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WINTER

2

2021

Engaging people in conservation

NatureMatters

40 Years

**VITAL
WORK**

Appeal

See P. 2 →



**Nature
Foundation**



Vital Work Appeal

Because we could not travel further afield in 2020, many of us took the opportunity to spend time outside and explore local South Australian landscapes, benefitting from slowing down and taking in nature's details, rhythms and cycles.

The global pandemic was like pressing pause in our busy lives, and it even gave the planet a reprieve which resulted in cleaner air and water, and less impact on wild creatures. It gave us the time to reflect on the big questions, like what is really important to us. Most of us would agree that health and well-being are at the top of the list and the link to spending time in nature is becoming clearer in the scientific literature.

As a supporter of Nature Foundation we know you're passionate about protecting and restoring the natural environment that sustains us all. You have the opportunity to help us continue our work by contributing to the substantial investment needed in the guardianship of nature – our landscapes, plants and animals. There is already a great deal of work being done but so much more to do.

Our conservation work has never been more critical and together we can make a big difference to nature, with much we can achieve in the short term.

At this time every year we launch the one appeal where we can generate untied funds to provide crucial financial support for Nature Foundation's general operations – the Vital Work Appeal. These untied funds enable our organisation to be flexible and responsive in a rapidly changing environment. Without funds for staffing, administrative needs and operational costs, vital conservation work and property maintenance activities on our precious nature reserves could not take place.

Your generous support enables our daily activities and overall efforts to continue to achieve the conservation outcomes our natural environment depends on. We ask you to consider making a donation to our Vital Work Appeal, if you are in a position to do so.

**Nature needs our help now more than ever.
Please donate to the Vital Work Appeal.**

Spoonbills at Murhbook Lagoon.
Credit: Natalie Stalenberg



From the Chair

Jan Ferguson OAM

Thank you to all who joined us on 31 March to celebrate the launch of our new branding, website and help kick-off celebrations for our 40th year anniversary.

It was a wonderful night and we also enjoyed profiling our new premises at Prospect, albeit delayed by Covid restrictions and with a scaled-down launch!

Forty years ago Nature Foundation did not own nature reserves, was a small organisation seeking funding to buy land to add to the reserve system, and knew that change was needed. Thanks to the bold vision of some brave South Australians – Dr Mark Bonnin, David Cleland, Warren Bonython and Dr Barbara Hardy AM, ably supported by Betty Lewis – we have achieved a great deal since then.

Fast forward to 2021:

- The pressure on soil water and biodiversity continues to rapidly increase across Australia and globally
- Climate change is now accepted by most countries, and understanding of its implications for nature are now mainstream
- Society in Australia and elsewhere is demanding positive change, to stop species extinctions.
- The challenge has never been more acute.

It's our 40th year and we will continue to be bold. Closer to our October birthday, we will be announcing a new initiative to protect and restore more of the landscape and species of South Australia. Stay tuned for further details!

Society is changing, business is changing and so too does the nature conservation sector need to change, grow and lead.

Over its 40 years, Nature Foundation has continually changed, innovated and adapted. Over the last two years we have:

- significantly strengthened the organisation and modernised
- developed a new Strategic Plan
- become a Company Limited by Guarantee
- moved to new premises in Prospect
- brought to fruition amazing new partnerships, adding to long-term partnerships with business, state government and Commonwealth Government
- launched our new brand – the third in our history
- experienced growth in donor support

Our success over the past 40 years has come from passionate people and partnering well – genuine partnerships and this is a core part of Nature Foundation's brand identity.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support of Nature Foundation, as we look toward the next 40 years of nature conservation for South Australia.



Halgania cyanea at Hiltaba



From the CEO Hugo Hopton

Hello to you all.

2021 has already been both a tough year and a rewarding year for nature conservation.

The demand for tangible on-ground nature conservation progress from people from all walks of life is clear. The combined memberships of South Australia's leading not-for-profit conservation organisations, for example, exceeds 125,000 and represents all ages, walks of life and backgrounds.

Just one of these sections of society is current and aspiring Heritage Agreement owners, who privately manage an amazing 1.5m ha of South Australia's beautiful native vegetation between them, and provide a home for a huge array of wildlife.

Through a great initiative of the South Australian government, private land conservation is now being supported until June 2022 through The *Revitalising Private Conservation in South Australia* program. Demand for advice and grant funds was immediately high and is growing significantly, with demand outstripping available funds by 3 to 1, and applicants additionally committing a further 110% of private and in-kind funding.

Just some of the conservation works grant funded to date have been:

- Kangaroo exclusion fencing to protect swamp revegetation in Nangkita
- Pest plant control in the Adelaide Hills
- Cat trapping, seed collection and wildlife surveys on Kangaroo Island
- Revegetation of endangered spider orchids in the Barossa Valley
- Integrated rabbit control on the Limestone Coast.

That demand is strong and growing was made evident with 33% of the successful grant recipients also applying to become Heritage Agreement owners to protect their native vegetation in perpetuity. Just wonderful to see. You can read in this edition the inspiring stories from the Gregor family and Nancy and Allan Bennett, who received a grant in the first round of funding.

In other good news we are seeing tangible signs of restoration, for example increasing numbers of Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies including pouch young, at Hiltaba. Bird surveys at Witchelina are showing increased numbers, including the Thick-billed Grasswren so heavily impacted by the last two chronically dry years.

There is a sense of growing momentum, strength, determination and achievement in the conservation sector, with a wide range of organisations working together at local, state and national levels.

In October 2021 the Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) of which Nature Foundation is an inaugural member, will host the 6th Private Land Conservation Conference in Sydney, exploring the theme 'Recover, Restore, Redouble'. People from around Australia will be drawn in by themes including on-ground restoration experiences, science, how to engage more of society and how to positively shape national and international nature conservation policy and targets. Nature Foundation looks forward to representing our members and supporters at this national forum, and we hope to see some of you there!

I mentioned a tough year. There are a few things in this category. Included is adapting to COVID-attributed changes in societal attitude, policy and economy, which will continue to unfold over coming months and years. We have also been involved in wide-ranging discussions about Governmental response to COVID and seeking a national nature conservation stimulus package. Additionally, we seek to realise nature-positive change to the draft Pastoral Bill here in South Australia, and nationally, to the Samuels review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. Their final form will fundamentally shape, either positively or negatively, the prospects of nature over vast areas.

Once again we find ourselves racing toward the end of financial year! If you are able, in this our 40th year, one of the immediate ways you can help nature is by donating to our 2021 Vital Work Appeal. While the needs of nature are great and growing, so too is the momentum in society to protect and restore it. Through your generosity and donations, you can help Nature Foundation to make a genuine and enduring difference to conserving, restoring and protecting South Australia's biodiversity. Please give generously.

Whether you are a partner, member, supporter, donor, bequestor or volunteer, thank you, as always, for all of your amazing support.



Blue Fairy Orchid

**Protect
today.**
For tomorrow.
Forever.

The Gregor family and Nancy and Allan Bennett have been living this mantra long before it became the tag line for the Revitalising Private Conservation in South Australia Program. Nancy and Allan are one of the 70 successful grant recipients from the first round of small grants delivered by this Program to support Heritage Agreement property owners across the state.

“We are excited to begin this revitalisation project,” says Nancy from Wirraworra Sanctuary. “The family was delighted to receive news recently of its successful application, which has renewed their long-term enthusiasm.”

The Wirraworra Sanctuary is a refuge of remnant native vegetation which has been protected from sand mining and habitat clearing on their farming property in Reeves Plains, north of Adelaide. It’s a special place where the bush flourishes next to the productive farm activities run by Neil Gregor. Nancy and Allan Bennett have joined the growing Heritage Agreement Community and now, thanks to its new status, this valuable ecosystem will be protected forever.

Nancy says that the conservation work and protection status is credited to many: “We are indebted to the previous

generations of Gregor farmers for all their work and care of this land since 1925. Our family is also indebted to the many enthusiastic individuals and organisations who have helped us in our endeavours over many years.”

This sanctuary has been assisted by students, volunteers, farmers, Landscape Board staff and Council officers, and is providing many benefits to the community as a place for learning, teaching and sharing.

Receiving the grant will ensure that “We’re now reinvigorated to carry on their good works,” says Nancy.

The Revitalising Private Conservation in South Australia Program grant funding is supporting a variety of activities. At the Wirraworra Sanctuary, the grant funding will help protect the most vulnerable areas through kangaroo exclusion and assist the health of the sanctuary by revegetation using provenance seeds and cuttings collected within the Heritage Agreement site.

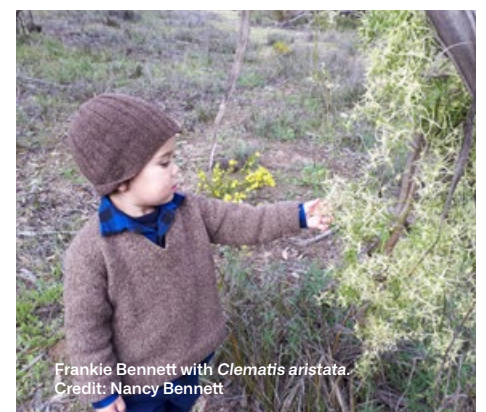
“We are custodians of some very rare and endangered species, unique to our area, e.g. *Acacia spinescens* and *Dampiera rosmarinifolia*, and no longer seen anywhere else on the Adelaide Plains. We feel it’s our duty to protect this valuable oasis in

perpetuity for others to witness and enjoy,” Nancy shares.

The commitment of the Gregor and Bennett families to conserve the South Australian bush is a habitat legacy to be celebrated, and through this grant funding and new protection status this refuge will continue to thrive.

If you are interested in a Heritage Agreement on your bush block, or the next grant round, please contact the Revitalising Private Conservation in South Australia Program Team:

Email: rca@naturefoundation.org.au
Telephone: 0436 431 660



Frankie Bennett with *Clematis aristata*.
Credit: Nancy Bennett

Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby family. Credit: Coral Johnston

Yellow-footed **Rock-wallaby** update

Thank you to all who helped out with the recent Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby free feeding at Hiltaba Nature Reserve!

It was a very successful survey which is part of an ongoing population monitoring program. For the first time since Nature Foundation took over the property ten years ago and implemented intensive goat, cat and fox control, the wallaby population appears to be growing. A really pleasing result was that while we trapped several larger adults, the majority of animals trapped were sub-adult or juvenile wallabies including a number with pouch young. Prior to this only one animal with pouch young had been trapped.

Although this is exciting news and great for the wallabies, we are exercising caution with respect to human interaction with the wallabies and have limited visitation to the main wallaby sites to monitoring activities

only. One area in particular is effectively a wallaby nursery, occupied by predominantly breeding females and reduced human interaction is required at this delicate stage.

We hope to be able to report soon that wallabies have begun to re-establish themselves beyond the stronghold habitat of Mt Friday at Hiltaba but until then we will continue to manage this population carefully.

At the recent Hiltaba Grand Working Bee, we established camera traps at several new sites where we hope to see dispersal of Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies.

Leaving a bequest is a powerful way to support causes that have deep meaning for you. For example, supporting conservation work through a bequest can help to protect the natural world for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Nature Foundation plays an increasingly crucial role in protecting the magnificent natural environment that sustains us all. Bequests help Nature Foundation to invest in conserving, restoring and protecting South Australian landscapes, flora and fauna to ensure their survival.

All bequests, of any size, are significant and greatly appreciated. When you include Nature Foundation in your will, your gift helps to protect nature.

You can choose where to leave your bequest to Nature Foundation including: Perpetual Endowment Fund, Vital Work, Water for Nature, Nature Reserves, Scientific Research, Property Purchase or Gift of Bushland.

When you leave a Gift in Will you are invited to a range of social, cultural and nature conservation events each year hosted by Nature Foundation especially for our Vision for Nature Society.

To discuss any matters regarding leaving a bequest please contact: Patrick Mentzel, Philanthropy Coordinator on 8340 2880 or email patrick.mentzel@naturefoundation.org.au

Have you **considered leaving a bequest** to Nature Foundation?



Marie and Clive O'Connor.
Nature Foundation
bequestors

You are welcome to visit us at our Prospect Office or we are happy to visit you! We recommend that you seek advice from a lawyer to ensure that the wording of your Will reflects your exact wishes.

Thanks to **CMV Foundation!**

Our sincere appreciation to CMV Foundation who have generously donated \$50,000 toward the purchase of two vehicles from CMI Toyota – both Toyota LC Military Workmates – to Nature Foundation for use at Witchelina and Hiltaba Nature Reserves.

To effectively manage a significant proportion of South Australia's private protected area network, Nature Foundation relies heavily on a committed network of volunteers, scientists and rotational reserve managers who donate countless hours of their time and expertise to make things happen on the ground.

To continue striving for excellence in conservation management while providing a safe working environment for our people, we recognised the need to upgrade two vehicles at our two major nature reserves, Witchelina and Hiltaba.

The generous contribution from CMV Foundation means we now have vehicles that will provide the means to manage significant areas for conservation, education and volunteering delivering:

- Feral animal control programs
- Monitoring and surveys of native plants and animals
- Boundary fencing management
- Invasive weed control
- Kids on Country camps (a program for young Aboriginal people)
- Volunteer participation

Both vehicles were freshly branded just in time for our launch event on 31 March and have since made their way out to the reserves where they are now in use by our Rotational Managers! Thanks so much CMV Foundation!



Anit-clockwise from below. Hiltaba Working Bee Barbara Hardy walk group. Hiltaba Working Bee Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby monitoring. Woolshed and wool press. Hiltaba Nature Reserve.



Hiltaba **Grand Working Bee** and the return of our restored woolpress



Fifty-six enthusiastic and highly skilled volunteers joined us for our annual Grand Working Bee – the first we have been able to run since 2019 due to COVID-19 – at Hiltaba Nature Reserve, 4–9 May.



It was a thoroughly enjoyable event with a great deal of conservation work and property maintenance was completed including:

- Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby research – the group walked about 30 kilometres to determine new survey sites for establishing camera traps
- Bird monitoring – recording species and number observed, location and site characteristics across 17 sites
- Fauna surveys – monitoring of four sites morning and afternoon for fauna species
- Weed control
- Exclosure construction
- Walking trail notes testing
- Photography recording
- Pastie, bread making and cooking activities



- Shearing shed clean-up
- Salvage work and repairs
- Chiltadinna Nature Drive construction – the newest nature drive at Hiltaba
- Barbed wire sculptures
- Geology tour
- Fence removal
- Well safety work
- Kangaroo transect surveys and more!

Participants enjoyed expert presentations each night including a talk on birds by Ian Falkenberg, who also led the bird monitoring surveys; Alex Nankivell on Yellow-footed Rock-wallabies, who led the establishment of new survey sites for camera traps; Hugh McGregor who gave a fascinating insight into feral cat management and led fauna survey monitoring activities, and Professor Pat James who facilitated a very interactive presentation and activities exploring Hiltaba’s geology. Just prior to the working bee, a hard-working team led by Rotational Managers Fred and Petra van der

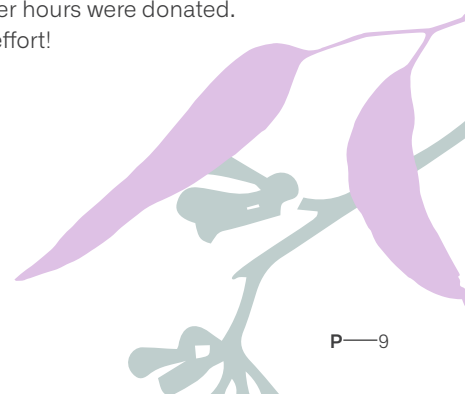
Heiden completed the laying of cypress pine flooring in the old Woolshed at Hiltaba. They were ably assisted by Brenton and Nanette Arnold, Paul Mitchell, Vic Breeding, Greg Bannon, Leon Ashton, Merv and Jill Lewis and Property Managers Chris and Maria Reed. The results are absolutely stunning, as you can see from the photo.

Another exciting project that was finished just in time for the working bee was the complete restoration of the old wool press by Bob Gray and his team of volunteers from Victoria. Bob personally spent over 1000 hours plus many hours of help from others in the team, which gives an idea of the work involved. About two years ago, when Bob was camping at Pretty Point, Rotational Manager Lange Powell pointed the wool press out to him, in pieces and slowly decaying at the tip. He approached Chris about taking it back to Gippsland for restoration. In the process he also bought an intact, similar press on e-bay, collecting it from northern NSW, to use as a model for putting the old one

together. To prove that the restoration is authentic and all the parts were working he pressed a wool bale in it. The result is spectacular.

With these projects complete and inclement weather forecast during the week, we were able to move our main meals over to the wool shed, which was great fun for all. As always, the amazing catering team of Maria Reed, Sally Tonkin, Inara Powell and Jill Lewis provided the most delicious food to sustain us all for the duration.

Our heartfelt thanks to all of the wonderful volunteers who came out to Hiltaba and worked with such passion and dedication to further our nature conservation programs – in total 2096 volunteer hours were donated. A wonderful effort!





Hiltaba Grand Working Bee



Credit: Rosalie McCarthy

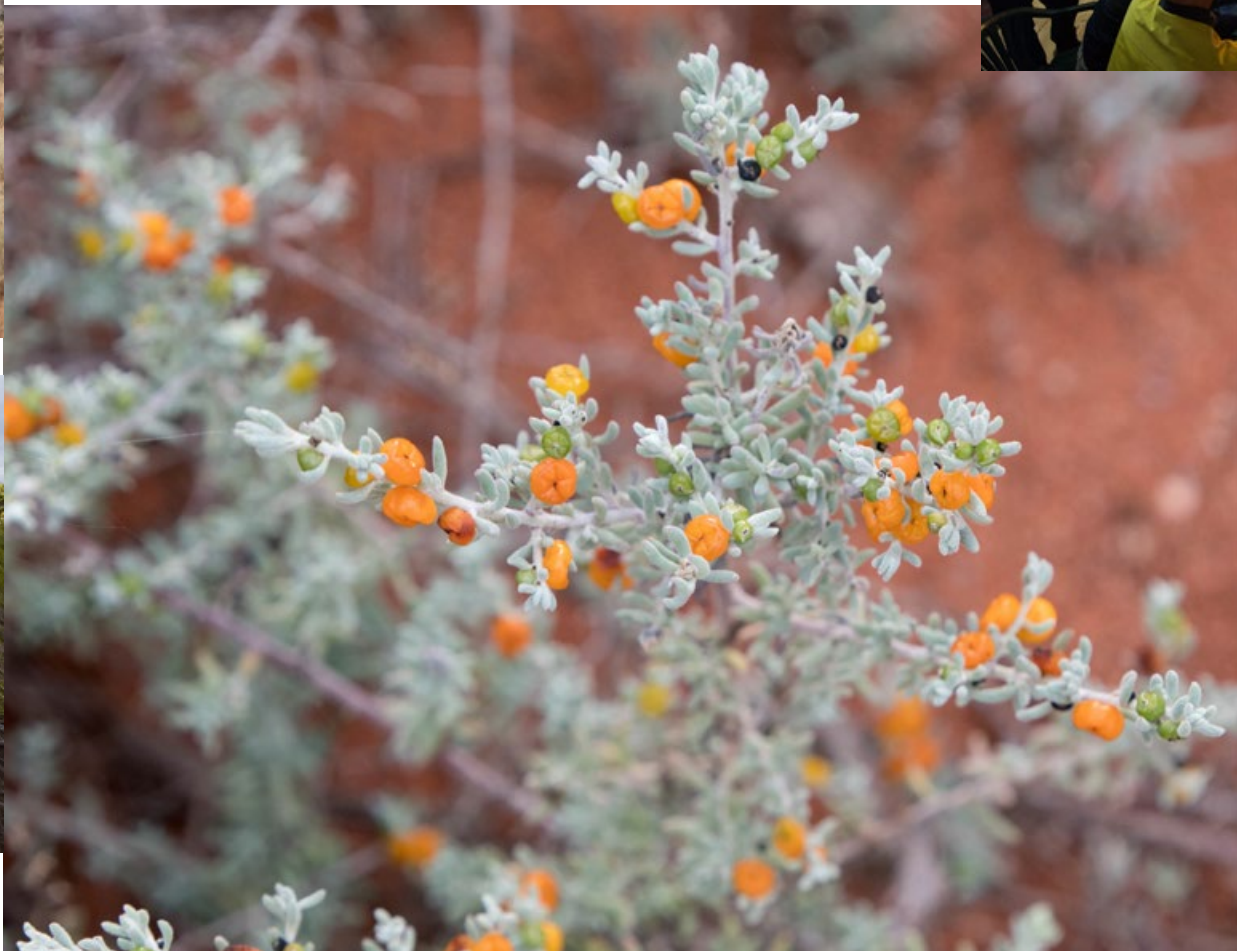




Images credit to Andy Rasheed, except where noted.



Fat-tailed Dunnart.
Credit: Anne Clark



Kangaroo Island Member Tour



*This image: KI Tour Members at Vivonne Bay. Credit: Gretta Koch
Left: Karleah Berris showing Glossy Black-cockatoo habitat at Cygnet Park. Credit: Patrick Mentzel
Right: Australian Sea Lion pup at Seal Bay. Credit: Anne Clark*

Fifteen members joined us for a wonderful tour to see some of the conservation work and bushfire recovery being done on Kangaroo Island. We were blessed with perfect weather and an itinerary packed with passionate speakers, all experts in their field.

Karleah Berris provided a fascinating insight to the Glossy Black-cockatoo Recovery Program at Cygnet Park Sanctuary and we were lucky enough to see two of the Glossies fly in, to roost near one of the new nest boxes!

We visited another part of Cygnet Park Sanctuary to meet with Michelle Haddy who showed us around the reserve to see the great results of so much species diversity through revegetation work.

Dr James Smith, Project Leader of the Feral Cat Eradication Program showed us the cat fence currently being built and explained the actions undertaken to control feral cats on the Dudley Peninsula, with a longer-term goal of making KI cat free!



2020 Nature Foundation research grant recipient Tanya Rosewarne gave our guests a very informative and engaging presentation on her Masters research with Australian Sea Lions. This was a great prelude for our visit to Seal Bay the next day, where we met Research Operations Coordinator Mel Stonnin who took us on a fantastic tour down to the beach to see Australian Sea Lions.

It was also lovely to bump into five Nature Foundation members on Kangaroo Island! Through them we also had the privilege of arranging a talk by Dr Peggy Rismiller OAM and Mike McKelvey, from the Pelican Lagoon Research and Wildlife Centre, on echidnas and Rosenberg goannas.

Our sincere thanks to the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board and to all of the speakers who generously shared their time and expertise with our members. It was such an inspiring trip for all of us and everyone enjoyed learning more about our partner projects on KI.

Thank you to all who joined us – we had great feedback on the tour. The Witchelina Member Tour enabled us to contribute a significant amount toward the purchase of a Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) portable sprayer unit and a dishwasher for the kitchen renovation there. From the KI tour, we will advise of a conservation project we can direct funds to.

We have another member tour coming up in September to Hiltaba Nature Reserve! Please see page 14 and our website for further details.



Where: West Thebarton Community Centre

When: 19 June 2021

Cost: Members \$20; Non-members \$25

Put on your best hat and join us for our Quiz FUN night ... heaps of prizes to be won, auctions and games!

Beer, wine and soft drinks can be purchased on the night; BYO supper.

For bookings and reserving tables of 10 please email info@naturefoundation.org.au

Members: \$20 Non-members: \$25

Tickets also available at the door if not sold out prior. All money raised will go towards our nature conservation projects! We would love to see you there.



Quiz FUN night

Upcoming Events

We are excited to announce the following upcoming events!

Please note all dates are indicative. Check our new website www.naturefoundation.org.au for the latest information.

18 June: Para Woodlands tree planting day

19 June: Quiz Night

26 June: Watchalunga Planting Day

13-18 September: Hiltaba Members' Tour

9 October: Nature Foundation 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner

13 October: Member Day Tour to Watchalunga and McLaren Vale

20-22 October: ALCA Private Land Conservation Conference (PLC21) in Sydney

28 October: Annual General Meeting

Genders and Partners law firm are offering two very generous discounts for any Nature Foundation member seeking to create a Will & Estate plan.

- 25% discount off the standard fixed-fee for Estate Planning Services* for Nature Foundation members;
- A further 25% discount off the standard fixed-fee for Estate Planning Services* for Nature Foundation members who choose to leave

a bequest in their Will to Nature Foundation - that's a total of 50% off!

For further information and to arrange a free, no obligation phone consultation, please contact Genders and Partners law firm directly: www.genders.com.au/free-phone-consultation



How can you help?

VOLUNTEERS

We are currently seeking a retired plumber who would be happy to do volunteer work on our remote nature reserves. We are also looking for a people to provide executive support to some of our committees or working groups.

BUSHLAND FOR SALE

Have you dreamt of owning your own natural wonderland? Our Blanchetown Bushland Estate provides a unique opportunity to purchase a 900 ha block of mallee woodland just minutes from the River Murray and alive with native flora and fauna. We have three allotments remaining.

For more information please contact Natalie Stalenberg on 08 8340 2880, or email: natalie.stalenberg@naturefoundation.org.au

ITEMS NEEDED – CAN YOU HELP?

If you are able to donate, fund or loan any of the following items, or provide the funds to acquire them, please phone 08 8340 2880 or email info@naturefoundation.org.au

- Water entitlements to assist our Water For Nature Program
- Land for nature conservation
- 1 weather station for Hiltaba and 5 for Witchelina to enable us to match changes in vegetation health with rain, temperature and other measurements.



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Foundation**

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Office Manager

Conservation & Spatial Programs Officer

Administrative Assistant

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RCSA Program Manager

Research Grants Officer

Communications Officer

Field Ecologist

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