

# Bank Australia Conservation Reserve

Reimagining  
the future



# From our Managing Director

As a customer owned responsible bank we place our customers at the centre of all we do: from supporting their financial wellbeing, to acting on the social and environmental issues they care about.

Our customers have told us that they care deeply about acting on climate change and protecting Australia's threatened species.

Since 2008 we've been restoring habitat at our customers' Conservation Reserve and offsetting some of the environmental impact of our lending activities.

The great progress we've made over the past eight years has given us a sense of what's possible at the reserve.

In 2016 we formed a new partnership with Greening Australia and Trust for Nature, two of Australia's leading conservation organisations. Together we've developed a strategy that draws on the latest scientific developments in conservation planning.

This strategy articulates our vision and what we are aiming to achieve at the reserve over the coming years. Realising this vision is part of our commitment to work on behalf of our customers to address the issues of importance to them.

We are looking forward to sharing our progress towards this vision with you in the future.

This is a new era for the Conservation Reserve, and we are excited by its potential to support our planet and enrich the lives of those who experience it.

**Damien Walsh**  
Managing Director  
Bank Australia





Customer owned responsible banking is how we do business. Our purpose is to create mutual prosperity in the form of positive social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes for our customers, staff and the communities in which we operate.

**As a customer, you are a part-owner of the Bank Australia Conservation Reserve.** This places our customers at the heart of a movement to protect endangered species and find novel ways to minimise the impact of our lending practices. To ensure that we stay on the cutting edge of conservation and that the reserve is managed effectively and safely we've formed a new partnership with Greening Australia and Trust for Nature.

**Greening Australia** is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to restoring and conserving Australia's unique landscapes. Greening Australia has conserved and restored 350,000 hectares of habitat for plants and animals over the last thirty years, and planted nearly 40 million understorey plants, shrubs and trees as habitat and food. The Federal Government employed Greening Australia to deliver the 20 million trees program, a program with the objective of planting 20 million trees and associated understorey by 2020, engaging the community and reducing carbon.

**Trust for Nature** is a not-for-profit organisation established under Victorian statute which works to protect native plants and wildlife in cooperation with private landowners. The Trust has protected more than 100,000 hectares of Victoria's unique habitat since its establishment in 1972, including over 60,000 hectares protected by conservation covenant and 36,000 hectares of private conservation reserve across 44 properties owned and managed by the Trust.



## How our reserve creates mutual prosperity

We are working towards helping to create a healthier planet by supporting the environment that supports us.

The Bank Australia Conservation Reserve contributes to this effort by:

- Supporting our planet through carbon storage, wildlife and land conservation, and helping our wildlife adapt to climate change;
- Engaging people to counter-balance their environmental impacts, adapt to climate change, celebrate culture and inspire the next generation to connect with nature;
- Using bold and innovative strategies to reimagine the ways business can engage people to create a healthier planet that also delivers prosperity to Bank Australia customers.

Our customers have told us that reducing carbon emissions is a clear priority. We plant trees on our reserve to help sequester carbon and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Our customers also care deeply about protecting threatened species and improving biodiversity. We protect land in our Conservation Reserve that is equal to the size of the building lots of all new home constructions we finance.

Over time, the Conservation Reserve will be planted as needed and may be expanded to cover the loss of land associated with new housing construction financed by Bank Australia.

## Approach

This document provides our vision, action areas and goals for the Bank Australia Conservation Reserve for the coming decade. It was developed using the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*, which is an internationally recognised and widely adopted framework for natural resource management planning. This approach is underpinned by complex scientific data and explicitly captures uncertainties where there are gaps in ecological knowledge and expert opinion. These data sources have been combined with expert opinion and local knowledge to refine the document and produce an adaptive management model. It will be reviewed and updated annually as needed, with a major review at the five-year anniversary in 2021.

## Vision

### Bank Australia Conservation Reserve

Bank Australia and its customers imagine a world in which all businesses do their part to ensure that animals, plants, people and culture remain healthy in the face of climate change.

We will contribute to a healthy planet by creating a Conservation Reserve where wildlife will flourish, resilient carbon stores grow, and culture is celebrated.

## Action Areas

### Bank Australia Conservation Reserve

The Bank Australia Conservation Reserve Action Areas are:

1. Wildlife and land conservation
2. Climate change resilience
3. Engaging the community
4. Demonstrating corporate environmental leadership
5. Delivering value to Bank Australia and our customers

Our Conservation Reserve encompasses 927 hectares of biodiverse Australian bushland in the Western Wimmera region of Victoria. As part of Habitat 141, our three properties are helping to create a wildlife corridor for native species.



The reserve is home to 227 native plant and 270 native animal species including 13 threatened animal species such as the South Eastern Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo and Diamond Firetail.

Bank Australia acknowledges that the Conservation Reserve is on the traditional lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk peoples and we pay respects to their elders past and present.

## Priority threatened species

Over the next ten years we aim to maintain or improve the quality of habitat for all 270 species that call the reserve home. In addition, we have selected four priority threatened species to monitor more closely. These species were chosen based on criteria including their conservation status, our ability to manage their threats and their representativeness of the broader ecological issues in the region.



### South Eastern Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo

The Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo is a charismatic bird that are highly nomadic and move around the landscape looking for food and homes. They are fussy eaters as they only like to feed on three plants and they require old trees with large hollows to build their nests. There are an estimated 900 Red-Tails in the wild, so this species is endangered. To help support Red-Tails, we will:

- Plant trees such as Buloke and Stringybark to provide additional food
- Explore the use of nest boxes to supplement old growth trees
- Manage weeds and pests, and keep livestock out of the reserve with fence maintenance



### Diamond Firetail

The Diamond Firetail is a beautiful songbird that lives in open grassy woodland habitats as well as heath, grassland and farmland areas. The Firetail forages exclusively on the ground, eating grass seeds, herb seeds, leaves and insects. Because it both feeds and roosts in grassy woodlands habitats, its presence is an indicator of high-quality grassland areas. To help Firetails, we will:

- Replant native grasses and herbs ensuring that there is year-round seed availability
- Control introduced grasses and weeds
- Implement a fire management plan to reduce risk of a catastrophic bushfire event



### Fiery Jewel Butterfly

The aptly named Fiery Jewel Butterfly occurs in small colonies around Victoria. The only known populations are in the Wimmera and Melbourne. This species has an extraordinary life cycle where the larvae of the butterfly are protected from predators by the coconut ant, which benefit from this relationship by receiving food in exchange for protection. To help these eye catching butterflies we will:

- Map ant byres (nests) and host plants to ensure they are protected
- Integrate knowledge of life cycle and byre location in bushfire planning
- Control pest plants and animals



### Bearded Dragon

The rugged looking Bearded Dragon lives across the interior of Eastern Australia. They are easily recognisable by their defensive tendency to puff up and extend their 'beard' under their throat and open their mouth widely. In Victoria, the Bearded Dragon is listed as vulnerable. To help this iconic species, we will:

- Restore habitat such as fallen timber and trees in revegetated areas
- Improve connectivity between the reserve and surrounding landscapes

# Wildlife and land conservation



Endangered Growling Grass Frog

Our focus is on creating healthy homes for wildlife, where plants, animals and people can thrive.

Our work will be backed by science, informed by indigenous ecological knowledge and inspired by nature.

## Goals

- By 2026, we will maintain or improve the quality of at least 600 hectares of our Conservation Reserve to support and increase the populations of up to five existing threatened plants and four existing threatened animals, which have been identified through baseline ecological monitoring.
- By 2026, we will extend and enhance the condition of existing revegetation across 200 hectares of previously degraded land in our reserve to provide habitat for at least five other wildlife species, which will be identified through baseline ecological monitoring.
- By 2020, social and indigenous ecological knowledge will be integrated into the management of our reserve.

Our Conservation Reserve already provides important habitat for a range of threatened plants and animals, as well as a number of common but important widespread animal species. Over the next 10 years, we will focus on strengthening the existing habitat and building ecological resilience by improving the quality and quantity of habitat and food for animals. Our management approach will integrate social and traditional ecological knowledge.

We understand the importance of the broader landscape in maintaining species, and we will work with existing programs to facilitate dispersal of threatened animals between fragmented habitats where appropriate.

We understand that our choices and actions now must assist our reserve with climate change adaptation in the future (Action Area 2). We will promote diversity in all of our activities and facilitate plant adaptation under climate change by including a broad suite of species and appropriate genetic diversity in all our revegetation activities.



# Climate change resilience



Endangered Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo

Climate change is already reshaping nature in Australia.

We can address our own impacts and help to make sure that our precious wildlife will have a home in the future.

Our actions will help people and nature adapt to a changing climate.

## Goals

- By 2026, the current extent of our Conservation Reserve system will be revegetated with native species, and managed to maximise both habitat and biodiverse carbon storage.
- By 2026 our Conservation Reserve will provide critical habitat for up to four identified threatened wildlife species, based on 2050 climate models, which will be identified through baseline ecological monitoring.

We will assist customers to address climate change through their shared ownership of our reserve, which protects precious existing carbon and stores additional carbon with new trees.

Climate change resilience is an important value of our reserve at both the ecological, community and corporate level. Resilience to climate change within our reserve can be achieved by increasing overall habitat quality, and by promoting species diversity and genetic variation of native plants and animals. This approach provides opportunities for Bank Australia and its customers to reduce their overall carbon impact whilst establishing a refuge for a range of threatened species, and supporting climate driven migration of other native species into our reserve.

We will boldly use innovative tools and approaches to help us model plant and animal persistence, overcome uncertainty and adaptively manage our reserve on an ongoing basis under climate change. Plant and animal monitoring will show us how effective our management strategies have been, and how best to influence positive change into the future.

## Action Area 3

# Engaging the community



Inspiring tomorrow's conservation leaders

We all value nature and acknowledge that our future depends on a healthy planet.

We will engage and inspire the next generation to connect with nature by sharing stories about our Conservation Reserve and getting people to visit the reserve.

### Goals

- By 2020, indigenous land management practices and stories will be implemented and celebrated within our Conservation Reserve.
- Each year we will run one project at our Conservation Reserve that ties in with an identified social priority of our customers other than conservation (for example, supporting people with a disability or refugee communities).
- Each year we will engage the local community, including children, with our Conservation Reserve.

Our Conservation Reserve is within the traditional lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people, who have been the traditional owners of this landscape for over 40,000 years. Traditional ecological knowledge of the management of this landscape has been passed from generation to generation across millennia, and supporting and integrating this knowledge into our daily management practices will help improve the health of our reserve. Adjoining landholders, the local community and government organisations also have a well-developed understanding of the issues that are present within the landscape and of the techniques and mechanisms by which some of these interventions may work. We will ensure these people and organisations are part of the journey to restore, manage and improve our Conservation Reserve.

Our local conservation efforts will be supported at the landscape scale through engagement with a team of scientists and experts across multiple organisations.

Our Conservation Reserve also provides an opportunity to inspire the next generation of nature lovers by increasing awareness among Bank Australia customers and staff, the local community and other groups, including children.

# Demonstrating corporate environmental leadership



Fostering a conservation movement in the business community

We will use bold and innovative strategies to reimagine the ways in which business can tackle climate change and help our native plants and animals adapt.

We will use and support best practice conservation science to tackle these challenges.

Our actions will be celebrated and promoted to inspire others to do the same.

## Goals

- By 2021 Bank Australia will have partnerships with at least three research institutions and/or conservation networks relating to the Conservation Reserve.
- At least once each year Bank Australia will inform a banking or corporate audience about the Conservation Reserve, such as through a conference, presentation, visit or publication.

Our Conservation Reserve will demonstrate Bank Australia's corporate environmental responsibility and thought leadership. By owning, managing and restoring our Conservation Reserve, Bank Australia will set a world class example of innovative conservation that inspires others to act. Through linking and celebrating evidence-based conservation, Bank Australia will balance conservation at a local and regional scale with landscape production needs. We will provide a model of how evidence-based conservation can support and facilitate resilient natural systems and society. This will be achieved by capturing and sharing stories and partnering with research institutions and conservation networks, such as Habitat 141°, that look to improve, innovate and deliver conservation within our reserve and more broadly across Australia.



# Delivering value to Bank Australia and our customers



Bank Australia staff spending time at the Conservation Reserve

As the bank grows by attracting new customers so does its ability to create greater positive environmental and social outcomes and value for customers through the Conservation Reserve.

## Goals

- By 2021, 60% of Bank Australia's customers will be aware of our Conservation Reserve.
- Every year there will be a greater number of customers who identify our Conservation Reserve as being a factor in deciding to join Bank Australia.
- Each year, 10% of current Bank Australia staff will have the opportunity to visit the Conservation Reserve for the first time and will be able to share their stories with customers.

The engagement of Bank Australia staff and customers with our Conservation Reserve is essential to its long term success. Engagement of customers, staff and the broader community with our Conservation Reserve and associated climate change adaptation and nature conservation will increase customer satisfaction and participation, as well as help attract and retain socially aware customers and staff.

Through the Conservation Reserve we will provide customers with the opportunity to make a positive environmental impact by choosing to bank with Bank Australia.



If you would like to know more please contact us:



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