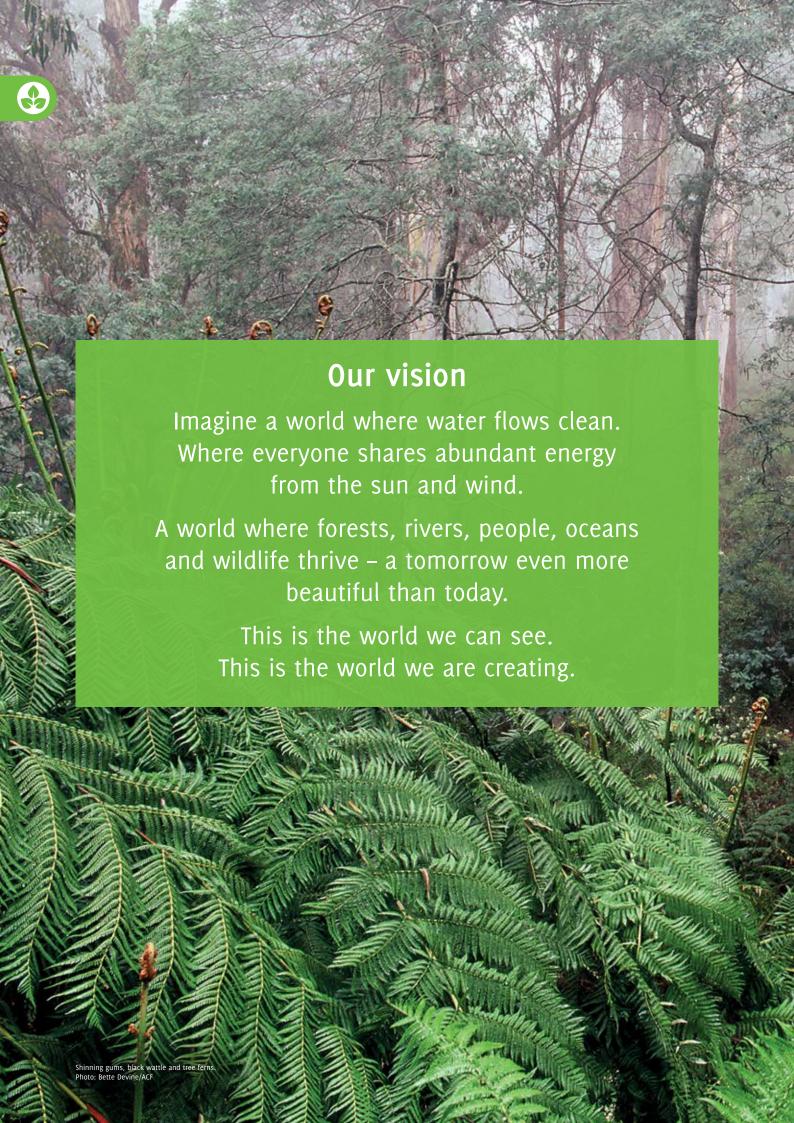




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# Report from the President and CEO

Fifty years ago a small group of people who cared about our rivers, reefs, forests and wildlife got together to form the Australian Conservation Foundation, Australia's first national environment group.

Last November we celebrated five decades of achievements driven by those that came before us. We celebrated World Heritage protection of the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu National Park, the protection of the Antarctic and the formation of Landcare where farmers and environmentalists united over our shared love of the land. We celebrated the clean energy revolution that is underway and the water that is once again flowing down the mighty Murray.

We paid our respects to those that came before us – Sir Garfield Barwick, ACF's first President, and Sir Francis Ratcliffe who loved this land and worked tirelessly for ACF. Together with people like Dr Max Day, one of ACF's founding members who celebrated his 100th birthday this year, they created history.

It's easy to forget, as we travel back through the pages of history, that we are making history ourselves.

What will they say about us at ACF's 100th birthday?

Will they say it was our generation that led Australia out of the dirty energy era, into a brighter future powered by the sun and the wind?

Will they gaze on the Cassowary, the Leadbeater's Possum, the Black-throated Finch and tell their children that, once upon a time, these species were on the brink of extinction but for a group of people that stood up for a better future?

Will they love the reef, the Great Dividing Range and our ancient forests as much as we do and echo back over time their thanks for our work in protecting them?

Let that be our history.

That's why we're standing against Adani's proposed Carmichael coal mine, because we know in the 21st century we can't have coal and the Great Barrier Reef. We're not sitting this one out, because the future of all living things depends on ending coal mining and its dangerous pollution, and sparking a clean energy revolution in this country.

That's why we're saying loud and clear that we will disrupt the business of pollution and the system that enables it, and rally with communities until our parliament passes a new generation of environment laws that protect the people and places we love.

And it's why we're activating people across Australia to speak together so there is no way we will be ignored.

ACF's community doesn't stop with our 300,000+ supporters. We collaborate with other environment groups and across civil society, we work with Indigenous groups like the amazing Olkola people who, with our help, are catalysing a new cultural and conservation economy on Cape York. We work with unions, business leaders and eminent Australians because we share a vision for a safe, beautiful country.

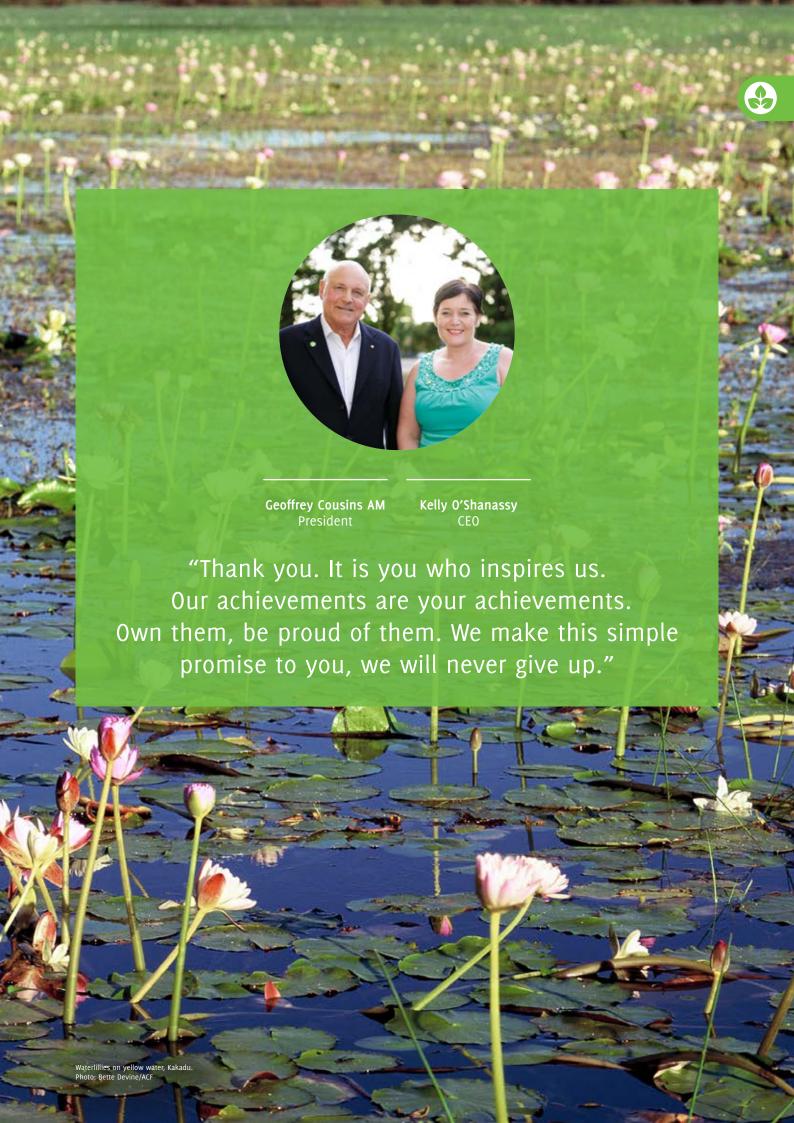
It's been an incredible year. A federal election where ACF tried new community organising approaches to make the politicians sit up and listen. The People's Climate Marches across Australia where ACF led the charge in asking our Prime Minister to join with world leaders to act on global warming. Australia hosted the largest mobilisations in the world in the lead up to the Paris Climate Summit.

Throughout our history ACF has stood up. There has never been a more important time for bold leadership than right now.

Other things have changed here at ACF over the past year. Last November we said goodbye to our outgoing Council and thanked them for their leadership and work over the last three years. Before they left us, the Council with the Board and ACF members undertook substantial governance reform, leaving ACF with a smaller, more workable and dynamic Council. We are pleased that ACF members voted in a new Council with a diversity of age, gender and cultures. Diversity generates great ideas and decisions and this is certainly what we are seeing from our new Council.

We also farewelled long-serving Board members Irina Cattalini, Professor Rob Fowler and Associate Professor Peter Christoff, all of whom have served ACF well over the past decade and will be greatly missed. We welcomed new Board members Dr Anne Poelina, Erika Avellaneda Celis, David Morris and Nadia McLaren.

Everything we do here at ACF is because of you. You give your time, your money, your voice, your passion and, with us, share your hopes and your dreams. Thank you. It is you who inspires us. Our achievements are your achievements. Own them, be proud of them. We make this simple promise to you, we will never give up.





# Our Board

### ACF Board members at 30 June 2016



Geoff Cousins President



Nadia McLaren Vice President



Piers Verstegen Vice President



Mary Latham
Treasurer and Chair of
the Finance, Audit and
Risk Committee



Jon Anstey Honorary Secretary



Erika Avellaneda Board Member



Jimmy Cocking Board Member



**Todd Davies**Board Member



**David Morris**Board Member



**Anne Poelina** Board Member



Andrew Reilly Board Member

# Our Council



### ACF Councillors at 30 June 2016



**Geoff Cousins** President



Nadia McLaren Vice-President



Piers Verstegen Vice-President



Erika Avellaneda



Christian Bell



Samara Cassar



Timothy Chapman



Jimmy Cocking



David Hood



Jonathan King



Jim Le Cornu



Jonathan Miller



**David Morris** 



Ian Penrose



Anne Poelina



**Andrew Reilly** 



Sue Richardson



Nicola Rivers



Margaret Steadman



Michael Williams



Daisy Barham



# The year in review

The ACF community is a powerful force for nature. We advocate against pollution and for our living world. We hold decision makers to account. We champion big ideas and find common ground with unlikely partners.

Right now, a pollution and extinction crisis threatens the web of life. But people made this crisis and we can solve it. Here is a snapshot of what we achieved together this year.

### Five big ideas whose time has come:

#### 1. Clean energy, not pollution

We held elected representatives to account on the promises they made in Paris to cut pollution and limit global warming.

#### 2. Laws to protect life

We kept up the pressure on elected leaders to create a new generation of environment laws that protect our reefs, forests and wildlife, improve biodiversity and regulate pollution.

#### 3. Economy for life

We catalysed the creation of a blueprint for a national clean energy transformation.

#### 4. Join the dots

We diagnosed the root causes of environmental problems so we can sow the seeds of change.

#### 5. Think global, act local on climate change

We wove local efforts with national solutions to help solve the challenges of climate pollution.

#### Five incredible places that sustain and enchant us:

#### 1. Our much-loved reef

We took on the big polluters and formed a giant wave of people power to protect the reef from the Carmichael coal mine.

### 2. The Great Dividing Range

We worked with community, business, and government to protect and connect critical habitats, water catchments, forests, and climate refuges along the Range.

#### 3. The mighty Murray

We formed alliances to amplify our call for support of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

#### 4. The beautiful north

We protected the Kimberley's, Kakadu's and Cape York's natural and cultural values while promoting a cultural and conservation economy.

#### 5. Tasmania's ancient forests

We helped stop logging and mining in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

### And one essential ingredient that makes everything possible...

#### People power

We welcomed more than 54,000 new supporters to the ACF community. Today, over 335,000 people are working together to create a world where forests, rivers, people, oceans and wildlife thrive.





### People power

### When we work together, we can change things

This year, the ACF community came together in greater numbers than ever before. More than 54,000 new supporters joined ACF, and today over 335,000 people are working together to create a brighter future. With our allies, we brought together more than 140,000 people at People's Climate Marches in 50 towns and cities across Australia. In Canberra, we presented senators with our biggest petition ever, signed by over 105,000 people who want strong laws to protect life. Together, we set in motion a new story for our reefs, rivers, wildlife and communities. In our story, people are part of nature – not apart from nature.

#### What we did:

- Across seven target communities in Victoria and Queensland, our community organisers trained and supported hundreds of Australians to stand up for the future they believe in. In the lead up to the federal election, we empowered supporters to show up and speak out at doorknock days, phone banking sessions, community forums, campaign training sessions and Count Me In events all across the country.
- Over the past year, our Narrative Project took a deep dive into understanding how language engages and inspires people to care and act. We reviewed the literature on persuasive and motivating communication. We researched the dominant stories told about our environment by industry, government, media and pop culture. We delved into how the way we talk can strengthen certain values that we all hold. And we ran focus groups and polled representative samples of ACF supporters and the broader community. Our resulting narrative handbooks are for the ACF community and
- other organisations to help create a coherent story that can engage and strengthen the values that will, over the long term, engage more people in our cause.
- We mobilised supporters to speak out on the issues they care about. When the government called environment groups "vigilantes and saboteurs", 6,000 ACF supporters wrote individual letters to their MPs and 400 logged a phone call to their MPs. When global warming fuelled the worst coral bleaching event on the Great Barrier Reef, more than 500 people logged in to our emergency webinar.
- Our digital and mobilisation work has gone from strength to strength. When compared to 105 international non-profit participants across eight sectors, ACF's online metrics – such as email response rates and social media reach – are outperforming benchmarks in comparison to the total environmental cohort (Source: M+R Benchmarks, 2016).

WE WELCOMED OVER

54,000

PEOPLE TO THE ACF COMMUNITY

**MORE THAN** 

335,000

PEOPLE ARE CREATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE



### Four community leaders, seven senators and 105,252 people

People with the desire to make a difference, united with many voices - that's what it takes to change the world for the better.

Meeting with the politicians that represent us is a vital part of our democracy. When more than 100,000 people stand up for an issue they care about, our elected representatives take notice. And when community members knock on their doors in Canberra, it has real impact.

In March, four incredible community leaders delivered 105,252 signatures from ACF supporters to key decision makers in Canberra calling on senators not to rip out the laws that protect our air, water and wildlife. Anne, Susan, Dennis and Paul travelled from different corners of the country to represent our community in Parliament.

"This is an opportunity to protect nature and defend the rights of nature."

- Anne Poelina, ACF Councillor and Traditional Custodian of the Fitzroy River, the Kimberley, WA

The decision makers heard our message loud and clear - our community wants leaders who listen to people, not polluters, and take responsibility for healthy reefs, rivers, forests and wildlife. Not all key decision makers were available to meet with us, but many made the time to hear your voice. Here are some of the things they said:

"It really strengthens our hand here in Parliament to have more than 100,000 of you who are saying 'we love our precious environment, we want it protected'. Thank you for trying to strengthen our democracy and improve environmental protection." - Senator Larissa Waters, Australian Greens

"We very clearly heard the message from Australians about the importance of having the right to take your government to court if you think that your government is not abiding by the nation's environmental laws. And that's why we'll reject in the Senate the government's attempt to block citizen groups, farmers groups and environmental organisations from taking that legal action." - Hon Mark Butler MP, Shadow Minister for the **Environment, ALP** 

This moment was the culmination of several years of campaigning to stop the Abbott/Turnbull government's attempt to water down our national environment laws, and it worked. The response from key senators was overwhelmingly supportive and we haven't heard a mention of the Bills since.



### 2016 Federal Election

Putting our air, water, and wildlife on the agenda.

The majority of Australians want a government that has a plan to protect our air, water and wildlife. In the lead up to the election, we called on all candidates and parties in the federal election to cut pollution, support clean energy, and protect our reefs, rivers, forests and wildlife.

#### What we did:

- More than 56,000 Australians signed ACF's pledge to vote for a candidate who will cut pollution, support clean energy and protect our reefs, rivers, forests and wildlife.
   We delivered these to candidates before the election so they could have no doubt about how much Australians care about the environment.
- Through our community organising, ACF supporters made over 4,400 phone calls and knocked on more than 4,200 doors in seven key electorates. Together, we had thousands of meaningful conversations on the phone, at people's doorsteps, at market stalls and on the street – so communities knew where their candidates stood on protecting our air, water and wildlife.
- We held major parties to account by rating their environmental policies in a national scorecard so people knew what they were really voting for. Thanks to our donors, we reached more than 1.9 million people with our scorecard and candidate report cards, promoted through newspaper, digital and social media.

- As a community, we emailed, called and met with local candidates. In total, 35 candidates across nine parties and independents pledged: "If elected I will represent people by acting to: cut pollution, support clean energy and protect nature."
- We put our candidate report cards on mobile billboards to show local communities which of their candidates took the ACF pledge. We drove them around four key electorates – Kooyong, Brisbane, Ryan and Deakin – in the lead up to the election.
- On election day, 86 volunteers handed out candidate report cards at 30 polling booths in seven key electorates.

56,860

PEOPLE SIGNED ACF'S VOTER PLEDGE

our scorecard reached

1.9 million

people





#### What we achieved

Our scorecard rating major parties on their environmental policies was covered by major news outlets nationally, including the Sydney Morning Herald, the Guardian and The Australian. Polling showed support for strong action on climate change was at its highest level since 2008, with the strongest support from undecided voters.

The Greens and the ALP released strong environmental policies early in the game. Minor parties like the Nick Xenophon Team and Glenn Lazarus Team improved their policies in the lead up to the election.

In 75% of the booths where we worked, communities showed increased support for candidates that supported clean energy and nature protection.

And in the time between our first and last scorecard, the parties we rated announced 60 new policy commitments for the environment that improved their scores. This didn't happen by chance. It happened because we came together and pushed the parties to do better.

And while the Coalition rated well below a pass on our election scorecard for their environmental policies – there is no doubt they know where the community stands.

But most important of all – together, we grew community power all over the country, especially in places with a lot of influence on our elected representatives.

ACF volunteer Jesse (above, left) on door knocking in the seat of Kooyong before the election:

"... having conversations with people is the most important way that we can connect to a community. We were able to get out and talk to voters from all ends of the spectrum - people who voted for all different parties, and have the chance to talk to them about climate change and the environment - to really start the conversation and to get people thinking about the environment and how who we vote for could really have an impact on the future of our planet."

Read more of Jesse's story on page 37.

**POLITICAL PARTIES** MADE 60 NEW **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS** 



14 out of 21

TARGET CANDIDATES SIGNED **ACF'S CANDIDATE PLEDGE** 





# Clean energy, not pollution

### Cutting pollution and powering Australia with clean energy from the sun and wind

The climate change agreement reached in Paris signalled the end of the fossil fuel age, creating a pathway towards a brighter future for all life on this beautiful planet. The talks were not an end point. They were a tipping point. Back home, we held decision-makers to account on their promises to cut pollution and limit global warming.

#### What we did:

- In our Big Polluters report, released in February, we named Australia's biggest polluting companies and held them to account for the impact they're having on our environment. We urged the federal government to commit to a phased closure of Australia's coal-fired power stations. This means starting with the dirtiest and least efficient stations, helping affected workers and communities with the transition, and drawing up comprehensive plans to clean up and rehabilitate old mine sites and power stations.
- We launched 'Our vision for a clean energy future' at Count Me In community events around the country, with a clear story about the future we want to create and how we can make this a reality.
- In the lead up to the federal election, our advocacy influenced major and minor party policy positions, with several parties strengthening their commitments on climate change and clean energy throughout the campaign. The ALP committed to a long-term plan to ensure the orderly transition of Australia's energy generation from coal to renewable electricity and a set of policies to reduce Australia's climate pollution to net zero by 2050. ACF's engagement contributed to the thinking and detail behind these commitments.
- In our nuclear free work, we contested the South Australian nuclear royal commission's recommendation that the state move 'as soon as possible' to import and store around one-third of the world's high level radioactive waste. On a community level, ACF has continued to press for a science-based, transparent community consent process to address the long term storage of domestic nuclear waste. Following the shortlisting of a proposed domestic waste dump in the Flinders Ranges region of South Australia, ACF supported Adnyamathanha traditional custodians from the proposed dump site region to visit Melbourne for public meetings, media interviews and a meeting with Minister Josh Frydenberg to express their firm opposition to the proposal.



### Laws to protect life

### Creating strong laws to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink and the wildlife and places we love

Our national environment laws exist to protect our air, water and wildlife. Yet under our laws today our governments are letting companies mine more, frack faster and dredge deeper with little oversight. This year, we kept up the pressure on elected leaders to create new generation of environment laws that protect our reefs, forests and wildlife, improve biodiversity and regulate pollution.

#### What we did:

- In July we attended the Commonwealth Government's Threatened Species Summit and presented Environment Minister Greg Hunt with our report into the failure of threatened species protections. Alongside the report we handed over a petition with more than 47,000 signatures, calling on him to strengthen laws and regulations designed to protect threatened species and invest more public money in preventing extinction.
- After the federal government announced plans to weaken our already limited national environment laws by giving away national environmental approval powers to states, community delegates delivered a petition of 105,252 signatures – the largest in ACF's 50-year history - to key senators in Canberra. We called on them to stand up for the laws that protect our air, water and wildlife and you can see how senators vowed to protect those laws on page 11. After several attempts, these changes have not passed through the Senate and the laws stand.
- ACF has worked to protect our existing laws but at the same time, we're working to develop the next generation of environment laws for Australia. Through the Places You Love Alliance, ACF is supporting Australia's brightest legal minds to work with communities to develop these new laws that will protect the people and places we love.
- In partnership with the Minerals Policy Institute, we released a survey of un-rehabilitated mine sites and

- their effects on communities and the environment. The research showed the public is almost always left to pick up the tab for cleaning up old mine sites. The New South Wales Audit Office consulted ACF when designing an audit of financial assurances for mine sites and we are continuing to feed into this review.
- In conjunction with the Places You Love Alliance, we were successful in obtaining policy commitments from Labor and the Greens to overhaul Australia's broken environment laws and replace them with national laws that truly protect the environment. This commitment included bringing the greenhouse gas emissions from land clearing under the control of the federal government for the first time, expanding national protection for water from shale and tight gas fracking, as well as stronger protection for national parks.
- This year, the government tried to change the law to limit the rights of environment groups to hold government decisions to account in Australian courts, and to change charitable rules to limit the ability of environment groups to receive donations. Both of these actions were a blatant attempt to silence the voice of Australians who care. We stood together with civil society to oppose these changes and our rights remain in place.



# Economy for life

### Making economic decisions that support life, not damage it

With you, we're creating a world where businesses create opportunities by working in harmony with nature. Where our economic decisions are shaped by what we value in life. Across all our campaigns in 2015–16, we continued to advocate for longer-term economic thinking and investment that delivers benefits for both people and the environment.

#### What we did:

- ACF outlined eight key priorities for the Federal Budget in a submission to the Department of the Treasury and continued a strong track-record of media coverage on the issue.
- In April we launched a leadership forum with 17 prominent Australians from diverse sectors to develop a blueprint for a clean energy transformation. Members include former Governor-General Dame Quentin Bryce, AGL Energy CEO Mr Andrew Vesey and TV presenter Ms Indira Naidoo. The forum will develop a blueprint for energy transition in Australia that is in the best interests of the Australian community, economy and environment. Members will offer this evidence-based plan for transition to political decision makers by the end of 2016.
- ACF is also part of the Australian Climate Roundtable, an unprecedented collaboration across business, community groups and unions to support the Australian government taking action to curb pollution and meet our international obligations to limit global warming. This unusual alliance calling for the same outcomes is really having an impact on our political decision-makers.
- Jobs that make us all feel good at the end of the working day are also an important part of our work. A report on the potential of jobs growth in a clean energy economy, being written in conjunction with the ACTU, is due for release later in 2016.

PROMINENT AUSTRALIANS
CREATING A CLEAN
ENERGY BLUEPRINT





### Join the dots

### Disrupting decisions at the heart of unsustainability and sowing the seeds of change

Runaway growth, mass consumption, needless waste, disconnection from nature, too much power in the hands of vested interests. These problems are all intertwined. To make lasting changes, we must change the system, not just fiddle with the parts. This means diagnosing the root causes of environmental problems, which we did this year in the first phase of our Drivers of Sustainability initiative.

#### What we did:

- We worked in partnership with Monash University's Sustainability Institute to conduct a comprehensive literature review. The review confirmed there is no single cause behind the destruction of our environment, but many complex and intertwined causes.
- From a series of workshops and interviews we narrowed our focus, identifying two underlying drivers of unsustainable practices for further exploration:
  - 1. Incumbency: the difficulty in changing a system when the rules and power structures are in the control of those who benefit from the system, and therefore have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, and
  - 2. Values: shifting from a value system that prioritises monetary wealth and economic growth above all, to a more broad-based value system that intrinsically values our natural world.

Our focus is now to develop a strategy to address these drivers. No one can solve all of this alone, but ACF is doing everything possible to catalyse a national transformation.



## Think local, act global on climate change

Coming together to cut pollution and solve problems so people and nature can thrive

This year, we continued to weave local efforts with national solutions to solve the challenges of climate pollution.

#### What we did:

- When world leaders headed to Paris for the UN climate summit, hundreds of amazing volunteers joined us to bring people together for the People's Climate March. They spent their evenings and weekends putting up posters, phone banking, making placards and banners, knocking on more than 8,000 doors and distributing more than 80,000 flyers across the country. In every Australian capital city, more people joined People's Climate Marches than ever before.
- At the same time our Climate Reality Project Climate Leaders worked with other ACF supporters to deliver messages from their communities - including many handwritten letters – to local MPs, calling on them not to settle for a weak target to cut emissions.
- To connect the community of more than 600 Climate Leaders across the country, we established a local coordinator network. Thirty-five volunteer Climate Leaders stepped up to take on the role of Local Coordinator, supporting and motivating other Climate Leaders in their network.
- Also on the theme of connections, this year Climate Leaders took part in our Connecting the Dots campaign. We know climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of heatwaves, bushfires, storms and droughts. To join the dots between extreme weather events and climate change, Climate Leaders have been using local, national and even international media to tell stories from their own communities.



"Each individual can make a difference, no matter how insignificant it may seem at the time, and I want to encourage people to make change in their lives. As a collective making a positive change, the impact will be so much more than what we can achieve alone"

- Anika Molesworth, Climate Reality Leader.





### Our much-loved reef

### Protecting our living reef - home to coral, turtles and so many other beautiful sea creatures

Over fifty years ago, a handful of people formed the Australian Conservation Foundation when oil and mining first threatened the Great Barrier Reef. This year, the ACF community - now more than 300,000 people strong - formed a wave of people power to protect the reef from coal mining.

### What we did:

- When our government made a reckless decision to approve one of the biggest coal mines in the world -Adani's Carmichael Coal Mine – the ACF community stepped up so we could take the government to court. Like the fight to save the Franklin, challenging Adani's Carmichael coal mine was a huge moment in the history of protecting Australia's environment. The hearings were held in Brisbane's Federal Court on 3-4 May 2016. The court found that the Minister had operated within the law and noted the wide discretion provided to the Minister and that the Minister alone can be held to account for his decision. A merits review of the decision is not available under current law.
- We set in motion the environmental law reform Australians are asking for. The case was a test of whether or not our environment laws are up to the task of protecting much-loved places, like the reef, from global warming. We won't give up until our government passes a new generation of environment laws that actually protect our air, water and wildlife, not the vested interests, the coal charlatans or the big polluters. And we won't give up on stopping the Carmichael coal mine, one of the most dangerous and polluting projects to ever be proposed in Australia. ACF is currently appealing the court's decision.
- Throughout the Carmichael campaign, and in the lead up to the election, ACF supporters from all corners of the country stood together to send a strong message to our elected representatives. We flooded the offices of

Members of Parliament and election candidates with more than 3000 origami fishes and 56,000 voter pledges to say: support clean energy, cut pollution and protect the reef. ACF supporters have proven time and time again, they won't give up on our magnificent reef. And neither will we.



Nine year old ACF supporter Lou Gole decided that he wanted to raise money for ACF to stop the Adani Carmichael coal mine. He made \$67.10 selling cupcakes at Montville Market and was promptly named a 'little legend' when ACF staff heard about his efforts!



### The Great Dividing Range

### Protecting the heartland of eastern Australia

Almost three-quarters of Australian people and most of our threatened wildlife live along the Great Dividing Range's mountainous corridor. Its dense forests keep our air clean. Its rivers and water catchments are our lifeblood. Its national parks are our playground. But in just two hundred years, people have polluted, mined, logged, and cleared nearly 70 per cent of the Range. This year, ACF brought community, business, and government together to protect, restore, and connect critical habitats, water catchments, forests, and climate refuges along the Range.

#### What we did:

- In August, we launched a groundbreaking report on the importance of the Range to life in the whole of South-Eastern Australia, along with a beautiful film that features stories of love, hope and connection from people along the Range.
- ACF campaigner Jess Abrahams was nominated by an alliance of conservation groups to be on the Victorian Industry Taskforce. ACF is playing a leadership role in negotiations, contributing to the development of recommendations for establishing new national parks and reserves, protecting threatened species like the Leadbeater's Possum, and ensuring a sustainable timber industry.



Deanne Eccles, member of Knitting Nannas of Toolangi. Deanne Eccles knows how important Victoria's remaining forests are for air quality, water filtration, health and wellbeing.

"Our kids are connected to the forest in so many ways. They breathe it, they climb it, they smell it. These incredible tall trees can be 140 metres high. These forests are the water catchments for Melbourne and all of the communities surrounding it. These trees are also the last remaining habitat of the critically endangered Leadbeater's Possum."



### The mighty Murray

### Keeping the lifeblood for our wildlife, farms and cities flowing

The mighty Murray River is Australia's largest and most heavily exploited river system. To keep the lifeblood for our wildlife, farms and cities flowing, we continued to amplify our call for bi-partisan support of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

#### What we did:

- Throughout the year we've held the government to account through national media and parliamentary inquiries. In April, ACF joined a coalition of 18 environment, Indigenous and community groups to call on state and Commonwealth governments to rule out delaying or weakening environmental water recovery targets.
- In partnership with the Conservation Council of South Australia, we established a network of community leaders trained in media and advocacy skills. The River Ambassadors include people from the arts, irrigation, Indigenous leaders and dairy farming communities – to name a few. Collectively, they've organised delegations to Members of Parliament and generated dozens of letters, opinion pieces and interviews in local and statewide media – advocating for the protection and restoration of this vital ecosystem.
- Earlier in the year, ACF joined an unusual alliance of farmers, fishers and scientists to publicly support the development of a biological control program for Australia's worst freshwater pest: the "rabbit of the river" – European carp. These efforts resulted in the Water and Agriculture Minister Barnaby Joyce announcing funding for the initiative in the federal budget.



River Ambassador Howard Jones is a farmer at Dareton, near Wentworth in NSW, and Chair of the Murray-Darling Wetlands Working Group.

"My family have fished the Edward River, down towards the bottom near Moulamein, for 80 years.

Darling Basin Plan] is going. If it's done as a quick fix, the fish and the river will be the losers. But if it's done right, there won't be any losers."



### The beautiful north

### Sustaining country, from the Kimberley to Cape York, with its unique nature and culture

Australia's north is home to the largest, most intact tropical savannah systems left on Earth. This year, we protected the Kimberley's, Kakadu's and Cape York's natural and cultural values, while promoting a cultural and conservation economy instead of the mining of fossil fuels and uranium.

### What we did:

- We congratulated Traditional Owners on the historic return of 54,510 hectares of traditional country in south-east Cape York Peninsula – of which over 29,000 hectares is now the new Biniir National Park. The Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution program, supported by ACF, has now returned over 3.2 million hectares of land to Aboriginal ownership and created over 1.5 million hectares of new national parks and protected areas.
- We advocated for a successful state government commitment of \$29.6 million over four years to continue to resolve land tenure issues on the Cape and create new national parks and nature refuges under joint management with Traditional Owners.
- We welcomed the Queensland Government's additional funding of \$2.2 million over three years to progress two World Heritage nominations. With the consent of Traditional Owners and the support of local communities, suitable parts of Cape York and an expanded Fraser Island World Heritage area would be nominated for World Heritage status.
- We warned investors away from shale gas development in the Kimberley and helped Indigenous Rangers establish new tourism ventures in the north. We are delighted to be working with the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation and Intrepid Travel on a new eco-tourism and employment venture, offering tours to Cape York Peninsula guided by Olkola elders and expert guides.
- Further north, ACF continued to work with Traditional Owners to ensure Energy Resources Australia and its parent company, Rio Tinto, commit the hundreds of millions of dollars required for full rehabilitation of the Ranger Uranium Mine – surrounded by Kakadu National Park – following its planned closure by 2021.
  - "We've been here a long time and this land is important to us, it's important to all Australians."
  - Jack Wongili Green (pictured above), 2015 Peter Rawlinson Award winner



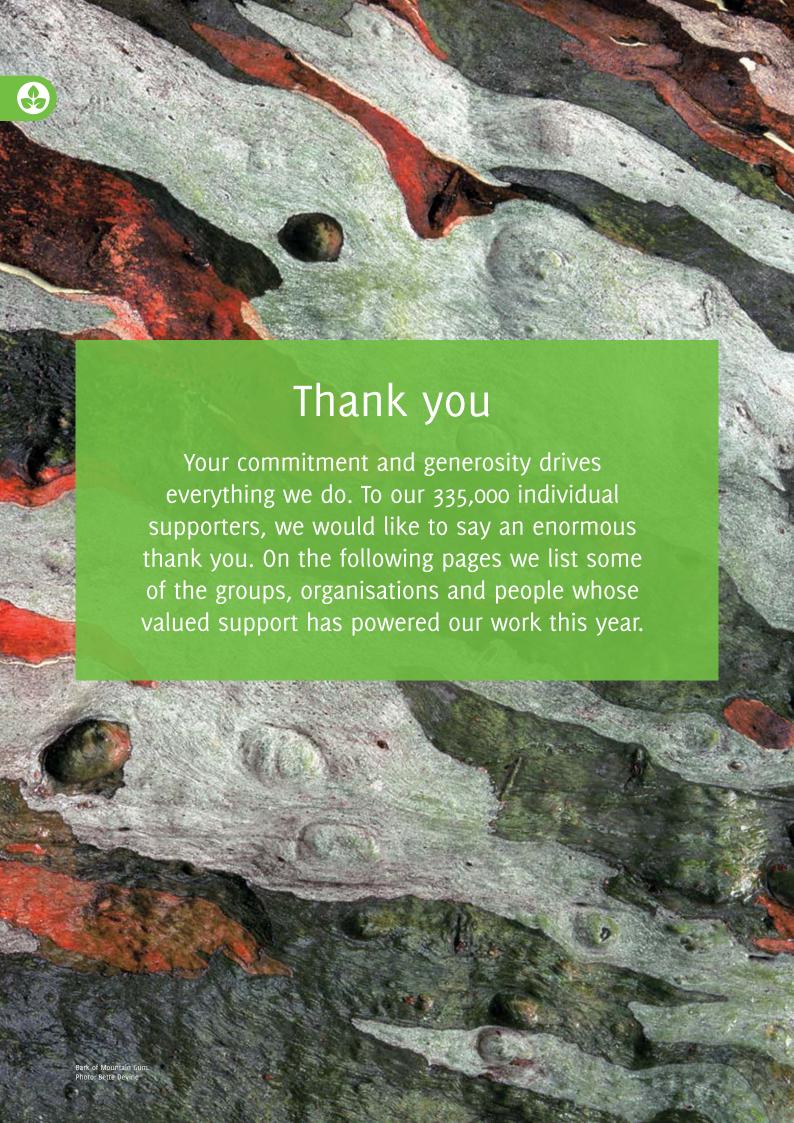
### Tasmania's ancient forests

### Let the trees stand tall for centuries to come

Tasmania's forests are home to the tallest flowering trees on the planet. Centuries old, these tall trees are the lungs of the land. This year we made important progress in our work to help protect these spectacular forests – home to ancient rock art and endangered species – from logging, mining and inappropriate resource extraction projects.

#### What we did:

- In January, when bushfires tore through century-old forests, ACF called for an independent inquiry into the impacts of climate change and fire on the World Heritage Area and made a submission to the resulting Senate enquiry.
- In April, we learnt that the United Nations had told the Tasmanian and Federal governments that their plans to allow logging and mining in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area were unacceptable. Their report made 20 unequivocal recommendations, including demands that the area be 'off-limits to commercial logging' and mining. The UN also said Australia must protect the area and that strict criteria was needed to make sure tourism developments don't damage it. The result is a testament to the hard work of dedicated Tasmanian conservationists and the love we all feel for Tassie's forests. Last year, more than 10,000 ACF supporters wrote to Greg Hunt and a further 1,659 supporters made submissions to the Tasmanian Government about the management of this World Heritage Area.
- On a national level, we continued to support the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in the development of an Australian standard for responsible forest management. We did this through representation on the Board of FSC Australia, by participating in public consultations on the draft standard and by supporting the participation of smaller regional environment groups in the standard development process.





### **Patrons**

Mr Peter Garrett AM

### Honorary Life Members

Ms Beryl Blake

Mr Trevor Blake

Ms Cate Blanchett

Dr Bob Brown

Dr Moss Cass

Ms Penny Figgis AM AO

Mr Peter Garrett AM

Mr Geoffrey Goode

Ms Annelie Holden

Ms Eve Kantor

Dr Aila Keto AO

Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO

Dr Geoff Mosley AM

Mr Jack Mundey AO

Mr Bill Paine

Dr bro Sheffield-Brotherton

Mr John Sinclair AO

Mr Murray Wilcox AO, QC

Mr Gavin Wigginton

Emeritus Professor Hal Wootten AC, QC

Mr Mark Wootton

Professor David Yencken AO



### Nature's Champions

ACF would like to recognise our committed donors whose annual donations were \$5,000 or greater in the 2015–16 financial year.

#### Leader

Mr Bill Bush and Mrs Mary Bush

Jaramas Foundation Minax Uriel Pty Ltd Ms Vicki Olsson

#### Guardian

Mr Allan Johnson Marich Foundation

Mr Conrad Oppen and Mrs Alice Oppen OAM

Mr Julian Tertini and Ms Jenny Mines

#### Steward

Mr Geoffrey Ainsworth

Mr Clive Blazey and Mrs Penny Blazey

Ms Darleen Bungey Dr Bill N Holsworth Dr Keith Lethlean

Mr Ross Mallam and Mrs Julie Mallam

Skellern Family Foundation

#### **Protector**

6A Foundation

Dr Susan Adams

The Andrew & Geraldine Buxton Foundation

Dr Barbara Baird

The Bluesand Foundation

Professor Carrick Chambers and Mrs Margaret Chambers

Dinosaur Designs

Ferris Family Foundation

Mr Andrew Hall

Hunter Hall International Limited

Professor Gernot Heiser

Hill Family Conservation Foundation

Ms Annelie Holden

Mrs Tim Jackson and Mr Doug Jackson

Ms Valerie Johnstone Mrs Elizabeth Law-Smith

Ms Natalie Mamone and Mr Laurence Stonard

Professor Michael Leigh

BB & A Miller, a sub-fund of the Australian Communities

Foundation

Mr John Mullen and Mrs Jacqui Mullen

Ms Julie Nelson Platinum Cables Ms Pam Petschack Scovell Gardner Family

Mr Gilvray Smith

Mr Brian Snape AM and Mrs Diana Snape

Dr Philip Tow Mrs Marjorie White

#### Sustainer

Mr Danny Almagor and Ms Berry Liberman

Ms Nan Brown

Mr Carl Childs van Wijk

S & J Cook Family

Mr Lindsay Crawford and Mrs Ann Crawford

Neville Grace

Ms Edwina Kearney

Koreen Conservation Ltd

The George Lewin Foundation

Mr Dennis Nassau and Mrs Fairlie Nassau

Nordia Foundation

Ms Victoria Parsons

Presentation Sisters of Wagga Wagga

Mrs Anne Reeves

Mr Brett Slater and Mrs Maree Slater

Mr Ian Taylor

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

We would like to thank all of our members and donors for their ongoing and valued support. For more information on ACF's Nature's Champions program please go to www.acf.org.au/natures\_champions or contact us on 1800 332 510.



### Pro bono and partner support

ACF is fortunate to receive in-kind and financial support from many businesses and partner organisations. Thank you to the following people and organisations who helped power our campaigns in 2015–16:

Arnold Bloch Leibler

Pro bono legal services

Chris McGrath

Pro bono legal services

Doug Gimesy

Pro bono photography

Emrys Nekvapil

Discounted legal services

Environmental Defenders Office Northern Territory

Discounted legal advice

Environmental Defenders Offices Queensland

Pro bono legal services

Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation/Kirsten Blair

Kakadu uranium project partner

Kevin Murphy Business Services Pty Ltd

Support of ACF campaigns

King & Wood Mallesons Pro bono legal services

MAPgroup

Pro bono photography

Medical Association for the Prevention of War

Pacific speaking tour project partner

Radio 3CR

Campaign documentation and technical support

Saul Holt QC

Discounted legal services

The Body Shop

Support of ACF campaigns

The Intrepid Group

Beautiful North campaign

Viola Design

Pro bono photography



### Workplace giving

The following organisations have contributed at least \$500 through workplace giving:

A & L Windows

Allens (Workplace Giving Program)

Amcor Australasia

AMP Foundation

AMP Services Ltd

Attorney-General's Department - Central Office

Australian Securities & Investments Commission

Australian Super

Australian Taxation Office

Benevity

CAF Australia

Catholic Development Fund

Catholic Education Office

Charles Sturt University

Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Corrs Chambers Workplace Giving

Department Of Defence

Department of Education, Employment & Workplace

Relations

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Department of Health and Ageing

Department Of Human Services

Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet

Dept of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science,

Research & Tertiary Education

Dept of Social Services

Karma Currency

King & Wood Mallesons

Lion Nathan

Macquarie Group Foundation

Marsh P/L

Melbourne Water - Payroll & HR Info

Mercer

Northern Territory Government WPG

Populous

Reserve Bank Of Australia

Therapeutic Goods Administration

Toyo Tyre & Rubber Australia Ltd

United Way

University of Wollongong

Victorian Building Authority

Westpac Banking Corporation



# ACF's Living Legacy community

We wish to thank all those who have included a gift to ACF in their will.

### Legacy Leaders (bequest value \$100,000+)

Miss Marian Bear

Ms Alice Beauchamp

Mr Stephen Blakeney and Mrs Janice Blakeney

Miss Margaret Bowman

Ms Rhonda Boyle

Ms Barbara Briggs

Ms Jane Crouch

Ms Helen Gillam

Mr Andrew Griffiths

Ms Margaret Hardy and Mr Grahame Hardy

Dr Jennifer Herrick

Ms Annelie Holden

Ms Valerie Johnstone

Mr Harold Levien

Mr Bruce Lindenmayer

Mr Neil McDonald and Mrs Pam McDonald

Mr Eric Miller

Mr Philip Morris

Ms Bronwyn Morris

Mrs Ruth Pfanner

Mr Frank Pierce

Ms Morag Ryder

Mr Gilvray Smith

Mrs Diana Snape

Mr Brian Snape

Mr Peter Timms

Mr Jack Trezise

Ms Laurel Tsang

Ms Beverley Weynton

Ms Merilyn Whimpey

Dr Judy Williams

Ms Patricia Williamsz

And thank you to our legacy leaders who wish to remain anonymous.



#### Legacies living on

ACF has been the beneficiary of 14 estates this year.

The supporters acknowledged here have given a gift in their will to ACF. Their legacies continue to play a vital role in protecting our beautiful world.

Dr John Atkinson

Mrs Gladys Ball

Mr Carl Bendix

Mrs Christine Borowich

Mr David Brand

Mrs Margery Cross

Mrs Helen Curtis

Mrs Patricia Gallaher

Mrs Coral O'Hara

Ms Aina Ranke

Miss Hope Reilly

Mr Robert Sturrock

Miss Marion Vincent

Mr Keith Williams

If you would like to consider a gift to ACF in your will contact Upeka or Nola for a copy of ACF's bequest brochure, Your Living Legacy: email bequests@acf.org.au; phone 1800 223 669 free-call or visit www.acf.org.au/leave\_a\_legacy

#### Gifts in memory

Thank you to the people who made in-memory gifts to ACF. Your generosity is inspirational and acknowledges the importance placed by loved ones, friends and colleagues on caring for nature and looking after the places we all love.

The following people have been honoured with gifts in their memory:

Mrs Linda Childs-van Wiyk

Ms Barbara Clissold

Mr Dennis Craney

Mr Garth Dixon

Ms Jennifer Herron

Mr Angas Hopkins

Dr Olive Johnston

Mr Robert McFarlane

Mr Iain Paterson

Mr Hans Penning

Mr David Stofberg

Mr Kano Walker

Dr Keith Walker

Mr John Warren

To make a gift to the Australian Conservation Foundation in memory of someone special, or to arrange for donations in lieu of flowers for a funeral, please contact Upeka Kumarasinghe on 1800 223 669.



### Supporter story Jane Crouch

Jane Crouch is an ACF member, bequestor and former Climate Reality Leader. Here's what Jane had to say about why she is part of ACF.

One of my earliest memories of being in nature was receiving a mini gardening set for my third birthday; I recall 'helping' Mum and Dad in our Melbourne suburban backyard. My happiest memories include making mud pies, picking vegetables, feeding the chooks, and climbing trees. I loved climbing trees!

I first became inspired by nature and its conservation after taking a short course in bushwalking in my early 20s, followed by an Outward Bound 28-day expedition. I learnt loads about myself, teamwork and the joys that can be found living simply and extending myself in the outdoors. I ended up working for Outward Bound for five years, and my work took me to extraordinarily beautiful places. I watched dawn break on many a mountain top, in wonderful places like the Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park, the Snowy Mountains, the Brindabella Range and on Hinchinbrook Island. Four days with Indigenous elders in the Kimberley in 1984 was another lifechanging experience, where I realised how much nature had to teach me...as long as I was prepared to quietly listen.

My knowledge of ACF started in the 1980s when I started reading - and then subscribing - to habitat. My scientist friends kept piles of them to read in the loo, so I thought they must be an authoritative source! I liked that ACF was working to protect many of the wonderful places where I had travelled and worked, and that the information was accessible.

On a personal level, I became incredibly passionate about ACF's climate campaigning when I was selected to train as a Climate Reality Leader in 2007 and again in 2009. The importance of this campaign resonated with me because climate change impacts every natural system in existence on our planet, and its acceleration is already proving to be catastrophic. As part of the generation in the developed world that is largely responsible for climate change, I want to actively be part of implementing the solutions, and I know we have no time to wait.

"I decided to leave a gift in my will to ACF as a parting 'thank you' to Mother Nature - investing in our planet's future seems the best practical legacy I can make. I would like my contribution to help educate people to make sustainable choices, with the hope that ultimately, the incredibly special places in nature that have brought my body and soul sustenance, will be there for many generations to come."



### **Volunteers**

People power our campaigns, and always have. For over 50 years, ACF volunteers have made banners, written letters, run events, done research, organised mail outs, and had conversation after conversation with people to engage them and spark action.

#### Office volunteers and interns

We'd like to thank our amazing volunteers and interns who help the organisation in so many ways.

Adeline Stuart-Watt Climate campaign intern

Anica Niepraschk Nuclear free Intern

Beryl Blake

Auto membership

Christy Pearson

Economics Intern

Darcy French

Communications & Mobilisation assistance

Diane Friennd Library

Dimity Hawkins

Nuclear free campaign support

Ella Krockenberger

Bequests and Fundraising assistance

Emma Swann

Communications & Mobilisation assistance

George Goddard

Climate campaign intern

Iesse Kalic

Community Organising assistance

Kate Wood

Supporter Services assistance

Kathy Eyles

Canberra office assistance

Lisa Williams

Supporter Services assistance

Maelor Himbury

Library and Melbourne office

Megan Clarke

Community Fundraising assistance

Miriam Potter

Community Organising assistance

Nick Patsatzis

Fundraising assistance

Peter Saunders

Bequests and Fundraising assistance

Rosy Satanek

Community Organising assistance

Tina Pandeloglou

Assisting General Counsel

Yolanda Krockenberger

Bequests and Fundraising assistance

These are just some of the hundreds of people who give their time and expertise to assist ACF.



### Volunteer profile Jesse Kalic

Across Australia, more than 300,000 people are speaking out, showing up and acting for a world where forests, rivers, people and wildlife thrive. Jesse Kalic is one of them. Here is her story.

"I grew up in a mining town in north-west WA and studied Conservation Biology at university. After that I got a job as a botanist, working in Environmental Consulting in the mining industry. I worked on surveying areas before they were mined and I got to see really incredible parts of Australia. I felt so privileged to be able to see these areas of nature that not a lot of people get to see, but at the same time there was this sadness in the back of my mind that the only reason I was seeing these areas was because they were marked for destruction. Eventually the problems of environmental destruction and climate change became quite overwhelming for me, and I decided to quit that job and go travelling.

While I was in Peru I met a guy in a hostel - an activist - and I told him my story; what I used to do for a living and how I didn't really know what I could do to have a positive impact on the environment. He told me that climate change is a systemic problem and to really make a difference I need to be amongst a group of people that are really working towards structural change. I had never thought of myself as someone that could make a difference. I thought the problems were

pretty insurmountable, but I realised that he was absolutely right and that I needed to mobilise myself, and I needed to find people to be amongst and to fight with people for change, to be amongst people that could really inspire and motivate me.

I decided to get involved with ACF. I've done phone banking, door knocking, action factories and stalls. I was part of the Peoples' Climate March, in the Riff Raff Radical Marching Band and we played music at the rally, and it was so much fun.

Volunteering with ACF makes me feel hopeful, empowered and like I can make a difference. One of the reasons that I really like volunteering with ACF is that it engages a real diversity of people from all over the community.

I think the activity that was potentially the most impactful was door knocking in the Seat of Kooyong before the election. We were able to get out and talk to voters from all ends of the spectrum. We had the chance to talk to them about climate change and the environment - to really start the conversation and to get people thinking about the environment and how who we vote for could really have an impact on the future of our planet."



# ACF Sustainability report and data

ACF's Melbourne '60L' premises is a landmark sustainable building for Australia. The building uses only 20 percent of the mains water and one third of the electricity of other buildings of the same size and class. This is achieved through utilising rainwater, solar panels, natural lighting and water and energy efficient appliances. ACF uses secondhand and recycled products within our premises and purchases 100% renewable energy.

The total distance flown by staff and Council and Board members continues to reduce through ongoing improvements to ACF's video and audio conferencing facilities and the election of a smaller, 21 member Council in late 2015. Fuel consumption by ACF Vehicle has increased substantially due to the vehicle (based in Cairns) being used for a number of trips up to and in Cape York.

Environmental Performance	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total water consumption (kL) <sup>1</sup>	253.8	274.5	257.4	260.7	276.3
Total recycled paper consumption (A4 sheets) <sup>2</sup>	184,783	254,903	144,705	176,372	158,000
Total electricity consumption (kWh) <sup>3</sup>	92,780	85,381	107,221	98,224	104,558
Total distance flown by staff and Council & Board members (km)	1,432,235	1,458,551	1,006,530	834,781	783,260
Fuel consumption by ACF vehicle (L) <sup>4</sup>	575	1,367	1,434	1,639	3,332
Employees who commute without a car (%)	92	93	93	93	93
Total emissions offset (tonnes CO2 equiv) <sup>5</sup>	474	457	287	265	320

Social Performance	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Total number (FTE)	55*	61	65***	63.1	60.8
Overall level of satisfaction (%) <sup>7</sup>	not available	not available	68	74	74
Turnover rate (%)	27.1**	18.8	20.5	15.7	17.6
Average annual training per employee (hours)	not available	12	12	15.5	16
Employees covered by collective bargaining agreements (%)8	93	91.3	94	94.5	94.7
Supporters <sup>9</sup>	N/A	-	170,000	281,000	335,340
Inclusive Members & donors (Total number)10	35,526	39,560	40,372	41,000	47,550

<sup>1.</sup> Data only available for Melbourne office

<sup>2.</sup> Data not available for Broome office (1 staff member). Total does not include outsourced printing

<sup>3.</sup> Data not available for Broome office

<sup>4.</sup> Vehicle used by Cairns office for travel to remote locations

<sup>5.</sup> Includes offsets for plane travel, paper consumption, taxis, car fire, waste, ACF vehicle use and staff car disbursements

<sup>6.</sup> FTE - Full time employment

<sup>7.</sup> In 13/14, ACF did not conduct a staff satisfaction survey. Instead, ACF implemented Human Synergistics Organisational Cultural Inventory which mapped behaviour and organisational culture

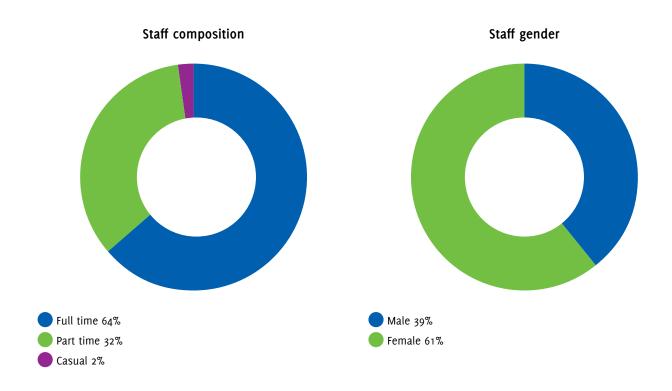
<sup>8.</sup> ACF senior managers are employed under performance based contracts. All other staff are covered by a collective bargaining agreement

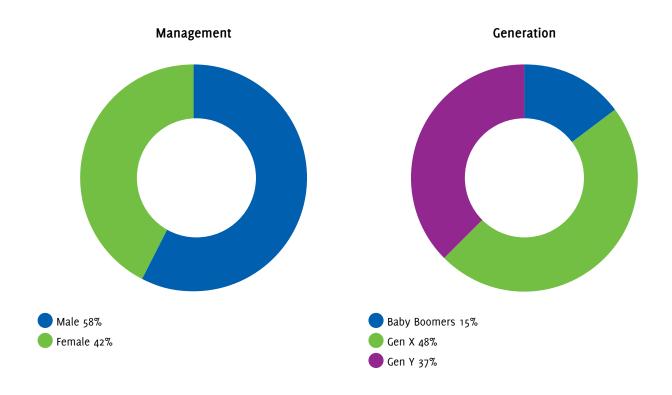
<sup>9.</sup> Supporter definition – a supporter is someone who has connected with ACF through following our work, membership, donating or taking action in the past two years 10. Comprises donors, Earth Voice donors and members

<sup>\*</sup> The 2011/12 Annual Report reported incorrect figures on FTE staff, as they included consultants, contractors and casual staff

<sup>\*\*</sup> The 2011/12 Annual Report reported incorrect figures on turnover as they also took into account contracting positions

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>The 2013/14 Total FTE includes temporary (contract) staff







# ACF financial position summary

### ACF continues to maintain a sound financial base upon which to operate.

ACF's asset base is \$16.9 million. Our cornerstone asset is the 60L Green Building in Melbourne (\$9.1 million at cost). Our remaining reserves of \$7.8 million, which we ethically invest and which provide a steady income stream, meet our policy minimums to ensure ACF can adequately meet all ongoing operational commitments and budget projections and provide a sound operational reserve to accommodate future economic fluctuations.

ACF supporters responded strongly to fundraising appeals during the year, resulting in an increase in income from donations. This increase can be attributed in part to the extraordinary response to the appeal to support ACF's Carmichael mine court action, and to the early results of our new and very successful Nature's Champions fundraising campaign. A further \$1.12 million was received in legacies and bequests. Although lower than last year's unusually large bequest income, this generous support is vital to ensuring that our critical work continues.

While ACF aims to spend the majority of the funds it raises each year to achieve environmental outcomes, in 2015/16 significant income was received in the final days of the financial year. ACF was unable to spend this before 30 June, resulting in a surplus for the year of \$631,943. This surplus will be utilised in future years to support ACF's environmental campaigns.

More than 90 per cent of ACF's income is received through the generosity and goodwill of our individual and private trust supporters, bequests and membership. Each year, with this support, ACF achieves significant environmental outcomes. At the same time, ACF strives to grow our income year-on-year to enable more investment in our environment. During this year, ACF embarked on a comprehensive evaluation of our regular giving program, EarthVoice, to determine strategies to improve our ability to attract, engage and retain these vital supporters. Other sources of ACF income include rental income from the 60L Building and returns from our ethical investments.

ACF strives to maximise the investment of our income on environmental and community activation activities. This year, ACF spent 54 per cent of its income on environmental activities, a six per cent increase on last year. We invested 34 per cent of our income in fundraising to raise more than \$10.3 million. Each dollar we spend on fundraising yields \$2.78 (2015: \$2.57) to invest in our environmental campaigns and essential administration.

ACF's administrative costs and compliance are managed to a budget of eight per cent of total expenditure with a further four per cent to manage the 60L building.

ACF is committed to strong financial management and regular reporting to ensure any changes that might affect our operations can be mitigated or enhanced, and that ACF continues to meet or exceed its budget expectations.

The 2015-16 independent financial audit was conducted by Grant Thornton. The full financial report can be found at: www.acf.org.au/annual\_reports



ACF Income 2015-16: \$13,189,154

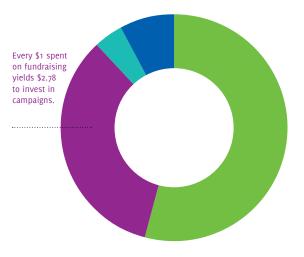
Individual donations 78%

Bequests 8%

Membership & Grants 5%

Investment & 60L Rental 9%

ACF Expenditure 2015-16: \$12,507,503



Environmental Initiatives 54%

Fundraising 34%

60L Building 4%

Administration 8%

