

1. Does the Board have a policy that encourages new Birds on Farms programmes be set up across the Australian continent where funds are available and farmers together with volunteers are present?

The Birds on Farms program is an initiative run out of the Conservation and Science department at BirdLife Australia. The original Birds on Farms program many years ago ran in several states but ceased for many years. The program was reinvigorated a few years ago and has expanded into Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, southern Queensland and Western Australia. The Birds on Farms program is aligned to the Woodland Bird Conservation Action Plan, and restoration of woodland habitats, to reverse or prevent further decline of woodland birds in these landscapes.

The program is funded through a range of funding sources, including donors, and Trusts and Grants. Key considerations when deciding whether to expand the program is ensuring that it is financially sustainable as well as ensuring that volunteers and farmers are able to support the program. In addition to continuing to deliver the on-ground program, the Birds on Farms team have been working on an e-learning course to expand access to farmers in other areas and provide them with resources to help them engage in the Birds on Farms farm planning and bird monitoring initiatives. This is scheduled to launch in coming months and can be cross promoted by Branches and the Network.

As the following questions are related, a single response has been provided.

2a. What steps have been taken to stem the significant losses in this financial year?

2b. What steps have been taken to ensure that the financial position does not deteriorate further?

BirdLife Australia has responded through tighter cost control, restructuring, vacancy management, more conservative budgeting, and development of a new Financing Strategy which focuses on returning the organisation to a sustainable financial position. Importantly, the deficit has been consistently reducing, improving from (\$3.076 million) in 2024 to (\$1.961 million) in 2025.

The approved 2026 budget forecasts a further improvement to a net deficit of approximately (\$0.534 million), with the organisation targeting a return to a break-even core business position by 2027 and an overall surplus position thereafter.

3. On current forecasts, when will Birdlife return to being profitable?

BirdLife Australia is budgeting for a significantly reduced deficit in 2026 compared with 2025. While financial performance will continue to depend on fundraising, project income and investment returns, current forecasts anticipate a return to approximately break-even or modest operating surpluses from 2027 onwards, supported by ongoing cost-control measures and initiatives to strengthen revenue growth.

4. To the Acting Chair, Finance & Audit Committee: What are the "Contract Assets" and why did they increase by 100% to nearly half a million dollars?

‘Contract Assets’ represents contracted project work already completed, where BirdLife Australia has recognised the revenue but not yet issued an invoice or reached an unconditional right to payment. The increase largely reflects the strong growth in externally funded project activity during 2025.

5. Why doesn't BirdLife Australia maintain an investment portfolio made up entirely of ESG investments?

BirdLife Australia takes a practical approach to responsible investment. The Board has a clear ESG policy and recognises the importance of reducing the organisation's exposure to investments that are not aligned to our values. These ESG factors are considered in investment manager selection, portfolio construction and ongoing oversight. However, suitable ESG-aligned options are not always available in every asset class. A diverse range of asset classes ensures BirdLife Australia takes a prudent approach to the risks inherent in investment markets. Where this occurs, potential reputational and mission-alignment risks are transparently considered as part of our investment governance. The portfolio is regularly reviewed and rebalanced and, when needed, capital is preferentially allocated towards investments with stronger ESG credentials.

6. Are elected nominees expected to attend a minimum number of meetings per tenure to validate voting rights?

No. Neither the BirdLife Australia Constitution nor the Corporations Act 2001 requires an elected Director to attend a minimum number of meetings to maintain voting rights. However, a Director ceases to hold office if absent from two consecutive Board meetings without the Board's consent.

7. Why are we only getting 1.02% interest on nearly 2.9M. Whilst this is up from 0.76% in 2024, it is still a paltry amount.

The 1.02% figure relates only to cash held in bank accounts. We deliberately maintain relatively high cash balances at year-end to fund operating activities during periods of lower revenue generation and to meet project and payroll commitments.

The majority of BirdLife Australia's financial assets are held in the externally managed investment portfolio, which generates significantly higher returns through dividends, franking credits and capital growth than are available on at-call bank deposits.

In 2026, BirdLife Australia is also implementing processes under which a greater proportion of operational cash balances will be held in banking products with higher rates of return, while maintaining appropriate liquidity for operational requirements.

8. What are the key features of a successful bird recovery project versus an unsuccessful one?

In general, a successful bird recovery project is one where our interventions are successfully reducing threats and halting the decline of a threatened species or keeping common birds common. An unsuccessful one is where our interventions are having little or no impact. Our most successful projects have many recurring elements such as:

- multiple partners and collaborative efforts, including formal working groups or established Recovery Teams
- adequate resourcing (people and funding)
- continued monitoring and research to track the species
- targeted actions that are supported by sound science and perseverance.

Continuing to drive, learn and deliver against recovery objectives is often achieved over the long term.

Another key element is having good communications to promote the issue for the individual bird, and to seek public (and government) support to identify and mitigate threats to species from all angles, with the goal to provide an environment for birds to thrive (and breed!). We know that bird recovery is difficult without all these elements.

9. What can we do to raise awareness about bird conservation to the public?

BirdLife has several programmes that seek to engage the Australian public about birds, but also the plight of our ecosystems upon which birds and other native animals rely.

The Aussie Bird Count received record engagement last year, and we are on track for a bigger and better year. 64,000 Australians participated, submitting over 153,000 surveys, and counting over five million birds. This important cohort of people, particularly those new to BirdLife, are then invited to further engage with BirdLife Australia's many programs and opportunities for involvement.

Bird of the Year, through the Guardian newspaper, was run at the same time as the Aussie Bird Count in 2025 and involved 313,000 participants, with 52,000 voters participating on the final day. Again, all these people were invited to get further involved with BirdLife Australia and birds more generally.

BirdLife Australia's advocacy and campaigning work is very active and represents an amazing way for supporters and the Australian public to participate in creating a better world for birds. Earlier this year the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) finally recommended the removal of second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) from general retail sale. This progress is only possible because of the extraordinary community response led by BirdLife Australia. The hard work of our members, experts and BirdLife Australia supporters - who alone are responsible for a massive 10,000 submissions to the APVMA in just under 8 weeks - is an incredible demonstration of collective action.

As the following questions are related, a single response has been provided.

10a. Due to considering an increased donation, I would like some idea of Birdlife financial management e.g. What proportion goes to salaries, management, active preservation etc.

10b. Can you advise on how much of the 11 million dollars collected in 2025 was spent directly for habitat preservation or captivity breeding programs and how much was spent on administration and wages.

BirdLife Australia's budget is built on inputs from our departments: Conservation and Science, Participation and Engagement, Strategy and Governance and Finance and Business Improvement, and then reported across revenue and expense categories.

In 2025, approximately 70% of expenditure related to employee costs and a further 13% to direct project costs. Employee costs include both conservation staff (such as scientists, project managers and conservation specialists) and support functions including fundraising, finance, ICT, people and safety, communications and governance.

Our budgets for conservation work include the staff and administrative costs that are needed to deliver those programs. In 2025, total expenditure was approximately \$19.2 million, of which \$13.5 million related to staff costs and \$2.4 million to direct project expenditure.

As a result, the vast majority of our expenditure is directed to conservation programs either through paid staff or supporting our wonderful volunteers. Our central administrative costs, things like investment in ICT systems and licences, training staff, office costs were 16% in 2025 down from 17% in 2024. These centrally managed costs support the entire organisation and compare favourably to industry benchmarks of 15% to 25%.

11. Will BirdLife continue to support the Eyre Bird Observatory?

BirdLife Australia remains committed to the Eyre Bird Observatory and is working with the EBO Committee, volunteers and DBCA to develop a pathway for its safe reopening. The current closure is temporary and relates to the implementation of health and safety improvements identified following a serious volunteer incident. While no final decisions have yet been made about future arrangements, BirdLife Australia's intention is to work collaboratively with all the stakeholders to ensure operations can be conducted safely and sustainably into the future.

12. How is BirdLife Australia working with other environmental organisations to make 'our' voice louder?

BirdLife Australia collaborates and partners with a range of environmental organisations nationally.

A recent example has been in working closely with other organisations on the issue of Rodenticides/SGARs. As well as leading our externally facing advocacy work, there has been much happening to coordinate our work on this campaign with others. After many years of public pressure from BirdLife Australia along with many other community and environment groups, the federal regulator for pesticides [has finally recommended removing the most dangerous rat poisons from retail shelves](#). This news came just months after the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) released its long-delayed review into the use and regulation of rodent poisons in Australia.

We have also worked closely with many eNGOs over several years advocating for changes and improvements to the EPBC Act / Nature Laws and we continue to work as part of a broader eNGO alliance on ensuring they are implemented.

Similarly, we also recently worked closely with other eNGOs to advocate for further Government federal funding for recovery threatened species work and this has resulted in funding being announced for another two years of work.

BirdLife Australia teams and senior staff regularly meet and engage with similar roles in other organisations, to identify issues of common focus, share challenges and what works. Our Annual Report outlines a significant number of partners – including many environmental organisations.

13. How is 'nature studies' - which includes birds - included in the Victorian/ Australian curriculum? Does BirdLife Australia keep track of (have the capacity) to ensure birds and habitat are included in the curriculum?

BirdLife Australia have run a Birds in Schools program over many years (part of the original Birds in Backyards initiative) and Urban Birds program. Very recently, through a small donation, we have recently launched an online Birds in Schools e-learning course. The course is aimed at teachers and provides lesson plans on how to increase interest and knowledge of birds and their habitats, become citizen scientists and enable students and teachers to engage through the school program. The link to the free course and more information is on the web page (Birds in Schools) <https://birdlife.org.au/projects/birds-in-schools/>