

Annual report

2023-2024 



**AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION**

**Nature
needs us,
now**

Holding decision-makers to account, elevating real solutions, and **empowering Australians to stand up for nature.**

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.

Cover. Scarlet Robin
Photo. Brendan Sydes

Contents

Message from the President and CEO	4
Our impact	6
Strategy on a page	9
Save our Big Backyard	10
Renewable Powered Australia	12
ACF Investigations	15
Corporate campaigns	16
ACF's First Nations changemaker	18
Building people power	20
ACF in parliament	23
Victory in the 'unwinnable' fight for Toondah Harbour	24
Changing the story	26
Thank you for acting on your love for nature	29
Patron and life members	30
Leaders for nature	32
Nature's champions	34
A love for family, nature and the science of wellbeing	37
Celebrating our dedicated community of fundraisers	38
ACF's Living Legacy Community	42
Barry's love of nature	44
Pro bono and partner support	45
Volunteers	46
Our organisation	48
Our Board and Council	50
Financial summary	52



Message from the President and CEO

In recent years we've seen Australia's federal parliament and business community act for climate and nature. Our federal parliament has passed emissions reduction laws and is beginning to move public money from fossil fuels into clean energy. Some of Australia's big banks are ending investment in deforestation and new gas projects.

Change is happening because people like you and organisations like ACF are leading the way.

We have welcomed this progress, and we are proud of our role in delivering it. At the same time, we are continuing to advocate for the scale of action that is necessary for a livable climate and a thriving natural world.

While action is being taken by our governments and business, it is not nearly enough to curb the climate and nature crises. Our political leaders are still approving new coal and gas mines, even while our Great Barrier Reef suffers mass coral bleaching, and forests in Western Australia face total collapse. As the list of threatened species swells, our government continues to delay the delivery of new national nature protection laws. It seems that few in government and the business community are willing to hold the big climate and nature wreckers like Woodside and Santos to account.

At ACF we will always hold businesses and governments to account for their damaging actions. This year, we've led strategic litigation, investigations, and shareholder activation to stop illegal deforestation and greenwashing by fossil fuel corporations. We've developed solutions, including the design of stronger nature protection laws and clean replacements for Australia's polluting coal and gas exports. And we've activated hundreds of thousands of people like you to advocate for change.

ACF's superpower is knowing when to disrupt business-as-usual that damages nature, when to roll up our sleeves and design solutions, and how to advance progress while always calling for the scale of action needed. It's a complex juggling act, but it means that ACF is respected and listened to by governments and businesses which gives us a seat at the table.

This past year we farewelled our President Liana Downey and Board members Grace Vegesana and Sarah Reid. We are indebted to their leadership and service to ACF. We welcomed new Board member Dr Stephen Lightfoot, and we are thrilled that long-term Board member Ros Harvey has been elected as ACF's 14th President and Chair of the Board. Ros begins her three-year term in November 2024, with Sarah English Acting President until then.

We are excited about the year ahead. The upcoming federal election is a pivotal moment to advance ambitious action and leverage significant leaps forward for nature.

We can only do this thanks to people power. We do this in partnership with you, our ACF Community, our friends across the environmental movement, and with forward-thinking businesses, unions, governments, farmers, and civil society.

To our members, donors, supporters, grassroots community groups, Board, Council, staff, and volunteers, we say thank you.

Together we are creating momentum, and together we will drive the necessary action. After all, with such rapid environmental, social, and technological change, we have more opportunities to positively influence the future than any generation before us.

Climate and nature need us now, and we are ready.

Acting Board Chair and President, Sarah English
CEO, Kelly O'Shanassy

Our **impact**



Outcomes for **climate**

- **ACF supported the Barnjarla People to win a legal case** to stop the Kimba waste dump.
- **Our new campaign to expose the truth about methane started with a bang**, with the purchase of an optical gas imaging camera. Since the beginning of the campaign, we have exposed alarming levels of methane emissions from more than 100 sources at 38 coal and gas sites in NSW and QLD.
- **Years of hard work are paying off in Queensland** with the state government pledging to legislate a 75% emissions reduction target by 2035 and an 80% renewable energy target.
- **ACF built pressure for super funds** to hold Woodside Energy accountable for its climate damage through activating super fund members to sign and deliver an open letter with 10,000 signatures. Super funds and 58% of shareholders voted against Woodside's plan.



Outcomes for **nature**

- **Toondah Harbour saved!** Walker Corporation's proposal for the nature-wrecking development was rejected after a years-long campaign by ACF Bayside, the Toondah Alliance and more.
- **Our work to lift the game of banks and superfunds continued**, with our report on financial institutions and their impact on nature and climate leading to the first bank – Westpac – committing to end land-clearing investment.
- **Nature positive bills** to establish Environment Protection Australia and Environment Information Australia passed in the House.
- **Our work in the food and deforestation space gained momentum** with Aldi committing to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains by 2025.



Other big **wins**

- **We welcomed another 190,077 supporters** to the ACF community and two new community groups.
- **We had a whopping 780,000 new visitors** to the ACF website.
- **304,701 donations were received to support ACF's vision**, and we welcomed 5,088 new monthly donors to our EarthVoice program.
- **We welcomed 142 new members to our Living Legacy Community**, recognising all those who have chosen to leave a Gift in their Will to ACF.
- **ACF was all over the news with 7,582 media reports** featuring ACF – that's 20 a day!
- **ACF was a key organiser in the 'Rise Up' 12 days of action**, delivering an impactful national mobilisation with our movement partners with almost 100 actions across every state/territory.



Thank **you**

Thanks to your support and action, together we've achieved great things this year.



OUR WHY

Nature needs us, now.

We see an Australia where nature and people thrive (our vision).
We empower people to stand up for nature (our purpose).



OUR WHAT

We champion big solutions for big impact because nature is in crisis and needs us, now.

Save our big backyard

Protect and regenerate nature to end extinction and create a healthy natural world.



Renewable Powered Australia

Power everything we can with renewables so Australia does its fair share to slash climate pollution.

Our big goals

Before 2025

- National nature laws that protect nature.
- Investors & food companies commit to end land-clearing.
- Investors don't fund new coal and gas projects.
- End fossil fuel subsidies.
- End political donations from fossil fuel companies.

Before 2030

- End land-clearing.
- Native habitat is net positive.
- Australia is powered by renewables.
- 80% of coal, gas & uranium exports are replaced with renewables.
- Investors & food companies are coal, gas & land-clearing free.

OUR HOW

Disrupt business-as-usual that harms nature



We expose undemocratic and unlawful acts and shift the public debate.

Create solutions for nature and people



We inspire communities, business and governments to find better ways of doing things.

Activate people to stand up for nature



We change the hearts and minds of people across Australia and empower them to take action in their workplace, communities and electorates.

OUR HEART

We go big!

We advocate for big, bold change because that is the only way to deliver the scale and speed of change we need.

We're for fair

We welcome anyone from Australia's diverse community to join us to create fair outcomes for nature and all people, especially First Nations Peoples who have cared for nature since time immemorial.

Everything we do is evidence based.

We use the available evidence and our judgement to take decisive action.

Team first

Together Everyone Achieves More. That's why we bring people together to have the biggest possible impact for nature.

We shake things up but never give up

We never stray from our big goals but we try new ways to achieve them because the clock is ticking on nature.

We're the foundation: As the national environment group we connect and support Australia's environment movement.

Save Our Big Backyard

Growing a thriving movement for nature

It has been a big year for our nature campaign as we continue the fight to protect the wildlife and places we love. We've had some huge wins, some disappointments and plenty of progress to be hopeful about. Here's a snapshot of the past 12 months.

Saving Toondah Harbour

After years of campaigning, we won the fight to save Toondah Harbour! In April, Walker Corporation withdrew their nature-wrecking proposal, after a draft decision from Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek to reject it.

It would not have happened without the bold and persistent efforts of ACF Bayside and the Toondah Alliance. You can read all about this huge community campaign on page 24.

Platy-Project

In September 2023, we ran ACF's much-loved platy-project for the second time. Building on the success of the previous year we saw 8000 people sign up to participate and 87 partners promoting and hosting platy spotting events, from Rotary clubs to local councils. Across the month over 1000 platypus were spotted. The platy-project provides invaluable data for researchers, helping them to understand more about this iconic and elusive animal and how we can better protect them.

The fight for strong nature laws continues

This year the government commenced consultations on the drafting of its promised new 'nature positive' laws. ACF's Biodiversity Policy Advisor Brendan Sydes and General Counsel Adam Beeson were in the thick of these consultations with the Federal Environment Department, Ministers' office, experts and stakeholders.

ACF community groups led the charge in their own communities, organising forums on the need for strong nature laws with hundreds of local participants.



After months of discussions on the ins and outs of the new legislation the government made a disappointing and frustrating announcement – rather than introducing the full package of reforms they promised in their Nature Positive Plan, the government was splitting the long-promised reforms into pieces. Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek announced she was planning to proceed with what she called 'stage 2' of the government's nature law reforms including only a couple of the reforms needed. These were an independent Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to enforce national environmental laws and Environment Information Australia to improve national environmental data.

These are welcome and important agencies. Australia's nature laws have barely been enforced for decades, and ACF along with allies in the Places You Love alliance have long campaigned for an independent national environment protection agency to enforce the law.

However, ultimately the EPA will be left enforcing Australia's broken environment laws. The government has said they remain committed to delivering the new laws they promised but have provided no timelines.



As we look toward the upcoming federal election, we must keep up the pressure to secure a well-resourced and independent EPA and the promised new nature protection laws.

While we continued to campaign for these laws, ACF successfully advocated for offsets to be excluded from the government's new nature repair market. The Federal Parliament passed legislation to establish a Nature Repair Market in December but crucially the legislation was amended to exclude the use of offsets. Allowing offsets risked the scheme becoming an avenue for government-endorsed greenwashing by permitting nature-wrecking companies like developers and mine operators to use the Nature Repair Market to buy 'offsets' for the damage they do to nature.

Exposing deforestation

We know that deforestation in Australia is often going under the radar, so we launched our own investigations into exposing potentially illegal bulldozing. Through this we uncovered the destruction of the homes of some of Australia's rarest animals including one of the last breeding grounds of the beautiful and critically endangered regent honeyeater. Crucially, our investigation stopped further destruction.

Shifting business to change

This year we ramped up our efforts to get Australia's big four banks to disclose nature-related risks and commit to stop financing deforestation.

Westpac became the first of the big four to set a zero-deforestation target for beef, sheep and dairy and we expect others to follow.

We released our second Risky Business report assessing how ten banks and ten super funds are addressing nature-related risks in their portfolios. The analysis found Australian banks and super funds are increasing their awareness of how nature intersects with business and more institutions have performed nature-related assessments in 2024, than when the survey was conducted in 2022, but there is still a long way to go.

Fixing our food system

We recently launched our new campaign to fix our food system. We all need food to survive and thrive, but our broken food system, dominated by big business, from supermarkets to chemical companies, is a major contributor to nature destruction and climate change in Australia and globally. This campaign has kicked off with a strong start and we have lots of exciting plans for the months ahead.

It has been a mixed bag of results for our nature campaign, but we are more determined than ever to hold decision makers to account and providing real evidence-based solutions to protect and restore nature.

Renewable Powered Australia

The 2023-24 financial year was the most important for climate change action in Australia's history.

From a federal perspective it was ACF's most successful year, and the most productive for policy ambition and delivery. Emissions across the domestic economy are finally stabilising and beginning to track downwards.

People rightly say that climate action starts with our energy transition, without realising we are nearly halfway there. The acceleration of the renewables transition and battery storage build over the last year has been extraordinary.

The strengthened Safeguard Mechanism is starting to drive down industrial emissions thanks in part to ACF's hard work during the reform process. We have vehicle emissions standards, some fossil fuel subsidies removed, and we helped block fracking in western Queensland's Channel Country, the largest intact inland river system in the world.

Thanks to ACF's work, every piece of federal legislation relating to climate has been improved during the first term of the Albanese government. Now we are focussed on strengthening the proposed *Future Made in Australia* laws, a transformational roadmap to decarbonise Australia's economy and seize the huge potential we have to be a major player in renewable manufacturing and exports.

We are also working to make sure the Albanese government's plans to decarbonise six sectors across the economy are as ambitious as possible, as these plans will underpin the announcement of Australia's 2035 emissions reduction target early next year.

With Australia looking likely to host COP31 in 2026, we are turning our attention to this unprecedented opportunity for Australia to play a lead role in domestic and global climate action.

Forward momentum in Queensland

While ACF doesn't usually focus on state-specific work, Queensland has been the exception. With the highest emissions of any state and one of the most fossil fuel dependent economies in the world, Queensland's lack of climate action has been a drag on federal ambition.

ACF co-led a campaign that saw the Labor government announce and legislate a nation leading 75% by 2035 emissions reduction target, an 80% renewable energy target and a Ten-Year Energy and Jobs Plan to phase out its fleet of coal-fired power plants and create 100,000 jobs in renewable energy industries in Queensland.

With a Queensland election coming up, it was essential to achieve bipartisanship with these commitments. We campaigned to successfully get the LNP opposition to match the emissions reduction target, though they are yet to announce a roadmap to deliver it.

This couldn't have happened without regional Queensland on board, which is why our investment in Gladstone has been so critical. In the last twelve months, one of Australia's most fossil fuel dependent regions has embraced the clean energy transition, with ACF coordinating a community led, deliberative democracy project to produce the Real Deal for Gladstone report. Launched by Gladstone's Mayor, the report will mandate the Gladstone Regional Council develop a transition plan for their heavy energy using industries. This is something no one thought possible just a few years ago.



Tackling the ongoing climate crisis

Of course, all this success came during a year where the climate crisis truly took hold worldwide. Climate and temperature records were smashed, 2023 was the hottest year on record globally, and every month from June last year was individually the hottest month ever recorded.

Australia endured another devastating summer, with heatwaves across Western Australia, deadly bushfires in Queensland, yet another mass coral bleaching event at the Great Barrier Reef and floods and violent storms devastating Cairns. We also saw a storm compared to a category two cyclone rip through the Gold Coast's Pacific Rim on Christmas night.

Stopping new coal and gas

While we have had our most successful year in terms of domestic climate and energy policy, it's been a different story when it comes to our coal and gas exports. Over 100 projects are in some stage of development or approval, including some of the world's largest new gas proposals across northern Australia, led by gas giants Woodside and Santos.

ACF is laser-focused on stopping these climate wrecking projects, from Barossa, Beetaloo and the Middle Arm gas precinct in the Northern Territory, to the Browse and Northwest Shelf expansions in Western Australia.

And while many subsidies have been removed, two big ones remain – the Diesel Fuel Tax Credit and the Albanese government's pre-election announcement to match the Morrison government's \$1.5 billion subsidy to build a huge new gas export terminal and petrochemical precinct at Middle Arm near Darwin.

If built, Middle Arm will drive offshore gas extraction and fracking onshore at the Beetaloo Basin. ACF is campaigning to have the subsidy redeployed. Our Recharging the Territory report with partners at the Environment Centre NT outlines a roadmap to use the subsidy to decarbonise the Territory economy and turn the top end into a renewable energy hub for Australia and Asia.

Methane: exposing the truth

This year ACF started a new campaign to expose the truth about the fossil fuel industry's polluting methane emissions. Methane is a greenhouse gas 86 times more polluting than carbon dioxide and is turbocharging the bushfires, coral bleaching, floods, and other climate havoc caused by coal and gas production. For decades the coal and gas industry have been hiding the true extent of their methane emissions, but through our Investigations team we will continue to shine a light on the truth.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, ACF became the only non-profit organisation to purchase an optical gas imaging (OGI) camera. This state-of-the-art technology uses thermal imaging to make super-polluting methane emissions from coal and gas projects visible on screen. Since we started this campaign last year, investigators have used our OGI camera to expose alarming levels of potent methane emissions from more than 100 sources at 38 coal and gas sites in NSW and Queensland.



The road to renewable energy

While the acceleration of the renewable energy build has come just in time, it's been a bumpy road. The decade of inaction under successive Coalition governments has meant the renewables roll-out has happened quickly, including for many communities in and around the construction of big on and offshore wind, solar and transmission projects.

ACF is working hard to increase the speed of the renewables build, but in a way that protects nature and delivers community buy in, jobs and energy independence for communities, new revenue streams for farmers and benefits for nature protection. We are working with local communities and unions in the Hunter and Illawarra to showcase the local benefits of the renewables transmission and dispel myths about the impacts of offshore wind developments.

There are some renewables projects proposed in the wrong places, where they would damage critical natural habitat. We must make sure this doesn't happen. We know that much of the push back against renewables is an alarming new chapter in the 'climate wars', driven by climate denialist groups waging a divisive disinformation war across the airwaves and social media, as a way of keeping coal and gas open longer and promoting the false solution that is nuclear energy. Our team is working hard to combat this disinformation and combat it with facts, and to make sure that renewables and nature co-exist.

It has been yet another huge year for the climate team and we are ready and raring to take on the next year of climate action.

Nuclear free Australia

Over the past year we have seen significant progress in ACF's nuclear free work. One example was with advocacy around the clean-up of the former ranger uranium mine in Kakadu, the most costly and complex mine rehabilitation work in Australia's history. We worked with communities and stakeholders facing the risk of uranium exploration and mining and supported the efforts the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance, a First Nations and civil society network tracking and contesting nuclear projects around the country.

In response to growing promotion of domestic nuclear power we elevated efforts to secure an energy future that is renewable, not radioactive. In an important win for radioactive responsibility the Labor government scrapped a former Coalition plan for a nuclear waste dump and store on SA's Eyre Peninsula against the clear wishes of the Barnjarla people.

Over recent years ACF has worked closely with the Barnjarla landowners – the recipients of ACF's 2023 Rawlinson Award – local grain producers, wider civil society and community voices to help build a powerful case for responsible and transparent waste management, not short term political 'fixes'. Our commitment continues to advance a future that is cleaner, safer and renewable not radioactive,

Wind farm in Western Australia
Photo. shawshot/ iStock

ACF Investigations

The Investigations unit saw significant wins for nature and climate in 2023-24.

After we exposed Woodside's dirty plan to drop toxic gear from the Enfield oil field to rot next to Ningaloo reef in 2021, we saw a major win with Woodside finally retrieving the gear and recycling it onshore in September 2023.

Our work on methane has continued to gather momentum. We brought the findings of our maiden methane camera fieldwork to Australian Parliament House with the support of top Australian scientists and international experts. Our findings of widespread leaks in the industry were reported widely in the media and, unexpectedly, an artist contacted us to use our footage in their exhibition.

In December, we were thrilled to purchase our own optical-gas imaging (OGI) camera to continue this important work. We are the only public interest organisation in the country and, in most jurisdictions, the only organisation other than the fossil fuel companies themselves to be able to detect methane leaks in this way.

We have been busy since then in the Illawarra and New England regions of NSW using the camera to investigate community reports of hissing vents from abandoned coal mines and gas infrastructure in woodland recently hit by bushfires.

The Climate Change Authority reviewed Australia's emissions reporting and validated what we have been saying for a long time: methane reporting in this country is woeful and companies have zero incentive to stop leaks. To further push the issue, we released a review of plumes of methane detected by satellite in 2023 which suggests a Glencore mine in Queensland emitted a staggering one year of its 'reported' emissions in roughly two and a half weeks.

Continuing our focus on the drivers of the nature extinction crisis, we reported 12 cases of potentially illegal habitat destruction to the State and Commonwealth authorities. Most of these leads came from the 2000 participants of our crowd-sourced investigation, *ACF Investigates: Habitat*



Destruction. One standout case included exposing and halting the illegal destruction of breeding grounds of the critically endangered regent honeyeater. Our follow-up work from the project has stopped active clearing, informed landholders of their legal obligations and kick-started vigorous political debate.

We also reported 14 potential national environmental approval breaches, most of which came from an extensive investigation into the protection of hundreds of environmental offsets. Our report from the investigation, *Set and Forget*, was well received by experts and provided campaigners with timely evidence for the consultation on nature law reform.

One of the reported breaches has been the subject of compliance action. We caught a council letting key koala habitat wither and die. Their approval was shortly going to expire, meaning the requirement to grow these trees would no longer be enforceable. After we reported it to the regulator, they extended the approval's expiration to allow time to ensure that at least 500 trees were planted and growing where they were supposed to be.

Our older investigative work continues to have impact, receive media mentions and prompt stakeholders to reach out and learn from ACF. This reflects the longevity and critical nature of this work.

We are looking forward to continuing the momentum into this next year of critical work for nature and climate.

Investigator Kim Garratt. Photo. Tessa Stevens / ACF



Corporate campaigns

After the corporate campaign team was reimagined in early 2023, we have been busy engaging with businesses to accelerate nature and climate action and hold to account those who aren't doing their part for a thriving future.

Research with impact

Our research continues to provide crucial insights into the environmental practices of major corporations. These reports have been instrumental in shedding light on the links between corporate activities and environmental degradation, equipping us with the data necessary to advocate for change.

In October 2023 we published *From Laggards to Leaders*, a first of its kind benchmark of Australia's largest banks' policies and practices to support their net zero commitments.

The report not only disrupted business as usual by exposing the laggards, but also introduced a rigorous framework for assessing Australian banks' net zero commitments which has been used both externally and internally within the banks. Throughout the year, we have celebrated numerous policy shifts as banks seek to align with the framework.

We also released a series of reports and deepened our engagement with businesses on nature-related issues, thereby elevating nature protection and restoration as a key issue for Australian businesses.

Growing investor pressure on fossil fuel companies

A highlight of the past year was successfully applying pressure on gas giant Woodside at their 2024 AGM in Perth.

Recognising the influence that superannuation funds hold as investors, and thereby owners, of large companies such as Woodside, we activated the ACF community to push super funds to use their voting power at Woodside's AGM.

Meanwhile our original research and report, *What Woodside Tried to Hide*, exposed the lack of credibility of Woodside's net zero ambition, and formed the basis of conversations with investors ahead of the AGM.

The result of this work, part of a collective effort across the environment movement, was a record-breaking vote against Woodside's climate report and a significant vote against the company Chair.

Campaigning for strong laws that govern corporations

There has been strong momentum in the development of progressive policy to better regulate Australian corporations when it comes to environmental issues. We have been actively engaged in consultations for the development of legislation requiring Australian corporations to fully report their emissions and strategy to reduce their impact on the climate. The team has also responded to the senate inquiry into greenwashing in Australia and was invited to Parliament House to present evidence of how large corporations are engaging in greenwashing behavior.

Looking ahead, our efforts will continue to focus on transparency, accountability and empowering Australians to be active participants in advocating for improved corporate environmental performance.

Volunteers outside the Australian Retirement Trust office, Brisbane.
Photo: ACF

ACF's First Nations changemaker

ACF acknowledges that First Nations Peoples of Australia hold unique knowledge and rights inherited from their ancestors and Country and have cared for this country since time immemorial.

ACF's First Nations Lead, proud Kuruma Marthudunera woman Josie Alec conducts vital work in keeping this knowledge and care at the centre of the work of ACF and the broader environmental movement.

Heart of Country

In 2023, Josie journeyed across Australia exploring First Nations connections with Country, and the fossil fuel and nuclear projects that threaten that connection and damage nature and climate. From that journey, the deeply personal and incredibly powerful documentary *Heart of Country* was made. In November 2023, we brought *Heart of Country* to Parliament House for the very first screening, with the First Nations peoples who were a part of the documentary in attendance. The documentary was seen by politicians and international delegates across the globe. In the first half of 2024, we held six screenings in and around Perth, sharing the storytelling with our community.



Polly Cutmore, Gomeroi Elder.
Photo. ACF

Conversations on nature and climate

First Nations voices must be a central part of the conversations around our nature and climate. Over the past 12 months, Josie attended various events and summits, sharing stories, listening, and contributing to key conversations. These included:

- **Whale Dreamers Summit:** Led by Jack Pascoe and Yaaran Bundle, the ceremony and speaking event resulted in the formation of the Sea Country Alliance.
- **Uluru Statement of the Heart:** Josie travelled to Adelaide as part of the collaboration of Yes campaigners in support of the implementation of the Uluru Statement of the Heart.
- **Voice to Parliament:** While the outcome of the referendum was heartbreaking for those who supported the spirit and intention of the referendum question, the awareness and conversations had by Josie and other campaigners will continue to resonate with those who heard them.
- **Lobbying for better laws around the consultation process:** ACF brought Raelene Cooper over from Save Our Songlines to participate in a press conference regarding her struggle for recognition of her rights and responsibilities as a traditional owner of Murujuga National Park. The group also set up meetings with the Indigenous Affairs team and other politicians that listened to our concerns.
- **Australian Nuclear Free Association:** One of the key aims of the conference was to highlight the nuclear resistance that has grown in opposition to the proposed nuclear submarine port in Port Kembla. The event was a great opportunity to connect with so many people from across the nation and hear stories of resistance to uranium mining and AUKUS on Country.

- **First Nations Clean Energy Symposium:** The main outcome of the conference was to lobby the government to initiate a funding program for First Nations people through the First Nations Clean Energy Network. Thanks to hard work and dedication, the recommendations have now been tabled.
- **Environmental Social Surrounds on Country:** As part of her native title group, Josie was invited to participate in the first survey held by Rio Tinto on traditional lands. While it was clear that Rio Tinto's processes of First Nations Consultation are very flawed, Josie was able to share information with her community on their rights and the laws and approvals in place. Her presence helped provide transparency and empower members of her community to speak up and say no to mining in sacred parts of the country.

First Nations Lead Josie Alec.
Photo. ACF



Leadership

Having completed her National Women in Leadership course in 2023, Josie was invited to the Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA) intensive program in Broome, WA in April. The program included a mix of participants from environmental workers such as doctors and council workers to on Country rangers from communities north of Broome. Elder Diane Appleby welcomed everyone and shared the importance of connection to Country for all. The intensive program covered different forms of leadership for women, decolonising the environmental movement, stories of change, reviewing campaign messaging and personal growth and empowerment. These connections and collaborations are integral to the growth and direction of the environmental movement.

The impacts of Josie's work cannot be understated and ACF is lucky to have a passionate, empathetic First Nations Lead who campaigns to protect people and Country.



Building people power

ACF is proud to be continually growing an accessible and inclusive community that reflects the experience of people from all over Australia.

We are more powerful when our campaigns are shaped by a diverse array of perspectives. This year we were thrilled to set up two new community groups in NSW - ACF South Coast and Illawarra and ACF Richmond, both in areas critical to our work.

Championing Renewable Projects

We know that we need to transition and upgrade our energy system to renewable power, and we need to do it quickly. But the rising threat of mis and disinformation is stirring up concerns around large scale renewables projects. We know that when they're located and built correctly, renewables help nature thrive. That's why ACF has been resourcing some innovative community-led work around building support for renewable energy. In Newcastle and Wollongong, ACF supported local communities to hold rallies and family fun days to loudly and proudly say yes to renewable energy. The rallies were attended by over 1000 people, and our movement of people saying yes to renewables continues to grow.

Nature Forums take flight

This year, ACF community groups began hosting nature forums in key locations with the aim of getting decision makers in front of their constituents so the community could find out how their local MPs plan to protect and restore nature.

The inaugural event hosted by ACF Boroondara and ACF Melbourne gathered nearly 300 people and a panel of experts and MPs including Michelle Ananda Raj Member for Higgins and Monique Ryan Member for Kooyong.

This brilliant and innovative idea led by our community set off a ripple of nature forums across the country with an additional panel hosted in McNamara featuring Josh Burns and Zoe Daniels and a third forum in Eastern Sydney with Allegra Spender and Matt Thistlethwaite.

Holding Woodside to account

In April this year we directed our people power at oil and gas giant Woodside Energy, working with partners across the environment movement to call out Woodside's failed climate policy and the role our superannuation companies often play in climate harm.

Together we wrote to, phoned and showed up at our super companies and requested they pre-declare their intent to vote for renewal at Woodsides AGM. We supported members of the community to pressure over 20 superannuation funds to declare that they would vote against Woodside's chairperson and their climate plan at their AGM in late April.

We also saw Woodside suffer the largest backlash against their climate strategy of any fossil fuel company in the world with 58.36% of shareholders showing their dissatisfaction with Woodside's plan – the first time that a company has ever lost majority support over climate, beating the previous record by nearly 10%.

This is the largest vote against a company's climate strategy ever – not just in Australia, but in the world!



ACF in parliament

We continued the momentum from this moment by working with our friends across the climate movement to support 12 days of activism around the country. We rose up and demanded the Federal Government phase out coal and gas.

Engaging with decision-makers

To protect our beautiful big backyard, we must connect with decision-makers and be part of the conversations that shape the future of nature and climate. Over the last 12 months, our ACF community groups continued to connect with Federal MPs and Senators in creative and impactful ways.

Through these events, our community groups have formed key connections with MPs from across Australia including Allegra Spender, Monique Ryan, Michelle Ananda Raj, Matt Thistlethwaite, Steve Georganas, Zoe Daniels, Josh Burns, Sophie Scamps, David Pocock, Janet Rice, Zali Steggall, Kylea Tink, Helen Haines, Jim Chalmers and more. We have even seen MPs speak in parliament about our ACF community – a huge win for our passionate volunteer teams.

Connecting through nature and art

Often in our busy lives, we can turn a blind eye to nature destruction and forget about the beauty of the world around us. Our ACF community groups have done a stellar job running hundreds of events which encourage people to get together, spend time in nature and truly understand the threats our natural world is facing and what we can do about them. Together we've hiked trails, embarked on platypus spotting adventures, planted trees, taken MPs to see whales and birds and used every opportunity we have to remind decision makers of what is at stake. We also connected with local MPs through our Community for Creatures campaign, an event where kids and adults alike designed gorgeous banners celebrating our incredible animals and the ecosystems they call home.

Wild at Art

Every year Wild at Art, Australia's biggest threatened species art competition for kids, brings joy, creativity and young voices to the forefront.

We saw 5000+ gorgeous entries from young nature-lovers across the country, with around 50% of parent-submitted artworks forwarded on to local MPs.

Each year we see even more creativity being unleashed from kids around the country and this year, our ACF community groups threw themselves into the mix!

Our community groups held showcase events attended by State and Federal MPs including Allegra Spender, Dr Carina Garland and Marjorie O'Neill, with submissions from kids across local communities and indeed, across the continent. These events have been critical in allowing ACF community leaders to lobby their local MPs to champion local threatened species in their patch, like Dr Garland championing the endangered southern brown bandicoot.

Innovative action

This year we also introduced a rapid response network and a Hands On Help initiative aimed at increasing opportunities for action and impact.

Our ACF Community Inner West launched their campaign to reWILD the Inner West, and in just a two-year period, helped to regenerate 27 soccer fields worth of canopy coverage. Tree canopy coverage is essential to the survival of a local resident and critter at risk of extinction, the grey-headed flying-fox.

Our ACF community continues to find innovative and creative ways to protect nature and we're looking forward to another busy, successful 12 months ahead.



Over the last 12 months, ACF has continued to increase our presence in parliament by hosting and joining events, speaking up on key topics, putting critical issues in front of decision-makers, and bringing young people's voices to the forefront.

In November 2023 we released a report with law partners King & Wood Mallesons about the *Right of the Child to a Healthy Environment*. To launch the report and support the upcoming Duty of Care Bill, we held a powerful Q&A session at Parliament House with a panel of young climate activists including Anjali Sharma, and legal experts, MC'd by ACF CEO Kelly O'Shanassy and sponsored by Senator David Pocock. Multiple MPs and senators attended the event alongside 30 young people, who we then supported to continue to meet with parliamentarians in the days following.

Our Wild At Art Exhibition at Parliament House facilitated another critical link between young people and decision-makers. Over 30 MPs and 40 school-aged children attended the exhibition featuring artworks of threatened species created by 5-12 year-olds. It was a heart-warming event and one we plan to hold again in the future.

Parliament House was the location for the premiere of *Heart of Country*, an evocative and powerful documentary weaving together stories, songlines, and the ongoing fight to protect Country. First Nations lead and proud Kuruma Marthudunera woman Josie Alec led an insightful post-screening discussion alongside CEO Kelly O'Shanassy, and some of the First Nations people who generously shared their stories in the documentary.

In the climate space, ACF teamed up with Solutions for Climate Australia to host an event in Federal Parliament myth busting the government's *Future Gas Strategy* and outlining how it creates a dangerous blueprint for a 9 billion tonne carbon bomb. The event had more than 70 people in attendance and featured speakers from IEEFA, Solutions for Climate Australia, ACF and MP Josh Burns.

We saw promising outcomes including MP Zali Steggall asking for a deeper dive on the *Future Made in Australia* (FMiA) bill and Minister Plibersek's office requesting that ACF replicate the briefing for the Minister. ACF's First Nations Lead Josie Alec and First Nations representatives held a press conference afterwards, speaking out against the Burrup hub expansion.

Our presence in parliament continues to be an impactful key tactic for our important work.

A powerful Q&A in parliament house to support the Right of the Child to a Healthy Environment. Photo. ACF

Victory in the ‘unwinnable’ fight for Toondah Harbour

Saving the iconic Toondah Harbour from Walker Corporation’s plans to quite literally pave over paradise was thought by many to be an unwinnable fight.

But thanks to a people-powered grassroots campaign, we won a historic battle to stop one of Australia’s wealthiest developers from destroying these internationally protected Ramsar wetlands.

On April 18th 2024, just a week after Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek announced her intention to reject the \$3 billion development project, Walker Corporation withdrew their proposal. This came after Tanya Plibersek visited Toondah Harbour and heard from passionate ACF Bayside and the Toondah Alliance members in person on March 8th 2024.

After over a decade of gritty campaigning, locals and nature lovers around Australia could celebrate and breathe a huge sigh of relief, knowing that the dugongs, turtles, critically endangered eastern curlews and other species that rely on Toondah’s coastal mudflats and mangroves were finally safe.

The will of the Quandamooka people would finally be respected, and this culturally significant place would be preserved.

But the fight to save Toondah was not easy.

Over the last five years, our local ACF Bayside community group, supported by many fellow ACF Queensland groups including ACF Brisbane South & Logan, turbo-charged the campaign to save Toondah.

They took what was still seen as a small local issue in 2019 and built it into a groundswell movement with tens of thousands of ardent supporters across the country. Thanks to their advocacy, in the span of five years, Toondah went

from a largely unknown Queensland issue to a campaign of significant national interest. It went from attracting small local media attention to being covered by every major commercial news organisation in the country. It became the subject of Randall Wood’s award-winning film *Flyways*, which was also turned into a TV series run by PBS in the United States.



ACF’s own dedicated community organiser Jude helped take the campaign to the next level, supporting community groups to run a strategic campaign that included:

- Rallies with thousands of people through the streets in Cleveland and Brisbane.
- Local festivals with over 5,000 people in attendance to celebrate Toondah’s shorebird migration.
- Film screenings with Director David Randall.
- Countless public and roadside demonstrations to raise crucial awareness and get media attention.

We had local artists create thousands of stunning postcards that were sent to Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek. ACF Bayside created ‘Save Toondah’ t-shirts that were worn by people across the country and helped fund the work on the ground. We organised billboards calling on the government to Save Toondah throughout Queensland and in Tanya Plibersek’s electorate.



These examples are a mere snapshot of the activities our community ran to protect the precious wetland habitat at Toondah Harbour.

180,000+ individual online actions to save Toondah Harbour

24,500+ people have contacted Minister Plibersek directly since November 2023

27,000+ public submissions opposing the proposal (including over 25,000 to the draft EIS alone)

2,000+ attendees annually to multiple local rallies and events

It is daunting work taking on a force like Walker Corporation, but the outcome clearly showed that when our communities come together and run a strategic grassroots movement, we can change the system and move our political leaders and decision-makers.

As our ACF CEO Kelly O’Shanassy reflected on the win, “Corporations are powerful, but when the people rise up, our power and our love for nature cannot be ignored.”

*Left. Dugongs in Toondah Harbour. Photo. Nikki Michail
Above. Walk for Toondah 2023. Photo. Greg Sullivan.*

Changing the story

ACF's Engagement Directorate is the town crier of our mighty organisation. We break the news, we uncover dodgy dealings, we bring our campaigns to life, and we inspire Australians who care about nature to demand better.

And boy, did we make a lot of noise this year!

ACF has a strong reputation with journalists and is a highly influential voice in the Australian media, averaging 20 media stories a day, often featuring in high-profile outlets like ABC's 7.30, Radio National and the Guardian, as well as The Australian and commercial television.

We work hard to change the story on climate and nature issues in Australia, leveraging our superpowers of media, marketing, content production, community organising and mobilisation.

From raising awareness of Australia's shameful extinction crisis in the mass media to collaborating with household-name musicians, to blowing the lid off a massive story about dangerous gas leaking from old coal sites – the team hasn't missed a beat.

Our work in action

In August, ACF's investigations team deployed cutting-edge optical gas imaging technology to expose a silent climate catastrophe. These otherwise invisible methane emissions were recorded from facilities operated by Santos, Origin, and Jemena. Our investigation proved that methane, a potent greenhouse gas that is 80 times more potent than CO2, is escaping at rates significantly higher than reported. We used this investigation to advocate for stricter methane regulations and a comprehensive action plan by the Albanese government to mitigate emissions and enforce accountability.

In November, we conducted pivotal research revealing that young Australians overwhelmingly support the right to a healthy environment. Our survey of 1,700 Australians aged 13–24 showed that 90% believe in their right to a healthy environment and are calling for stronger government action on climate change. We then took the fight to Parliament with youth campaigner Anjali Sharma and Independent Senator David Pocock to demand this right is enshrined in federal law.

Shortly after ringing in the new year in 2024, ACF released an analysis that revealed that 144 species were newly listed as threatened in 2023 - the highest annual increase since the inception of the threatened species list. This alarming trend reflects the inadequacies of current environmental protection laws, with 10,426 hectares of habitat destruction approved under national nature laws in just 12 months.

In April, ACF celebrated a major win for people standing up for nature when Federal Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek announced her decision to reject the Walker Group's controversial development proposal at Toondah Harbour. This proposal threatened vital Ramsar-listed wetlands and critical habitats for migratory birds and local wildlife. Our advocacy, supported by over 24,500 public submissions and years of news media coverage organised by ACF's excellent media team, played a crucial role in this decision. Now that's people power in action!

Renewable not radioactive

In June, we launched a strong response to the Coalition's proposal to build nuclear power plants in seven sites across Australia. Learning into decades of expertise in campaigning against nuclear, our videos, media engagement, digital ads, billboards and explainer content highlighted this as an impractical and costly solution, fraught with risks: including a very large price tag, long and complex development times, and the lack of a plan to manage toxic waste.

A new report – Power Games – made the case that nuclear power would delay the transition to renewable energy, increase electricity bills, and impose significant financial burdens on taxpayers. **We've made our message clear: our future is renewable, not radioactive!**

Other highlights

- ACF teamed up with musician Jack River to create a song 'Nature's Cry', spotlighting the hidden toll of nature destruction in Australia. The song featured the real sounds of nature in distress.
- Amidst our continued campaign for strong new nature laws and a strong new EPA, our team rolled out sharp, hard-hitting content on the wildlife impacted by our broken nature laws, and why we need strong new laws now. ACF's biggest ever petition reached over **520,000 signatures**.
- In the face of an angry summer, ACF ran a campaign during the Australian Open (sponsored by ANZ) to raise awareness of the impact of extreme heat on tennis and urge ANZ to stop lending to fossil fuel expansion.

Media snapshot



7,582
Media reports featuring ACF (that's 20 a day!)



19,323,870
ACF digital ads reach



402,170
ACF's total social media followers



780,000
New website visitors



Thank you for acting on your love for nature

Every day we're inspired and empowered by the generosity of our amazing community of nature-lovers. Your generous donations, Gifts in Wills and fundraising efforts contributed \$15.5 million last year, comprising 94% of ACF's total income. You've given us the resources to boldly hold decision-makers to account without fear or favour.

In the past year, an astounding 304,701 donations poured in through our many fundraising initiatives including Giving Day, Nature's Champions, Australia's Biggest Bushwalk, appeals, community and workplace fundraisers, general donations and regular gifts. We're grateful to welcome 5,088 new regular donors into our EarthVoice family, bringing our EarthVoice community to 24,914 strong.

We're equally thankful for the incredible Gifts in Wills we received. These enduring legacies, left by 25 donors in their Wills, total over \$1.4 million. We extend our heartfelt thanks to these extraordinary supporters and their families for their commitment to creating a better future for generations to come. We're also honoured to welcome 142 new members to our Living Legacy community, which recognises everyone who has chosen to leave a gift in their Will to ACF.

ACF is committed to ethical and responsible fundraising practices, in line with the Fundraising Institute Australia (FIA) Code. Our commitment to transparency and honesty underscores our promise to manage every donation entrusted to us with the utmost integrity. For every dollar invested in growing ACF's fundraising this year, we generated a return of \$2.87, a testament to the efficient and impactful use of your donations.



We won't give up until Australia's nature is protected and regenerated, but we can't do it without you. Together, we can and will achieve our vision of an Australia where nature and people thrive.

Thank you for acting on your love for nature, for being our partners in our mission, and for your unwavering determination to protect the animals, rivers and reefs close to our hearts.

Left. Caper White Butterfly Photo. Brendan Sydes

Right. Sacred Kingfisher Photo. Brendan Sydes



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.

Honorary Life Members	Date of award
Dr Moss Cass	1982
Dr Geoff Mosley AM	1987
Dr Aila Keto AO	1990
Mr Geoffrey Goode OAM	1990
Ms Annelie Holden	1992
Mr Trevor Blake	1999
Mrs Beryl Blake	1999
Mr Mark Wootton AO	2001
Ms Eve Kantor AO	2001
Dr bro Sheffield-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
E. Prof Ian Lowe AO	2014
Mr Geoffrey Cousins AM	2018

Corellas on a cold and colourful sunrise.
Photo. Brendan Sydes

Leaders for nature

Leaders for Nature are generous donors who gave \$1,000 or more to our 2024 Giving Day matching fund, inspiring others to give and helping us raise over \$585,000 at a critical time for nature protection.

Brian Abel
Deborah Lehmann and Michael Alpers
Dennis Archibald
Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation
Tim Bailey
Karen Bartel
Roger Bartlett
Dave Batt
Val Beckett
Elizabeth Bluff
Ken Bradstock
Barbara Briggs
Lorraine Brister
Dianna Brookes
Joan Bryan
Jennifer and Henry Burger
Anne Campbell
Julie Carolane
Jennifer Charlesworth
Ralph Cooper
Diana Cotter
Ralph Curnow
Ana Cussinnet
Bruce Davie

Pamela Fiala
Joshua Gilbert
Roger Gillard
Susan Harris
Alice Harris
Ros Harvey
Antony Hedemann
Jim Hejtmanek
Michael Ireland
Bill Jobling
Jennifer Kjeldal
Jerry Koliha
Chris and Diane Komor
Simon Lai
Elizabeth Lambden
Ian Landon-Smith
Stephen Lightfoot
Sue Mackinnon
Ruth Macleod
Martin Mansfield
Christian Maul
Sheena Moyer
John Panteladis
Brian Parsonage

Trevor Parsons
Lance Pilgrim
William Pitt
Josephine Prosser
Teresa Ruane
Nick Seddon
Robert Shanks
Peter Skellon
Paul and Juliet Staindl
Sten Starner
William and Mary Thompson
Kerry Thompson
Mark Tindale
James Turnbull
David and Susan Watson
Pamela Webb
Adrienne Westman
John White
Randal Williams
Michael Wishart
Robert Wyatt
Angela Wydeveld



Nature's champions

We would like to recognise and thank our committed supporters whose annual donations were \$5,000 or more in the 2023-2024 financial year.

Leader

Australian Climate and Biodiversity Foundation
Boundless Earth
Gum Tree Foundation
Dr Bill N Holsworth
Dr Matthias Krups and Mrs Marlies Krups
Oranges and Sardines Foundation

Guardian

Jaramas Foundation
Dr Heather Johnston
Mr Ross Mallam and Mrs Julie Mallam
The Nelson Family Trust

Steward

Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation
John Bennetts and Ann Ryan
Mr Bill Bush and Mrs Mary Bush
Mark Hardy
The late Felicia Huppert
Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd
Ramses Foundation
Skellern Family Foundation
The Ubuntu Foundation
Michael & Margaret Williams

Protector

Lawrence Acland Foundation
Lindsay Adams
Susan Adams and Andrew Kirk
M & I Arnold Family
Alice Arnott Oppen OAM
Award Force Pty Ltd
Ms Joanna Baevski
Dr Barbara Baird
Betty Barker
Mr John Barkla and Dr Alison Street AO
Bluesand Foundation Pty Ltd
Professor Warwick & Dorothy Bruce Foundation
Simon Buckingham and Annie Crawford AM
CANNA Australasia
Margaret Chambers and the late Professor Carrick Chambers
Margaret Dawbarn Foundation
Ferris Family Foundation
Dr Geoffrey and Dr Ann
Ms Roslyn Gordon
Gernot Heiser
Hill Family Conservation Foundation
Ms Annelie Holden
Holmes Family Foundation

Emeritus Prof Andrew Hopkins and Ms Heather McGregor
Will and Jennie Irving
Kamener Family
Dr Robert and Mrs Pamela Knight
Knights Family Jabula Foundation
Letcombe Foundation
Marich Foundation
Grace 'Miffy' Marsh and Megan Marsh
Professor Michael
Norman Family
Charlie Pascoe
Andrew Penman AM
Ms Pam Petschack
Rellim Foundation
Mr Greg Rowe
Dr Angela Rutherford
Scovell Gardner Family
Brett Slater
Toot Sweet Consulting



Sustainer

- ATS Charitable Trust
- Dr Eldon Ball
- Mrs Cheryl Barassi
- Milly & Robert Blakeley
- Ms Nan Brown
- Lynda Cowan
- Ms Caroline Le Couteur
- Mrs Ann Crawford
- Dr Andrew Danks
- Rebecca Denham
- Diversicon Environmental Foundation
- Esther Gallant
- The Green Eyes Foundation
- Greenstone Drinks Co.
- Ruth and Evan Griffiths
- Mrs Pamela Habersberger
- Stephen Ingman
- Koreen Conservation Ltd
- Profs Ros and Richard Madden
- Natalie Mamone & Laurence Stonard
- Dean Mason
- Kelly O'Shanassy
- David Ramsay

- Sage Foundation
- Stobart Strauss Foundation

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

Photo. Erwin Jackson

A love for family, nature and the science of wellbeing

Known for donating to ACF every year on Valentine's Day, Felicia truly put love at the heart of everything she did. Felicia Huppert has generously donated to ACF for the past five years choosing February 14 as she felt it was the best way to show her love for her children, grandchildren, and nature.

This year we were devastated to hear of Felicia's death from metastatic breast cancer. Felicia left a lasting imprint of warmth on everyone she met in her personal and professional life, with her sons joking that "Many colleagues became friends, and her friends and family were rarely spared the zeal she had for her professional beliefs."

In her job as a psychology lecturer, she was described as the Professor of Happiness, with a deep curiosity and philosophical outlook on life. For this reason, she was especially intrigued by ACF's narrative work, and the impact of storytelling on climate justice and nature.

From attending an ACF community event in 2019 to now, Felicia's passion for nature and deep-thinking curiosity about the world has left a lasting impact. She always went above and beyond, attending training in climate justice, delving deeper into the why of ACF's work, and always seeking to have the greatest positive impact on the planet.

We are so grateful to have spent time with Felicia in even just a small way and to have been touched by her intellect, positivity and passion.

Felicia's legacy will continue to inspire and impact us all.

ACF would like to thank Felicia's wonderful family for sharing her story, giving more people the chance to be touched by her legacy.

Felicia Huppert with sons Julian and Rowan.

Celebrating our dedicated **community of fundraisers**

Throughout the year, our nature-loving community of over 1000 incredible fundraisers continued to show up for nature, from raising funds on birthdays and swapping wedding presents for donations, to running marathons and taking part in our inaugural Australia's Biggest Bushwalk challenge.

In May 2024, 827 nature lovers from across the country joined Australia's Biggest Bushwalk, clocking up more than 48,000km (that's like looping around Australia more than twice over!) and raising an impressive \$190,264 to protect threatened species. These fundraisers shared

beautiful stories on social media about the wonders they encountered during the challenge, and how much it meant to them to be able to raise awareness and money for nature.

We continue to receive incredible support from The Landscape Awards photography competition, which has raised over \$20,000 by donating \$5 of each entry fee to ACF. In the last 12 months, we also had 18 small businesses generously pledge their support to raise funds for ACF through their workplace or school.

Our incredible community of fundraisers continue to make a huge difference for nature through their creative and passionate fundraising.

“We both have a strong love for nature and animals, and feel very lucky that we get to enjoy Australia's incredible wildlife!”

Alex and Bernard kindly swapped their wedding presents for donations, raising \$250 for ACF.

“Environmental protection is close to my heart as a runner who is concerned by the effect that even a 1.5°C increase can have on our planet”

Thomas raised \$600 as part of his Sydney Marathon.

Bottom left. Australia's Biggest Bushwalk participants
Bottom. Alex and Bernard





Message from our top Australia's Biggest Bushwalk team fundraiser

Former environmental educator and ranger Rose Baillie lost her vision to eye disease, and now volunteers as a nature therapy guide for people with low vision and blindness. Rose told us that taking part in Australia's Biggest Bushwalk was life-changing, giving her new meaning and purpose. Walking under the name 'Rosey Pose goes n glows', she and her team raised more than \$11,000 to protect our incredible wildlife and Rose's team 'Mosey with Rosey' was the top fundraising team.

"My walking name was inspired by the idea that the more I walk in nature, the more I feel healthy and happy, as I connect and spread awareness. Walking for wildlife

conservation gives a sense of meaning and contribution... there's nothing like getting out into the beauty of nature to refresh the mind, body and soul."

For our ACF staff, supporting incredible fundraisers in achieving their goals has been a source of inspiration for us. We have been privileged to get to know this passionate and energetic group of ACF supporters. Their unwavering dedication and creativity are instrumental in helping us build a world where nature and people thrive.

If you are interested in fundraising for ACF, contact us at fundraise@acf.org.au or call 1800 223 669.

Workplace giving

A huge thank you to the following 19 organisations and their amazing nature-loving staff who generously contributed **\$1000** or more through workplace giving.

Thanks to their support we raised a total of \$98,199 with this program. We deeply appreciate these generous contributions, which are vital in supporting ACF's work to protect our incredible wildlife.

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| KWM | Google | Australian Securities & Investments Commission |
| Dept. Employment & Workplace Relations | Dept. Health & Ageing | REA Group |
| ATO | Dept. Foreign Affairs & Trade | Charles Sturt University |
| Westpac | Ernst & Young | NAB |
| Suncorp | Melbourne Water – Payroll & HR | Dept. of Social Services |
| Macquarie | Info | |
| LFG Services | Aust Post | |
| | Dept. Treasury & Finance | |

Rose Baillie said Australia's Biggest Bushwalk was life-changing.

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.

Dr Barbara Briggs AM

Professor Byron Lamont

Mr Neil McDonald

Ms Rhonda Boyle

Ms Laurel Tsang

Mr Frank Pierce and Ms Janet Mattiske

Ms Marilyn Wimpey

Mr James Richardson

Mr David Fisher

Dr Jennifer Herrick

Mr Bruce D Lindenmayer OAM

Ms Margaret and Dr Grahame Hardy

Mr Kym Hancock

Ms Jan and Mr Stephen Blakeney

Mr Peter Timms and Mr Robert Dessaix

Ms N Mamone

Ms B Weynton

Ms Annelie Holden

Mr J Trezise

Mr A Marshall and Ms M Durham

Mr Harold Levien

Mr P Geschke

Ms Jane Crouch

Mr Geoffrey Shores

Mr Kahn Franke and Mrs Julie Franke

Mr C P Morris

Mr Brian Snape AM

Ms Helen Gillam

Dr Judy Williams

Ms Sandy Jennings

Mr Andrew and Mrs Clare Kavunenko

Mr Andrew Griffiths

Ms Patricia Williamsz

Ms Vicky King and Mr Paul Hudson

Mr Karl And Mrs Andrea Williams

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.

Ian Bedford

Natasha Hildebrand-Lockie

Bronwen Stewart

Jock Anderson

Annette Ribbons

Ruby Curthoys

Krista Foale

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.

Philippa Carter & Peter Currie Foundation Trust

Estate Of Margaret Helen Ralph

Estate Of Denis Klein

Estate Of Raymond James Wallace

Estate Of John David Nielsen

Estate Of Donald Charles Yates

Estate Of Raymond Noel Peachey

Estate Of Jeffery Colin Walker

Estate Of John Alexander

Estate Of Jan Little

Estate Of Henry Robert Thorne

Estate Of Mary Dooley

Estate Of Robert Steel

Estate Of Gabrielle Watt

Estate Of Gail Munro

Estate Of Cath Shepparbottom

Estate Of Martha Novak

Estate Of Jeanette Taylor

Estate Of Justin Christopher House

Estate Of Jonathan De B Persse

Estate Of Ian Selby Bedford

Estate Of Harry Calder

Barry's love of nature

By Asha Collins

Barry Clugston's love for nature began in Victoria's most north-westerly corner, in the Mallee region. Growing up on a sheep farm, Barry explains, "We had a couple of paddocks with good bush, and I spent a lot of time in there as a kid."

His connection to nature and the land has only deepened through the years.

Developing an early interest in birdwatching he fondly remembers the native birds of the region, the pink cockatoos, various parrots and birds of prey. He recalls how local farmers used the bird's behaviour to predict the weather, even as farming practices unwittingly contributed to habitat loss. This early regard for nature sparked Barry's environmental activism, his passion often leading to robust discussions with local farmers, with Barry's foresight and love for the land frequently winning them over.

In the early 70's, Barry sought help from ACF to protect the Mallee's 'Big Desert' from development. Alongside a small group of dedicated locals, Barry campaigned to have the area recognised as a Wilderness Zone. He recalls his meeting with ACF's then-CEO Geoff Mosley, "He took it on board and included us in the discussions, so we felt vindicated by his support." The campaign succeeded, and the 'Big Desert' gained formal protection, a defining achievement of Barry's advocacy.

Throughout the 1990s, Barry served on the ACF Council, using his deep knowledge of the land and tireless dedication to further conservation efforts. For these reasons and more, Barry has left a gift to ACF in his Will, ensuring his legacy of protecting Australia's wilderness will continue for generations to come.



"With ACF's long history of achievements, I just want the work to go on."

After 50 years of collaboration with ACF, Barry's advice to future generations of advocates is simple: "Always have hope."

Barry loves spotting birds like pink cockatoos
Photo. Kristian Bell/Shutterstock

Pro bono and partner support

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

Legal services

Arnold Bloch Leibler
Maddocks
Marcus Fleming
Kathleen Foley SC
Juliet Forsyth SC
Emrys Nekvapil SC
David Hume
Matthew Pudovskis
DLA Piper

Thermography training

Clean Air Task Force

Public participation support and training

Earth & Every

Mailing services

Active Mail Pty Ltd

Phone calling services

The Clever Contacts Group Pty Ltdpa



Photo. Black Photography & Design

Volunteers

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



Investigations Unit Volunteers

Emma White
Matt Whitting
Anna Christie
Johanna Evans
Tom Mullaney

Fundraising and Operations volunteers

Eva Antoniou
Francesca Keaveney
Caroline Larcher
Isobella Faith
Nick Pastalatzis
Agnes Koo
Lynn Wang
Kenneth Stent (and many Eaglehawk community volunteers)

Engagement and Campaigns volunteers

Zeynep Budak
Francesca Keaveney
Ashley Jing Rhu Lim
Georgia Fernando
Ailyn G. Arienza
Zei Mharzeline Guanzon
Claudia Patricia Benitez
Caitlin Jack
Julia Clugston

Engagement and Campaigns volunteers

Rosalie Gebert
Don Vogt
Nikhil Sobti
Sally Faraday
Alan Farrar
Lynn Gunning
Mauricio Pontalti
Liz Reen
Mitzi Tuke
Helen Thompson
John Nihill
David Hudspeth
Sue Miles
Martine Seccull

Hanne Falkiner
Isabella Barrow
Jodi Vermaas
Helen Lester
Tony Fisk
Greg Hardisty
Julia Croatto
Colette Marshall
Ken Rookes
Marie Philippe Bonne
Ian McCaw
Chris and Peter Cook
Sal Fisher
Judith Ridley
Sanja Van Huet
Wayne Jury
Bart Citroen
Alison Mitchell
Rowena Turner
Phil Day
Katherine Burrows
Lyn Reed
Janette Matthey
Richard Bentley
Leon Cermak
Andrea Rankin
Annelou Jansen

Sue Richardson
Jill and Peter Cournc
Jenny Cuningham
Anthony Brown
Wanda Rusek
Joanne & Warren Fraser
Dianne & David Tucker
Jonathan Wills
Shannon
June Morris
David Costello
Una Sandeman
Vicki Salisbury
Tania Kromoloff
Cris McIvor
Judith Hoyle
Mark Mitchell
Maureen
Robyn Bodey
Will Booth
Mary Swayne
Bob Stevenson
Di Glynn
Matt Vaughan
Emma Prior
Nicola Burford

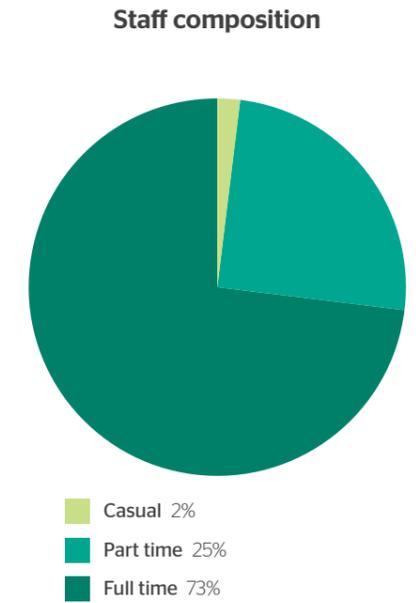
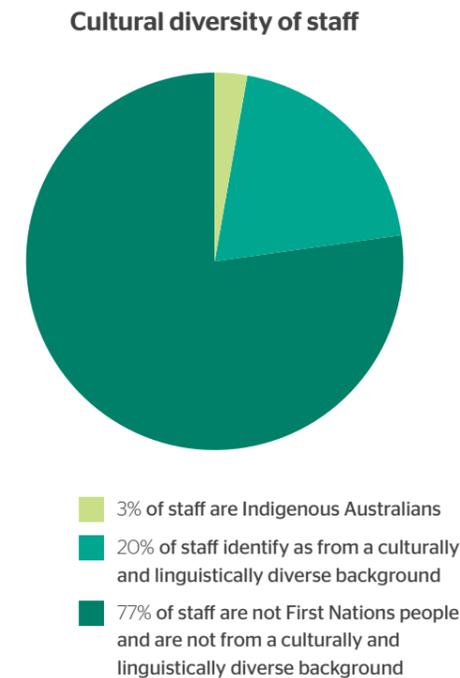
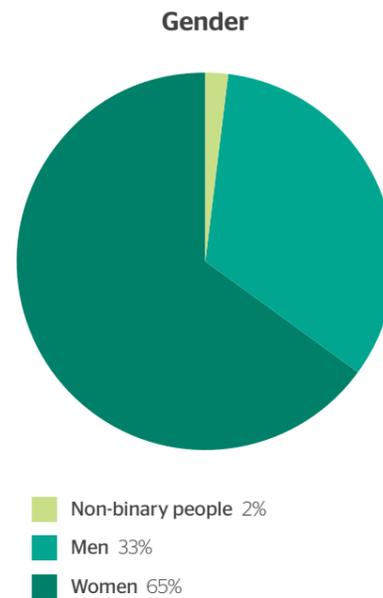
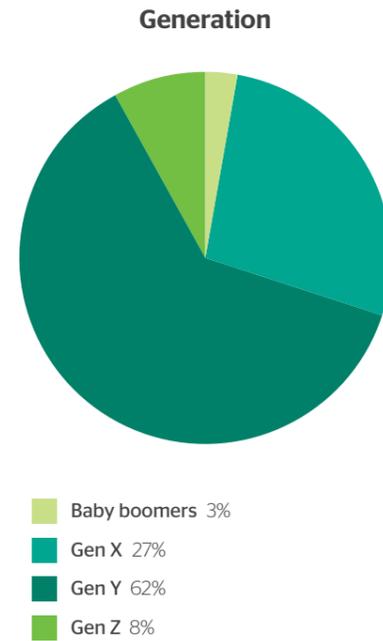
Our organisation

Over the last twelve months, one of our key focus areas has been in strengthening our digital capacity through marketing technology ensuring ACF systems and platforms enable our wonderful supporters to stand up for nature.

We also ensured our institutional knowledge was accessible and collaborating effectively to bring together our information management systems and rolling out an improved intranet: The Hive. As we become a more geographically dispersed team, these initiatives are important to maintain our creativity, efficiency and impact.

Our culture remains a key strength of ACF. We continue to find new ways to bring joy to our work, celebrate each other's achievements and learn from the wins and losses that come with this work. We are proud to attract talent with diverse lived and professional experiences.

Our office spaces around the country continue to evolve to meet the needs of our staff and support ACF's flexible work policies. Our Gadigal/Sydney team have moved into a green hub which offers exciting opportunities for knowledge sharing with movement partners and technology experts. We have evolved the way we engage with other organisations in the 60L Green Building in Naarm/Melbourne and are offering co-working spaces to values-aligned organisations. This helps ensure 60L remains a hub for passionate environmentalists and can offer flexibility and community to others in the movement.



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 six ACF Councillors – ACF's Vice Presidents and four Councillors elected to the Board – and up to five further members appointed (co-opted) by Council.

Our Board

Sarah English – Acting President

Shar Molloy – Vice President

Leon Cermak - Secretary

Joshua Gilbert - Treasurer

Ros Harvey (*President elect –
Term commencing 1 November 2024*)

Melanie Birtchnell

David Hood AM

Terence Jeyaretnam

Stephen Lightfoot

ACF is indebted to the following Board members, who retired during the financial year.

Liana Downey – President (*Retired April 2024*)

Grace Vegesana – Board member (*Retired May 2024*)

Sarah Reid – Board member (*Retired September 2023*)

We acknowledge the significant, voluntary contributions of the following external members of the Board's Finance Audit and Risk Committee: Jonathan Andrews, Beenish Durrani, Damien Manuel and Katie Morris.

Our Council

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

Shar Molloy *Vice President*, NT

Sarah English *Vice President*, WA (*formerly NSW*)

Bronwyn Campbell, WA

Sarah Reid, ACT (*retired September 2023*)

Jonathan King, NSW

Stephen Lightfoot, NSW

Jade Kudrenko, NT

David Hood QLD

Revel Pointon QLD

Narelle McCarthy, QLD

Leon Cermak, SA

Sue Richardson, SA

Jessica Hargrave, SA

Joana Cubillos, TAS

Martyn Summers, TAS

Melanie Birtchnell, VIC

Kate Nobel, VIC

Liz Reen, VIC

Financial summary

The past financial year has been a challenging one, with ACF recording its first deficit in a decade.

The deficit excluding activities funded from reserves was \$0.70 million— and \$1.68 million when including work funded from reserves. Whilst it was disappointing not to balance the books in 2023-24, this does not mean ACF is in financial difficulty. In fact, ACF remains in a relatively resilient position with nearly \$10 million in cash and freehold ownership of our offices in Leicester Street, Carlton, Victoria.

Our financial challenges are connected to the cost-of-living pressures felt by everyday Australians, weighed down by high interest rates and increased cost of food and energy. Since ACF does not receive funding from government, we are reliant on the generosity of over 40,000 supporters like you, to fund our work. Despite these tough economic conditions, we were able to maintain our core income from donations and grants at \$14.00 million - an increase of a mere 0.5% - however, total revenue from all sources fell 5.7% to \$17.10 million. For every \$1 we spend on fundraising, we raise \$2.61 down from \$2.85 in the prior year.

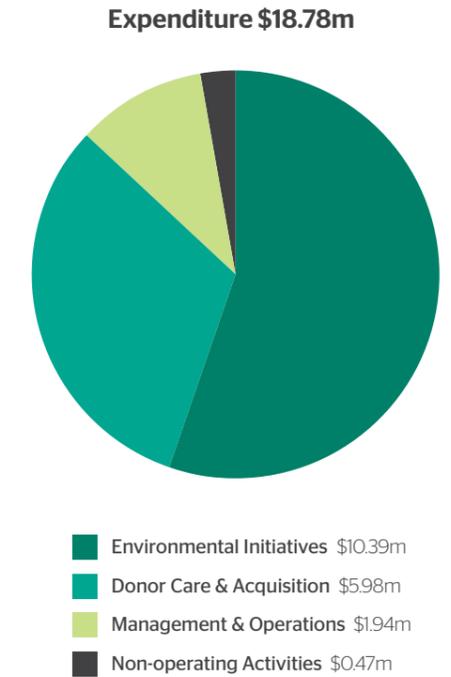
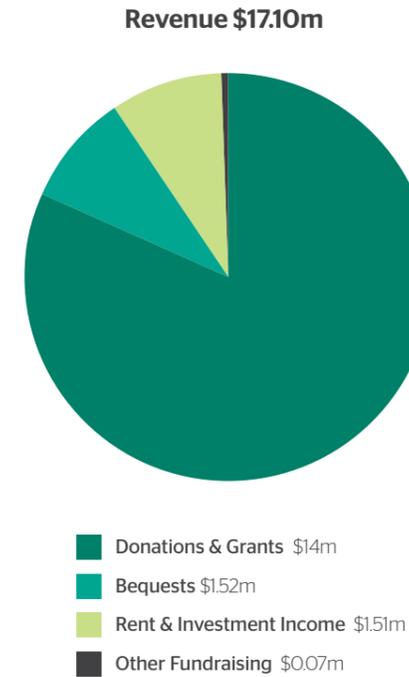
With declining revenue and rising costs, we have had to tighten our belts further and ensure that every dollar spent has maximum impact for the environment. ACF is very much a people-powered organisation with more than 62% of our budget spent on salary and related costs. Our staff are an amazingly talented and passionate group who advocate, activate and drive impact. Wherever possible we want to avoid redundancies, however, we are also pragmatists and recognise that it is necessary to trim and evolve the capabilities of our team, from time to time.

Overall, we were able to reduce costs by \$0.48 million or 2.5% from 2022-23, to \$18.78 million. Unfortunately, these cost cutting measures were not enough to offset the drop in revenue and avoid a deficit. ACF recognises that there are many worthy environmental causes that need our advocacy but we simply don't have the resources to do everything. This year, our expenditure on environmental initiatives fell 8.2% to \$10.39 million or 55.3% of total spend. In the new financial year, 2024-25, we have chosen to make deeper cuts to bring our budget back into balance. These are difficult decisions that the Board does not deal with lightly, but on balance it is the right thing to do. Keeping a tight focus on priority initiatives that drive systemic change is the ongoing strategic challenge for the Board and Executive.

A tighter budget and narrower focus do not imply reduced impact. This Annual Report clearly demonstrates the incredible work ACF has delivered with less resources. Additionally, we continually invest in new technologies to drive productivity, notably our digital transformation work which will allow us to communicate with supporters in a more tailored and engaging way and at lower cost.

The next year is shaping up to be one of the most pivotal in recent memory. The federal government is yet to deliver on its promise to fix Australia's broken environmental laws, countries around the world are backtracking on climate commitments and we are having to fend off the distracting efforts of the pro-nuclear lobby. The upcoming election is an important moment for us to redouble our efforts, raise our voices and ensure the momentum is with us.

Today, we need your support more than ever. As we navigate these financial challenges, we invite you to stand with us—knowing that every gift you give has an impact, and every bit of support helps us create a better world for the people and places we love.



Nature needs us, now

Australian Conservation Foundation

Wurundjeri Country, Level 1, 60 Leicester Street, Carlton VIC 3053 ABN 22 007 498 482

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 Australian Conservation Foundation  @AusConservation

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