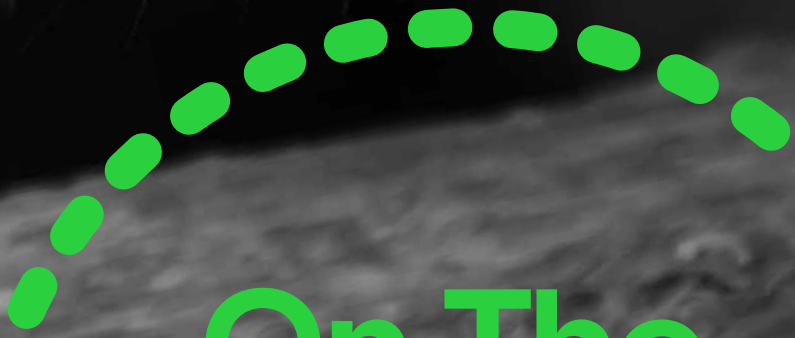


25
YEARS OF

F A M E

SAVING OUR ENDANGERED FLORA & FAUNA



On The Brink

Issue

01

2019

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Is 'Catastrophe' too strong a word?

I have often thought – are many Australians sleep-walking towards a native-wildlife extinction catastrophe from which there is no return?

This is a powerful statement about which I have thought long and hard. Am I over-reaching, exaggerating or being needlessly alarmist?

The ecological statistics suggest not. Our members and donors know the statistics well enough but they bear repeating. Since European settlement:

- 91 species have become extinct;
- 258 are critically endangered;
- another 711 are endangered and
- nearly 800 species are considered vulnerable to extinction.

This is my third year as CEO of the Foundation and there are times when it is difficult to decide whether to feel elated at our successes or despondent because there is just so much to do and insufficient resources to tackle the most urgent needs.

I've opted to take a lead from one of our Melbourne donors who told me that 'the

Foundation remains optimistic in what is essentially a pessimistic space.' I think that's true and I believe it is a good basis on which to build on our effectiveness.

Nevertheless, there is little point in glossing over facts and no point at all in pretending that things on the ecological front are better than they are. The picture is awful – simply confronting the unpalatable truth that today, right now, 258 species of flora and fauna face extinction is sobering. In fact, I think it is made more difficult because as a Foundation we are frustrated by limited resources to effect immediate change.

Nevertheless, thanks to you all, we are achieving some wonderful results and, as the Foundation grows, all of us have good reason to remain optimistic in the midst of the dire stats. On pages 5 and 10 of this edition I am thrilled to announce two new projects – bringing the Eastern Bettong back to Victoria and, in partnership with the SA Department of Environment and Water, continue to safeguard the Western Quoll in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges with the long term prospect of reintroducing quolls into the Gammon Ranges.

As you all know too, we've just concluded our first 25 years of existence. Apart from business-as-usual, it has also been a period of planning and review. What do we want to do in the next 25 years, how are we going to do it, where are we going to get the resources, what partners will we need, how can we do things better?

An issue of importance to the Board and to all our supporters is that donations should go towards nominated projects, not administrative overheads. To that end, the Board will continue efforts to build a significant Capital Fund. Many of you have indicated support for this initiative, as a sufficiently large fund

would underwrite our administrative costs and enable all future donations to be applied only to conservation projects.

Encouragingly, in a survey last year, some members have indicated a willingness to nominate the Foundation as a beneficiary in their Wills. This is hugely encouraging for the development of our Capital Fund and for our future over the next quarter century. To those of you who have so indicated, thank you.

As always too, we will continue to ask for donations. I know it can appear that the Foundation is always asking for money – but we have no choice. For the foreseeable future, and our recent grant round is no exception, the demand for project support is likely to be unending. But, be reassured that at all times we attempt to select projects that have a good chance of success so that the funds provided demonstrate a return to all our supporters. For further insight into how we chose our projects we have interviewed the Chair of the Foundation's Conservation Committee, Dr Fred Ford. Read his interview on the opposite page.

At various functions towards the end of last year, some members told me their support of the Foundation made them feel as if, in a small way, they were helping to heal the planet and, by so doing, healing themselves.

I think that is truly wonderful as it demonstrates an outcome for our supporters beyond saving one species or another.

Thank you for being a part of our evergrowing community.

Tracy McNamara
Chief Executive Officer

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the content within this newsletter. We apologise for any omissions or errors that may have occurred.

Follow us on social media



About FAME

FAME is an independent, non-profit organisation based in South Australia but operating across the country.

FAME is completely donor funded; our work is only possible because of the generosity of our community who support us. For this we are grateful. Donations to FAME are tax-deductible under relevant Australian legislation.

5 minutes with FAME Board Director, Dr Fred Ford

Dr Ford has been a Director of FAME since 2012 and, in his time on the Board, has been involved in the recovery of the remaining wild populations of Bridled Naitail Wallaby in central Queensland, improving genetic diversity of the Mountain Pygmy Possum at Mt Buller and, most recently, the successful reintroduction of the Western Quoll back into the Ikara-Flinders Ranges where it had been locally extinct for over 100 years.

In 2014, Dr Ford wrote John Gould's Extinct and Endangered Mammals of Australia, published by NLA Publishing. His book is available to purchase online and in bookstores.

Please describe your role on the Board of FAME.

I chair the Conservation Committee. We assess project applications against FAME's organisational goals and on scientific merit, and provide advice to the rest of the Board on each proposal.

Is native wildlife conservation more important today than it was 20 years ago? What's changed?

No. It was just as important then as now, although some threats are increasing, more species are in decline than ever, and the undeniable stresses of global warming are starting to have real impacts on the predictability and success of conservation programs. I think the role of advocacy and awareness is equally as important, but today's audience can be reached in their homes so you no longer need to take to the streets to make your voice heard.

What do you think are the most critical issues confronting native wildlife conservation in Australia today?

Unfortunately the vastness of the continent will always be one of our biggest challenges. Threats posed by cats, foxes, rabbits, weeds and disease are almost intractable when considered at that scale. It will take truly smart technologies and luck to ever truly win those battles, so we need to keep working on concerted local programs where success is more achievable to ensure something is left to save if we ever crack the really big

picture problems. Awareness levels of the Australian public about their native plants and animals are also alarming. Many people think that trout and proteas are native (flower sellers always tell them proteas are) and wouldn't have a clue what a Bettong was, let alone a Kowari or Nabarlek. [Ed: a Kowari is a small desert-loving carnivore about the size of guinea pig, but with a bushy tail; a Nabarlek is a little rock wallaby which lives in the Top End and the Kimberleys.]

Feral exotic animal management is a hot topic. Is it critical to the survival of our native species?

Yes. It was critical in the extinction of many species 100 years ago, and modern experiments removing exotic species show strongly that dealing with exotics is the single biggest gain to be made towards conserving many native species today.

Would there be one or two projects over the years, that you have been particularly proud to have FAME involved with?

There is obvious pride that comes from collaborating with government and local communities to deliver projects like the return of quolls and possums to the Flinders. However, we don't choose to support any projects we aren't proud of. Some of FAME's best work has been to support smaller projects like the Tall Astelia, or to provide seed funding for great ideas like the Felixer (cat sprayer) which has gone on to become a nationally-recognised development in cat management.

Do you think FAME can play a role in saving native species from extinction?

If I didn't, I wouldn't be on the Board. We have and will continue to be an important avenue for conservation gains through applied research, direct on-ground action and great ideas.

What do we need to do, as individuals and as members of the Australian community, to ensure no further extinctions of our native flora and fauna species?

Sadly I don't think we can ensure there are no further extinctions. Global change is too fast and entrenched, and existing stresses too pervasive. And then there are the catastrophes and bad luck that we have no control over that take us by surprise. (Think Devil Facial Tumour- if something similar happened to a native rodent, would we manage to save the species? Would we even know until it was too late?). So I guess being vigilant is important - getting a better understanding of local environments

and species, noticing changes, telling the right people about them.

Applying new technologies to the big-picture issues is always potentially a game changer. We now see this happening in the energy sector, there's potential for the same to happen in conservation of native species, but there just aren't the market forces to drive change. That means community advocacy must drive industry and governments to value species and seek solutions. Alignment of goals between the pastoral and conservation sectors where there are shared or similar problems can help leverage funding and effort- for example fox baiting serves both sectors, and many biosecurity issues may equally impact agriculture and the environment.

FAME is reliant on philanthropic giving, being 100% donor funded. There are over 50,000 registered charities in Australia; in your view, how do we stand out as a foundation worthy of support?

I wish great outcomes could speak for themselves, but you have to get a bit shouty sometimes before you can tell the stories you want to tell. And let's not forget that for every registered charity there are probably another four or five clubs, schools or local groups that people want to support. Reputation and recommendations can take us only so far, and I think we have started on a good and necessary journey toward stronger brand identity and presence to let people see our stories and successes.

Giving is a very personal thing, and I get it that for many people there are other priorities. So that leads to an interesting question of how we show that we are more than just a way of making people feel like they are "doing the right thing" by giving to a charity. The real-world outcomes we achieve, the collaborative partners we attract including Commonwealth and State Governments, and the sense of community among FAME donors go from strength to strength each year, and I think that highlights that we are much more than a feel-good exercise.

We live our mission.



Dr Fred Ford

Eastern Bettong

Species Profile:

STOP THE PRESS

Thanks to the generosity of our donors we have now raised all the funds for this project.

Is it too little, too late for the **Eastern Bettong**, which has been extinct on the mainland of Australia since the 1920s? (It is also known as the Southern Bettong or Tasmanian Bettong, as the only wild populations left are currently found in the eastern two-thirds of Tasmania.)

To best describe an Eastern Bettong, imagine a tiny kangaroo with head and body totalling about the length of a sheet of A4 paper. With powerful hind legs – helpful when needing to escape quickly from the clutches of lurking predators – and short arms, its tail is typically as long as the length of its head and body (another sheet of A4), usually with a white tip on the end.

Eastern Bettongs are solitary animals, except during the mating season. They are foragers by nature and build dome-like nests from foliage collected and carried back to the nest in their curled-up tails. For such a small marsupial, they are known to travel up to 1.5km from their nest in search of food. How exhausting!

Major threats to the Eastern Bettong's survival in Tasmania are predation, competition and habitat loss to rabbits, fire and land clearing. Although not listed as an endangered species in Tasmania, current estimates are that there are fewer than 20,000 left, with the species in decline.

The importance of the Eastern Bettong and the ripple effect of its absence from the ecosystem may not yet be realised. They are quite incredible ecological engineers. Simply by scratching the ground and foraging, they have the effect of improving water retention in the soil, creating inter-tussock spaces and increasing composting.

In this issue of On the Brink, we announce that FAME will partner on a project to Bring back the Eastern Bettong. For further information, read the project announcement on page 5 or visit the project page on our website.

- http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/epd/public/publicspecies.pl?taxon_id=66656
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Bettong
- <https://www.nin.gov.au/department/experiment/03/au/bettong.html>
- <http://on.micalab.edu.au/eastern-bettong>



STATE: VIC

SPECIES: Eastern Bettong

STATUS: Extinct on the mainland



Photo credit: JJ Harrison

Bringing back the Eastern Bettong

The Foundation for Australia's Endangered Species will join with partners to reintroduce the Eastern Bettong into Victoria.

Orana Park Safe Haven, in Central Victoria, will fence 200 hectares of unspoiled grasslands, chenopod shrublands and woodlands habitat on the Loddon River. A 5.5 km feral-proof fence will be installed around the native vegetation in order to form a safe haven.

Creating a new safe haven will not only support an additional population of Eastern Bettongs but will also protect all endemic flora and fauna from cats and foxes. The additional population will be able to supply future foundation animals for other reintroductions on the mainland and contribute to a meta-population model guided by recommendations from our project partners at Australian National University who lead the research at Mulligans Flat.

The Eastern Bettong is listed as one of the 20 mammals targeted for recovery by 2020 under Australia's National Threatened Species Strategy.

The Project will aim to support other collateral beneficiaries including a number of endemic flora and fauna species of significance; Brush-tailed Phascogales, Yellow-footed and Agile Antechinus, Fat-tailed Dunnarts, and various amphibians and reptiles including Legless Lizards, bird species including Swift Parrots and Plains Wanderers and a large variety of wildflowers and orchids.

The Orana Park Safe Haven is located on Borung-Hurstwood Road, Borung, in central Victoria, and it is located within an area which has several threatened flora and fauna species. It forms part of the

200km bio-link between Mt Kooyong to the Loddon River. The property is of high conservation value and shows significant potential for the re-introduction of some of Victoria's most threatened fauna such as the Eastern Bettong, Eastern Quoll and Eastern Barred Bandicoot.

Conservation outcomes for the project include:

1. Improved threatened species outcomes – This site has the capacity to support a number of species currently listed as priority species under the Threatened Species Strategy, such as the Eastern Bettong. Safe havens provide a vital step in reversing species decline. We expect to have self-sustaining population within three years.
2. Improved ecosystem health – Eastern Bettongs are ecosystem engineers and would significantly improve the condition of the critically-endangered Box Gum Grassy Woodland, turning over the soil, spreading microbes and allowing nutrients and water to penetrate and assist in vegetation growth. Increased populations of endemic carnivorous marsupials such as the antechinus, dunnart and quoll will prevent insect plagues which might benefit from the increased biomass as a result of rabbit eradication.

Partners in the project include Tiverton Agriculture Impact Fund, Odonata, Mt Rothwell Conservation Centre, Mulligans Flat, Australian National University and Australia's Threatened Species Commissioner.



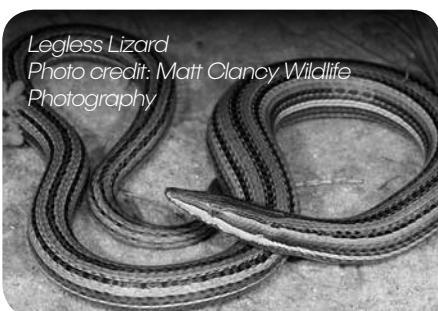
*Fat-tailed Dunnart
Photo credit: Animals Anonymous*



*Plains Wanderer
Photo credit: Patrick K59*



*Swift Parrot
Photo credit: Gunjan Pandey*



*Legless Lizard
Photo credit: Matt Clancy Wildlife Photography*



*Brush-tail Phascogale
Photo credit: Lochman Transparencies*



*Yellow-footed Antechinus
Photo credit: Geoff Park*



STATE: QLD

SPECIES: Cassowary

STATUS: Endangered



Southern Cassowary

Restoring important feeding habitat for the Cassowary

Cassowaries are the third largest bird in the world and are listed as endangered under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999). It is estimated only 4,500 remain in the rainforests of the wet tropics in Far North Queensland. Indeed, spotting one in the wild is at the top of many wildlife enthusiasts' lists. Fortunately, the likelihood of seeing one in the Daintree Lowland Rainforest is about to increase due to a collaborative effort involving FAME and Reforest Now.

With thanks to our donors, FAME has been able to support this remarkable project, enabling important feeding habitat restoration. **We are pleased to report that already an astonishing 2,500 trees of 112 species have now been planted at Cow Bay.** This will help to restore more of the tropical breeding habitat for the Cassowary. As the trees become

established, Cassowaries are expected to again start using the area. Project planting by Reforest Now is set to continue, with the aim of reaching 5,000 trees planted in total.

The conservation value of the Daintree Lowlands is unparalleled. Statistics from the Wet Tropics Management Authority reflect the region's biodiversity.

- 40% of Australia's bird species
- 58% of Australia's bat species
- 30% of Australia's mammal & orchid species
- 60% of Australia's butterfly species
- 21% of Australia's reptile & cycad species
- 29% of Australia's frog species
- 65% of Australia's fern species



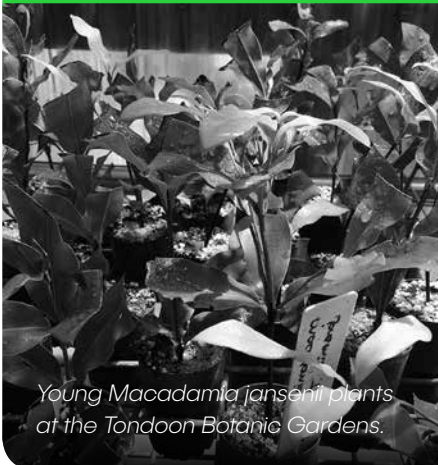
Reforest Now volunteer tree planters in action



STATE: QLD

SPECIES: Bulburin Nut

STATUS: Endangered



Young Macadamia janseni plants at the Tondoon Botanic Gardens.

Australia's most endangered macadamia species

In December 2018, we reported that our newest project securing the future of Australia's most endangered macadamia nut was under threat of fire. The rarest of the macadamia species, *Macadamia janseni*, of which there were thought to be only 90 trees left in the wild, was in danger of being wiped out by catastrophic fires in the Gladstone region.

We thank you for your expressions of concern during this time. Thankfully, the remaining *Macadamia janseni* trees survived the initial fires.

Other forests in the region were not so lucky and were completely destroyed. It's a stark reminder as to how precarious survival of a species can be.

Confirmation has been received from our project partner, Macadamia Conservation Trust (MCT), that new

populations of *Macadamia janseni* have been positively identified following targeted searches. Thanks to funding provided by FAME, MCT has been able to commission searches to locate any other existing trees.

"In total, 37 healthy trees have been found to exist in two smaller populations in a neighbouring gully in the Bulburin National Park, about 5km from the original population", explains Denise Bond, MCT Executive Officer.

It can now be said with certainty that there are 127 confirmed Bulburin Nut trees left in the wild.

What next for the *Macadamia janseni*?

The next steps of the project will involve MCT working with National Parks to establish exact sizes and locations of all newly-discovered trees and working to ensure they are protected from weeds and future fire threats. Testing will determine the genetics of the trees within the newly-discovered populations. If they show diversity from the original trees, plans will be made to add them to future insurance populations.

The project is also part of the Girdarjil program, providing training opportunities for Girdarjil Rangers, thus benefitting indigenous Australians.



PROJECT WRAP-UP: Finding the elusive Kangaroo Island Dunnart

The short answer, yes! The elusive Kangaroo Island Dunnart has been found. When this project began, there were two major objectives:

1. Ascertain the number of endangered Kangaroo Island Dunnarts *Sminthopsis aitkeni* living on the Island and protect them against feral predators and habitat loss.
2. By March 2019, in partnership with private Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife property owners, contribute to the management of 10,000 hectares of private lands for Kangaroo Island Dunnart conservation.

FAME's support has helped the Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife program engage with over 60 landholders and gain access to more than 14,000 hectares of western Kangaroo Island potential Dunnart habitat for survey work.

Landholder survey participation has increased enthusiasm to carry out threatened species conservation activities like feral cat control and *Phytophthora cinnamoni* (Pc) dieback management independently. Over 7000 survey-nights have been completed across the 14,000 hectares. Camera image data analysis is ongoing with over 50,000 images to analyse.

We now have a better understanding of the endangered Kangaroo Island Dunnart distribution within western Kangaroo Island private bushland. A total of 19 Kangaroo Island Dunnart individual camera trap records have been confirmed across four different sites.

While our focus has been to survey for the Kangaroo Island Dunnart, we are also capturing information about other threatened Kangaroo Island species such as:

- **Kangaroo Island Echidna** – *Tachyglossus aculeatus multiaculeatus* (endangered)
- **Southern Brown Bandicoot** – *Isodon obesulus obesulus* (endangered)
- **Bassian Thrush** – *Zoothera lunulata halmaturina* (vulnerable)
- **Southern Emu Wren** – *Stipiturus malachurus* (endangered)
- **Rosenberg's Goanna** – *Varanus rosenbergi* (endangered)

The Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife program and the Kangaroo Island Dunnart project have grown in name and reputation over the past 12 months, thanks to the seed-funding from FAME. This has allowed us to plan for additional conservation activities and apply for funding through a variety of sources. With the additional funds, we have increased our capacity to survey more widely for the Kangaroo Island Dunnart and survey for feral cats that threaten their survival. (Australian Government's Threatened Species Fund and Wettenhall Environment Trust).

We have been overwhelmed with the amount of landholder interest in the Kangaroo Island Dunnart project and Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife program. Our goal is to secure funds to continue the coordination of the Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife program to enable continued landholder engagement in Kangaroo Island Dunnart and other threatened species conservation activities across private lands.

Heidi Groffen & Pat Hodgens
 Kangaroo Island Land for Wildlife

//
A total of 19 Kangaroo Island Dunnart individual camera trap records have been confirmed across four different sites.



To make a donation, or give to an individual project, visit fame.org.au, or detach and complete this form and return back to us in the supplied envelope.

Donation Form

Yes, I would like to assist FAME to continue their work in making a difference to the survival of endangered Australian species.

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E fame@fame.org.au

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BSB: 105-079 Account Number: 049889540

Please email the details of your deposit with the date, amount and reference to: fame@fame.org.au

I prefer that this donation remains anonymous.

Please send me a FAME sticker.

Please send me information on donating share dividends to FAME.

Please send me information about how to help FAME's endangered species work through my will.

*All donations over \$2 are tax-deductible and we will send you a tax receipt.

Monthly Giving

Unfortunately, FAME's work is never done and never will be. Indeed, despite our successes to date, the list of endangered species in Australia continues to lengthen.

FAME's projects are carefully chosen so that our precious funds are put to work in the most effective way possible. We do not gamble with the financial support of our members and donors because we know when we choose wisely we can have the greatest impact on endangered Australian flora and fauna.

When you give monthly, you become an important part of FAME's ongoing commitment to stop any further extinction and allow the Foundation to allocate foreseeable income to support worthwhile projects that will save endangered wildlife from extinction.

Most of all, you have the satisfaction of knowing that your support will help increase FAME's ability to seek out and support projects that will save endangered flora and fauna from extinction.

For this, we say thank you.

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Automatic Monthly Donation Request Form

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Please complete and return to FAME in the envelope provided.

*Please note that we will contact you prior to the expiry date on your card in order to update this information.

*All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

*A summary of your donations will be sent at the end of each financial year for your records.

Thank you
for your
support!

FAME commits to a new phase in the Western Quoll project

FAME has once again partnered with DEW (South Australian Department of Environment and Water) to safeguard the Western Quoll in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges, South Australia, through ongoing monitoring and specific management responses in order to allow the quoll population to further expand and prosper beyond current limits.

Monitoring of the whole population through twice-yearly trapping has indicated that the population has consistently grown. However, as we now aim to build a sustainable population, it is vital we continue to monitor and track the quolls, particularly with threat-abatement management the greatest challenge.

To safeguard the Western Quoll in the Ikara-Flinders Ranges, specific management mechanisms will be undertaken to control feral predators as well as regular, ongoing monitoring of the population.

Background:

In April 2014 as part of a joint project between FAME and the Government of South Australia, 37 Western Quolls were released to see if the species could survive in the Flinders Ranges. Fortunately, the species has flourished in its former home and further releases in 2015 and 2016 have strengthened the population.

For the first time in living memory, the Adnyamathanha people are able to see the animal that is one of their totems and mentioned in dreamtime stories thriving in the wild. Extensive on-ground feral management has been undertaken to ensure the survival of the Quolls with the assistance of the South Australian Sporting Shooters Association.

Vision

Our vision is to prevent any further extinction of Australian flora and fauna.

Mission

FAME is the only organisation dedicated to helping Australian species most at risk of extinction. FAME seeks to fund on-ground conservation outcomes with a focus on seed-funding and innovation.

The Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

Core Values

- Commit to conservation and environmental issues.
- Embrace open transparency at all times.
- Display strong, clear corporate governance.
- Maintain inclusiveness with all stakeholders and donors.
- Respect the culture of Indigenous Australians.