

WILDLIFE LAND TRUST

Wildlife Market Market

The Newsletter of HSI Australia's Wildlife Land Trust • Issue 27 • 2023

Welcome to our latest edition of Wildlife Lands. A lot has happened since our last newsletter, with an incredible influx of members from all across Australia joining the ranks and contributing to our network of sanctuaries dedicated to conservation. With this growth, we're working on some exciting new updates, partnerships and programs—read on to learn more!





We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land. We recognise and respect the enduring relationship they have with their lands and waters, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Wildlife Land Trust

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Head of Programs Evan Quartermain

s Project Officer Helen Church

Front cover

Eastern long-necked turtle (Chelodina longicollis) at WLT sanctuary The Styx. Image: Doug and Peach Rollinson

About us

Australia is lucky to have some of the most unique and diverse wildlife on the planet, but our native species and the places they call home are disappearing. The Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) Australia is a national movement to help landholders save our wildlife by conserving, restoring and enhancing their land.

The WLT is a network of privately-owned wildlife sanctuaries committed to preserving wildlife and habitats. Our members are found across Australia and include farmers, retreat owners, conservationists and any landowners who want to support native species on their land. Whether you're new to private land conservation, registered with an existing land protection scheme or a seasoned conservationist, we'd love to hear from you.

Becoming part of the WLT is completely free and involves a nonbinding letter of agreement to commit to preserving wildlife and their habitats. Joining our program will complement any current or future land protection arrangements.

The WLT is a program of Humane Society International Australia, an animal welfare and conservation organisation working to create a better world for animals in Australia and across the world.

How to join the Wildlife Land Trust (WLT) Australia

We provide an opportunity to become a part of a growing network of sanctuaries promoting best conservation practices and protecting wildlife and habitats across Australia.

Share your conservation story with your own sanctuary profile and our biannual newsletter and connect with likeminded people in your local area with a free WLT property sign.

You'll also be supported with expert conservation advice and assistance for wildlife issues in your local community, as well as information on restoration grants, private land conservation and wildlife events.

Fill out our application form to get started. We'll create a personalised Letter of Agreement for your property which is flexible, non-binding and can be cancelled at any time.

Learn more about this exciting program at: wildlifelandtrust.org.au Or contact our Project Officer Helen Church at:

1 800 333 737 (phone) helen@hsi.org.au (email)



The dam at Wattlebewillbe provides habitat and water for the native residents. Inset: Since its extensive regeneration, ornate burrowing frogs have returned to the sanctuary.

Wattlebewillbe

Queensland • NORTH BURNETT

Wattlebewillbe is a 22-hectare sandstone and sodic clay forestry property situated on Goreng Goreng and Wakka Wakka country in rural Central Queensland.

It is nestled in the upper reaches of the Burnett River catchment and home to Endangered species such as koalas, greater gliders and glossy black-cockatoos. The property also directly borders over 40,000 hectares of State Forestry, including an Endangered Regional Ecosystem—an enormous wildlife corridor!

Wattlebewillbe was once part of a much larger grazing land parcel, before being repeatedly logged and then subdivided off into the lifestyle block it is today. The current residence was built in 1994 and the property continued to be periodically logged for native timber until 2006 and grazed heavily up until my purchase in 2010.

The soil fertility is poor and highly erodible with large deposits of sandstone, a nod to its prehistoric past submerged under an inland sea. The local area supports this story with fossilised coral reefs (complete with shark teeth) and the shells of long-extinct molluscs dotted about the countryside.

Since my purchase, no logging has occurred and the wattle regrowth is slowly giving way to a mix of other canopy species including casuarinas, soap box and

crows ash. The rear portion of the property is actively managed for conservation and the grazing of one horse, while the front half of the block has been allowed to passively regenerate with minimal interference.

The large dam is used to water the native gardens that we have established around the residence as well as to attract and feed wildlife, flush the toilets and fill the horse trough. It has also been revegetated with locally endemic aquatic species to improve habitat, and a 150-metre riparian buffer is completely fenced off from grazing.

This has greatly improved water quality and native frog populations including the northern banjo frog, whose call is a short, high-pitched series of 'plonks', not unlike the plucking of a banjo, and the ornate burrowing frog, a beautiful ground-dwelling species who breeds prolifically after rain.

Wattlebewillbe is also now home to many other species that we hope to expand through revegetation and habitat restoration including nesting boxes.

Misty Green

Member since 2022



Mandjura's regenerated grasslands provide an ideal home for kangaroos. Inset: Young wombats in rehabilitation at Mandjura.

Mandjura New South Wales · SNOWY-MONARO REGION

Mandjura is a 44-hectare sanctuary in the Snowy-Monaro region. The property, previously used for agricultural purposes, is now destocked and in the process of regeneration.

Vast tracts of the region surrounding Mandjura were devastated in the 2019-2020 bushfires. The property became a hub for wildlife rehabilitation, with volunteers from all over the world coming together to build enclosures and rescue wildlife.

We were amazed by the huge amount of support, with everyone from the Canadian Animal Rescue Group to the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital and the Army volunteering their services. After initial search and rescue efforts, volunteers from our local wildlife group LAOKO worked tirelessly to rehabilitate koalas on the property, with almost all koalas successfully released.

Following the fires, the Aboriginal organisation Back to Country, with support from various organisations, planted over 3,000 koala trees on the property, erected possum boxes and undertook extensive erosion control works on a degraded gully on the block. The gully restoration used different types of leaky weirs and planted vegetation to slow down flows and stabilise the gully.

Since initial works began, many of the upper leaky weirs have backfilled with sand. While it is great to see this

system working to stop sedimentation into the downstream Badja River, it showed us a need to build up and stabilise the gully.

Mandjura became a member of the Wildlife Land Trust about a year ago, and as part of our membership we applied for a NSW Conservation Partners Grant. This funding will allow us to continue with our gully restoration over the next three years, building more leaky weirs and repairing those that have been backfilled.

We are very excited to be able to do this alongside our other project, where we will plant another 600 native trees on the property with the support of Local Land Services and Greening Australia.

Personally, I find restoration work incredibly satisfying. We are already seeing some of our original plantings really take off after the past few wet years, have found evidence of our possum boxes being regularly used and have seen a complete stabilisation and transformation of the downstream sections of the eroded gully.

We hope to continue to regenerate the property for native wildlife and see more of our native species coming back to call Mandjura home.

Alison and Richard Swain

Members since 2021

Pelican Lagoon is a significant woodland and wetland habitat for native birds. Inset: Pygmy possum spotted on the sanctuary.

Teasdales at Pelican Lagoon

South Australia · KANGAROO ISLAND

Pelican Lagoon is a stunning conservation site. Early European explorer Matthew Flinders wrote eloquently about its natural beauty and the abundant wildlife on its shores and in its waters.

We are the privileged custodians of a 53-hectare property along the southern coastline of this incredible lagoon. We purchased the land in 2000 with the aim of reinstating its natural beauty.

For millennia, early Indigenous peoples lived empathetically on the land taking only what they needed. However in more recent centuries, sealers and whalers pillaged the marine environment, and with the advent of European settlement our property experienced colonial slash-and-burn along with intensive sheep grazing by early farmers.

In two decades we've transformed our sad, denuded tract of land by replanting thousands of native trees and removing all livestock and feral animals, and nature has quietly taken over. Tiny trees have become forests; understorey has naturally re-established itself; terrestrial wildlife has returned and multiplied; birds are breeding and the tidal lagoon itself is returning to its former environmentally diverse marine habitat, especially with the spread of samphires and coastal saltbush along its edge.



These days if you come looking at our place, you'll need to pause for extended families of kangaroos to cross the track and you'll discover Rosenberg's goannas, tiger snakes, echidnas, pygmy possums, moths, butterflies and far more birds than you can possibly count.

We always take the time to take in the gracious flight of the giant Australian pelican and the white-bellied sea eagle and observe the sooty oystercatcher and the foraging ibis in the intertidal zones. Closer to land, forest birds will surround you with song while diminutive wrens, firetails, honeyeaters and willy wagtails keep you entertained.

In the Lagoon itself there is a whole other world to celebrate. Colourful sponges grow in the deeper channels. Sea grass meadows exist in abundance in the shallower parts, providing habitat for pipe fish, sea horses, fiddler and eagle rays, crabs and cuttlefish. Fingerlings of most common species of fish abound.

Our place is a haven and a home for wildlife in all its forms.

Bob and Jennie Teasdale Members since 2022

This sanctuary is for sale—head to our website to learn more

The Micalong Creek provides habitat, fresh water and a wildlife corridor on this sanctuary. Inset: Platypuses are regularly spotted in the Micalong Creek.

Micalong Descents

New South Wales • WEE JASPER

Micalong Descents is a diverse, mountainous property located between Canberra and Tumut. It is predominately forested but also has a few hectares of grassland, herbfield and creek flats. The Micalong Creek (a major tributary of the Goodradigbee River) runs through the property, and diverse terrestrial and aquatic habitats support a wide variety of wildlife.

We have owned this 210-hectare property for the last 42 years and over this time have delighted in it, learnt from it, and worked hard to meet its wide range of management challenges. This was the first place either of us saw a platypus in the wild, and it remains the only one in which we have seen greater gliders.

When we bought it about one fifth of the property was recently cleared, the standard array of weeds was present, and it had areas of erosion associated with poor vehicle tracks. Otherwise, the property was in good condition, with a lot of old-growth forest.

We thought that management to bring the property to a high environment standard would be straightforward, viz: re-tree the cleared areas, do a bit of weed control and repair and realign tracks.

Well, it has not really turned out that way. External influences have made the goals elusive. We have had droughts and floods and feral animals (pigs, cats, foxes and deer) and weeds (blackberries, St John's wort and sweet briar). There is always something to be done.

We still delight in the property and its special range of environmental assets, but keeping a clear view of the goal requires planning and quite a bit of support.

We are aging and a succession plan for the property is important. We want to pass it on to someone of similar values and who will have the same goals in mind. Joining the WLT is part of our succession plan, and organising a covenant on the land with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust was another.

Our rewards over the years have been in watching the land steadily rehabilitate, and observing governments and NGO's becoming more aware of environmental values and consequently building systems of support.

Apart from all the delights of learning about the native plants, wildlife and land management, the major thing we have learnt is that land (even pristine land) needs a significant level of human input to maintain high environmental standards.

David Cummings and Mary Lush

Members since 2022

Wallaby Wetlands

Our mission to transform a cane farm into a thriving sanctuary

Stepping on to the sanctuary, you can sense its potential despite its 20-year history as a sugar cane farm. The boundaries of the grassy fields are ringed with old-growth stands of eucalypt and melaleuca, and flashes of red-backed fairy-wrens and rainbow bee-eaters appear in the leftover cane crops, chasing butterflies and native bees. But the most surprising feature of this land is its location-a lone cane field surrounded by magnificent national park on three sides, and a stunning Nature Refuge on its fourth.

Though the Wildlife Land Trust is comprised of memberowned sanctuaries, in late 2020 Humane Society International was gifted a property from a generous philanthropist. Named Wallaby Wetlands, the property spans 74.6 hectares in Far North Queensland and despite its degraded condition we're confident we can build it into a thriving wildlife sanctuary.

Wallaby Wetlands features melaleuca wetlands, eucalypt woodlands, several natural and manmade billabongs and a creek, which is bordered by remnant littoral rainforest. It's this incredible habitat diversity that makes it a great contender for regeneration, both as a wildlife corridor and habitat for a wide range of threatened species. Though it's still early days, we can see the land becoming a home for cassowaries, platypus, spectacled flying-foxes and tree kangaroos, as well as many more plants and animals.

There's a lot of work to be done. We're currently working with CO2 Australia, who will carry out the planting with support from the Queensland Government's Land Restoration Fund and a 100-year permanence agreement to protect the regenerated forest. Along with the larger canopy trees, we hope to begin planting understorey plants to build more complex habitat for smaller animals.





Field report: Wallaby rescue

Even before our plans for the property were hashed out, we found a use for ita population of wild agile wallabies were trapped in a sports field in Cairns, where they were suffering from dog attacks, car strikes and immense, unrelenting stress.

Evan and I, along with HSI's CEO Erica Martin, travelled to Queensland to help local group The Agile Project humanely trap and relocate over a hundred of these wallabies. They were safely transported and released at Wallaby Wetlands, where they are now thriving in their natural habitat and integrating with the resident population.

Evan Quartermain Head of Programs

Helen Church **Project Officer**

And habitat restoration isn't our only goal-surrounded by permanently protected native habitat, Wallaby Wetlands will make an ideal release site for native wildlife. Stay tuned for updates in this incredible project!

Protection at last for two neglected NSW forests

In June 2022, we received some tremendous news for wildlife—two important habitat areas for threatened species in NSW had been formally recognised as Endangered and listed as Threatened **Ecological Communities (TECs).**

Humane Society International nominated these two habitats, the Araluen Scarp Grassy Forest and Brogo Wet Vine Forest in 2020, making the case that both ecosystems were under immense pressure from farming and heavy cattle grazing.

The Araluen Scarp Grassy Forest lies on the steep, sandy slopes of the Araluen Valley. An open woodland dominated by maiden's, forest red and yellow box gums, it supports a diverse ground layer of grasses, forbs and ferns.

The significant habitat trees in this forest provide tree hollows, nectar, leaf litter and a dense canopy, creating an ideal home for threatened species like greater gliders, koalas, swift parrots and powerful owls.

The community's steep, difficult terrain has been its only protection from development up until now, but damage from cattle and feral goats are degrading the land. To make matters worse, the impacts of more severe droughts are causing dieback in the forest canopies.

The Brogo Wet Vine Forest of the South East Corner Bioregion spans rocky granite slopes within the Bega Valley. This community has a complex ground layer of shrubs, vines and grasses under a towering canopy

of forest red gum and rough-barked apple. This old-growth forest is interspersed by patches of dry rainforest and fig species, providing important food sources for birds and bats.

Tree hollows and the unusual diversity of shrubs and vines in the lower stories also create excellent habitat for honeyeaters, gliders, frogs, microbats and native insects. Dingoes, spotted-tailed quolls and white-bellied sea eagles have also been spotted in this forest.

With around half of the Brogo Wet Vine Forest already cleared, urgent action is needed to protect the remaining habitat from bushfires, invasive weeds and livestock. Most of this community is found on private lands, meaning that landholders can play a key role in protecting and restoring it.

Though it is bittersweet to see two more irreplaceable habitats now listed as Endangered, these new classifications afford far stronger legal protection, both for the habitats and the species found within them. The myriad threats surrounding these forests will also need to be addressed and governments, developers and landowners all need to work together for their recovery.

It's relieving to see such a large and often overlooked area of habitat gain recognition and protection, and with some hard work these forests and their inhabitants can be saved. They've now joined the millions of hectares of habitat that HSI has successfully nominated for protection across Australia.



These threatened ecological communities support native species like kurrajong and spotted-tailed quolls.



Regent honeyeaters feed almost exclusively on nectar from native blossoms.

Saving the regent honeyeater from death by a thousand cuts

Deep in the forests of New South Wales and Victoria, a warbling song is dying out. The singer of this complex, lilting melody, the regent honeyeater, is Critically Endangered and one of Australia's most threatened species.

Regent honeyeaters were once found across Australia's eastern states, occupying vast box-ironbark woodlands where they could travel to feed on ironbark, yellow box, white box and swamp mahogany blossoms.

These birds are black, with an intricate scalloped pattern of white and lemon yellow across their wings, breast, back and tail. As relatively large honeyeaters, they need a lot of energy and spend most of their days foraging for high-calorie nectar, insects and lerps (crystalline honeydew drops produced by insects). Regent honeyeaters gather for foraging events when their preferred eucalypt food trees blossom, converging in an energetic, squabbling flock.

In their ideal conditions, regent honeyeaters are quite resilient—these birds can live for 10 years, reproduce successfully and can adapt to a wide range of food sources and habitats.

But extensive clearing of eucalypt forests has destroyed 90% of their habitat, with the remainder left fragmented, weed-infested and plagued by dieback. To make matters worse, honeyeaters have to compete with aggressive noisy miners for nesting sites, and their eggs are preyed upon by currawongs and sugar gliders.

The result is a precipitous decline in the regent honeyeater species, with around 80% of the population lost in just three generations.

- These birds are considered a flagship species for their box-ironbark forest homes. By recovering regent honeyeaters, we can benefit a variety of threatened plants in this habitat as well as squirrel gliders, swift parrots and brush-tailed phascogales.
- Breeding programs are seeing great success, with hundreds of captive-bred birds joining wild populations and building the genetic diversity of the species. The honeyeater's song, famously becoming lost in the wild, is being taught to young birds at the Taronga Conservation Society breeding centre with recordings and "tutors", adult birds captured from the wild and housed near fledglings to guide their songs.
- The key to saving the regent honeyeater is to save their threatened habitat. More protection is needed to conserve box-ironbark forests for nesting sites, feeding grounds and refugia during environmental fluctuations. Landholders have a critical role to play—around 65% of honeyeater sightings have been on properties, and many old-growth trees for nesting sites and food sources occur on private land.
- Time is running out for these remarkable birds, but it's not too late to save them. We need stronger laws for nature and more dedicated support for Australia's threatened species.

If you'd like to learn more about HSI Australia's work in improving the future of our natural spaces, look into our Extinction Fighters campaign.

hsi.org.au/australian-wildlife-and-habitats

WLT welcomes these new member sanctuaries

New Sanctuary	Owner / Manager	Location	Size (ha)		
NEW SOUTH WALES 25 new sanctuaries (2,017 ha) • Total now: 377 sanctuaries (30,100 ha)					
Tickalara	Annie and Emily Hurst	Gunning	118		
Louise's Refuge	Louise Boronyak	Bowen Mountain	2		
Riserva Rosso	Michael Neely and Megan Walls	Lower Boro	400		
Lionel's Refuge	Lionel Atkinson	North Yalgogrin	0.1		
Nuwambip	Sarah Thompson and John Gilmore	Mountain Lagoon	6		
Bobbie and Owen's Refuge	Bobbie Bayley and Owen Kelly	Clarence	14		
Allendale	Eva and Bill Johnstone	Blackheath	3.2		
Katheaghan	Meaghan and Kathy Adam-Cross	Yarramundi	10		
Picket Hill Gardens	Virginia Littlejohn	Valla	19		
Tarcoola	Fiona and Daniel Wasley	Clarence Town	2.7		
Northern Shelter	Tristan Lavery	Mullumbimby	60		
Different Medicine	Tammy Spence	Wallanbah	99		
Big River	Stephen Thompson	Upper Orara	35		
Tracey and Todd's Refuge	Tracey Davis and Todd Farrawell	Turill	43		
Sharewater	Bidda Jones and Julian Davies	Warri	672		
Big Sky	Thomas Last	Khancoban	220		
Deolinda and Shane's Refuge	Deolinda Pereira and Shane Fewtrell	Barkers Vale	10		
Micalong Descents	David Cummings and Mary Lush	Bondo	212		
Karl's Refuge	Karl Wedeman	Huonbrook	2.3		
Bo Bo Retreat	Tammy Spence	Hillville	20		
Plum Pudding Reserve	Tammy Spence	Hillville	4.5		
Stonewood	Garry and Kerrie Watterson	Kurrajong	4		
Paul and Sharyn's Refuge	Paul Healy and Sharyn Fulton	Karangi	40		
Warialda	Gabrielle and Patrick Witter	Bungwahl	10.5		
Isabelle and Luke's Refuge	Isabelle Strachan and Luke Mahony	Tarbuck Bay	10.1		
SOUTH AUSTRALIA 2 new sanctuaries (156 ha) • Total: 48 sanctuaries (3,395 ha)					
Sandra's Refuge	Sandra Isobel Simon	Belair	3.9		
Eba	Nadia and Paul Bellerby	Eba Anchorage	152		
TASMANIA 1 new sanctuary (83 ha) • Total: 46 sanctuaries (3,312 ha)					
Stringybark	Romina and Lars Roberts	Blessington	83		
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1 new sanctuary (20 ha) • Total: 49 sanctuaries (5,252 ha)					
Freddy's Homestead	Marion Helwig	Walkaway	20		

60 new members added

	New Sanctuary	Owner / Manager	Location	Size (ha)
	QUEENSLAND 23 new sanctuaries (1,341 ha) • Total 254 sanctuaries (38,052 ha)			
ſ	Warrakin Valley Farm	Peter Collison	Japoonvale	27.3
	Boonooloo	Gerrit de Bruyn and Barbara de Bruijn	Speewah	1.9
	The Cubby	Amanda Dolan	Peeramon	1.3
	Rocky Falls	Adrian and Gail Heyliger	Atherton	11
	Nightjar Ridge	Craig and Susan Hollindale	Guanaba	52
	The Eco Retreat	John Powrie	Wootha	21
	Glenn and Glynis' Refuge	Glenn Bellis and Glynis Lee	Speewah	2
	Araucaria	Ronda and Denise Green	Running Creek	35
	Waluma Nature Refuge	Paul Muir and Robyn Price	North Gregory	6
100	Maraverde Wildlife Sanctuary	Dr Michael and Maria Parsons	Whyanbeel	65
200	Monsoon	Barry and Shelley Lyon	Cooktown	2
100	Bellarine	Glenda Henry	Emerald	806
	Y Ty Bach	Andrea and William Branch	Bloomsbury	2.6
PACKA AND	Craig's Sanctuary	Craig Thomson	Bollier	27
199	Badjinjilla	Eleanor Susan Robertson	Kuranda	3.4
	Wattlebewillbe	Misty Green	Three Moon	22.3
-	Phillip and Genevieve's Refuge	Phillip Russell and Genevieve Robey	Maroon	50
	Mullumbimby	Jenna Rumney	Mowbray	3
R	7.8.1d	Anthony O'Malley	Mission Beach	0.6
	Clearview	Daniel and Katrina McLaughlin	Dingo Pocket	140
	Dulbil Rest	Murray and Kay Clarke	Koah	31.5
2000	Madja Yilki	Dave and Connie Pinson	Cow Bay	1
	Pudding Farm	Shirley Haddin	Julatten	29
	VICTORIA	8 new sanctuaries (103 ha) • Total: 81 sanctuaries (2,540 ha)		
	Mittagong Talia	Kat and Steve Forrest	Eldorado	21.8
(County)	Lynlee and Eric's Refuge	Lynlee and Eric Tozer	Smiths Gully	8
	Stephanie's Refuge	Stephanie	Colbrook	20.2
	Claudia's Refuge	Claudia Haenel	St Helens Plains	30.3
	Keith	Kate Crawford	Navigators	6.5
	Tumbly Downs	Barry and Dawn Angus	Newstead	8
	Kaylene and Nathan's Refuge	Kaylene Idda and Nathan Agius	Emerald	0.4
	Engaeus	David Cummings	Erica	8
5				A STATES

860 sanctuaries nationwide

83,170 hectares preserved

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SANCTUARIES YOU CAN STAY

Looking for a vacation off the beaten track? Our Sanctuaries You Can Stay program features some of the best wildlife and nature destinations in Australia. Check out our website for a variety of retreats to suit any holiday at: www.wildlifelandtrust.org.au/stay



QUEENSLAND

Kennedy Springs Country Escape

Kennedy Springs Country Escape covers over 80 hectares in the picturesque natural settings of the Kirrama Range in Queensland's Wet Tropics.

Enjoy bushwalking, wildlife spotting and swimming in crystal clear creeks, or take a short trip to the sister-property Meunga Creek Farm to learn about holistic farming as part of the Mahogany Glider Recovery Project.

The sanctuary is home to quolls, gliders, kingfishers and brolgas, and situated close to Blencoe Falls, Hinchinbrook Island and Mission Beach.

Contact Justine at: email: douglassmith10@bigpond.com mobile: 0437 630 577



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Baudin's Cottage

Nestled in the picturesque Swan Valley in Western Australia, Baudin's Cottage is the perfect retreat for families, friends or couples.

Wake up to the sound of native birdlife including the distinctive Baudin's cockatoo, and be on the lookout for the local kingfishers, shingleback lizards and hawks. Visit the nearby wineries and restaurants to explore spectacular local produce, or take a picnic down to the riverbank where Captain James Stirling ended his expedition of the Swan River in 1827.

In the evening, play a game of tennis, badminton or boules, and help collect macadamia nuts for the harvest.

Contact Paula at: email: info@baudinscottage.com mobile: 0412 298 665

Thank you for your continued support of the Wildlife Land Trust Australia. Together we are all working towards a better world for wildlife, and making Australia a more vibrant, diverse and beautiful home for people and animals.

wildlifelandtrust.org.au