



22 / 23



Australian Land  
Conservation Alliance

# ANNUAL REPORT

Building and growing our impact

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) is the peak national body representing organisations that work to conserve, manage and restore nature on private land. We represent our members and supporters to grow the impact, capacity and influence of private land conservation to achieve a healthy and resilient Australia.

We recognise and respect the deep and enduring relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with land, sea and water and the enduring persistence, knowledge and connection built over tens of thousands of years. We recognise that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nature and culture are inextricably connected. We acknowledge and value the role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to play in managing Country today and their right to self-determination.

ALCA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working group has been active throughout 2022-23 and provided key recommendations and insights to the ALCA Board. This has included possible pathways and processes for ALCA's membership expansion so that ALCA can represent the broader diversity of the sector.

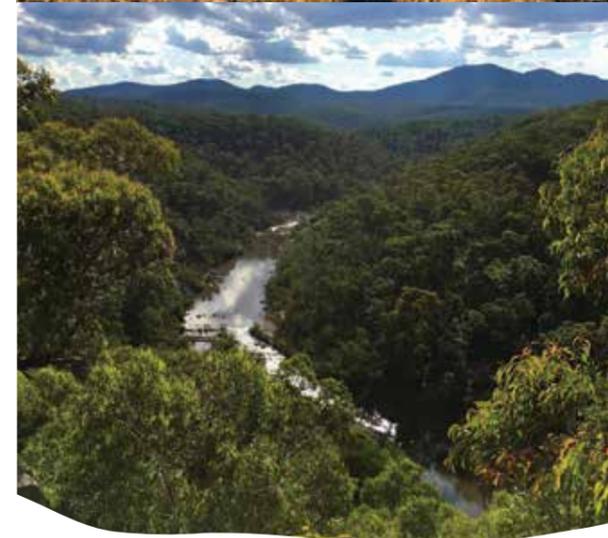
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Cover image: Tony and Annette at Banyula sanctuary. Photo by Annette Ruzicka, supplied by Odonata Foundation.

Pictured left: Yellow-footed antechinus. Photo by Rowan Mott, supplied by Bush Heritage Australia.

This page (top): Springflowers at Witchelina. Photo by Alex Nankivell, supplied by Nature Foundation; (centre) Bush stone-curlew release at Orana Sanctuary 2023. Photo by Annette Ruzicka, supplied by Odonata Foundation; (bottom) Huggets. Photo by Dan Brown, supplied by EcoGipps.





## We are ALCA

Our vision is a future where nature thrives Australia-wide, cared for by empowered people and resilient communities.

Together with our members, we are addressing some of the most pressing conservation issues across the country, including restoring endangered ecosystems, building the protected area estate, tackling invasive species, expanding private conservation finance and using nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change.

Through active land management, ALCA member organisations are deeply embedded in regional communities and economies – providing jobs, securing significant regional investment, and safeguarding remaining native habitat, with its many positive spillover effects for community wellbeing and food security.

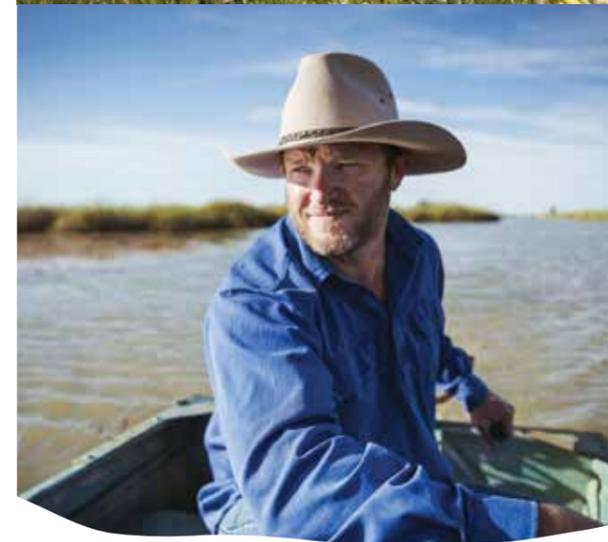
We represent a growing force in Australia's land management sector. By 2030, we seek to have grown a diverse, highly capable and resourced sector that protects, stewards and restores Australia's privately managed land and water to reverse nature loss for a healthy and resilient Australia.

*Pictured left: Snow Gum Woodlands and Grasslands conservation agreement-holder Barbara Evison (left) takes NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust staff Adam Cook and Hannah Windley for a walk over the area they'll protect and manage with annual payments. Photo by Colin Elphick, supplied by NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.*

*This page top: Rainforest stream on the Maalan Cloudforest Reserve, Atherton Tablelands. Photo by Steven Nowakowski, supplied by South Endeavour Trust.*

*Centre: Harvesting *Craspedia variabilis* seedheads at the Native Seed Centre for Restoration. Photo supplied by Greening Australia.*

*Bottom: Nari Nari Tribal Council's Jamie Woods on waters that are part of the Gayini Conservation Area, protected by an agreement with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Traditional Custodians. Photo by Annette Ruzicka, supplied by NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.*





## Message from the Chair

In a time where nature decline and biodiversity loss threaten life as we know it, the need for collective action and systemic change is fundamental. The challenges, although complex, are clear and increasingly well understood.

Habitat destruction, overexploitation of non-renewable resources, climate change, and invasive species are all consequences of human systems and behaviours.

In order to truly make a difference we must unite on a global, national, local and sectoral scale. ALCA recognizes this imperative and maintains its commitment to fostering alliances and partnerships within and beyond the conservation sector, both here and overseas. At its core ALCA is based on the belief that together we are stronger and the health of nature needs to be at the front and centre of all that we do.

Private land is central to maintaining global ecosystems and safeguarding biodiversity. To move towards a nature positive future ALCA represents its members and supporters in growing the impact, capacity and influence of private land conservation. While there are many inspiring individual success stories, fragmentation poses a challenge for widespread systemic change. And this is what makes ALCA's work so important.

ALCA provides an opportunity for the coordination and influence necessary to mainstream nature and lift up its status in our structures, institutions and laws. The need and inspiration for ALCA has been informed by the growing maturity of the international private land conservation sector, and with ALCA at the helm, the organisation and

advancement of the Australian sector is happening with strength and pace.

In 2022-23 we welcomed WWF Australia, GreenCollar, Odonata, EcoGipps and Arid Recovery to our membership and we continued to expand and deepen our cross-sector relationships and partnerships. Our small, high impact team grew to four staff, and we thanked Brendan Foran for five years of strong leadership as Chair. Brendan led ALCA through incorporation, establishment, and our growth as a trusted and respected voice for private land conservation.

As Chair, I am grateful for the extraordinary talent and knowledge present on our Board and for their support in making positive, long-term impact for nature. I further extend my thanks to the people and communities that work tirelessly to protect and restore our landscapes. I look forward to more catalyzing action in the coming year that enables us to further build and grow our impact.



**Victoria Marles**

Chair  
Australian Land  
Conservation Alliance

*Pictured left: Planting day at Monjebup Reserve. Photo by Krysta Guille, supplied by Bush Heritage Australia.*



## Message from the CEO

With over half of the country under some form of private management, private land conservation is an increasingly critical solution to our global climate and biodiversity crises.

The ratification of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022 elevated nature – and private land conservation – to the world stage, and I had the privilege of representing ALCA and our members, alongside a robust Australian NGO delegation, in Canada, at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) when the Framework was ratified.

I saw and was part of collaborative efforts involving the Australian Government, NGOs and businesses, all advocating for a high level of ambition, and we welcomed a final Framework that sets out a pathway to achieve the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. What matters now is what we do here in Australia to implement this global framework.

The Framework offers mechanisms for comprehensive societal change, and whilst our domestic nature protection commitments show raised ambition, we now need action that matches the scale and urgency of the crisis. We have no time to lose. Private land conservation and Indigenous-led initiatives have a role to play in achieving many, if not most of the GBF targets; and offer a pivotal opportunity to achieve Australia's national protection and restoration targets.

The nature-based solutions that are already being delivered by ALCA members in partnership with landholders, business, philanthropy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups – are scalable – and as the relevancy of our sector's work grows, ALCA has been working tirelessly

to build a national voice for private land conservation in Australia, and influence policy, investment and capability across the sector.

Sector development and network building remain critical components of our efforts, and we have delivered a range of initiatives that support our progress towards building capacity and driving investment. We are particularly proud of our growing profile as a trusted authority on nature conservation through broad, regular, and substantial submissions combined with expert engagement across Government and Parliament which has seen ALCA influence key legislative and policy changes throughout the year.

We look forward to scaling up our ability to deliver in a way that can address both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. As we take time to reflect on ALCA's achievements across the past 12 months, I'd like to extend a deep thank you to our Board, our supporters, and acknowledge ALCA's hard-working staff for their commitment and dedication to our vision and values.



**Jody Gunn**

CEO  
Australian Land  
Conservation Alliance

*Pictured left: Honey possum feeding on a Scarlet Banksia.  
Photo by Barry Baker, supplied by Bush Heritage Australia.*

# Our members

During 2022-23, our membership grew from 11 to 16 members:

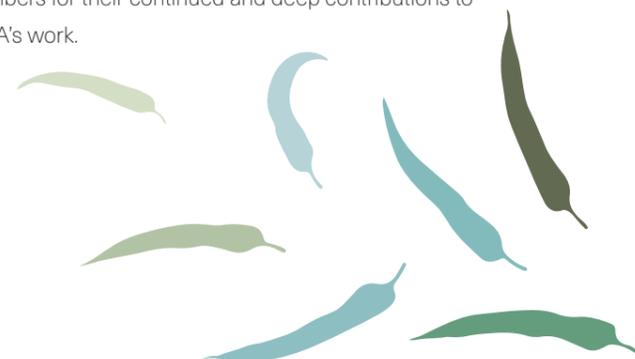


# Our supporters

We extend our thanks to those who have supported and partnered with us over the past 12 months, including for capacity building, program and pro-bono involvement. This support has made our growing influence possible.

- Albert George and Nancy Caroline Youngman Trust
- Bush Heritage Australia
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- MinterEllison
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Rendere Environmental Trust
- State Trustees of Victoria
- Wildlife Bank Trust

ALCA members provide additional contributions from time to time for discrete programs, including for example, supporting ALCA participation at COP15, and supporting delivery of the Global Stewardship Program. We thank members for their continued and deep contributions to ALCA's work.



# Our leadership

We are a membership organisation governed by a Board of Directors, critical to supporting the restoration, protection, and management work taking place within the private land conservation sector. Board subcommittees include Sector Development, Finance Risk and Audit, Policy and Government Relations, and a Nominations Committee. The Board and committees meet regularly providing transparency and collaboration at the most senior levels of the member organisations.

The following ALCA Directors served on our Board during 2022-23.



Tim Allard Heather Campbell Paul Elton James Fitzsimons Brendan Foran  
(until August 2022) (until May 2023) (Chair until February 2023)



James Hattam Tim Hughes Doug Humann AM Victoria Marles AM Corinne Proske  
(Chair from January 2023)

*Pictured below: Brolga on Sylvester floodplain. Photo by Kyle Barton, supplied by Bush Heritage Australia.*



# Our collective impact

The private land conservation sector supports an immense diversity of people, places and practices that contribute to protecting our precious biodiversity and supporting our social and economic wellbeing. Our work goes to the heart of the nature and climate nexus by protecting, stewarding and restoring land. Within our sector, ALCA members alone:



Influence biodiversity outcomes across  
**3 million km<sup>2</sup>**  
of Australia



Employ  
**1000+**  
**staff**



Generate over  
**\$325 million**  
in turnover



Attract  
**109,537**  
**volunteer**  
hours



# 22/23 activity highlights

Supported knowledge sharing & thought leadership through  
**3 member** & **4 executive**  
briefings & roundtables

Advanced policy reforms through  
**38 POLICY**  
& legislative submissions

Built our sector's capacity to unlock private and philanthropic investment through a  
**Conservation Finance Intensive** and a **Philanthropic Forum**

ADVOCATED FOR NATURE AT  
**UNITED NATIONS**  
Biodiversity Conference COP15

Built a global stewardship network by coordinating the  
first Australian **Global Stewardship** Exchange



"There are significant benefits of being a member of ALCA, including learning from emerging approaches and successes in other member organisations, and fostering innovation and best-practice."

ALCA member

*Pictured left: Trust for Nature team members Rachel and Gabi monitor saltmarsh on a property in Tarraville, Gunaikurnai Country. This page: White-fronted chat at Sloping Main Reserve. Photo by Rob Blakers, supplied by Tasmanian Land Conservancy.*

# A peak need

Australia is grappling with the impacts of biodiversity loss and climate change, which are indiscriminately impacting livelihoods from urban areas to rural communities. This underscores the urgency of ALCA's work. The outlook for our environment is deteriorating, and among all the continents globally, Australia has one of the highest rates of species decline.

"Private land conservation can often be an isolated pursuit, but ALCA brings our diverse sector together to share knowledge and build a connected community working to protect and restore the unique landscapes which makes Australia so special."

*ALCA member*

Against this backdrop of environmental decline and the increasing awareness that nature is fundamental to our wellbeing, food and water security, cultures, and economies, the demand and support for nature protection, management, and restoration is surging.

The private land conservation sector does heavy lifting to protect our precious biodiversity and deliver the critical public benefits that result from this – but there is a multibillion-dollar gap between the resources we have to deliver and the task ahead of us.

This has not stopped ALCA and our members from getting on with the job. Our work is critical to maintaining Australia's social and economic wellbeing and achieving many of the targets in the Global Biodiversity Framework.

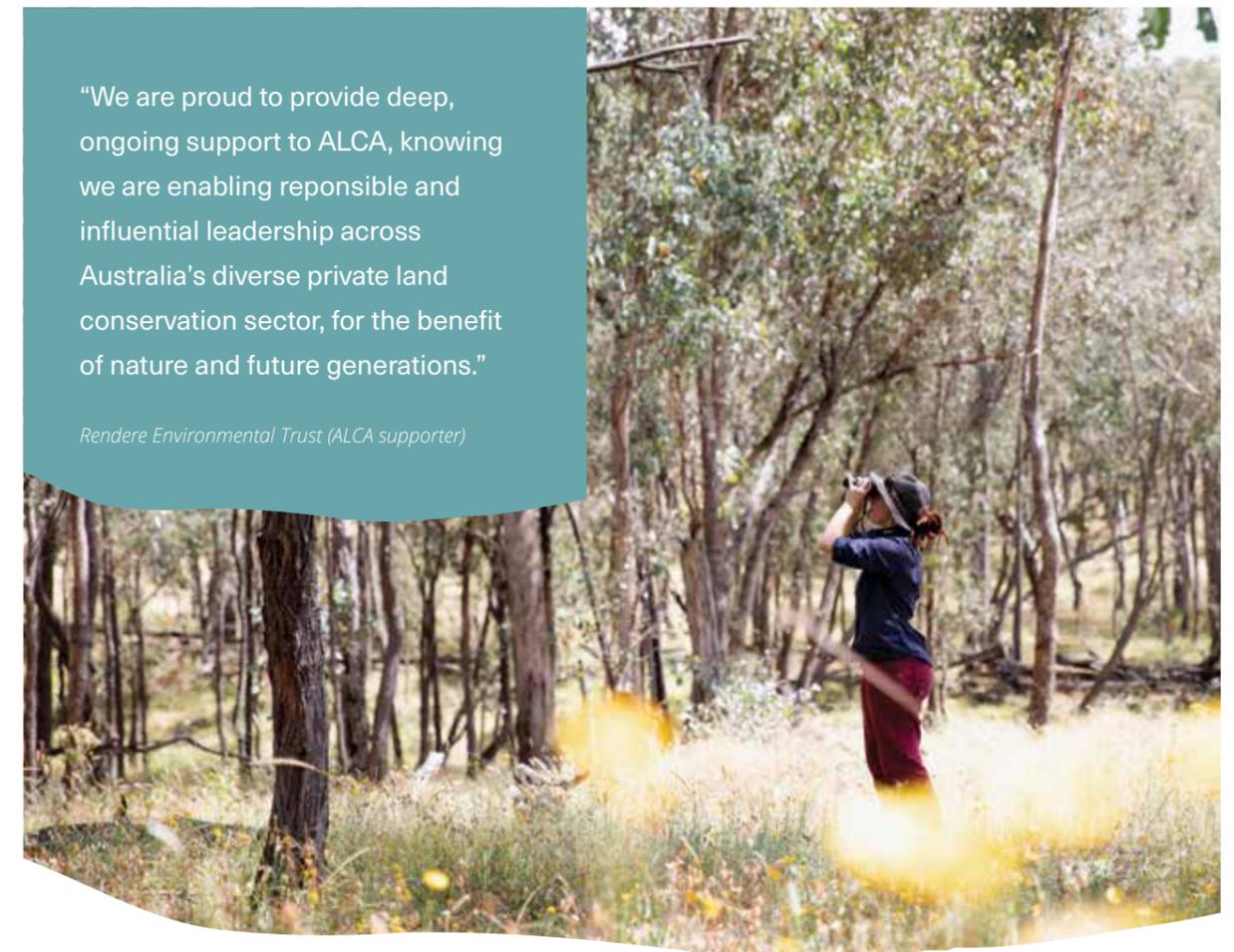
As the nation navigates the way forward to halt and reverse nature loss, ALCA, our members and the private land conservation sector offer a pivotal opportunity to expand and accelerate the cross-cultural and cross-sectoral solutions already being driven by our sector.

The influence, footprint and diversity of the private land conservation sector is growing and ALCA's role as a national peak body is more important than ever as we continue uniting the work and vision of the sector and its partners.

Growing the impact, capacity and influence of our sector requires concerted and integrated efforts. The objectives and actions of our four strategic goals will help us achieve this, and do even more for nature, together.

"We are proud to provide deep, ongoing support to ALCA, knowing we are enabling responsible and influential leadership across Australia's diverse private land conservation sector, for the benefit of nature and future generations."

*Rendere Environmental Trust (ALCA supporter)*



*Pictured left: Trap setting. Photo by Ines Badman, supplied by Arid Recovery. This page: Reserve Manager Kelly Price at Tarcutta Hills. Photo by Bee Stephens, supplied by Bush Heritage Australia.*

# 2030 Strategy: Protecting & stewarding for nature



## Goal 1: Sector development

A highly capable, networked and coordinated sector



## Goal 2: Policy and regulation

Ambitious policy and regulation that empowers private land conservation



## Goal 3: Investment

Australia's private land conservation is driven by public and private investment



## Goal 4: People

People value nature



## Sector development

As our sector prepares to scale up efforts to meet the increasing environmental, social and economic challenges associated with nature loss, sector development lies at the heart of so much of what ALCA does.

With a focus across a continuum of policy, regulation, investment, and research & development, 2022-23 saw us growing the sector's policy literacy, keeping it abreast of and engaged with national and global agendas, and meaningfully engaged in activities that foster critical networks, knowledge exchange and collective purpose.

Coordinating sector knowledge sharing and leveraging the deep expertise within our sector has been facilitated through various working groups and forums. ALCA's policy working groups and policy briefings support the sector in developing a more sophisticated understanding of and engagement in driving effective policy outcomes. ALCA's communications forum builds opportunities for greater collective impact through shared messaging agendas, and our markets working group grows preparedness for future investment drivers. With a small team, drawing on the extensive knowledge and capacity

of the sector helps keep ALCA agile, while delivering collective impact through coordination.

Across the year we facilitated numerous events and opportunities that are contributing to the growth of a highly capable, networked and coordinated sector – a sector poised to drive the necessary systems change to deliver enduring, measurable and scalable impact. Events included hosted field events like landholder forums, targeted events including a full day conservation finance intensive, a philanthropic forum, and member briefings. General webinars were also delivered for broader sector engagement with the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Significant planning was undertaken for the 2023 Australian Private Land Conservation Conference – a flagship national knowledge sharing and thought leadership event, with in person delivery scheduled for October 2023, the first fact to face conference since 2019.

*Pictured right: Volunteers tree planting at Scottsdale Reserve. Photo by Bee Stephens, supplied by Bush Heritage Australia.*





## Sector Development

### Member briefings & roundtables

We convened four executive roundtables to advance strategic dialogue and strengthen member relationships, and hosted three member briefings with a focus on emerging and key topics relevant to our sector. In 2022–23, expert speakers (including report authors) presented to ALCA members on topics including State of the Environment Report; the Federal Budget and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. Member briefings have been crucial for information sharing, and building alignment around goals to ensure coordinated efforts to advance our shared interests.

### Global stewardship exchange

ALCA coordinated the first ever Global Stewardship Exchange, to build intercontinental capacity and networks, which saw 14 participants from the US travel to Australia to begin developing the global network of land stewards. The program saw international guests visit member organisations across Eastern Australia, participate in sector-relevant workshops and forums, and establish connections between First Nations guests and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conservation leaders. The program has continued beyond the in-person exchange to an online land stewardship network.

*Pictured this page: Sloping Main Reserve. Photo by Rob Blakers Panorama, supplied by Tasmanian Land Conservancy.*

### Nights for nature

Celebrating the impact and value of private land conservation is as important as growing it, and two “Night for Nature” events provided opportunities to reflect on the work that ALCA, our members, and supporters are doing to protect nature and engage key constituents with our work (Government and philanthropy in these cases). The events were heartening reminders of the way that private land conservation unites the work and vision of so many people. Opening remarks from the Minister for Environment and Water, and the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network deepened the value of the events for all participants.

“If we’re serious about really changing what’s happening in conservation in Australia, we have to acknowledge that most land in Australia is privately owned and that there is an enormous contribution made by private landholders ... but there’s also, further enormous opportunities.”

**The Hon Tanya Plibersek**  
*Night for Nature, Parliament House*



### A global framework

ALCA remained actively engaged in the development of the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Together with other NGOs, ALCA’s interventions ensured updated Ministerial instructions were provided to the Australian delegation to the Nairobi meeting, creating a solid platform for the Australian Government engagement during final negotiations in Montreal. ALCA attended the Montreal meeting, working on the ground to influence an ambitious final framework.



## Policy & regulation

### The July 2022 release of the 2021 State of Environment Report (SOE) continued to sound the alarm on the nature crisis facing our country.

ALCA has maintained the call for environmental law and policy reform that recognises the urgency and seriousness of the crisis outlined in the SOE report and elsewhere.

ALCA members’ on-ground work to safeguard habitat and save species benefits all Australians. We need ambitious environmental policy and regulation to ensure this work can deliver the impact and scale that it desperately needs. Across 2022-23, ALCA continued to assert itself as a credible and engaged actor, advocating for reforms across a broad range of nature and private land conservation policy agendas, and growing our influence at the Federal, and State and Territory level.

ALCA made 38 submissions (26 Commonwealth; 10 State; and 2 international) and appeared at two parliamentary inquiries – the Nature Repair Market Bill, and Australia’s Transition to Green Energy Superpower. Together with its members and partners, ALCA continues to go from strength to strength in helping deliver positive policy and legislative outcomes, with highlights including:

- Securing substantial legislative amendments to the Nature Repair Market Bill;
- Securing an exemption from land tax for Victorian conservation covenant holders;
- Advancing amendments to South Australia’s pastoral legislation that reconfirms conservation – and conservation covenants – within its pastoral estate;
- A collective commitment by Federal and State Governments to investigate barriers and incentives for the protection and restoration of nature on private land; and
- Securing changes to Australia-New Zealand occupation codes, including, the creation of Ecologist as a new occupation category and expanding the definition of Park Ranger to include all protected areas.

*Pictured this page: The Trust for Nature team visit the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, Gunditjmara Country, to learn from Traditional Owners. Photo supplied by Trust for Nature.*



## Investment

Australia is at a critical juncture if its ambitions for addressing the biodiversity crisis are to be effectively resourced. With half of our gross domestic product either moderately or highly reliant upon nature, there is an inescapable economic rationale for investing in it; yet we have immense global and national shortfalls.



*Pictured: Southern Brush-tailed Rock Wallabies, Mt Rothwell Sanctuary. Photo by Pete James, supplied by Odonata Foundation.*

At a domestic level, the price tag to restore 98.8% of Australia's degraded land, recover our listed threatened species, and manage high priority terrestrial threats would be upward of \$4.6 billion per year<sup>1</sup>. The urgency of responding to the nature crisis is not currently reflected in federal government spending in Australia, where biodiversity spending is projected to be less than \$400 million for 2022-23<sup>2</sup>.

Increasing public and private finance, alongside philanthropic contributions, is vital for bridging the finance gap. Industry leadership, collaboration, and cornerstone government investment is critical for leveraging the successes and also significant investment that ALCA members bring.

Throughout 2022-23 ALCA has been engaging strongly across a range of policy and regulatory reforms to ensure they can deliver investment in private land conservation and reduce financial barriers to engagement.

From August 2022, our submissions and advocacy on environmental indicators and the wellbeing budget called for appropriate indicators (including protected areas and biodiversity), to help to reorient the strategic direction of Government budget measures and allocations to account for the importance of nature.

In January 2023, our submission to the 2023-24 Pre-Budget process called for the progression and implementation of the Nature Repair Market, a formal review of Commonwealth taxes upon private conservation landholders and conservation activities, and the removal of policies disadvantaging employment in the land conservation sector.

The Nature Repair Market has been a significant component of ALCA's policy efforts, which centred upon a properly constructed market that can increase private investment into high quality private land conservation.

ALCA was successful at securing an important amendment to the \$10bn National Reconstruction Fund Bill that makes environmental impact considerations a requirement of fund investment decisions. In another win for our sector, we also secured a formal commitment by Federal and State governments to investigate barriers and incentives for protection and restoration on private land.

## Unlocking conservation investment

In October 2022 ALCA together with Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network (AEGN) co-designed and delivered the "Collective Impact, Common Agenda" forum which explored domestic and international giving trends, and the unique role of philanthropy. The same month, ALCA also delivered our annual Conservation Finance Intensive which examined how global drivers are influencing nature investment actions by the private sector, not-for-profits, and government.

### Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures

ALCA has actively participated in the development of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), which has the potential to enable business, financial institutions, and other investors to integrate nature into their decision-making. This is expected to reduce environmental impacts and drive investments towards positive nature outcomes.

ALCA has served as a representative on a Federal Government Natural Capital Working Group, advised a TNFD pilot program commissioned by the Federal Government, and has contributed to the TNFD framework development. This framework, set to launch in the second half of 2023, is aligned to the Global Biodiversity Framework.

<sup>1</sup> See: Mappin et al, 'The costs and benefits of restoring a continent's terrestrial ecosystems' in *Journal of applied ecology*, September 2021; Wintle BA, Cadenhead NCR, Morgan RA, et al. 'Spending to save: What will it cost to halt Australia's extinction crisis?' in *Conservation Letters*, 2019; Threats to Nature project, 'Averting extinctions: The case for strengthening Australia's threat abatement system', 2022.

<sup>2</sup> See: Murphy H & van Leeuwen S, 'Australia state of the environment 2021: biodiversity'

# People

Nature's role as the keystone of our wellbeing, food security, economies and cultures is increasingly being recognised by the broader community.

We are seeing shifts in the way that nature is valued but it is not yet as well understood as the climate crisis. Despite this, research is showing that Australians care about our environment and want more action and policy to protect it. This sentiment now must be harnessed through a range of strategic and coordinated communications to turn sentiment into action across our society.

ALCA regularly communicates the value of private land conservation and its successes through a variety of platforms including events, media and digital channels. ALCA continues building the profile of our sector and demonstrating its impact to a broader audience through presentations and engagements in national and international forums. These have included:

- Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework forum;
- Carbon Farming Industry Forum;
- Great Eastern Ranges Connectivity Conference;
- Landcare Australia Conference;
- ACIUCN Global Biodiversity Framework workshop.

Noteworthy reporting that ALCA has been involved in

includes stories by The Guardian Australia; The Wall Street Journal; and ABC Radio National. Our quarterly newsletter has improved on the 2021-22 open rate from 36% to 42%, list growth has remained steady and social media channels have continued to experience growth.

## Our natural legacy

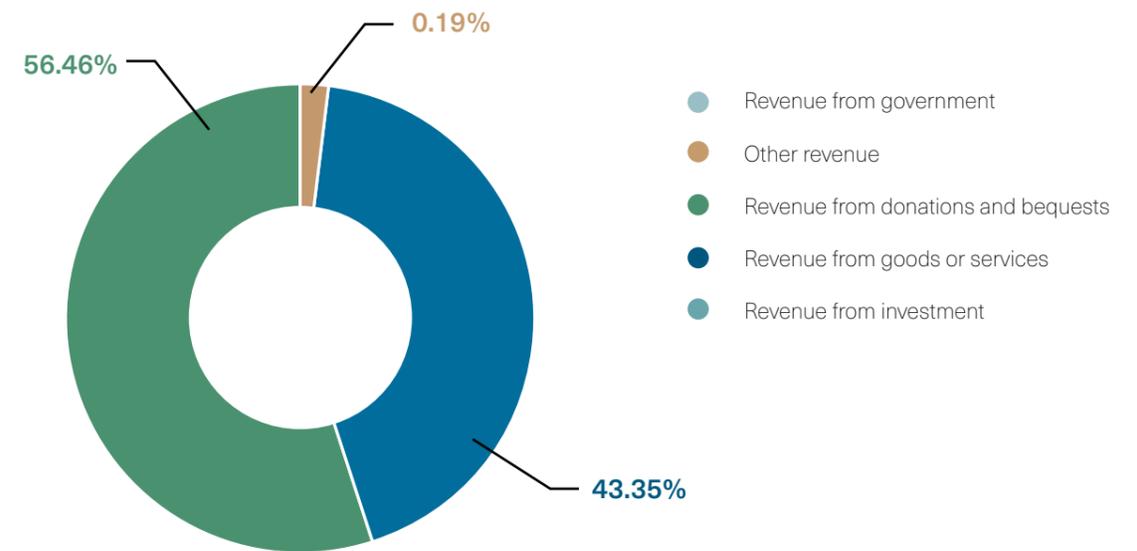
Our Natural Legacy (ONL) is a national initiative promoting private land conservation in Australia. Increasing awareness and participation in permanently protecting land will help to build political support for scaling the contribution of private land conservation towards Australia's 30 x 30 target. In 2022, ALCA, as part of ONL, hosted landholder networking and knowledge sharing forums in collaboration with state-based covenanting organizations, conservation groups, and local landowners. They were an important demonstration of private landholders' contributions to the national agenda.



# Financial overview

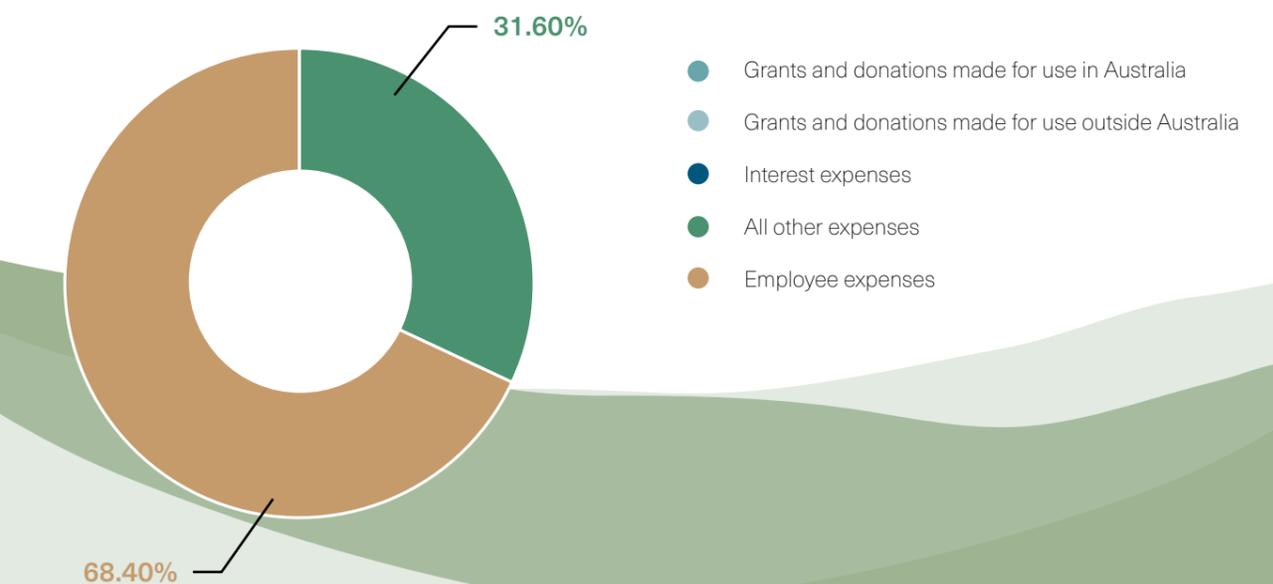
## Revenue

Total revenue: \$662,881



## Expenses

Total expenses: \$692,273



Pictured left: Members of Nari Nari Tribal Council, The Nature Conservancy and NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust celebrate the signing of a conservation agreement to protect 55,220 hectares of Gayini Nimie Caira, in the NSW Riverina. Photo by Vince Bucello, supplied by NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust.



For more information visit: [alca.org.au](http://alca.org.au)

