto:peterb@tfn.org.au)

*Pictured top: Mallee woodlands on Neds Corner Station. Inset: a living Little Pied Bat. Credit: Sally Brewsher.*



## Riverside haven protected forever

The Wimmera River never reaches the sea. Victoria's longest land-locked waterway, it flows 150 km from the Great Dividing Range to Lake Hindmarsh in the state's north-west, in doing so connecting the Grampians and Wimmera plains to the Mallee.

Trust for Nature has partnered with landholders in the region to protect important habitat along the river with the support of the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Response Program. One of those landholders is Marj Light, who recently volunteered to permanently protect her 4.8 ha property on Wotjobaluk country, between Dimboola and Antwerp, with a conservation covenant.

Marj bought the property with her two children Claire and Mark back in 2004 when she was living across the road.

"I used to wander around it looking at all the wildflowers, and we bought the property because I didn't want it to be ruined. I was getting anxious about what would happen when it was sold, which is why we put the covenant on it," Marj says.

Growing up on a farm, Marj says she inherited her love of nature from her parents. On weekends, the family would drive out to bush blocks to search for wildflowers. In 2007 she and her partner Dave bought a 100-ha block right next to Grampians National Park where they live now, which they protected with a covenant in 2010.

The Wimmera River property protects endangered Plains Woodland and Low Rises Woodland, as well as depleted Riverine Chenopod Woodland and Riverine Grassy Woodland. After rains, the land comes alive with wildflowers, including a number of species of orchids.

Trust for Nature Senior Conservation Officer Fiona Copley says such high quality habitat is really valuable.

"With climate change warming and drying the region, protecting areas alongside rivers is more important than ever. They serve as refuges for wildlife by continuing to provide food resources, water and shelter when other habitats have dried out during summer" Fiona says.



"Importantly this covenant illustrates the fact that even relatively small areas can help deliver conservation outcomes that endure over a much larger scale. This covenant, by supporting riverine vegetation in an important corridor that connects across bioregions and climate zones, delivers multiple long term benefits belying its small size."

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

For information on climate-change impacts on biodiversity and what landholders can do go to [trustfornature.org.au/resources](http://trustfornature.org.au/resources)

*Pictured top: Marj Light bought her property on the Wimmera River in 2004. Inset: Orchids found on Marj's Wimmera property include spider-orchids. Credit: Marj Light.*



## Where the forest meets the sea

In the heart of Apollo Bay on Victoria's spectacular Great Ocean Road is a patch of precious wet forest owned by Trust for Nature. Although small, five ha Henriksen Sanctuary is a natural treasure close to the town and home to threatened species.

Recently, Trust for Nature built a 500 m walking trail through the reserve, including wooden steps, bridges and gravel paths with the support of the Australian Government and the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative. Interpretive signs have been installed to highlight the threatened species living in the reserve.

Although the project had to deal with COVID-19 restrictions, Trust for Nature's Chris Lindorff said

it was a tremendous success. "Access into the sanctuary was previously near impossible, as the terrain is very steep and there was no track. The community now has a safe walking trail through a very picturesque and environmentally important forest very close to the town of Apollo Bay," Chris said.

Donated by the Henriksen family, the sanctuary is one of Trust for Nature's 40-odd reserves across the state. Covered in lush Wet Forest, the reserve is home to the threatened Rufous Bristlebird, Powerful Owl and Otway Black Snail, as well as Satin Bowerbird.

"The Rufous Bristlebird subspecies found at Henriksen is unique to the Otways," said Chris. "While much of their habitat is

protected in state reserves, loss and fragmentation of habitat on private land is an ongoing threat, which is why places like Henriksen are so important."

"Although little is known about the Otway Black Snail, it depends on damp forests and rainforest. It's a carnivorous species that comes out at night to hunt invertebrates, including other snails."

The track will also be a huge help in managing weeds on the reserve. Now that work crews have better access to the site, it will be easier to control Blackberry, English Holly and Spanish Heath in the reserve and on nearby properties.

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For more information about projects in the Corangamite region contact Regional Manager Jo Day on (03) 8361 5888 or [jod@tfn.org.au](mailto:jod@tfn.org.au)



*Pictured top: Conservation Officer Jo Day and Peter Lindorff clearing thickets of Blackberry in Henriksen Sanctuary. Left: the carnivorous Otway Black Snail, one of the threatened species found in the reserve.*

## From boxing to conservation

Champion boxer, proud Ngarrindjeri woman, and now certified land manager: 19-year-old Marissa Williamson is one of nine Indigenous students from Victoria who recently graduated from the Certificate III of Conservation and Land Management course run by Trust for Nature in partnership with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and Holmesglen.

Marissa grew up in and out of foster care. While training for the AFL women's league, she discovered boxing, and quickly became a star, holding the title of current national and Victorian 64kg champion. She was awarded NAIDOC Sportsperson of the Year in 2019.

In between her training, she started working for the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's Narrap Team, which does work on Country around Melbourne. Her traineeship included the six-month land management course through Holmesglen.

"At first I didn't like it," Marissa said. "But as I came to see the results, get better at plant identification and learn about wildlife rescue, I came to love it.

"As an Aboriginal person I feel a pull to the environment and want to decolonise how we look after it. My favourite part of the course has been meeting other mob from different areas who share the same goals and sense of spiritual and cultural connection."

While continuing her boxing career, Marissa also hopes to study public health with an emphasis on sustainability.

In the course, students have undertaken activities across the greater Melbourne area, including mangrove plantings, midden protection and erosion control, propagating yam daisies and grass trees and building a planter box and a bush food garden on Philip Island. In April 2021, the students went out to Coranderk Station to experience a cultural burn led by Wurundjeri elder Uncle Dave Wandin, the first burn at the station in over 160 years.

"It's been an amazing year of learning and working together and sharing knowledge," said Trust for Nature regional manager Ben Cullen. "I can't wait to see the role these grads play in the future of how our natural areas are managed.



"Traditional Owners have told us they want to work more on country and want support to do that. Trust for Nature is in a position to help join those dots. The course is guided by Aboriginal people and we work with them to deliver it."

The Conservation and Land Management course is supported by the Victorian Government, Mornington Peninsula Shire and Holmesglen.

For more information about projects in the Port Phillip and Westernport region contact Area Manager Ben Cullen on (03) 8631 5888 or [benc@tfn.org.au](mailto:benc@tfn.org.au)



*Pictured top: Marissa Williamson is the current national and Victorian 64kg champion. Credit: Archivist Media. Above: Students from the course with the planter box installed on a Phillip Island property.*

# Covenantors think big on new biolinks for Gippsland

When it comes to conservation, Jim and Heather Phillipson are big picture thinkers.

After purchasing three properties near their home farm in Gippsland recently, the passionate environmentalists and philanthropists saw an opportunity to create a community of conservation-minded landholders that could have a huge impact on the region. This led to the creation of EcoGipps, a family-owned, not-for-profit company seeking to restore and conserve the landscape through the management of conservation properties and the establishment of bio-links across Gippsland.

“We want to connect people, animals and plants,” said Jim. “We owe our existence to a healthy environment. We want to be able to give instead of take, and gain the satisfaction of leaving the world a better place.”

Jim and Heather’s land currently consists of four properties in the Macalister and Avon River catchments, encompassing riparian woodland, grassland and subalpine forest. The properties are in the process of being covenanted or have plans for future covenants through Trust for Nature.

Trust for Nature’s West Gippsland Regional Manager John Hick said Jim and Heather’s vision is inspiring. “The innovation and scope of their plans is incredibly exciting and it’s at a scale I haven’t quite seen before. They are leading by demonstration and showing what’s possible.”

Jim and Heather, who also steward a fifth covenanted property of endangered damp forest in the Eastern Strzelecki ranges, see their conservation strategy as something that will continue to give back for generations to come. “We plan to grow EcoGipps into a not-for-profit that will be a gift to the community,” Jim said.

“Jim and Heather’s work is a vital piece of the conservation puzzle in West Gippsland,” said John Hick. “A complementary program we are working on is the West Gippsland Conservation Fund, which will soon start funding stewardship activities on covenanted properties in the region. It’s all part of connecting and protecting habitat at a landscape scale.”

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For more information about projects in the West Gippsland region contact Regional Manager John Hick on (03) 8631 5888 or [johnh@tfn.org.au](mailto:johnh@tfn.org.au)

*Pictured: An arborist creating a tree hollow.*

## New covenant a 'sanctuary' for returning wildlife

When Galena Debney bought her 20-ha home in Glenlyon, it was overgrazed, and the creek was choked with weeds. After 30 years without livestock, the property—which borders state park or reserve on three sides—is a thriving ecosystem of vulnerable Herb-rich Woodland and Valley Grassy Forest, and is home to threatened Powerful Owls, Brush-tailed Phascogales and Platypus.

“It’s amazing to see how much it has recovered,” Galena said. “The wildlife is moving back in. It’s a real sanctuary.”

For this reason, Galena recently decided to permanently protect the property with a covenant, so the flora and fauna are never put at risk from clearing or overgrazing again. “There’s a huge influx of people moving to the area for a rural lifestyle and there’s a lot of development going on. I didn’t want that to happen here.”

Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Shae Brennan said this site protects a stretch of approximately

a kilometre of Kangaroo Creek and adjoins both the Upper Loddon State Forest and Glenlyon Bolton’s Lane Bushland Reserve. The covenant, which is currently in the process of being finalised, is a split tier covenant that will cover the remnant vegetation and the previously cleared land.

Galena, who ran a wildlife shelter for sick, injured and orphaned animals on her property for many years, loves living among the wildlife and has seen Brush-tailed Phascogales and Platypus herself—the latter was recently listed as a vulnerable species in Victoria.

“I saw the phascogale right outside the house,” Galena said. “It was so unexpected, and I knew it was something special.”

Shae said the evidence of such important species on the property is wonderful news. “I was overjoyed when I heard that Galena had seen a platypus in Kangaroo Creek, given their status. It’s really exciting.”

Galena has bequeathed her property to the local Dja Dja Wurrung people. She said: “It’s their land anyway. I’m just giving it back.”

Shae said this act just shows Galena’s commitment to the land. “She thinks of the big picture, and she wants her property to go to people who are connected with country, who will care for it as she has.”

This covenant has been funded through the State Government’s Biodiversity Response Planning, Box Ironbark and Forests program.

For more information about projects in the North Central region contact Area Manager Deanna Marshall on (03) 8631 5888 or [deannam@tfn.org.au](mailto:deannam@tfn.org.au)

*Pictured: Galena ran a wildlife shelter for sick and injured animals.*



# Protecting a wildflower spectacle

The rugged Gariwerd/Grampians mountain range is one of the most spectacular landscapes in Victoria. It is also a refuge for wildlife and plants from the surrounding farmlands. While much of the land is protected by National Park, there are still large areas of privately owned, intact habitat surrounding the Park.

Trust for Nature is protecting one of these areas forever through a conservation covenant, on Kylie Rose and Andrew Taylor's 61 ha property at Bornes Hill in the southern Grampians. The Geelong family of five bought the property two years ago when they were looking for a bush block to spend holidays and weekends and go bushwalking in the National Park.

"The first time we visited the property we fell in love with the huge river red gums, these beautiful old giants have so much character. We think they could be 600 to 700 years old. To imagine what they've witnessed is incredible and humbling," Kylie said.

The property, adjacent to the National Park, contains significant areas of endangered Plains Grassy Woodland and vulnerable Plains Sedgy Woodland. Many areas are seasonally inundated, providing important habitat for a range of wetland species. The property is home to a population of nationally threatened Clover Glycine, which blooms with purple pea flowers in late spring. The more Kylie and Andrew got to know the property, the more they realised how special it was.

"We approached the Trust when we realised that we don't own these ancient trees: we're just temporary custodians. We have a strong sense of responsibility to protect the land from future development," said Kylie.

Trust for Nature Conservation Officer Adam Merrick says the property forms an important connection with the National Park. It is being protected with the support of the Victorian Government's Biodiversity Response Program.

"The wetlands on the property become a refuge for woodland birds in summertime when the plains are dry. It's a transition zone between two major different types of habitat, where the forest wildlife of the Grampians meets the wildlife of the plains. So, it's really important habitat-wise.

"It's very weed free too because it's seasonally inundated with water. That makes it fantastic habitat for wildflowers, particularly lilies and orchids. The flowering display in spring is spectacular."

At the moment, Kylie and Andrew are enjoying getting to know the property and connecting with other people in the area who are equally as passionate about nature.

Kylie said, "We're really keen to learn more. We love nature but we aren't experts, so connecting with people like Adam and other conservation groups has been amazing. Learning how to protect, conserve and enhance nature for future generations is exciting and rewarding, it certainly makes us sleep better at night."

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

*Pictured top: Wildflowers like these Bulbine Lilies thrive in the seasonally inundated wetlands. Credit: Kylie Taylor. Inset: Clover Glycine is one of the threatened species found on the Taylor's property. Left: Kylie and Andrew Taylor with one of the huge River Red Gums found on their property. Credit: Hilary Bradford.*



# Helping hand for lifelong conservationist

**Maisie Enders has spent the past 15 years maintaining the restoration work of her late husband, Stan. At 90 years old, Maisie manages her 120 ha farm at Carboor, on Taungurung country in central Victoria, by herself.**

Maisie and Stan bought the property in 1953 and practiced regenerative farming and holistic farm management, including establishing revegetation networks across the farm. Maisie was also a wildlife carer, taking in hundreds of orphaned wombats, wallabies, possums and birds. In 2004, the entire farm was placed under a conservation covenant, protecting this important habitat and sustainable farming system forever.

Maisie's story was featured on the ABC after she got help to rebuild fences on her property. As she told the ABC, her husband was eager to protect the land they were looking after.

"The way he developed it, he wanted to preserve it," Maisie said. "He cared about the methods that he was using and he wanted it to be carried on."

When cattle began to get out through deteriorating fences, Trust for Nature was able to help out. Thanks to the North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA), through the Victorian Government's Working for Victoria program, Trust for Nature had access to crews to support landholders with covenants throughout the catchment.

The Working for Victoria program was an initiative responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was designed to help jobseekers find work across Victoria. The North East CMA employed three teams who worked with organisations including Landcare, Trust for Nature and Parklands Albury Wodonga, as well as with private landholders.

A team of seven—Blake, Chris, Alex, Isaak, Bryce, Shannon, and Fraser—rebuilt fences on Maisie's land to protect tree belts, re-hung a dozen gates to make them open smoothly, repaired old fencing and slashed under an electric fence so Maisie can turn it on safely.

Chris and Isaak, who completed undergraduate degrees in environmental management and science, said the program helped them gain practical skills and certifications. Alex, who grew up on a local farm, said he enjoyed the opportunity to be out of the office.

Trust for Nature's North East Area Manager Amelia Houghton said thanks to the North East CMA and the Working for Victoria program, Trust for Nature provided much-needed assistance to more than 20 landholders with conservation covenants in the north east.

"Trust for Nature is really pleased about how the Working for Victoria program was delivered. The close collaboration between North East CMA and Trust for Nature made the process of linking the crews to landholders seamless. Trust for Nature received very positive feedback from landholders who were impressed by the skill level, professionalism, and attention to detail that the Community Liaison Officer and work crews displayed," she said.

"This was a fantastic opportunity for Trust for Nature as it allowed us to provide more support for landholders to protect their conservation covenants, particularly those recovering from bushfires."



*Pictured: Working for Victoria crew give Maisie a hand to mend fences on the property.*



*Pictured: Maisie Enders with her cattle on her covenanted property.*

# How the US is leading the way to protect a third of the planet



*Pictured: in California, Sandhill Cranes benefit from programs encouraging farmers to create habitat for migratory birds.*

**In January this year, the United States took a significant first step in moving toward 30×30: a global goal of protecting 30 per cent of Earth’s land and water by 2030.**

A sweeping executive order from President Joe Biden on the climate crisis contained a mandate directing government leaders to submit recommendations for how the federal government could conserve at least 30 per cent of the United States’ land and waters by the end of the decade.

This historic step recognises that to address the interlinked extinction and climate crises it is necessary to tackle the rate at which we are losing nature. It also sends a clear message of support to scientists and policy makers who are working to achieve a global 30x30 target as part of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be decided at the 15th Conference of the Parties of the UN convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China, later this year.

Private land conservation and protection is central to this challenge: like Australia, around 60 per cent of land in the United States is privately owned, but only three per cent of protected areas are on privately owned land. As a result, the loss of nature is particularly acute on private property, reducing carbon sequestration and threatening ecosystems.

For example, 95 per cent of American endangered species rely on private land for at least part of their habitat; three-quarters of wetlands are located on private and tribal lands, and privately owned forests (half the total) provide 30 per cent of the country’s drinking water.

With political will and meaningful resourcing, the US is well-placed to ramp up its conservation efforts on private land to achieve 30x30. The US Land Trust Alliance (similar to the Australian Land Conservation Alliance) represents more than 1,700 land trusts, which over time have developed a range of tools to deliver outcomes for biodiversity on private land.

About 16 million ha of natural habitat in the United States is already protected through conservation easements. Like Trust for Nature covenants, these voluntary agreements between landholders and land trusts or government agencies limit the future uses of the land for conservation purposes. In exchange for voluntarily setting aside their land for environmental goals, landholders receive a range of valuable financial benefits.

For example, land donors are able to deduct 50 per cent of their income (or in the case of qualified farmers and ranchers, up to 100 per cent) against the loss in land value that occurred due to protection



by an easement, across a carry-forward period of 15 years. The value of the protected land is based on its ‘highest and best use’ before protection, which often means development.

Another tool is conservation banking. Resembling our biodiversity offset market, these ‘banks’ are permanently protected stretches of land, generating habitat or species credits to landholders that can then be sold to developers to mitigate the impact their planned projects will have on species. As of 2019, there were 137 conservation banks operating across the US, which permanently conserve over 62,000 ha of land.

The US federal government has also created cash incentives for voluntary conservation such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW). The CRP offers annual payments to farmers who agree to take land out of production to protect the quality of the water and wildlife on their land. As of 2019, approximately 9.7 million ha of land are enrolled in the CRP.

Other innovative solutions include The Nature Conservancy’s ‘BirdReturns’ program, which allows conservationists to ‘rent’ land from private landholders to create habitat for migrating wetland-dependent birds. The project analyses when and where there is a need for additional habitat. It then allows eligible farmers to compete for funds in exchange for flooding their fields at the correct time and depth.

Conservation easements are also used more expansively in the US than they are in Australia: for example they protect working farms to secure open space values and sustainable management practices; and working forests to ensure sustainable harvesting.

As the Biden Administration sets out on an ambitious conservation agenda, there is much to be learned in Australia from the suite of incentives available to private landholders wishing to protect and manage their conservation values.

*Pictured: the Florida Panther, a subspecies of Cougar, is one of the species benefitting from conservation easements in the US.*

# Brown Toadlet

## *Pseudophryne bibronii*



**Tiny, brown and sometimes warty, it's easy to miss the Brown Toadlet. But this is one of Victoria's special species that we're protecting at Trust for Nature. These small frogs grow up to 3cm—smaller than your thumb. With brown skin to help them camouflage, they have striking black-and-white bellies and yellow armpits.**

### What's in a name?

Also known as Bibron's Toadlet, these frogs aren't true 'toads'—they belong to a family called the Australian ground frogs. Among their close relatives are the brightly coloured and highly threatened Corroboree Frogs of the Australian Alps.

### Dry feet

For a frog, Brown Toadlets live in surprisingly dry areas, including dry forest, grassland, woodland and shrubland across north east, central and western Victoria. They lack webbed feet. Still, they prefer places that are inundated after rain. During dry times, they shelter in damp places under rocks, logs or leaf litter.

### Calling for love

Males start calling from suitable nest sites in damp spots in autumn with a call described as an "ark" or "cre-ek". The females lay eggs in batches of 70-200. When rain comes, the eggs hatch and the tadpoles grow up in water. The eggs can remain dormant for several months if the rains don't come.

### In decline

Brown Toadlets are declining across their range, perhaps by more than a third in a decade, and have disappeared from many sites where they were previously seen around Melbourne. In Victoria, they are listed as endangered. The reasons aren't clear, but likely involve a number of factors including habitat loss, habitat degradation, changed hydrology and Chytrid fungus.

### Global picture

Amphibians have been declining worldwide since the 1970s, when a fungal disease began to spread around the world. In Australia, more than 40 of the country's 238 amphibians are in decline or have become extinct, including at least 15 Victorian species.



## How we're helping

Now classified as endangered in Victoria, and with more than 60 per cent of their remaining habitat in Victoria estimated to be on private land, one of the best things we can do is protect their homes with conservation covenants. Also important is making sure any areas of possible habitat have logs and leaf litter to provide shelter and food. More research into the frogs will help too: we're pleased that Muhammad Jawad Jilani is completing part of his PhD at Deakin University researching Brown Toadlets at Trust for Nature's Burge Family Reserve.

*Pictured top: The underbelly of a Brown Toadlet, showing its striking patterning. Above: Brown Toadlets can be found in damp zones in drier vegetation types across northern, central and western Victoria.*



## Focus on the driver weeds

by Dr Graeme Lorimer, environmental scientist and Friends Group convenor for Trust for Nature's Bunglook Conservation Reserve.

Weeds can be one of the thorniest issues for landholders and it isn't always easy to figure out where to best direct our efforts.

Not all weeds are alike. While some can cause serious harm, others have little impact or may even provide habitat for native wildlife. Environmental weeds aren't always introduced plants; species such as Coast Wattle (*Acacia longifolia* subsp. *sophorae*) can be significant environmental weeds, even within their natural range, following habitat modification.

One way that ecologists categorise environmental weed species at a particular location is to place them on a spectrum between 'driver' species and 'passenger' species. Drivers actively alter the ecosystem they are in. Passengers don't cause change but move into habitats that have been altered by things like deer, past clearing, soil modification or driver species of weeds. Because passengers are symptoms, they tend to abate when underlying causes are fixed; otherwise, removing them is usually futile. Weed control should focus on drivers.

A single species may be a driver, a passenger or in between, depending on context. For example, Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*) is ecologically important in its natural habitat but O'Leary *et al.* (2018) provided strong evidence that it can be a driver species in forests from Panton Hill to the Mornington Peninsula. Their key evidence was the combination of two observations: (a) the higher the density of Sweet Pittosporum, the lower the number of indigenous plant species; and (b) indigenous species returned when the pittosporums were removed.

Those steps (a) and (b) are probably the best way to tell if a species is a driver. A slower way is to observe changes as an environmental weed spreads. It's a driver if the number of indigenous species is stable or rising before the weed arrives and consistently declines after.

The following screening test is also useful: A species that consistently represents a steady, low fraction of foliage cover within its layer of the vegetation is unlikely to be a driver.

Each of these tests for drivers has limitations. Nevertheless, the concept of passengers and drivers is still useful for understanding how vegetation changes in response to your weed control efforts, and hence how you should adjust and prioritise your management efforts.

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Find out more ecological concepts about environmental weeds on YouTube: <https://livinglinks.com.au/publications/educational-materials/>.

Further reading: O'Leary B., Burda M., Venn S.E. & Gleadow R. (2018). Integrating the Passenger-Driver hypothesis and plant community functional traits to the restoration of lands degraded by invasive trees. *Forest Ecology and Management* 408: 112–120.

*Pictured top: Sweet Pittosporum is an important species in its natural habitat, but can be an environmental weed elsewhere.*

## How a covenant works

A conservation covenant is one of the most important steps landholders can take to protect habitat on their land, and Trust for Nature is incredibly fortunate to work with so many landholders passionate about conservation.

Many private properties in Victoria have high quality remnant bushland that have been managed by environmentally friendly farming practices over many years. A conservation covenant can protect the work that you and your family have done by ensuring the next landholders continue to look after the land.

A covenant is a legal instrument that sits on a property's title and includes certain restrictions on what activities can be done on the land to ensure it protects and maintains the health of habitat. The basic restrictions and standard of environmental protection that a covenant provides are relatively consistent across all covenants. A separate management plan provides guidance to landowners on how to achieve the conservation objectives of the covenant.

When initiating a new covenant, landholders help determine the covenant design. This includes, for example, whether the covenant is to apply over all or part of the property, the management objectives for each area (which can be allocated different 'tiers' under the covenant) and whether a domestic area is required to allow for a dwelling.

The most common types of tiers include: Conservation Tier, Modified Use Tier and a Sustainable Use Tier. The Conservation Tier tends to be appropriate for those areas of high quality remnant bushland; the Modified Use Tier for modified areas that are being managed for stock grazing or for open

space reserves in peri-urban areas that buffer an adjacent conservation area; and Sustainable Use for low impact farming or other businesses that can be done in conjunction with protecting the native plants and animals that are on the land.

**When a covenanted property is sold, the management plan is updated to recognise the new owner's plans for the property and help guide their actions and to ensure they are aware of the individual conditions of their covenant.**

A Letter of Approval can be issued to a landholder to allow an activity that is otherwise restricted by the covenant deed, provided that the activities will not prejudice the conservation objectives. Common examples include the keeping of pets or collecting firewood for personal use. A Letter of Approval is issued to the individual landholder and expires when the property changes hands— this way each landholder can negotiate activities that are specific to their needs.

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If you would like further information, please contact your regional staff or the Stewardship Coordinator Karen Tymms on 0417 327 514 or [karent@tfn.org.au](mailto:karent@tfn.org.au)

*Pictured: Covenants can have multiple tiers reflecting different management objectives.*



Another  
**1,800 ha**  
in Victoria  
protected!

## Adding to Victoria's protected areas

**Conservation covenants are one of the recognised mechanisms for protecting land in Australia as part of the formal system of protected areas. Putting a conservation covenant on a property is consequently one of the single most important steps a landholder can take to protect plants and animals. It truly gives those species 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 areas that have been identified in Trust for Nature's Statewide Conservation Plan as priority habitats and landscapes for protection. Trust for Nature covers the costs of covenanting.

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, thanks to the generous commitment and vision of those landholders.

### Corangamite

Princetown	412 ha
Dereel	6 ha
Dereel	5 ha
Ocean Grove	8 ha

### East Gippsland

Nungurner	8 ha
Bruthen	71 ha

### Glenelg-Hopkins

Langi Logan	54 ha
Maroona	32 ha
Hexham	9 ha
Darlington	15 ha

### Goulburn-Broken

Boho South	14 ha
Clonbinane	84 ha
Murchison	16 ha
Mitchellstown	28 ha
Strathbogie	6 ha

### Mallee

Natya	17 ha
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### North Central

Heathcote	17 ha
Moonlight Flat	12 ha
Fentons Creek	71 ha
Fiery Flat	89 ha
Mount Lonarch	32 ha

### North East

Heathcote Junction	15 ha
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### Port Phillip

Red Hill South	10 ha
Mount Toolebewong	45 ha

### West Gippsland

Boolarra South	59 ha
Maffra West Upper	104 ha
Glenmaggie	53 ha
Stockdale	52 ha

### Wimmera

Fyans Creek	44 ha
Laharum	5 ha



## Home on the range

**A long search led Katherine Horsfall, her husband Hugh and architect Peter Knight to Falcon's Nest on the Great Dividing Range.**

"We were looking for a piece of land out of town to care for," Katherine said, "Something bigger than us and something to keep us busy."

Falcon's Nest is 84 ha across two properties between Clonbinane and Broadford near the Hume Freeway. It's steep land with more than 200 metre range in elevation, with Grassy Dry Forest on the ridges and Herb-rich Foothill Forest on the slopes, and full of glorious Bulbine and Chocolate Lilies in the spring.

The Horsfalls and Peter bought the property recently through Trust for Nature's Revolving Fund program, which ensures the property will be protected forever with a conservation covenant. Proceeds from the sale will be used to purchase additional properties through Trust for Nature's Revolving Fund.

Katherine said, "It's a magnificent, a 'knock-your-socks-off' sort of place. It has real atmosphere."

Katherine is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, where she researches replanting native meadow plants in urban environments. A trial meadow seeding at Royal Park that she established in 2020 is thriving.



That knowledge will come in handy in managing Falcon's Nest. The property is threatened by weeds, including Blackberries and Patterson's Curse.

"It's not a pristine wilderness and it's going to be a challenge to control the weeds."

That the property would be protected forever with a conservation covenant was part of the appeal of purchasing through Trust for Nature.

Katherine said, "It means that all the work that we put in is really valuable. There's going to be a legacy of our work and the land will retain those values beyond us."

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For more information about properties for sale contact Michael Fry on (03) 8631 5888 or [michaelf@tfn.org.au](mailto:michaelf@tfn.org.au)

View properties for sale at [trustfornature.org.au/properties-for-sale](http://trustfornature.org.au/properties-for-sale)

*Pictured: Steep land on the property means sore legs - and amazing views. Credit: Hugh Horsfall.*

**Trust for Nature covenantor and supporter Dr Barbara Baird bought her 65.4 ha property in Meredith in 1982. For more than 40 years she has lived on the property and restored it. Here, she tells us the story behind these photos.**



I call this tree the Thinking Tree. It's one of the biggest old trees left on the property, a huge old Messmate. I have an aerial photo from the 1970s, when the land was highly degraded by farming and rabbits, showing this tree all by itself. Now there is forest all around it. I've planted thousands of locally indigenous trees and shrubs over the whole property in my time living and working here. It's also exciting to watch other native plants naturally regenerating.

I installed these nest boxes made by La Trobe University many years ago. I used to sit quietly and watch the sugar gliders leaving them in the evening, all coming out around the same time. I often feed a kookaburra in the morning before dawn and see the gliders returning. I also installed boxes in the young trees along the driveway, which the gliders would chew into and eat the sap. I've cared for many animals over time. In the really dry summers I leave water for the animals such as koalas, and once saw a sugar glider come out during the day to drink.



# HELPING TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE





**If you are a Trust for Nature covenantor you are already taking vital action to reduce the impacts of climate change on the natural environment — you just might not realise it.**

Conservation work not only builds resilience on your property, But it has wider benefits in your local area for biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Not all of these ideas will be applicable to your property but we hope that, in combination with your management plan and other resources, they will encourage you to know that your conservation actions are worthwhile and make a difference.

These actions help our habitats, plants and animals be resilient to climate change:

-  by maximising health of ecosystems, AND
-  by giving native plants and animals the best possible chance of surviving and raising young.



Action	I already do this ✓	Yes, I'll do this ✓
<b>Protect habitat</b>		
Protect habitat forever with a conservation covenant	✓	
Fence habitat from grazing animals		
Protect habitat features from threats (e.g. old trees, rock outcrops, ponds)		
<b>Improve habitat</b>		
Increase plant diversity		
Establish missing keystone plants		
Thin trees where they are unnaturally dense		
Maintain or increase fallen wood		
Install nest boxes		
Restore inflows to wetlands and waterways		
Provide water in dry times for wildlife		
<b>Manage threats</b>		
Control feral animals to protect native plants and wildlife		
Manage impacts of over-abundant native kangaroos on native vegetation through fencing or authorised control		
Control soil erosion		
<b>Connect and expand my bit of nature</b>		
Revegetate cleared land		
Provide habitat links between isolated patches		
Work with neighbours/local conservation groups to increase extent of native vegetation		

