

Annual report

2019–2020



**AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

Cover. Wooroonooran National Park, Qld. Photo. Kerry Trapnell
Below. Kakadu wetlands, NT. Photo. Kerry Trapnell

Imagine an Australia where our forests, rivers, people and wildlife don't just survive, but thrive. **This is our vision.**

Who are we?

The Australian Conservation Foundation is Australia's national environment organisation. We are more than 700,000 people speaking out for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the places and wildlife we love. **Because nature is at the heart of everything.**

Our strategy

Build people power

We are building a wave of people who care and act into powerful, organised communities. Together, we're holding decision makers to account and speaking up for solutions to keep nature healthy for generations to come.

Change the story

We can't be what we can't see — yet the dominant story in politics and media is destructive, short-sighted and divisive. We are shifting the public conversation and inspiring people to work together to create a better future for all of us.

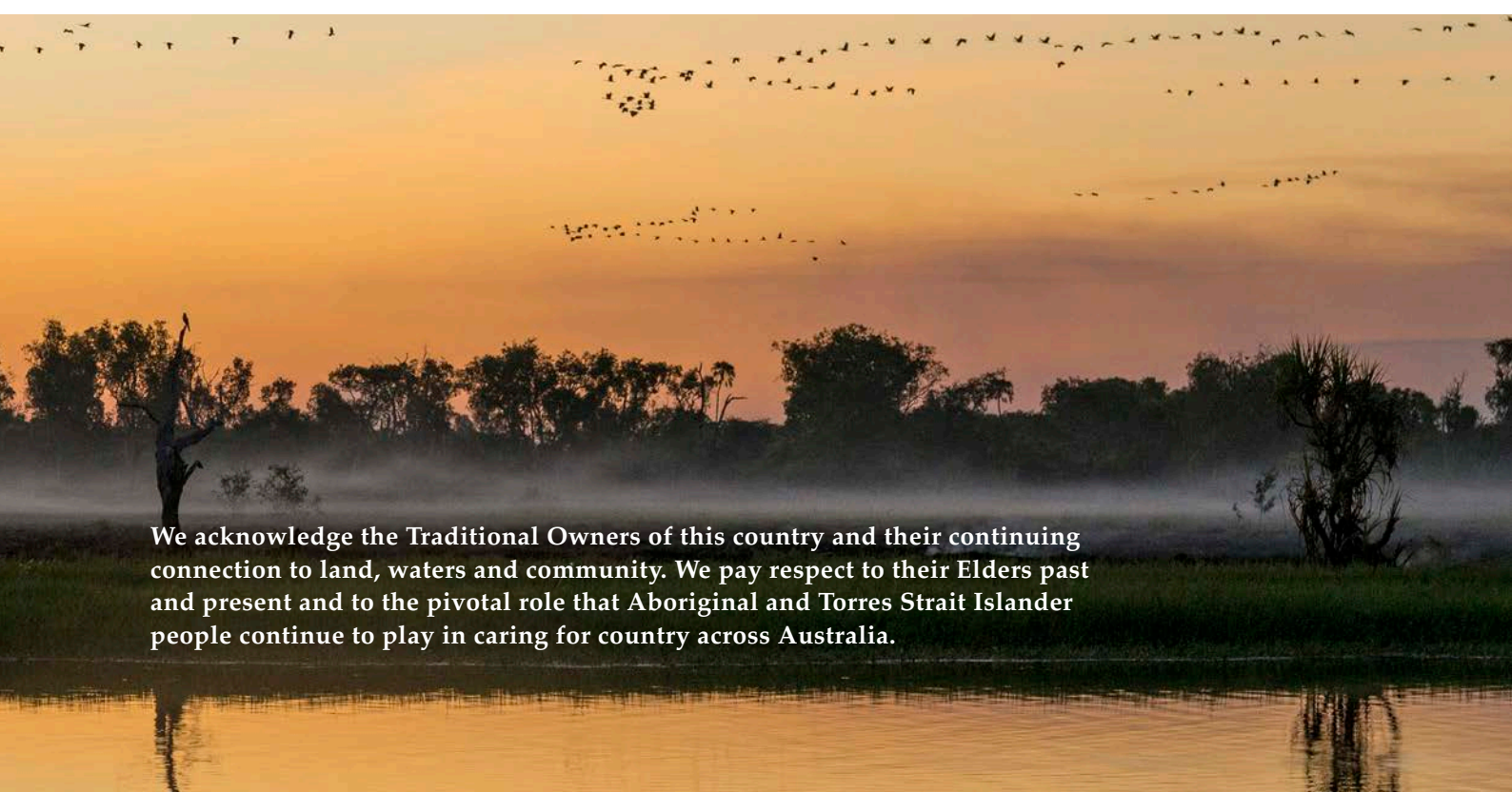
Fix the system

We're taking on the big structural challenges that are driving the climate and extinction crisis in Australia. Only by transforming our economy, standing up for our democracy, protecting nature and ramping up climate solutions can we keep enjoying life in this beautiful country.



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this country and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to their Elders past and present and to the pivotal role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play in caring for country across Australia.

**In uncertainty
lies a challenge**
— to change the
future for the
better 



Message from the President and CEO

Unprecedented.

Disruption.

Damage.

Words that have echoed across the past year as climate-fuelled bushfires and drought wreaked havoc on people and wildlife, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic threw our societies, jobs and industries into chaos. The future has never seemed more uncertain.

But in that uncertainty lies a challenge — to change the future for the better.

When the bushfires devastated Australia, ACF called for the renewable energy and climate solutions to make our country safer. When billions of animals were killed or harmed in the fires, we named the extinction crisis and called for the national nature laws to fix it. And when COVID-19 disrupted our lives, we called for a climate- and nature-positive recovery to help solve the economic, climate and extinction crises.

We are utterly amazed at how ACF staff, volunteers and supporters remained resolute as the world turned upside down. Focused on shared goals but agile in tactics, ACF pivoted to remain influential in newsrooms, respected in board rooms, persuasive in cabinet rooms and energising in the lounge rooms of our supporters. We remain determined to create a better future.

ACF is at the heart of bold, collaborative change. We work with communities, business, governments, unions, farmers and civil society groups that want to create a better future. And we hold those that don't to account.

We're innovating to reach new audiences, like the 'quiet Australians' that are so crucial to advancing our nation to the better future we all want.

Like everyone, the pandemic has changed ACF. As a national organisation we were already digitally savvy, but we've moved all our ACF Community groups online, held digital town hall meetings, and this year we'll hold our first online AGM, allowing supporters from across Australia to participate.

When the pandemic lifts, we are excited about 'moving forward to work' where the flexible practices and digital meetings we've all perfected become a norm, leading to less pollution and more time and money for our environment. Fear not, face-to-face contact will remain central to our approach as human interaction is vital for successful community organisations.

This year, the Board and Council have spent time improving ACF's 50-year-old constitution, modernising it for our contemporary organisation while remaining true to our democratic roots and values. We've worked with governance experts and ACF members and will put the new constitution to members at the 2020 AGM.

We can't thank you enough for speaking up, taking action and donating your time and money when this year has had a personal toll on everyone. And we thank our wonderful staff, our Board and Council members and our volunteers for rising to the challenge this year. Together we are an incredible team of more than 700,000 people all working for that better future.

Mara Bun, President

Kelly O'Shanassy, CEO

Our **impact**

Outcomes for **climate**



- After a year-long, people-powered campaign by ACF, the Business Council of Australia announced a target for **net zero emissions by 2050**.



- With allies, we pushed engineering firm GHD to **rule out further work** on Adani's Carmichael coal mine. Other companies continue to withdraw support.



- Energy Resources Australia, the company behind the Ranger uranium mine, held its final AGM as **the mine prepares to close** in January 2021.

Outcomes for **nature**



- After years of campaigning by many groups, the Victorian government announced it will immediately **cease old growth logging** and phase out all native forest logging over the next decade.



- Our investigations work helped **stop the illegal clearing** of threatened species habitat on King Island (Tas) and Meadowbank Station (Qld).



- We shaped the media narrative around the announcement of the EPBC Act Review and **focused attention** where it needs to be – solving Australia's extinction crisis.

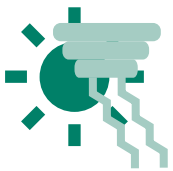
Imagine an Australia where our forests, rivers, people and wildlife don't just survive, but thrive. **This is our vision.**

Other big **wins**



Queensland now leads the nation with electoral reforms

to get big money out
of politics.



Before coronavirus,

climate was the top issue in the country and despite the media focus on COVID-19, ACF continued to generate climate and nature stories and remain among the most influential not-for-profit organisations in the Australian media.



Millions of Australians now care about nature and our climate and

over 700,000 are taking action with us!

Build **people power**

Together, we held decision makers to account and spoke up for solutions to keep nature healthy for generations to come.

Our work in action

Our greatest power is in the people who stand with us. This year, we grew our social media communities and mobilised more people through digital and community-based tactics.

An incredible 409,908 people have now signed on to the biggest petition in the 55-year history of ACF — one that asks for strong new nature laws. Members of Parliament have received thousands of personal letters from constituents asking them to end the extinction crisis.

Our community inundated the Business Council of Australia (BCA) member companies like Coles and Woolworths with calls, emails and social media messages. And it worked! The BCA became a climate advocate.

We now have 37 ACF Community groups with 507 group members. This year, these groups ran 235 events and delivered efforts on big moments, like the student climate strikes, the campaign to save Toondah Harbour and our work targeting Adani mine contractors. They also held 25 meetings with state and federal MPs asking for their public support for our *Recover, Rebuild, Renew* campaign.

To support our people, we trained more than 200 Community members in digital organising. We ran quarterly leadership training in Brisbane and Melbourne, offered monthly Community webinars, and established a Community hub on the ACF website.

Our Fellowship program continued, with 13 Fellows all volunteering two days each week in a role specifically designed to support the ACF Community.

To better represent and include our diverse Australian community, our Equity Project team consulted with a range of stakeholders, including external organisations. We developed our partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and recently supported their 'All One Together' anti-racism campaign.

Our impact

- We grew our community in one year, from 650,000 to more than 700,000 people.
- 409,908 people have now signed on to the biggest petition in the 55-year history of ACF.
- Our community raised the pressure on big banks to move money out of coal and gas.
- We shifted business lobby groups from undermining climate action to advocating for it.

Respecting nature through **First Law**

Australia's First Nations people and ACF have a long history of working together to achieve conservation and cultural outcomes. We share values and objectives, but we also differ in many aspects. ACF has recognised that to be fully effective in our work for nature and climate, we need to understand our differences, and learn from and work alongside First Nations people. After all, protection of Country and nature are intertwined.

That's why ACF engaged Lidia Thorpe, a Gonnai-Gunditjimara woman, to provide guidance on how to deepen and strengthen our First Nations engagement to become a real ally. Lidia consulted Traditional Custodians across Australia. We've listened and we've recognised we must do more to support and stand with First Nations people as they determine their future. We can work together to win cultural and conservation outcomes. We'll be putting these into action over the next year.



Change **the story**

We made the most of these
disruptive times to **elevate a
solutions-focused story.**



Our change the story work

In times of uncertainty and disruption, the stories people see, read and share play a key role in how they navigate the world and define what is possible and necessary.

This year, the story landscape changed rapidly — from frank and fearless student strikers catalysing global attitudinal shifts, to the sharp focus of devastating bushfires and a global pandemic.

ACF is among the most influential NGOs in the country when it comes to media, with our expert commentary making the news on a daily basis. Throughout the disruption, we tirelessly generated media coverage to keep climate and nature prominent in the national debate. Our investigations unit exposed environmental damage and political interference and ensured these stories made the news.

We significantly grew our impact on social media and reached new audiences through an official ACF TikTok account. We broadcast our first live podcasts on Facebook and Instagram with three episodes of Look At Me, hosted by Benjamin Law and Chris McCormack.

We elevated the voices of trusted messengers to engage new audiences across Australia. We reached more than one million people with powerful videos of survivors, firefighters, Indigenous land management experts and wildlife carers in the wake of the bushfires.

We piloted new approaches to connect climate change with sport and health for new audiences. As well as commissioning three reports and generating free and paid media, we ran display ads during the Australian Open and Big Bash cricket featuring cricket legend Ian Chappell.

While we will never have the advertising budget of the fossil fuel lobby, we can change the story by being smart and innovative, and collaborating with hundreds of thousands of passionate ACF community members. This year alone, we trained more than 500 volunteers to share powerful local stories to move their communities to action.

Our impact

- Our climate change and sport ads had 8.3 million views, highlighting the impacts of climate change on tennis, cricket and cycling.
- Our bushfire video stories reached 1,350,331 people.
- We significantly grew our social media reach and impact, surpassing 300,000 followers across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and Twitter.

We trained
more than **500**
volunteers to
share powerful
local stories 



Our investigations work

Our investigation into alleged illegal clearing of protected Greater Glider habitat on the Meadowbank property in Far North Queensland received extensive media coverage. As a result, the federal environment department launched their own investigation and ultimately increased protections for the species.

Likewise, when we looked into the alleged illegal clearing of rare bird habitat in a Ramsar wetland on King Island in Tasmania, the federal environment department took compliance action, requiring a landholder to fix their destruction. The department has more broadly engaged with landholders since our intervention and the culture on the island is changing, with a number of landholders withdrawing their plans to clear habitat.

We investigated the failure of the Victorian government to secure a promised grasslands reserve outside Melbourne. This work supported our engagement with the EPBC Act Review, and helped bring about new legislation from the Victorian government on protecting grasslands.

We also shone a light on the failings of the Coalition's main climate change policy, the Emissions Reduction Fund and the Safeguard Mechanism. And we generated extensive media coverage of our analysis of donations to political parties, exposing how the fossil fuel industry doubled its donations to the major parties in the past four years.

Our impact

- We increased protections for the Greater Glider and its habitat.
- We helped fix the destruction of a Ramsar wetland and changed the culture around land clearing on King Island.
- We raised awareness about the plight of rare grasslands, and helped bring about new state legislation.
- We exposed how big mining and heavy industry are allowed to increase their emissions under the Emissions Reduction Fund.

Above. Greater glider. Photo. Doug Gimesy

Right. Werribee Gorge fern, VIC. Photo. Annette Ruzicka/MAPgroup



Fix the **system**

Solve the **climate crisis**

We brought Australians from all walks of life together to demand a **fast and fair transition** from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy.



Our campaign in action

This year we continued to push for federal action on climate change while increasing pressure on state governments, energy companies and businesses to lift their game.

When it comes to reducing Australia's domestic and export carbon footprint, shifting the politics of coal and building public support for renewables, Queensland is Australia's most important state. That's why it's our priority for state-level advocacy.

Throughout 2019–20, ACF built community support to push both major parties in Queensland to adopt stronger climate and energy policies in the lead up to the October 2020 state election.

We also started working at a community level in the coal regions of Gladstone, to advocate for community aspirations for a low-carbon, jobs-rich future.

In our Adani work, we lodged a case in the Federal Court against the Morrison government's assessment of Adani's plan to pump up to 12.5 billion litres of water per year from the Suttor River to its Carmichael coal mine. The basis of our case is that the government made an error of law when it decided not to apply the 'water trigger' to the assessment of Adani's water scheme.

Meanwhile, we continued to hold Adani, the coal lobby and its political allies accountable for their actions. Our freedom of information requests exposed cover-ups by the former resources



minister Matt Canavan and unearthed documents Adani tried to hide about its failure to protect the Black-Throated Finch.

More broadly, we developed strategies to identify and engage key non-traditional ACF audiences in Australia. As part of this strategy we released three reports with Monash University coinciding with the Boxing Day Test, the Australian Open and Tour Down Under. These reports show the effect of climate change on sportspeople and fans from the grassroots to elite level, and they gained extensive national and international media coverage.

We also attended the COP25 international climate negotiations in Madrid to hold the Morrison government's poor climate policies to account on the international stage and to form closer ties with climate campaigners in major importing nations of Australian coal and gas, such as Japan, India and South Korea.

In response to the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19, ACF's *Recover, Rebuild, Renew* policy platform proposed a set of economy-wide initiatives that reduce emissions while delivering jobs and reducing social inequality.

Our impact

- In coalition with grassroots activists and other climate organisations, we successfully pushed engineering firm GHD — Adani's longest serving Australian contractor — to rule out further work on the mine. We then helped to expose the role of German multinational Siemens in enabling Adani's coal rail line. This sparked furious protests around the world.
- As a member of the Australian Climate Roundtable, we strengthened the business sector's policy, advocacy and voice on climate ambition. Now all state and territory governments, the federal opposition, civil society, unions, business and industry representative bodies have adopted a commitment to help reach net zero carbon emissions for Australia by 2050.
- In Queensland we negotiated stronger climate and energy policy from both major parties.
- More people are actively calling on local state MPs to push their party to adopt stronger climate and energy policies.
- We helped bring together a broad coalition of civil society organisations and unions as part of the Queensland Community Alliance to push for stronger climate action.

Nuclear free

Our campaign in action

In our work to ensure a fair transition away from uranium mining, ACF worked with local environmentalists and affected communities in Western Australia and the Northern Territory to ensure mining projects remain stalled and former sites rehabilitated. The 2019 ACF Peter Rawlinson Conservation Award reflected this work by acknowledging the efforts of three Tjiwarl women to oppose the Yeelirrie project in WA.

In the fight against radioactive waste, ACF actively promoted responsible waste management principles and advocated for a new and evidence-based approach to this complex issue. We worked with communities to oppose unnecessary federal disposal and storage plans in regional South Australia. In December, community concern led the federal government to drop plans for a facility in the Flinders Ranges. We have since been working with people in Kimba on the Eyre Peninsula.

At federal and state inquiries into nuclear power, ACF presented a clean energy vision and achieved significant media commentary. We worked to retain nuclear prohibitions and dedicated scrutiny of the uranium sector in the EPBC Act through the current statutory review process internationally.

We continued our close cooperation with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons to advance the Entry into Force of the UN nuclear weapons ban. We also participated in the No Nukes Asia forum in Taiwan and were involved as a guest educator on a regional tour of the Japanese based Peace Boat initiative.

Our impact

- Energy Resources Australia, operators of the Ranger uranium mine, held its final annual general meeting as a uranium producer in May with the mine to close in January 2021. ACF maintained pressure on parent company Rio Tinto and industry regulators to ensure a comprehensive and credible clean up of the mine site, and supported the Mirarr people's moves to transition to a post-mining regional economy.
- Against a concerted industry public relations push, ACF convened a civil society statement calling for an energy future that is renewable, not radioactive. This was endorsed by over 60 organisations including the ACTU and leading public health, faith and environment groups.



Stand up **for nature**

We kept the spotlight on environment law reform and **activated more people** to connect, protect and restore nature.



409,908 people have joined the call for strong new environment laws

Our campaign in action

This year, we invested much of our energy in Australia's broken national environment laws for the 10-year independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

We coordinated more than 200 leading Australian conservation scientists to sign our open letter calling on the federal government to fix the laws. And we generated media and parliamentary questions around dodgy approvals.

We engaged proactively with the EPBC reviewer, Professor Graeme Samuel, and provided a comprehensive 123-page submission to the EPBC Act Review. ACF supporters made hundreds of unique comments and submissions.

In February, we attended the UN Convention on Biological Diversity negotiations in Rome. As the only Australia-focused environment organisation there, we successfully pressured the Australian delegation to adopt more constructive and ambitious positions, and to work with global allies to shape the negotiations text.

In March, we launched our *Connect, Protect, Restore* campaign, working closely with global experts to translate Australians' love of nature into advocacy and a growing movement. Our goal is to activate new and politically diverse people to care for nature locally and, over time, join the dots between these local actions and the necessary environmental reforms.

As part of the campaign, we piloted a new tactic with ACF Community groups called Nature for Neighbourhoods. Many organised a range of actions to restore nature locally, like revegetating a disused quarry and regenerating bushfire-ravaged urban bushland.

When COVID-19 disrupted these plans we rapidly pivoted to digital actions, like the *#NatureNearYou*

citizen science challenge. More than 2,350 people took up the challenge to record sightings of plants and animals in their local area.

Finally, ACF's investigations team exposed illegal habitat destruction and made sure the government stopped it, protecting species like the Greater Gilder.

Our impact

- 409,908 people have joined the call for strong new environment laws, adding their name to the biggest petition in ACF's 55-year history.
- We shaped the media narrative around the announcement of the EPBC Act Review and focused attention where it needs to be — solving Australia's extinction crisis.
- ACF investigations exposed destruction of threatened species habitat on King Island and in north Queensland and got the federal environment department to step in to stop the destruction.
- After years of campaigning, led by our friends in The Wilderness Society, the Victorian government committed to ending native logging in Victoria by 2030.
- We were the only Australian-focused environment organisation to hold the Australian government delegation to account at the 2020 UN Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The ACF community collected more than 36,000 observations of over 6,600 species on citizen science apps, providing important data to scientists and policy makers so they can better understand Australia's biodiversity.

Strengthen our **democracy**

We continued to strengthen our democracy so **it works to protect** the places and wildlife we love.



Our campaign in action

This year we celebrated a significant win for our democracy campaign when Queensland introduced nation-leading electoral reforms to get big money out of politics. ACF played a critical role in achieving this, building influential relationships with politicians and working closely with civil society to ensure their views and ours were reflected in the final legislation.

The new laws mean companies and individuals who want to influence the political process through donations will be limited in the amount of money they can contribute — tipping the balance back in favour of the community. They also stand as a model for other governments to adopt.

At a national level, ACF worked alongside the Human Rights Law Centre and the Australian Council of Social Service to help launch the Australian Democracy Network. ACF is now helping to bring civil society groups into the network, with the goal of creating a thriving democracy for Australia.

We kept up our inside track work to strengthen relationships with federal Members of Parliament, providing advice, background briefings and submissions to parliamentary inquiries. We continued to expose the influence the fossil fuel industry has on Australian democracy, publishing research on links between politicians and coal, oil and gas corporations.

To find out how to talk effectively about democracy, ACF led a research project with allies from across civil society. We dug into Australian and international social research, analysed the language dominant voices use, and conducted qualitative and quantitative research. We published and shared our findings in a comprehensive how-to guide.

Our impact

- Queensland now leads the nation with electoral reforms to get big money out of politics.
- Awareness of links between the fossil fuel industry and politicians continues to grow.



Transform our **economy**

We disrupted 'business as usual'
and called for companies to
lift their game on climate action.



Our campaign in action

This year, ACF played a key role in ensuring the Business Council of Australia (BCA) — one of Australia's biggest business lobby groups — adopted a policy for net zero emissions by 2050.

We engaged publicly and privately with key companies belonging to the BCA, asking them to seek changes on the group's climate advocacy position or to reconsider their membership. The ACF community inundated BCA member companies like Coles and Woolworths with calls, emails and social media messages. People raised questions at AGMs and together we used our power as customers, employees and shareholders to demand change. In February, BCA Chief Jennifer Westacott called for net zero emissions in Australia by 2050.

Alongside our BCA campaign we continued to commission and promote research to help change the conversation about the economy and the environment in Australia. We mobilised our community to call and email ANZ and Westpac to continue the push for fossil fuel divestment.

In May, we responded to the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 with our economic agenda document — *Recover, Rebuild, Renew* — calling for an economic recovery that is climate- and nature-positive. We have since had a number of good inside-track meetings with major and minor parties federally, and across New South Wales and Queensland.

Our impact

- We exposed the BCA's decade-long lobbying to undermine climate policy in Australia, making the front page of *The Australian*.
- The BCA is becoming a force for good in its climate and nature advocacy, with the peak body leading positive interventions through the Australian Climate Roundtable.
- As part of an alliance of organisations we pushed Westpac to commit to divesting from thermal coal by 2030.

The BCA is becoming a **force for good** in its climate and nature advocacy 

Thank **you**

Together, we are more than **700,000 people** speaking out for nature. Whether you give donations, volunteer your time, speak out, plant seedlings, sign petitions, rally or tweet, we thank you for being part of the vibrant ACF community.

On the following pages we list some of the individuals, groups and organisations whose valued support powered our work.





Patron

The Hon Peter Garrett AM

Honorary Life Members

From time to time, ACF awards Honorary Life Membership to a member in recognition of their outstanding contribution to our work.

Dr Moss Cass, 1982

Dr Bob Brown, 1983

Dr Geoff Mosley, 1987

Emeritus Professor Hal Wootton AC QC, 1989

Dr Aila Keto AO, 1990

Mr Geoffrey Goode, 1990

Ms Annelie Holden, 1992

Mr Trevor Blake, 1999

Mrs Beryl Blake, 1999

Mr Mark Wootton, 2001

Ms Eve Kantor, 2001

Dr bro Schefffield-Brotherton, 2005

Ms Penelope Figgis AM AO, 2005

The Hon Peter Garrett AM, 2005

Mr Bill Paine, 2006

Ms Cate Blanchett AC, 2011

Mr Gavin Wigginton, 2013

Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe AO, 2014

Mr Geoffrey Cousins AM, 2018

Why I give

I support ACF because for me, conservation is the most important issue.

If we continue down the same pathway that is damaging the natural world, what will be left for our children and grandchildren? They will miss the beauty of the natural world and so we must do something to ensure the damage doesn't get worse. We need to raise the profile of conservation and I think ACF does that well.

I take pride in contributing to this issue by donating to ACF. Being a supporter of ACF also makes me part of a community of people who share the same values.

In addition to my support of ACF, as the owner of a manufacturing firm, I've sought to increase the amount of solar we collect, to reduce coal power usage, so that our products are not draining nature's resources and not contributing to the climate effects of burning fossil fuels. We've also implemented water purification systems so that we produce solid waste rather than highly contaminated water waste.

My favourite places in nature are rainforests. I love rainforests and own an eco-resort adjoining Kondalilla National Park, Queensland. I'm passionate about providing a resort facility where people can come, bring their children and experience nature, see the animals, birds and reptiles that are there and learn how to cohabit with nature so as not to damage the environment. It's important we protect and preserve special places like this.

In the future I want to see government action, business practice and individual decisions that will enhance rather than destroy nature. It's important we have a voice when it comes to elections but also on a much more regular basis, and ACF is there to provide that voice on important issues that need attention.



If we continue down the same pathway that is damaging the natural world, what will be left for our children and grandchildren?

— **Gene Thompson**



Nature's champions

We would like to recognise and thank our committed supporters whose annual donations were \$5,000 or more in the 2019–2020 financial year.

Leader

Jaramas Foundation
Gum Tree Foundation
Ms Vicki Olsson
Oranges and Sardines Foundation

Guardian

Dr Keith Lethlean and Dr Heather Johnston
Minax Uriel Pty Ltd
Mr Conrad Oppen and Mrs Alice Oppen OAM
Skellern Family Foundation

Steward

Mr Bill Bush and Mrs Mary Bush
The Bluesand Foundation
Dr Bill N Holsworth
Dr Jonathan Kalman and Mrs Anna Kalman
Kevin Murphy Business Services Pty Ltd
Dr Matthias Krups and Mrs Marlies Krups
Professor Michael Leigh
Mr Ross Mallam and Mrs Julie Mallam
Marich Foundation
Mr Brian Snape AM
Rob and Karina Taggart

Protector

Dr Susan Adams and Mr Andrew Kirk
Dr Barbara Baird
Mr John Barkla and Dr Alison Street AO
CANNA Australasia
Prof Carrick Chambers and Mrs Margaret Chambers
Mrs Ann Crawford
Ms Caroline Le Couteur
The Forbes Family
Professor Peter Godfrey-Smith
Ms Roslyn Gordon
Mr Andrew Hall
Prof Gernot Heiser and Mrs Trudy Weibel
Ms Annelie Holden
Emeritus Prof Andrew Hopkins and
Ms Heather McGregor
Felicia Huppert
Mr Allan Johnson
The Kamener Family
Mrs Pamela Knight
Dr Ros Madden and Prof Richard Madden
Norman Family
Ms Pam Petschack
Rellim Foundation
Dr Angela Rutherford
Scovell Gardner Family
Toot Sweet Consulting
The Honorable Thomas Waddell

Sustainer

Mr Lindsay Adams
Ms Joanna Baevski
Ms Nan Brown
Dr Andrew Danks
Rebecca Denham
H and J Farrow
Mrs Katja Gordon
Ruth and Evan Griffiths
Holmes Family Foundation
Will and Sue Howard
Hub Foundation Castlemaine
Will and Jennie Irving
Mr Carl Johnston
Koreen Conservation Ltd
Declan King and Anne Latham
Ms Natalie Mamone and Mr Laurence Stonard
Mr Dennis Nassau and Mrs Fairlie Nassau
Ms Victoria Parsons
Presentation Sisters Wagga Wagga
Mrs Anne Reeves
Rendere Trust — Kate Phillipson
Mr Brett Slater and Mrs Maree Slater
David and Jennie Sutherland Foundation
Gene Thompson
Turner Family Foundation
Ms Nikki Watson
Elisabeth and Oliver White
Mrs Marjorie White
Mr Karl Williams

We thank all our donors, including those who have chosen to remain anonymous, for your dedication to protecting nature and our climate. Learn more about being a Nature's Champion:

www.acf.org.au/natures_champions

1800 332 510



In the future I want to see government action, business practice and individual decisions that will enhance rather than destroy nature.

— Gene Thompson



ACF's Living Legacy community

ACF's Living Legacy community recognises supporters who have decided to leave a gift in their will as a way of taking action for future generations.

Legacy leaders (bequest value \$100,000+)

We thank our supporters who have arranged to leave a gift in their will to ACF. This will form a living legacy for nature and our planet. Our Legacy Leaders have advised us they are leaving a significant gift and we gratefully recognise them here.

We also thank all our Legacy Leaders who wish to remain anonymous.

Mr Stephen and Ms Janice Blakeney

Ms Rhonda B. Boyle

Dr Barbara Briggs

Ms Bronwyn Brown

Ms Jane Crouch

Mr David Fisher

Mr Kahn and Mrs Julie Franke

Mr Phillip Geschke

Ms Helen Gillam

Mr Andrew Griffiths

Mr Kym Hancock

Mrs Nina Hardie

Ms Margaret and Dr Grahame Hardy

Dr Jennifer Herrick

Ms Annelie Holden

Ms Sandy Jennings

Ms Valerie Johnstone

Mr Andrew and Mrs Clare Kavunenko

Ms Victoria King and Mr Paul Hudson

Ms Gail Kingsford and Mr James Newton

Professor Byron Lamont

Mr Harold Levien

Mr Bruce Lindenmayer OAM

Mr Neil and Mrs Pam McDonald

Mr Philip Morris

Mrs Ruth and Mr David Pfanner

Mr Frank Pierce

Mr James Richardson

Mr Geoffrey Shores

Mr Brian Snape

Mr Peter Timms and Mr Robert Dessaix

Mr Jack Trezise

Ms Laurel Tsang

Ms Merilyn Whimpey

Dr Judy Williams

Ms Patricia Williamsz

Gifts in memory

Thank you to those who made in-memory gifts to ACF. Your kind tribute is inspirational and acknowledges the importance placed by your loved ones, friends and colleagues in caring for nature. The following people have been honoured with gifts in memory.

Mr Rudolf Anders
Miss Helen Aston
Ms Margaret Boston
Mr Murray James Couper
Ms Ellen Alice Dawson
Ms Anne Fien
Mr Peter Harris
Mr Robert Lesslie
Dr Neil McKilligan
Ms Harriet McKnight
Ms Margaret Sim
Mrs Shirley Slatyer
Ms Winifred Parry
Mr Igor Van der Waerden
Ms Heidi Watson

Legacies living on

We acknowledge the supporters from whom we received a gift in their will this year, and we express our appreciation to their family and friends. These gifts are a testament of how important nature is to them and their legacy beyond their lifetime to support conservation.

Estate of Denis Ashton
Estate of Janet Brumley
Estate of Clarence Michael Burke
Estate of Margaret Bowman
Estate of Lorna Patricia Carroll
Estate of Denis Craney
Estate of Philippa Helen Currie
Estate of Ann Forbes
Estate of Raymond Forsyth
Estate of Roland Good
Estate of David John Gould
Estate of Alan Hall
Estate of Susan Elizabeth Hutchinson
Estate of Daryl Keeble
Estate of Michael Leonard Jones
Estate of Mavis Joyce Matthews
Estate of Christobel Rosemary Mattingely
Estate of Sylvia Monk
Estate of Rein Nittim
Estate of Trevor Norman Pound
Estate of Eleanor Putnam
Estate of Sheila Mary Rooke
Estate of Janet Ann Rover
Estate of Ian Sappay
Estate of Donald Boyce Taylor
Estate of Barbara Winkley
Estate of Brian Robert Hector Williams

My legacy

Jo Wainer is an ACF Community group leader from Gippsland, Victoria. She experienced the healing power of nature and has left a gift in her will to ACF.

"I grew up in the city but always had a longing to be in the country. As a teenager, my ideal getaway was a farm holiday. I remember thinking if I had a different life, it would be in the country. One day that different life happened for me. It was prompted by an illness that ejected me from my career and took me to a place where I could look out to the sea, surrounded by forests and animals. The energy of nature can be deeply healing and that is exactly what my new life in Gippsland gave me.

I took two years to heal. After that, I wanted to use my gift of life so I established a local ACF Community group with another woman from the area. ACF is full of people who are smart and committed to nature. People who act — and action is the best antidote to our despair about the issues facing our planet.

We know that the climate crisis has been caused by more than 200 years of industrialisation. It was almost the first thing the British did when taking over Australia, from digging coal in the Hunter Valley in the 1820s to the massive movement of sheep and cattle which destroyed the natural grasses and forests. All this has also destroyed the lives of the First Nations people as they were driven from their lands. We owe them a great debt. Protecting nature is part of recognising that debt.

Nature has been paying an unthinkable enormous price while we reaped the benefits. I am a direct beneficiary. I feel a sense of responsibility and the need to do something. I have left a gift in my will to ACF to support the next generation who will need to restore nature to its natural magnificence. My bequest is a way of paying for the services of nature I have received during my lifetime when I did not pay the true cost.

We have so often heard governments make excuses about needing lengthy transition times to tackle the climate crisis. Now Mother Nature tells us, "Here's

“

My bequest is a way of paying for the services of nature I received during my lifetime.

— Jo Wainer

”

a pandemic — practice making rapid and radical change!" We have seen what governments can do when forced to pay respect to science and we can only demand they extend the same approach to climate change. ACF has a great reputation and is well-placed to take us into the future. This is a community with a long history of contributing to landmark wins. Stopping the Franklin River from being dammed is one of those incredible wins that stands out for me. And today, the Stop Adani campaign is a force that led me to take action like so many others to ensure this disaster of a coal mine does not happen.

One day, you and I will no longer be here. I want to be sure that every effort to save our planet can continue."



Pro bono and partner support

ACF is fortunate to receive in-kind and financial support from many businesses, individuals and partner organisations.

Consultants

Nous Group
Today Strategic Design
Clark Butler
Tim Buckley

Legal services

Arnold Bloch Liebler
King & Wood Mallesons
Environmental Justice Australia
Environmental Defenders Office
Neil Williams SC
Angus Scott
Chris McGrath
Sarah Porritt
Christopher McDermott

Nuclear free campaign assistance

Eve Kantor and Mark Wooton
Mia Pepper
Kirsten Blair and Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation
Peace Boat
Dr Rebecca Lawrence and Sydney Environment Institute
Electrical Trades Union
Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
Maurice Blackburn
Cat Beaton
Dimity Hawkins

Workplace giving

We thank staff from the following organisations who have kindly contributed \$500 or more through workplace giving.

Australian Securities & Investments Commission
Australian Taxation Office
Catholic Education Office
Charles Sturt University
Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Department of Defence
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Department of Health and Ageing

Department of Human Services
Department of Jobs and Small Business
Department of the Attorney General
Epoch Systems Development
King & Wood Mallesons
LFG Services Pty Ltd
Melbourne Water
National Indigenous Australians Agency

Volunteers and fellows

Our community created ACF and our community powers us today. Thank you to our amazing volunteers who show up, speak out and act.

Library volunteers

Maelor Himbury
Mary Trudzik

Fundraising volunteers

Belinda Atchison
Nick Pastalatzis

Communication and campaign volunteers

Matilda Bowra
Lauren Burns
D'Arcy Horam
Freia Johnston
Vishal Karna
Kate Noble

Donor services volunteers

Beryl Blake
Kate Wood



Volunteers and fellows

Social media moderators

Saskia Adysti
Emmanuel Arnold
Louella Carr
Nadia Floreani
Joanna Hewes
Camille Lloyd
Jacqueline Mitchell
Anita Ngov
Marissa Paine
Cara Rixon
Ann Seward
Eleni Sgardelis
Gemma Snowball
Isabella Stacey
Luc Van Vliet
Sarah Winter-Irving

Fellows

Julian Atchison, Group Health Coordinator
Lauren Burns, Campaign Coach (Nature)
Ben Cox, Campaign Coach (Climate)
Kelly De los Santos, Recruitment Coach
Emily Gregg, Story Mobilisation Coordinator
Kelly Griffin, Training Support Coordinator
Emily Keane, Welcome Team Leader
Kirsten MacLeod, New Group Support Coordinator
Madeline Price, Fellowship Support Coordinator
Samantha Sweeney, Network Support Coordinator
Rachael Szumski, Social Media Coach
James Temple, Network Support Coordinator
(Community Comms)
Brigitte Walsh, Social Media Moderator
Team Leader
Sarah Wookey, Story Collection Coordinator



The Fellowship is a
unique opportunity.
ACF are willing to train
you and trust you.

– Julian Atchison



Why I volunteer

On top of taking action at an individual level, Chamilka Jayawardana wanted to join a movement of people pushing for systemic change.

“I was born in Sri Lanka, lived in Zambia and went to boarding school in England. I came here for university and that was the last stop.

A few years after I moved here I saw a picture of myself with three close high-school friends. They were Nigerian, Japanese and English and then there was me. I remember thinking to myself ‘that’s like the United Nations right there.’ I realised I never really saw colour until I came to Australia, because my new surroundings lacked it so much. Thankfully over 20 years, things have changed.

Having moved around so much, I have a slight identity crisis and always felt safer identifying myself as an international citizen. I say to my kids, ‘everyone is a citizen of the world and you are here to lift the whole world up, as well as Australia.’

I joined ACF because I wanted greater impact. I’ve done a lot of micro-level environmental stuff like recycling, but I felt like an ant running around achieving nothing. The biggest challenge at the moment is climate change. Making my household zero waste is not going to fix that.

I started with ACF’s Activate training in November 2019, which was brilliant. The last time I got comprehensive training like that was when I was in the corporate workforce.

When you volunteer, you want your time well spent. Joining ACF, we all have our allocated tasks that match our skills, then collectively we have a movement. Our community organiser Matt, he’s awesome. He always gets back to you, and that keeps you going, because you know your time is being taken seriously.

I’ve always volunteered. It makes me feel hopeful. That sense of service is definitely something my parents instilled in me. Volunteering with ACF helped me meet friends up here and show my kids we are all part of a bigger humanity.”

“

Volunteering with ACF helped me show my kids we are all part of a bigger humanity.

– Chamilka Jayawardana

”





We can meet
this challenge
**and continue to
have impact** 



Environmental performance and response to COVID-19

In 2020, coronavirus restrictions drastically reduced the use of energy and water in our offices, as well as emissions from air travel and staff commuting.

ACF will continue to offset the CO₂ emissions associated with all of its activities, by purchasing Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) from the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation. As well as having a positive impact on climate, these ACCUs provide the added benefit of supporting employment and the everyday lives of people in Aboriginal communities.

Impact of COVID-19 on ACF

We have all experienced a seismic upheaval in our lives this year. The impact of COVID-19 on our health, communities, economy and personal wellbeing would have been unimaginable at the beginning of the year. In response, we have had to reimagine, and sometimes endure, a new way of living. The pandemic has also meant businesses and charities like ACF have had to adapt to new realities.

ACF was well prepared for the initial shock of lockdown in March 2020. Good planning and investment in technology had enabled staff members to work from any location, so moving their workplace to home was straightforward. We quickly set up online meeting spaces to ensure the ACF community could stay connected, and ramped up our engagement via email and web.

While technology might not have been a barrier to home working, our staff members faced other sorts of challenges — like juggling the demands of a young family or having to use the kitchen table as an office.

However, acknowledging this reality for our people and supporting them has relieved unnecessary additional pressures. ACF is a lean organisation and no-one has been sitting idly, waiting for the pandemic to pass. In fact, the output and impact of ACF, under the circumstances, has been quite extraordinary and a testament to the commitment of our amazing team. We're particularly pleased that we've generated so many media stories about climate action and nature protection, even with the media industry being focused on the pandemic.

Like many organisations we were very concerned about the potential impact of the pandemic on our financial position. Good financial management had delivered us cash reserves that provided financial resilience. Whilst the outlook was uncertain, our wonderful and generous donors were there to support us, even as they would have been suffering their own hardships.

All the technology in the world cannot substitute for getting out into nature, gathering in our communities and knocking on the doors of those in power. In August we reopened our offices in Brisbane and Canberra in a COVIDSafe manner, and hope that it won't be too long before our Sydney and Melbourne teams can gather face-to-face. Our team is weathering the storm well. They are focused and eager to get back out and work hard for places we love.

Organisational culture and social performance

As environmental advocates, we face a significant challenge in one of the most crucial times in human history. A strong organisational culture – with shared values, norms and expectations – means we can meet this challenge and continue to have the greatest possible impact.

Over the past few years, ACF has transformed its culture in a way that few organisations achieve. This has been through:

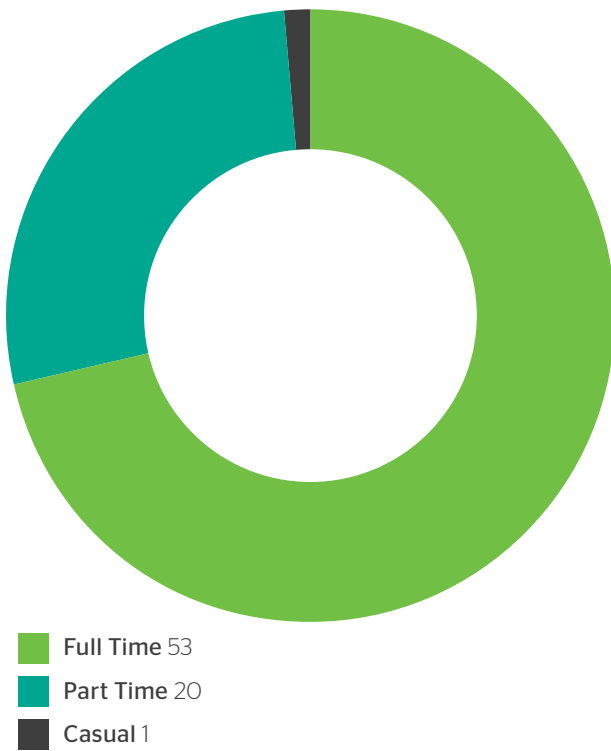
- prioritising culture as fundamentally important to achieving ACF's goals
- exhibiting leadership
- developing, training and mentoring
- recognising impact
- encouraging and resourcing experimenting and learning
- improving structures
- boosting collaboration
- shared (co-designed) plans and goals.

The 2019 iteration of our biennial Organisational Cultural Inventory (OCI), measuring our workplace culture and effectiveness, told us that ACF's culture is collaborative, encouraging, empowering, friendly, action oriented, respectful and challenging. And we won a second global award for an outstanding organisational culture. But we have more to do. We have set our sights and targets high.

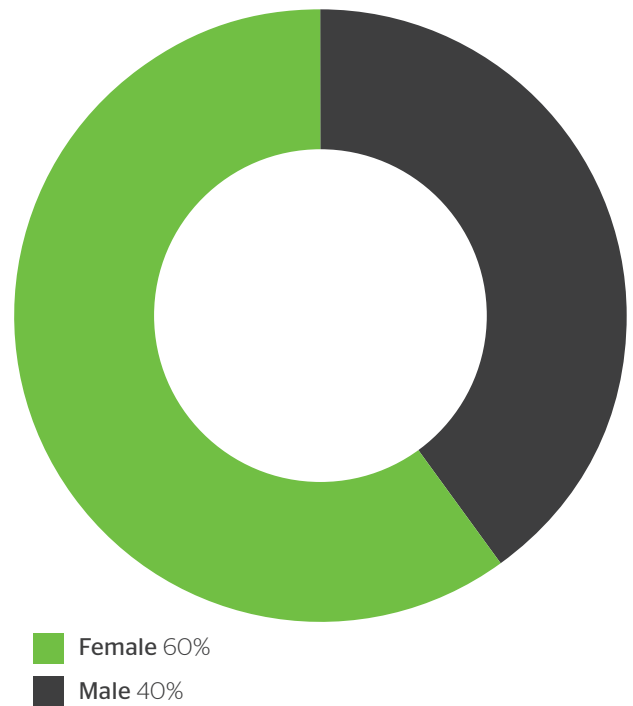
Cultural diversity among our staff and supporters is important to ACF, as is being a good ally to First Nations people as they seek to protect Country and their culture. ACF is supporting a First Nations campaign hub in our 60L Green Building to create stronger links between First Nations' and environmental campaigns. And we are diversifying our own staff, setting targets for First Nations people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Staff statistics	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Total Staff Full Time Equivalent	59.79	65.39	67.15	67
Avoidable Turnover Rate (%)	13.9	13.5	10.3	14.6
Average Annual Training per employee (hours)	16	18	22	24

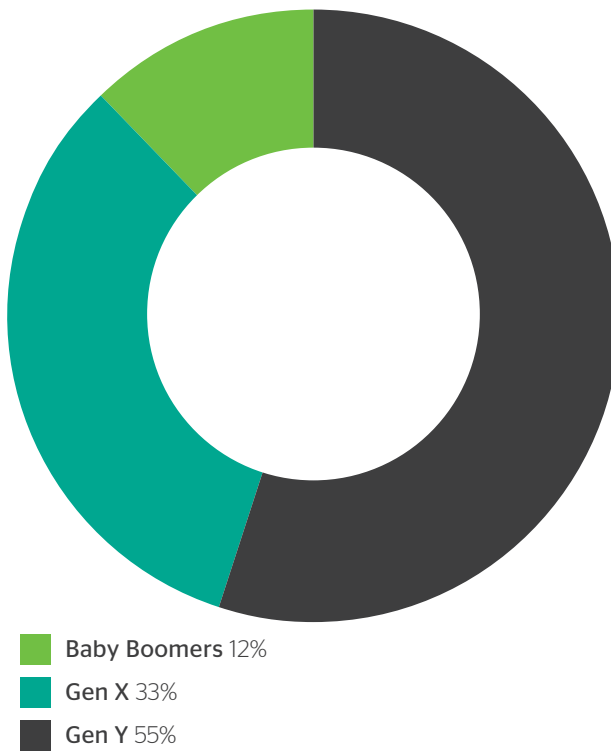
STAFF COMPOSITION



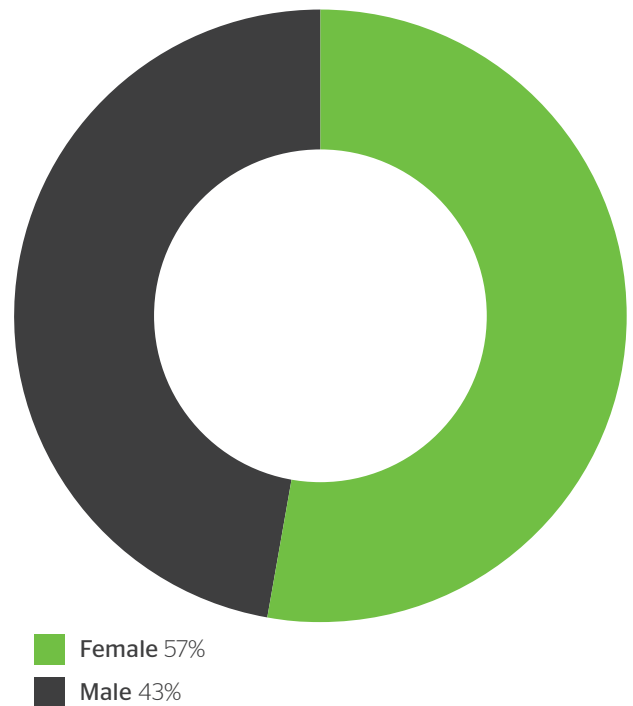
ALL STAFF GENDER



GENERATION – ALL STAFF



GENDER IN MANAGEMENT



We can be a powerful voice in the post-pandemic recovery



Our Board

ACF is governed by a volunteer Board which contributes a broad range of expertise to the organisation. Our Board members are dedicated to ACF's purpose, values and strategy for change.

The Board comprises seven ACF Councillors — ACF's President, Vice Presidents and four Councillors elected to the Board — and up to four further members appointed (co-opted) by Council.

Mara Bún, *President*

Jimmy Cocking, *Vice President*

Tim Chapman, *Vice President*

Miles George, *Treasurer*

Jon Anstey, *Hon. Secretary*

Ash Peplow Ball

David Hood

Donna Bagnall

Erika Avellaneda Celis

Garry Gale

Ros Harvey

We acknowledge the significant, voluntary contributions of the following external members of the Board's Finance Audit and Risk Committee: Amanda McIntyre, Jane Smithers, Jonathan Andrews, Alex Woerndle.

Our Council

The Council is ACF's core representative body. ACF Members elect their state and territory Councillors to a three year term.

Mara Bún, *President*

Sarah Reid, ACT

Daisy Barham, NSW

Donna Bagnall, NSW

Tim Chapman, *Vice President* NSW

Jimmy Cocking, *Vice President* NT

Shar Molloy, NT

David Hood, QLD

Gemma Plesman, QLD (*resigned June 2020*)

Revel Pointon, QLD

Leon Cermak, SA

Philippa Rowland, SA

Sue Richardson, SA

Erika Avellaneda Celis, TAS

Margaret Steadman, TAS

Anne Martinelli, VIC

Ash Peplow Ball, VIC

Melanie Poole, VIC

James Eggleston, WA

Mia Pepper, WA

Sarah English, WA

ACF financial position summary

2019–2020 has been a tumultuous year and ACF has, so far, proven to be resilient to the shock of COVID-19. While the outlook remains uncertain, we are confident ACF can weather the storm and be a powerful voice in the post-pandemic recovery.

ACF delivered another financial surplus for the 2019–2020 financial year — the sixth surplus in a row. This year's surplus of \$0.91 million has a different character to prior years, having arisen because ACF was constrained in some of the activities it could undertake due to the government-imposed lockdown.

Our total expenditure on environmental activities fell by 4.2% to \$7.56 million. This represents about 53% of our total expenses which is consistent with the prior year. We have had to defer our planned increase in environmental activity expenditure, and we will now do this in 2020–2021, pandemic restrictions permitting.

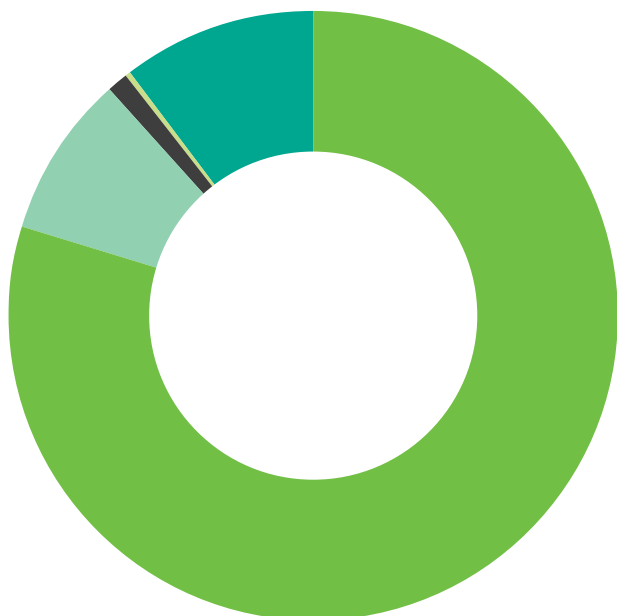
Fundraising expenditure fell by 11.6% to \$4.08 million as we increasingly move to more cost-effective online fundraising methods. ACF has reduced reliance on traditional face-to-face fundraising in recent years, building a digital capacity that has served us very well in the face of the pandemic. Our return on donor investment has improved by 9% over this period — for every \$1 we spend on fundraising we are now raising \$3.31.

Operating revenues from donations, bequests and memberships fell from \$14.08 million to \$13.52 million, a decrease of 4%. When the pandemic emerged at the beginning of 2020, there was considerable uncertainty about whether donors would be able to support ACF in the way they had previously. It is quite remarkable to report that our donation income increased by 2.6% compared with the prior year. We never cease to be amazed by the generosity of our 40,000 donors who continue to give, even as they face their own pandemic-related financial challenges.

In the face of revenue uncertainty, ACF applied for taxpayer support through the federal government's JobKeeper scheme. Once it became clear that our revenues were holding up very well and we were not suffering financial hardship, we voluntarily withdrew from the scheme and returned the taxpayer funds to the government. It is quite extraordinary that under the JobKeeper scheme ACF was not required to return any money to the government — we did this voluntarily, because it was the right thing to do.

Uncertainty looms large for the coming year and there is not yet clarity on the length and depth of the economic recession. Nevertheless, our operations are emerging from lockdown and we have a strong financial base from which to take a powerful step forward. What is clear is the importance of our work and the need to change the current course of post-pandemic recovery that is mired in old ways of thinking. Thank you for your continued financial support as we recover, rebuild and renew.

REVENUE \$15.05 M



- Individual donations \$12.03 m
- Bequests \$1.28 m
- Other fundraising \$0.16 m
- Government subsidies \$0.05 m
- Rent and investment income \$1.53 m

EXPENDITURE \$14.13 M



- Environmental initiatives \$7.56 m
- Donor care and acquisition \$4.08 m
- Management and operations \$1.76 m
- Non-operating activities \$0.73 m



For every \$1 we spend on fundraising
we are now raising \$3.31

We love our beautiful planet

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