

Annual Impact Report

2020/21 Financial Year:
March 1, 2020 - February 28, 2021





Introduction

In celebration of Australian Wildlife Conservancy's (AWC) 30th Anniversary. It is releasing its first Impact Report.

The report compiles the financial and conservation outcomes achieved by AWC during its financial year, ending February 28, 2021.

The AWC Impact Report reveals that Australian philanthropic investment in AWC has remained stable throughout the COVID-19 year and this support has resulted in some significant wins for Australian wildlife.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country and the land on which we live and work throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Strategy

Australian Wildlife Conservancy's story began on August 2, 1991 when Martin Copley purchased Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary in Western Australia. It has since grown to become the largest private owner and manager of land for conservation in Australia, protecting more than 6.5 million hectares across 31 sanctuaries and partnership sites in iconic regions of Australia.



Australian Wildlife Conservancy's vision is to see a world where Australia's biodiversity is valued and effectively conserved by an engaged community.



Australian Wildlife Conservancy's mission is the *effective* conservation of all Australian animal species and the habitats in which they live.



Australian Wildlife Conservancy will realise its vision and mission by focusing on and measuring progress towards: Pre-eminent conservation science; Effective species conservation; Working together as OneAWC; Ensuring strong financial sustainability; Operating as a key conservation leader and engaging the community.

AWC will achieve this through key actions:



2020-21 Financial results summary

(Year ending February 28, 2021)

AWC recorded **steady income** despite the economic effects of COVID-19

AWC recorded an overall **surplus of \$5.57 million** due to stable donation revenue and a focus on financial efficiency and cautious expenditure following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic

Donations to AWC **remained steady over its last financial year**, recording a revenue decline of just 0.70% to \$29.75 million, largely due to reduced sanctuary visitors

Sanctuary sourced income (such as visitation programs) was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, **a portion of these losses were recovered** through access to the JobKeeper wage subsidy

AWC's **operating expenditure was reduced by 13%** following a rapid pivot to measured budget reduction prioritising critical operations such as Australia's largest non-government fire management program

Capital expenditure was also reduced as there were one-off large programs from 2019-20 that didn't repeat in 2020-21

83.5% of AWC's total expenditure was invested in conservation with just 16.5% spent on fundraising and administration combined. This represents a modest 3.5% increase on fundraising and administration in 2020-21. The increase was due to a decrease in large scale project (and notably, fence construction) expenditure from the previous year. AWC continues to invest substantially more in conservation than any other comparable organisation in our sector

AWC has a **strong balance sheet holding \$111.66 million in total assets**, and only \$6.95 million in total liabilities



2020-21 Conservation summary

The investment donors have made in supporting AWC over the last year has resulted in some significant wins for Australian wildlife. Some of the conservation highlights for the 2020-21 financial year include:

Protecting threatened species

AWC undertakes Australia's most ambitious mammal reintroduction program. During 2020, AWC undertook a nationally significant reintroduction program to provide safe havens for threatened and regionally-extinct species, including:



- Safely translocating 34 Mala from Scotia Wildlife Sanctuary in western New South Wales to Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary in the Northern Territory. The return of Mala to their historical range in Australia's red centre is significant for Newhaven's Ngaliya-Warlpiri and Luritja Traditional Owners, as the marsupial is an important ancestral figure and a Mala Dreaming site is located on the property



- Re-establishing a population of Red-tailed Phascogales in the wild in the Northern Territory for the first time in more than 70 years



- In partnership with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, as part of the New South Wales Government's *Saving Our Species* program, AWC returned 40 Greater Stick-nest Rats to Mallee Cliffs National Park in NSW



- Mallee Cliffs also received its first Numbats, with the endangered mammal being reintroduced to a NSW National Park for the first time

In partnership with Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife, and local landholders, AWC constructed the Western River Refuge on Kangaroo Island, securing the future of the Kangaroo Island Dunnart and a suite of threatened and endemic species following the devastating Black Summer bushfires of 2019/2020.



Land management

- AWC commenced **expanding Curramore Wildlife Sanctuary** in south-east Queensland through direct land acquisition
- **Managed bushfire recovery** at Sydney's iconic North Head which involved installation of specially designed refuge tunnels, nest boxes and watering points and providing supplementary food for surviving animals
- Achieved **feral predator-free status for the 9,570 hectare** Mallee Cliffs National Park safe haven in NSW, creating the largest such refuge on mainland Australia
- Australia's **largest feral herbivore control program** is undertaken by AWC and this resulted in the removal of more than 8,586 feral herbivores (eg cattle, rabbits, camels, pigs) over this reporting period
- AWC delivers Australia's **largest non-government fire management program** (across more than 8 million hectares of northern Australia). Working alongside rangers from Wilinggjin Aboriginal Corporation (WAC) and Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation (DAC), AWC delivers prescribed burning across more than 6.5 million hectares (15 million acres) of the Kimberley alone. This program has been steadily **improving ecological outcomes in the Kimberley** for over fifteen years
- AWC commenced **plans to establish the first feral predator-free fenced area in northern Australia** at its Mount Zero-Taravale Wildlife Sanctuary with the objective of restoring the Northern Bettong (one of Australia's most endangered mammals). AWC is a member of the Northern Bettong Recovery Team, working with Traditional Owners and Rangers from Wadjanbarra Tableland Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation, Djabugay Aboriginal Corporation, Buluwai Indigenous Corporation, Western Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation, Gugu Badhun Aboriginal Corporation and Giringun Aboriginal Corporation, as well as Queensland Department of Environment and Science and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service representatives, researchers, and local landholders
- AWC's **innovative partnership with pastoralists** to deliver conservation outcomes at the iconic Bullo River Station in the NT is seeing many species recorded on the property for the first time, including 18 reptiles, 3 birds and 1 frog species. AWC also captured a small carnivorous marsupial, (*Pseudantechinus sp.*), previously only seen on camera trap images at Bullo River Station, and are awaiting species identification by genetic analysis from experts



Science

- AWC conducts Australia's **most extensive national biodiversity monitoring program**, which substantially contributed critical data to the first national Threatened Species Index for mammals. This contribution will be on an ongoing basis
- AWC began work on a **Climate Change Adaptation Strategy** to inform its property acquisitions, reintroduction program and conservation land management strategies
- Dr John Kanowski, AWC Chief Science Officer, presented evidence to the Federal House of Representatives Inquiry on Feral Cats. The Inquiry recommended a new national conservation mission to **protect native Australian wildlife from the threat of predation by cats** ('Project Noah')
- An endangered **Black-footed Tree-rat** and two **vulnerable Kimberley Brush-tailed Phascogales** were **detected** during biodiversity surveys conducted as part of a collaborative partnership between Wilonggin Aboriginal Corporation (WAC) and AWC
- AWC conducted and supported **more than 80 research projects**, collaborating with a range of partners to address key issues impacting biodiversity in Australia, including:
 - The ecology of threatened species including Sharman's Rock-wallaby, the Numbat, the Greater Bilby and the Purple-crowned Fairy-wren
 - The impact, ecology and management of feral cats and foxes
 - The effect of different fire regimes, and the optimal management of fire for conservation
 - Reintroduction ecology, including survival, habitat use, home range and movements of reintroduced species, and the ecological consequences of reintroductions for extant fauna, flora and ecosystem processes
 - Understanding and managing genetics for conservation
 - Applying technology to increase the reach and rigour of AWC's monitoring programs

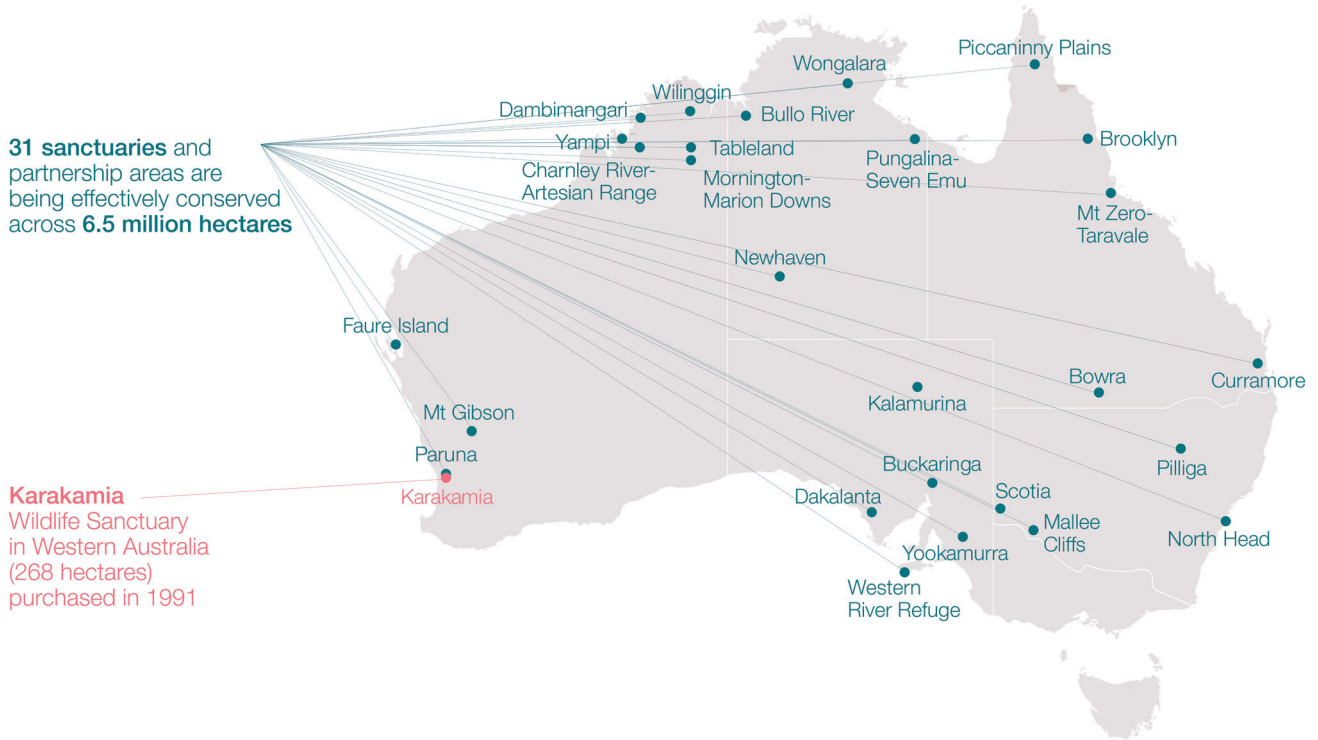


Public education

- **Environmental education and visitor programs** across several sanctuaries were heavily impacted by COVID-19, including: Mornington, Karakamia, Paruna, Charnley River-Artesian Range and Bowra Wildlife Sanctuaries. Limited visitor programs were supported where possible under COVID-19 constraints
- **School visits** were hosted at Yookamurra Wildlife Sanctuary
- In 2020 AWC delivered its **first webinar series** to educate viewers. Episodes have been viewed more than 70,000 times in 18 countries around the world
- AWC hosted **ministerial visits** in both New South Wales and South Australia and we have been in continual dialogue with Federal and State Governments on conservation issues and opportunities
- All **conservation announcements** have been shared with the public via the media, AWC website and social media channels
- Public visitation to sanctuaries was impacted by COVID-19, including a restriction on AWC partner Outback Spirit Tours which usually conducts guided visits to some of AWC's most remote sanctuaries in WA, NT, SA and Qld. However, **public access and education was maintained as much as possible** in keeping with government guidelines and health and safety protocols



30 Year Impact



AWC has created nine safe havens and is now protecting:

74% of all mammal species

88% of all bird species

54% of all reptile and frog species

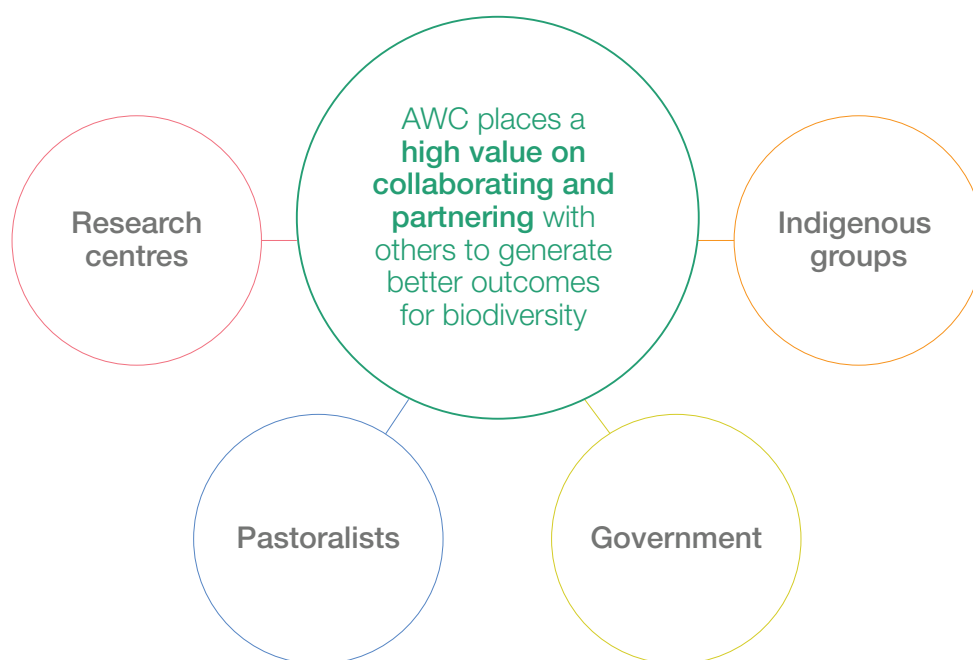
- Over the last 30 years AWC has developed a network of nine feral predator-free safe havens across 31 sanctuaries and partnership areas, protecting:
 - **74% of all mammal species**
 - **88% of all bird species**
 - **Over 54% of all reptile and frog species**
- Over the last 30 years AWC has expanded the area under management from 268 hectares to 6.5 million hectares in some of the most iconic regions of Australia
- AWC is a **leader in threatened mammal translocations** and undertakes the most extensive wildlife mammal translocation program in Australia
- AWC deploys around 80% of its staff in the field
- Over 6,500 individual animals from over 20 species have been translocated into, out of, and between AWC sanctuaries and partnership sites to date
- AWC conducts Australia's **most extensive national biodiversity survey program**, 'Ecohealth', gathering data that informs land management actions and measures the ecological return on supporters' investment
- Research conducted by AWC scientists or by external researchers on AWC sanctuaries has resulted in over 400 peer-reviewed publications to date
- AWC is currently conducting, hosting, or collaborating on over 80 scientific research projects across its sanctuaries and partnership areas

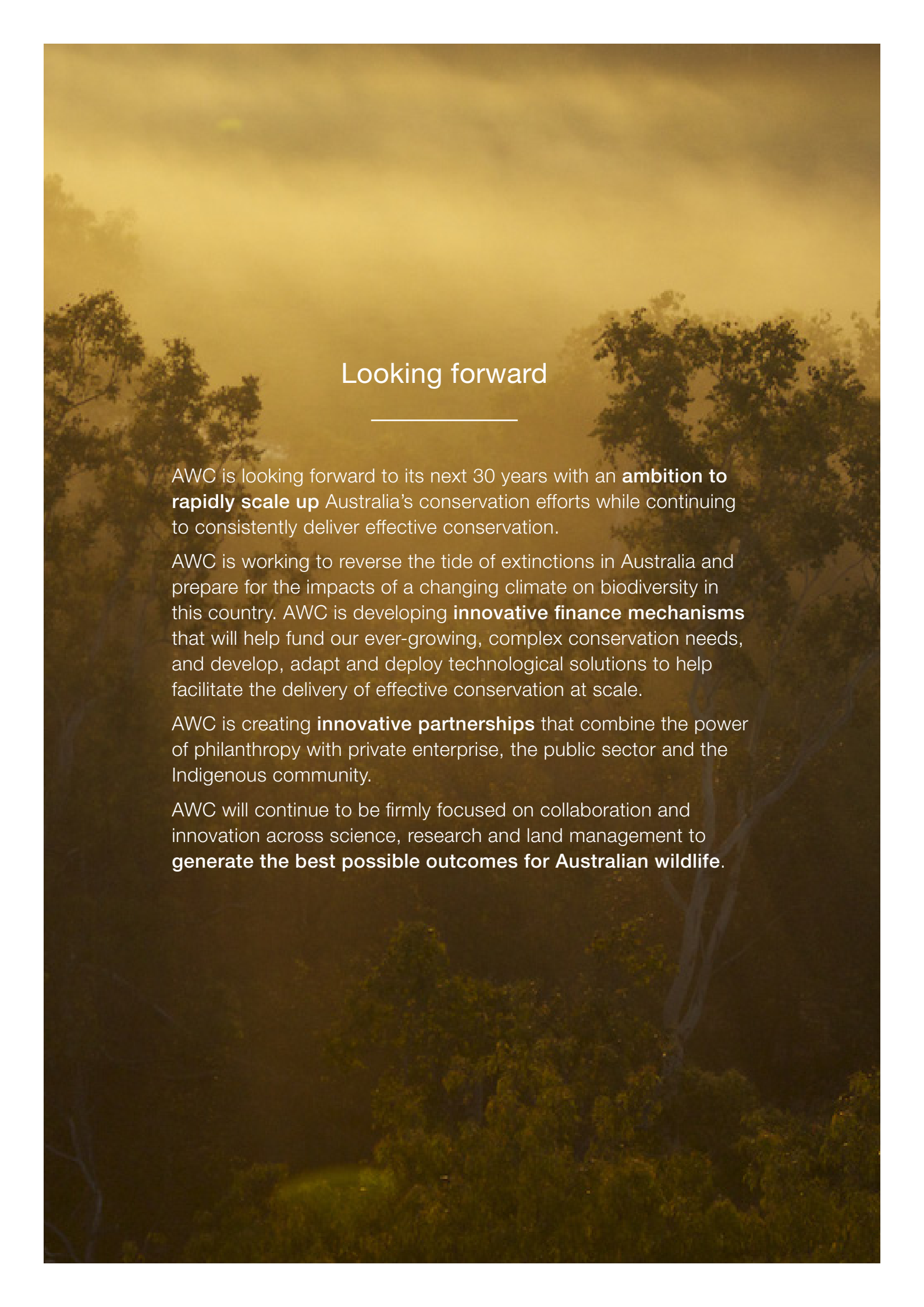
AWC places a **high value on collaborating and partnering** with others to generate better outcomes for biodiversity. For example:

- AWC is **partnering with numerous Indigenous groups** across the continent, including Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation (DAC) and Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation (WAC)
- AWC **established an historic partnership with the NSW Government** to manage two national parks (Pilliga and Mallee Cliffs). Already four species have been reintroduced (Numbats, Greater Stick-nest Rats, Bridled Nailtail Wallabies, Greater Bilbies). The feral predator-free area at Mallee Cliffs is the largest (9,570 ha) on mainland Australia
- AWC has **partnered with the Australian Department of Defence** to manage Yampi Sound Training Area on the Kimberley coast of Western Australia. Yampi is

located in the only part of mainland Australia thought to have suffered no wildlife extinctions since European settlement

- AWC has established a **ground-breaking partnership with Bullo River Station** in the NT to deliver conservation on pastoral land. This represents a new approach to conservation that has the potential to be replicated on other pastoral land
- **AWC partners with researchers** from multiple universities and scientific institutions like the National Environmental Sciences Program, Threatened Species Hub and the CSIRO in conducting research
- AWC **delivers Australia's largest (non-government) fire management program** across 8 million hectares on multiple tenures, including on Indigenous, pastoral and AWC land





Looking forward

AWC is looking forward to its next 30 years with an **ambition to rapidly scale up** Australia's conservation efforts while continuing to consistently deliver effective conservation.

AWC is working to reverse the tide of extinctions in Australia and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate on biodiversity in this country. AWC is developing **innovative finance mechanisms** that will help fund our ever-growing, complex conservation needs, and develop, adapt and deploy technological solutions to help facilitate the delivery of effective conservation at scale.

AWC is creating **innovative partnerships** that combine the power of philanthropy with private enterprise, the public sector and the Indigenous community.

AWC will continue to be firmly focused on collaboration and innovation across science, research and land management to **generate the best possible outcomes for Australian wildlife.**