

Annual Report

2015

birds are in our nature

President's Report

Bringing science and community together is a truly unique and effective model for bird conservation.

A few years ago, the newly merged BirdLife Australia was optimistic about the future, with a new constitution and a unified strategy for bird conservation.

Like many not-for-profit groups reliant on government funds, however, severe funding cutbacks put our long-term conservation programs at serious risk.

Thankfully, the Board and staff moved quickly to adopt a new business and financing model to implement our Bird Conservation Strategy. This model is focused on moving to a long-term sustainable position that is less dependent on government funding.

The last year, therefore, has been another period of significant change, both operationally and culturally. BirdLife Australia is evolving as a charity while remaining true to its science, membership and community roots.

Changes over those years included: investing in a fundraising program, which has generated new income for our core bird conservation programs; tripling our supporter base to 77,000 and growing our membership from a low of 8,500 members to 12,384 as at the end of 2015; and our network of volunteer groups embracing "collective impact" – this means delivering conservation together.

Looking back, we have come a long way and I'm proud of our achievements. Our underlying financial performance improved by 20% on the previous year. This progress clearly has to continue to secure BirdLife Australia's long-term financial sustainability.

Plans developed in 2015 will come to fruition in the new financial year. This includes the launch of a Birddata app and web portal, providing 21st century tools for our hard-working volunteers. We are investing in national Migratory Shorebirds and Woodland Birds programs and embracing world's best practice through multi-species Conservation Action Planning.

The Board remains confident and optimistic about the future. I'd like to thank the Directors, our hard-working staff and leadership team, and all our wonderful volunteers for helping BirdLife Australia drive real and lasting positive change.

You are helping to create a bright future for Australia's birds.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Gerard Early". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gerard Early, President



CEO's Report

BirdLife Australia made a big difference in 2015.

Breeding rates of threatened resident shorebirds continued to improve; threats to Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas "in danger" were mitigated; more captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters were released and woodlands covenanted by working with conservation partners; migratory shorebirds like the Eastern Curlew were added to the threatened species list under the Australian Government's EPBC Act and development of the wetlands they rely on was stopped; and we are fighting for the very survival of the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in Perth.

And there was much, much more going on. It makes me very proud to lead BirdLife Australia. Our staff and volunteers have delivered so much, with very limited resources.

The challenges are mounting as governments cut back further on environmental spending and shift the burden of threatened species protection to the non-profit sector. We also need to work hand in hand with those governments to change policies that are failing birds and nature.

The good news is BirdLife Australia has the science, ability, plans, people and determination to drive real change. I am committed to finding the resources and capacity we need to really make a difference, including investments in our people and systems.

To do this, we are connecting with our growing network of supporters, branches, non-profit partners, researchers, governments and like-minded community groups. The power of many can create a much larger impact than going it alone.

To do this, our programs are adopting world's best practice in Conservation Action Planning. This involves working with our networks to agree on the research, resources and actions needed to make an impact.

To do this, we are fundraising and proud of it. Private philanthropy reduces our reliance on government and gives us the resources and capacity we *really* need.

Thank you to the BirdLife Australia Board, which has supported change – it can be tough going. Thank you to our donors who fully fund and believe in this terrific organisation; you are our partners in conservation. And thank you to our staff, members and volunteers who – as wonderful and effective ambassadors for birds and nature – do the heavy lifting.

Reversing the population decline of threatened birds is possible if it is connected to smart strategy and people.

Paul Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer

Year in Review

Click on any milestone to find out more



Hooded Plovers' successful breeding season

Through engaging and raising awareness in local communities, training volunteer wardens and collaborating with coastal municipal authorities and other agencies, the Beach-nesting Birds Program provided its greatest protection yet, allowing Hooded Plovers to achieve their highest level of breeding success in decades.

January

February

Indigenous Wetland Wardens workshops

A successful workshop to train Indigenous wetland wardens was conducted in conjunction with Victoria's Port Phillip Westernport CMA, providing practical experience for young Indigenous people in the management of shorebirds and waterbirds. Similar training by BirdLife Australia has empowered Indigenous people across Australia to nurture and monitor birds.

March

Birds and Bikes

What's the link between birds and bikes? The doyen of cycling commentators, Phil Liggett. Renowned for his Tour de France commentary, he's also a passionate birdwatcher who entertained BirdLife Australia's 'Birds and Bikes' gala dinner, sharing anecdotes and reaching new audiences to raise funds for BirdLife Australia.





April

Caley Valley wetlands saved

Home to the Endangered Australian Painted Snipe, the Caley wetlands were earmarked for destruction, making way for industrial development. Only after intensive advocacy and the collective voices of members of BirdLife Australia and other conservation groups, did the government back down, saving the wetlands and their birdlife.

Captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters successfully released into the wild

The wild population of Regent Honeyeaters was bolstered with captive-bred birds, with a released bird pairing with a wild bird, successfully rearing a chick. It required collaboration between BirdLife Australia and various agencies to breed, release and monitor the birds, training dozens of citizen scientists along the way.

May

BirdLife Australia's Network converges on Melbourne

Bringing together people from BirdLife branches, Observatories/Reserves and Special Interest Groups across Australia, the Network Forum is an opportunity to meet and discuss the issues, big and small, and work towards a common goal, providing an overview of the organisation while allowing local issues to be aired.

Wavebreak Island development cancelled

Gold Coast's Wavebreak Island—an important roost for migratory shorebirds—was earmarked to make way for a cruise ship terminal—another cut in the 'death by a thousand cuts' scenario of habitat loss. The decision was reversed after long-term monitoring informed advocacy from BirdLife Southern Queensland and other dedicated community groups.



Eastern Curlew and Curlew Sandpiper listed as Critically Endangered

By recognising the Eastern Curlew and Curlew Sandpiper as Critically Endangered, the Federal Government has reinforced the importance of BirdLife Australia's long-term monitoring programs and effective advocacy using science-backed data. Now these two species can be afforded the protection that the EPBC Act provides.



June

Save Our Species Grant for Regent Honeyeaters

The NSW Government has recognised the value of the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program by awarding it a 'Save Our Species' Grant, providing crucial funding for ongoing monitoring and banding of Regent Honeyeaters, at least 625 hectares of covenanted land, captive releases and an upgrade of captive facilities at Taronga Zoo.

July

State of Australia's Birds Headline Report released

Unveiling the Australian Bird Index—an innovative analysis of Atlas data to detect population trends across Australia, the report highlighted never-before-dreamed-of declines in some common species, such as Australian Magpies and Laughing Kookaburras, as well as other species with lower profiles.

August

Birds in Schools concludes

The future of Australia's birds depends on our young people. Since 2014, the Birds in Schools program has engaged schoolchildren at 16 primary schools across Sydney, spreading the word, providing a detailed curriculum to support teachers and providing hands-on activities to create bird habitat in the playground.



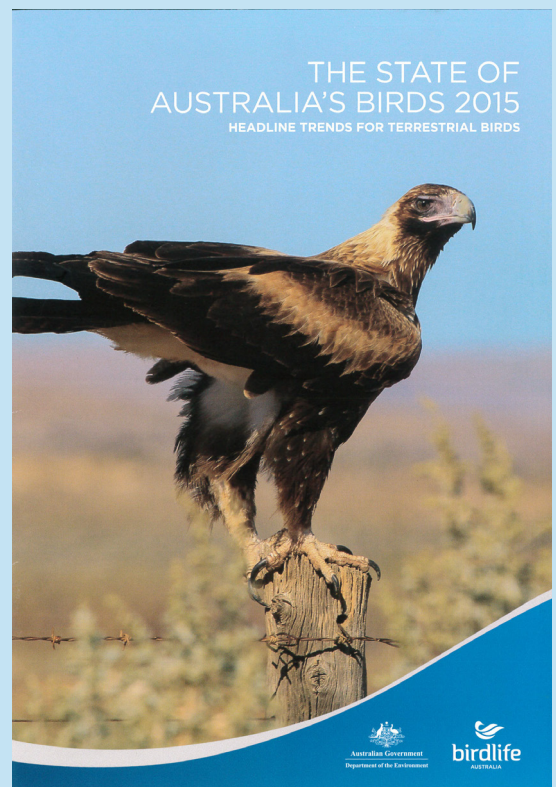
Staff Day at Clarkesdale

BirdLife Australia staff from across the country gathered at our Clarkesdale Reserve, near Ballarat, not only to reconnect with one another, but to participate in a number of workshops, seminars and practical tasks to ensure that the team continues to work together with a common purpose.

September

BirdLife Australia's 12,000th member

To be effective, a conservation organisation needs to be big enough to have its voice heard by the nation's decision-makers. By achieving the landmark of 12,000 members, together with our 85,000 supporters, BirdLife Australia is well placed to achieve real results in advocating on behalf of Australia's birds.



Samphire Coast Icon Project wins SA Premier's Award

Recognising the landscape scale of the Samphire Coast Icon Project's community engagement regarding samphire and tidal flat environments and their shorebirds, the Premier's NRM Big Picture Award encourages 'big-picture' projects that motivate and work with communities to improve the outcomes of natural resources management.

October

Aussie Backyard Bird Count

Featuring a pop-up garden in Melbourne's Federation Square, the second Aussie Backyard Bird Count engaged 39 local councils and over 42,000 people across Australia—many for the first time—raising awareness of native birds by encouraging the public to count them in their neighbourhood. The result: over a million birds!



BNB wins another Victorian Coastal Award

The Beach-nesting Birds program won its third Victorian Coastal Award for Excellence, this time in the Education category, for fostering coastal appreciation and understanding among students and teachers in coastal towns. It was also a finalist in the Community Engagement category, showing how holistic this program is.

November

The biggest Australasian Ornithological Conference ever

Held in Adelaide, the 2015 Australian Ornithological Conference was the biggest yet, with over 200 ornithologists and students flocking in from across Australia and beyond to hear the latest in bird-related science. Science is the backbone of our organisation and underpins every research and conservation action we undertake.

2016 BirdLife Australia Calendar flies off the shelves

Rapidly becoming an end-of-year tradition at BirdLife Australia, our calendar is more than just a celebration of Australia's birds. With its easy-to-digest snippets of information and sumptuous images, it raises awareness of our birdlife, and its sales contribute funds to BirdLife Australia's many bird conservation projects.

December



Financials Statement

The BirdLife Australia group, including the Australian Bird Environment Foundation (ABEF), BirdLife branches, reserves and observatories, returned a surplus of \$1.343m in 2015, compared with a deficit of \$984k in 2014. This was largely due to receiving significant bequests of \$2.199m during the year.

While the consolidated result before bequests is similar to last year, BirdLife's result, including branches, has improved by 5%. Significantly, the National Office underlying result has improved by 20% on 2014.

Comparison of results before bequests	2013	2014	2015	Improvement 13 to 14	Improvement 14 to 15
Underlying National Office (NO)	(1,135)	(1,278)	(1,026)	(13%)	20%
Prior year and one off adjustments	(81)	(1)	(115)		
NO Reported Result	(1,216)	(1,279)	(1,141)	(5%)	11%
Branches, reserves, observatories	38	59	(15)		
BirdLife Reported Result	(1,178)	(1,220)	(1,156)	(4%)	5%
ABEF	50	140	78		
Consol Reported Result	(1,128)	(1,080)	(1,078)	4%	0%

The decrease in ABEF's result reflects the additional grants paid out in 2015.

The result returned by branches, reserves and observatories was a small deficit, compared with the small surpluses delivered in previous years.

The improvement in the underlying National Office result is the result of:

- a 14% increase in revenue, particularly in donations (45%) and sales income (42%)
- a 6% increase in expenses, mainly in employee costs (8%) and increased project activity (28%)

BirdLife Australia has, to date, adopted a conservative approach to the release of unearned income. This will be reviewed in the context of a more programmatic approach to

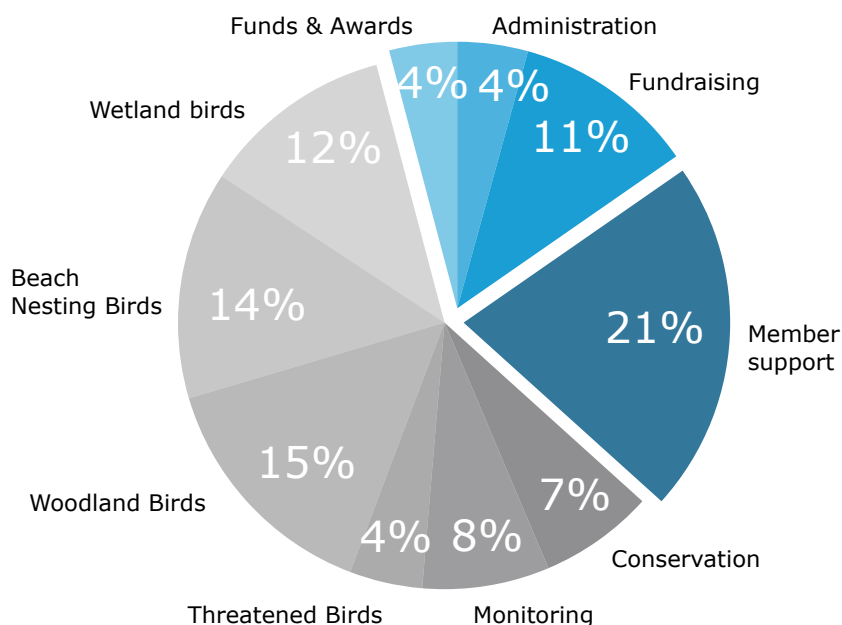
service delivery and in accordance with audit recommendations regarding funds being carried forward.

Key areas of focus in 2016 include:

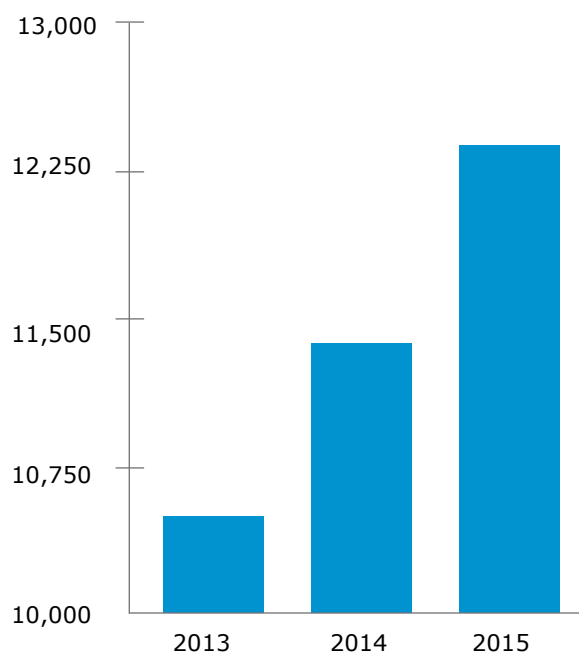
- continuing to organically grow donations, memberships and supporters to diversify income sources and reduce reliance on government grants.
- Improving reporting, cost controls and savings. Considerable improvements were achieved in 2015 in accounting processes, controls and reporting across the organisation.
- IT and system improvements to increase productivity.

Birdlife Australia has continued to fund core research and conservation programs through the generosity of donors and by drawing on capital reserves, including the Atlas, conservation advocacy and network support.

Expenditure 2015



Voting Members



Directors List

Directors	Date Appointed	Qualifications & Experience	Directors Eligible	Meetings Attended
Gerard Early (President)	May 2011	MPA, BA, Grad Dip Admin, PSM; Environmental and public sector consultant, formerly Deputy Secretary of the Australian Government Environment Department	5	5
John Barkla (Vice President)	February 2011	BEC, FCA, Chair of Audit & Risk/Australian Bird Fund Committee	5	4
Barry Baker	February 2011	PhD (UTAS), environmental consultant, member of Research & Conservation Committee	5	5
Stuart Cooney	May 2013	PhD (ANU), BAppSc (Hons), ecological consultant, small business owner, member of Awards Committee	5	5
Robert Davis	May 2011	PhD, University lecturer in Biology, small business owner and former ecological consultant	5	5
Robert Dunn	May 2011	MAppISc, BA (Hons), Grad Cert ornithology, member Audit & Risk/Australian Bird Fund Committees	5	4
Fiona Hunt	October 2015	MMgmt, B Ed, Dip Teach, GAICD, Head of Strategy, Mahlab Media, Director Aitch.Co Consulting	1	1
Duncan MacKenzie OAM	May 2014	FRMAA, FMAA, FAIIM, FAICD, Chairman BirdLife Australia Gluepot Reserve, member OHS and Audit & Risk/Australian Bird Fund Committees	5	5
Martine Maron	December 2011	PhD (Monash), BSc (Hons), ARC Future Fellow and Associate Professor in Environmental Management, working group member for IUCN and UNEP, Chair of AOC Committee	5	5
David Reid OAM	May 2011	Marketing and strategic planning experience, Chair of OHS Committee	5	5
David Torr	May 2011 (resigned July 2015)	BSc, ARCS, BirdLife Photography Website Developer	3	2
Alanna Vivian	May 2014	BA (Hons), LLB, practising lawyer, member of Audit & Risk/Australian Bird Fund Committees	5	4

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2015

	Consolidated	
	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Revenue from Ordinary Activities:		
Research project income	2,409,131	2,349,579
Donations	1,603,889	1,196,469
Subscriptions	778,486	772,466
Sales, courses and fees	855,921	669,531
Interest received	336,214	215,320
Other income	28,393	156,303
Total Revenue	6,012,034	5,359,668
Expenditure from Ordinary Activities:		
Employee costs	4,116,359	3,742,749
Printing, stationery and magazine costs	739,022	760,067
Finance and administration costs	766,105	677,467
Research projects non-employee costs	715,442	519,422
Occupancy expenses	441,506	434,840
Travel expenses	261,913	242,976
Subscriptions	49,470	62,612
Total Expenditure	7,089,817	6,440,133
Operating surplus/(deficit) from ordinary activities	(1,077,783)	(1,080,465)
Bequests	2,198,694	133,946
Operating surplus/(deficit)	1,120,911	(946,519)
Other comprehensive income		
<i>Items that maybe reclassified to profit or loss</i>		
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments	222,914	(37,265)
Total comprehensive income for the year	1,343,825	(983,784)

Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2015

	Consolidated	
	2015	2014
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,329,200	2,933,635
Trade and other receivables	459,270	186,918
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	3,788,470	3,120,553
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Investments	5,057,996	3,962,269
Property, plant & equipment	2,027,014	2,087,129
Intangible assets	80,000	42,000
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	7,165,010	6,091,398
TOTAL ASSETS	10,953,480	9,211,951
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	417,633	317,756
Provisions	715,636	655,271
Unearned income	2,515,541	2,350,872
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,648,810	3,323,899
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	158,830	86,037
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	158,830	86,037
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,807,640	3,409,936
NET ASSETS	7,145,840	5,802,015
EQUITY		
Reserves	7,145,840	5,802,015
Retained surplus	–	–
TOTAL EQUITY	7,145,840	5,802,015

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 31 December 2015

Consolidated	Retained Surplus \$	Unrealised Gains on Investments \$	General Reserves Investments \$	Other Reserves \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 January 2014	–	1,070,162	2,010,464	3,705,173	6,785,799
Deficit attributable to members	(946,519)	–	–	–	(946,519)
Transfers to and from reserves	946,519	(37,265)	(946,519)	–	(37,265)
Balance 31 December 2014	–	1,032,897	1,063,945	3,705,173	5,802,015
Surplus attributable to members	1,120,911	–	–	–	1,120,911
Transfers to and from reserves	(1,120,911)	222,914	1,120,911	–	222,914
Balance 31 December 2015	–	1,255,811	2,184,856	3,705,173	7,145,840

Statement of cash flow for the year ended 31 December 2015

	Consolidated	
	2015 \$	2014 \$
Cash flows from operating activities		
Bequests	2,198,694	133,946
Receipts from ordinary activities	5,568,137	5,713,939
Payments to suppliers and employees	(6,696,031)	(6,131,366)
Interest received	336,214	212,298
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,407,014	(71,183)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Net acquisition of investments	(872,813)	(258,849)
Acquisition of intangibles, plant and equipment	(138,636)	(142,120)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(1,011,449)	(400,969)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	395,565	(472,152)
Cash at the beginning of the financial year	2,933,635	3,405,787
Cash at the end of the financial year	3,329,200	2,933,635

Honour Rolls

Life Members

Rosemary E Adams
Sue Ap-Thomas
Noel & Heather Arnold
Helen I Aston
George Bedggood
Genevieve Binns
Margaret Brooke
Michael and Lesley Brooker
Lilla Buckingham
David Buntine
Gordon Cameron OAM
John Carabella
Graeme Chapman
Rick Clarke
John Courtney
Lyle Courtney OAM
Gina Cowling
Michael Craig
Marion Crouther
Henry Dee
Richard Donaghey
Douglas Dow
Harry Dunn
Robert A Elvish
Frank Farr
Thomas Fletcher
Patricia Forrest
Phillip Fuller
Dennis Gosper
Ken Harley
Rachel Hill
David Hollands
Peter Hopper
Rodney Horner
Graeme Hosken
Julia Hurley
Kath Johnson
Alan Johnson
Tess Kloot
Andrew Krumins
Richard A Leeds
Gladys Leslie
John Liddy
Geoffrey Lodge
Gail Lonnon
Tom Lowe
Duncan MacKenzie OAM
Bill Middleton OAM
Pat Minton
Robert Missen
David Morgan
Alan Morris
Chris Morris
Christopher Morse
David Nicholls
Lloyd Nielsen
David Niland
Joan Palamountain
Trevor Pescott OAM
Chester Porter QC
Jean Porter
John Ravenhall AM
Don Reid
Alan J Reid OAM
Peter Roberts
Donald H Seton
Michael Seyfort
Lester Short
Merran Spinaze

Brian Speechley
Graeme Stevens
David Stewart
Rod & Barbara Sutherland
Evan Thomas
Elizabeth Turnbull
Graham Walters
Neil Weatherill
Bill Weatherly
Malcolm Wilson

Honorary Life Members

Geoff Deason
Beryl Jarman
Alma Mitchell
Peggy Mitchell
Rosemary Payet
Howard Plowright
Len Robinson
Shelley Robertson

Honorary Members

Patricia White

Fellows

Brian Bell
Margaret Cameron AM
Sid Cowling
Stephen Davies
Clive Minton AM
Mike Newman
Henry Nix AO

Distinguished Service Awards

Marleen Acton
Robert Anderson
Marjorie Andrews
David Ap-Thomas
George Baker
Michael Bamford
Colin Barraclough
Rod Bloss
Ronald Bone
Ian Boyd
Alan Brown
Celia Browne
Max Burrows
Shirely Cameron
Wallie Coles
Shirley Cook
David Coutts
John Crowhurst
Stephen Debus
Xenia Dennett
Tina Dotto
Ian Dowling
Val Ford
Barbara Garrett
Alan Giles
Janet Hand
Graham Harrington
Judith Harrington
Alex Hawtin

Graeme Hosken
Virgil Hubregtse
Julia Hurley
Tania Ireton
Dorothy Johnstone
Laurie Living
Tess Kloot
Andrew Ley
Barbara Longmuir
Marlene Lyell
Nance Marriott
Peter Mason
Suzanne Mather
Clare Miller
Tim Mintern
Ian Morgan
Ian Muir
Clive & Wendy Napier
Clive Nealon
Helen O'Donnell
Joan Peters
Margaret Philipppson
Jill Plowright
Bill Ramsay
Barbara Reidy
Leonie Robbins
Don Roberts
Jenny Rogers
Don Saunders
Peter Sedgwick
Rod Smith
Richard Stevens
Keith Stockwell
Nancy Taylor
Trish Teesdale
Duncan Turnbull
Bessie Tyers
Liz Walker
Mr Brice Wells
Barb Williams
Jon Wren

We sadly note the passing of

Murray Bouchier
William Gittins
Margaret McKenzie

Major Supporters

Individuals

John Barkla and Dr Alison Street AO
Peter and Daphne Bayliss
Judith Bloxham
Richard Bomford and Bernadette O’Leary
Barbara Butler
Peter and Elizabeth Crossing AM
Christopher and Georgina Grubb
Dr Bill N Holsworth
Roger Howard-Smith
Peter Lemon
Dr Keith Lethlean
Susan Maple-Brown AM
John McRae and Sue Smith
Philip Robinson
Margaret Ross AM and Dr Ian Ross
Brian Snape AM and Diana Snape
Dr Elizabeth Xipell

Bequests

The Estate of Edna Curwen-Walker
The Estate of Shirley Edith Poole
The Estate of John Samuel Bentley
The Estate of Dorothy Griffiths
The Estate of James Rowland Webb
The Estate of William Joseph Regan
The Estate of Andree Christine Meredyth Griffin
The Estate of Peggy Smart
The Estate of Ismay Airlie Hillman
The Estate of Barbara Beeson
The Estate of Aina Matilda Ranke
The Estate of Natalie Staples
The Estate of Hope Rutherford Reilly
The Estate of Ann Sherlock

Organisations

BirdLife East Gippsland
BirdLife Mildura
BirdLife Southern Queensland
Gwynvill Group
Lane Cove Bush Regenerators Co-operative Ltd
Quark Expeditions Inc
The Corella Fund
Wildlife Profiles Pty Ltd

Trusts & Foundations

Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust
Beswick Family Fund
Caroline Durre Foundation
CMV Group Foundation
Dick and Pip Smith Foundation
F and J Ryan Foundation
J M Howlett Charitable Trust
Perpetual Foundation
The Ian Potter Foundation
The Angel Fund
The Gras Foundation
The Harris Estate Trust
The Landman Foundation
The Madden Sainsbury Foundation
The Stuart Leslie Foundation
W J & E N Orme - Tukathyme Trust
Wood Family Foundation

And thank you to all our supporters who wish to remain anonymous.

BirdLife Australia is the Australian member of BirdLife International, the world's largest nature conservation partnership. BirdLife International is a partnership of 120 organisations worldwide and growing, with 13 million members and supporters, over 7,000 local conservation groups and 7,400 staff.

BirdLife's vision is a world rich in biodiversity, where people and nature live in harmony. The partnership is driven by the belief that local people, working for nature in their own places but connected nationally and internationally through our global partnership, are the key to sustaining all life on this planet. This unique local-to-global approach delivers high impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.


The BirdLife International partnership is widely recognised as the world leader in bird conservation. Rigorous science informed by practical feedback from projects on the ground in important sites and habitats enables this truly global partnership to implement successful conservation programmes for birds and all nature.

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birds are in our nature

