



ARID RECOVERY



Our Strategy 2020 - 2025

**From threatened
to thriving**



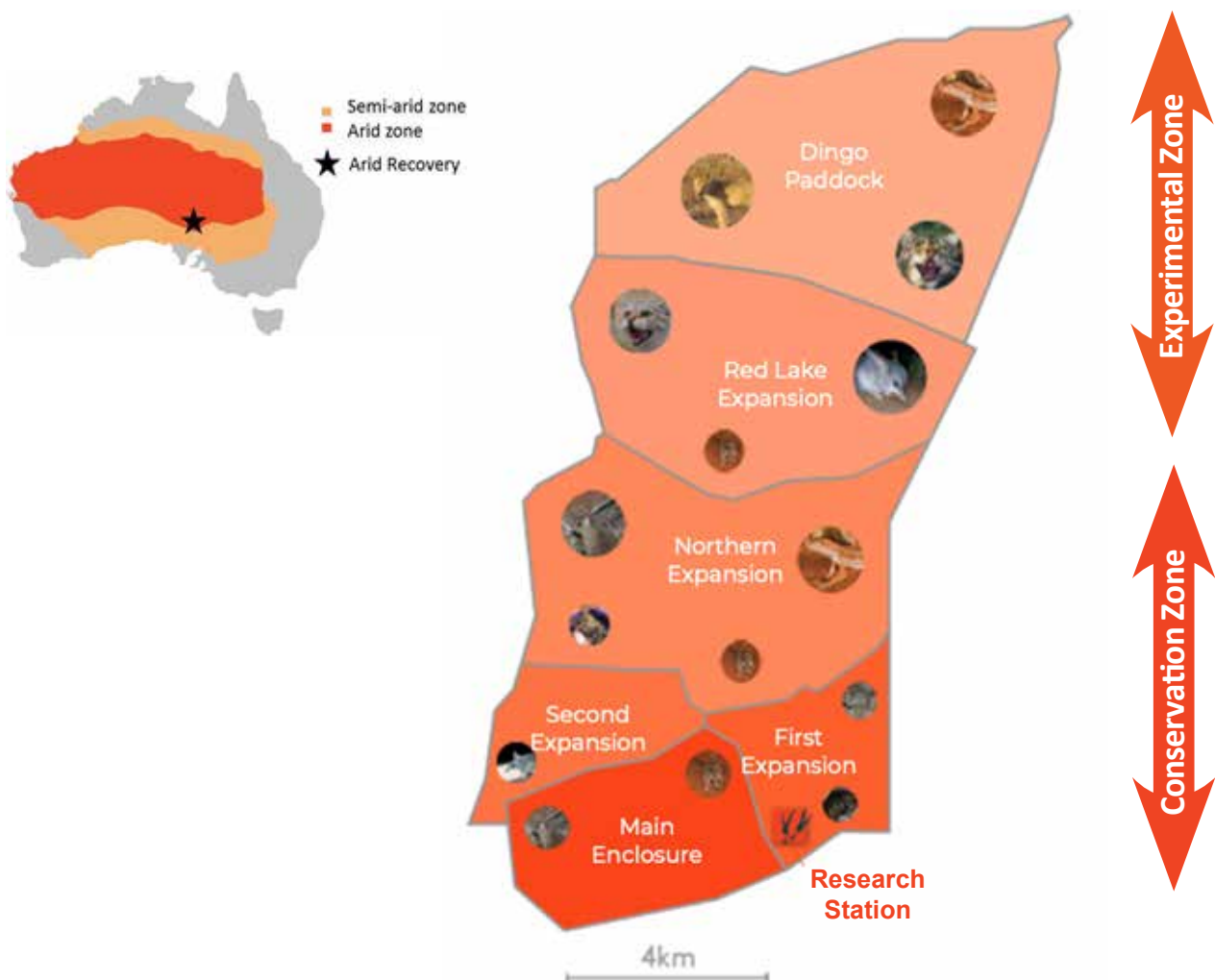


Introduction

Arid Recovery is an independent not-for-profit organisation running a 12,300 ha wildlife reserve in South Australia's arid north. We pioneer conservation science to help threatened species thrive across the Australian outback. We aim to make a nationally significant long-term scientific contribution to conservation practice that supports the recovery of threatened native species.

Arid Recovery operates on the land of the Kokatha people. We have deep respect for traditional owners, and recognise their relationships to the land and waters that have endured for thousands of years.

Our success is attributed to our supporters, including the unwavering support of the local community through volunteers and the long term support of our major sponsors BHP, SA Department for Environment and Water, the University of Adelaide and Bush Heritage Australia.



This strategic plan for 2020 - 2025 was developed in consultation with the Arid Recovery Board, partners, staff, Scientific Advisory Panel and local community.

Arid Recovery Charter

The Arid Recovery Charter has its foundation in our original program created in 1997.

Our vision

To return species from threatened to thriving in the arid zone.

Our mission

To make a nationally significant long-term scientific contribution to conservation practice that supports the recovery of threatened species and arid ecosystems. We ultimately seek to have threatened species thrive without the need for a fenced reserve.

What we do

Arid Recovery is home to Australia's largest predator-proof fenced reserve that excludes feral cats, foxes and rabbits. The reserve has been a living laboratory for the recovery of threatened species for more than 20 years.

Science underpins the management of the reserve. We test, measure and adapt our techniques to a dynamic arid zone. Arid Recovery's focus is on the long-view of reintroduction rather than short-term rescue.

1. Science for reintroduction of threatened species and ecosystem recovery
2. Conservation management and monitoring
3. Outreach, demonstration and training

Where we do it

We run and maintain an arid zone living laboratory and conservation reserve – the heart of Arid Recovery – a 12,300 ha fenced reserve north of the Olympic Dam mine site in South Australia. We apply our science and management techniques more widely through partnerships with landholders and traditional owners.

How we do it

We operate a reserve to enable pioneering research and conservation practices that can be shared and applied nationally and internationally.

We undertake world class science and research coupled with technical innovation.



What enables us

We rely on partnerships and collaboration.

Our success is attributed to the long-term support from our partners BHP, SA Department for Environment and Water, the University of Adelaide and Bush Heritage Australia, and supporters including the local community and volunteers.

The reserve is on Kokatha land and we have a deep respect for, and work with, traditional owners.



We are committed to the values of:

Safety

We know that keeping ourselves and others safe builds strength and trust in our team.

Collaboration and community focus

By sharing expertise and resources with the local community, nationally and internationally, we achieve the best research and conservation outcomes.

Ownership and integrity

We do what we say we will do and take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

Scientific and ethical rigour

We hold ourselves and those who work on our site to the highest ethical and scientific standards, including caring for the welfare of the animals we work with.

Courage and innovation

We encourage boldness, innovation and creativity in every aspect of our work.

Our achievements so far

In 23 years, Arid Recovery has progressed ecosystem restoration and conservation of threatened species within the Arid Recovery Reserve. We have also made a significant contribution to conservation research and to our community.

Managing feral threats

We are currently Australia's largest predator-proof fenced reserve at 12,300 ha. We use our landscape-scale laboratory to persistently trial and implement new management tools. Feral cats, rabbits and foxes are excluded from the 6,000 ha Conservation Zone and we test new solutions for survival of vulnerable species 'beyond the fence' in the 6,300 ha Experimental Zone.

Protecting threatened species

Five nationally listed threatened species have been reintroduced (Greater Stick-nest Rat, Burrowing Bettong, Greater Bilby, Shark Bay Bandicoot and Western Quoll), and two more are protected in the reserve (Plains Mouse and Thick-billed Grasswren). We have built a large portfolio of research on reintroduction science and the role of these returned species in arid ecosystems.

Scientific endeavour

Through our research collaborations, Arid Recovery has a larger output of scientific publications for our size than any equivalent conservation organisation. Our long-running monitoring datasets reveal powerful insights into arid zone ecology and reintroductions. Breakthroughs made in reintroduction science, feral animal management and arid ecosystem dynamics from research collaborations at Arid Recovery are being applied for conservation and informing policy across Australia and overseas.

Connecting with community

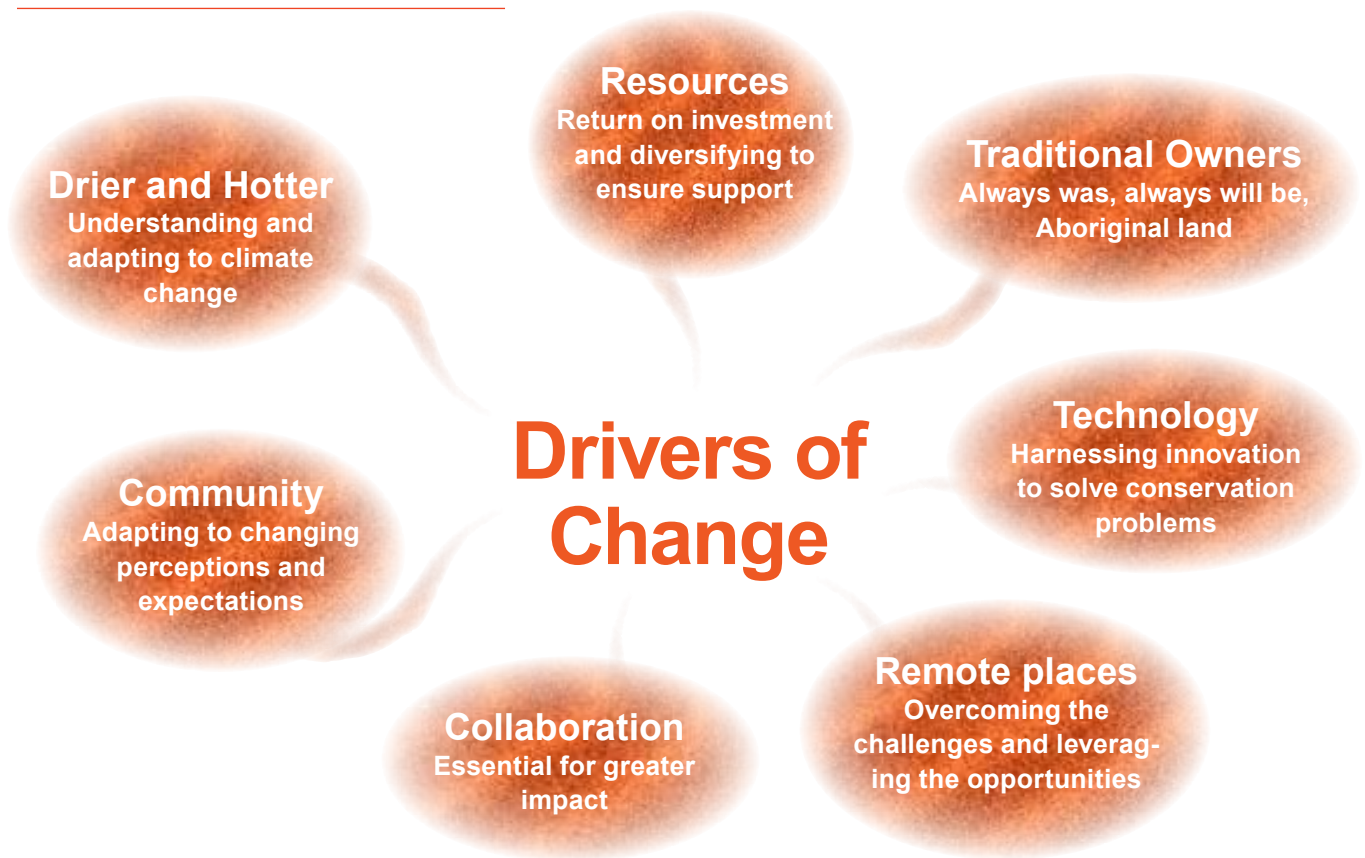
Arid Recovery's community programs build the foundation for communities to connect with nature in arid lands. Our capacity building work is growing new conservation workers equipped with a passion for desert places and the skills they need to make a difference.

We have achieved these milestones through consistent hard work on the ground with our local communities and by collaborating widely to share what we learn while also learning from others.

We invite you to work and learn with us towards a shared vision for arid species, places and people.



Our Direction



We will continue to run the reserve as a living laboratory to inform the recovery of threatened species. We aim to amplify our impact and innovate in the way we do things.

We have identified the four frontiers for change and innovation that we are committed to progressing over the next decade. Our challenge is to maintain our commitment to the biodiversity of the reserve and to our community while pushing on these four frontiers.

1. Scientific innovation

Conservation is progressed beyond the fence so that reintroduction of species can occur on a landscape scale.

2. Working together for greater impact

We will have an impact well beyond our size through alliances, collaborations and sharing of knowledge for conservation.

3. Working together on country

We will support genuine and enduring partnerships with traditional owners, building understanding through collaboration and incorporation of traditional knowledge into management of landscapes and native species.

4. Understanding climate change and drought

Arid Recovery will be resilient to drought and ready to adapt to a changing climate. We will have developed a narrative of adaptation for arid landscapes.

In a spirit of enquiry, many of the objectives under these four frontiers are posed as questions. For some, we set a goal to aim for, while for others we leave the question open to scientific enquiry and invite multiple perspectives to collaborate together on the journey.

1. Scientific innovation

Vision

Conservation is progressed beyond the fence so that species reintroduction can occur on a landscape scale.

To move towards this vision we will

- Develop a research plan identifying themes and questions to pursue.
- Seek collaborators to service the plan with a research prospectus.
- Seek funding to resource research.
- Track research outputs, measure the impact of research, and communicate findings to build Arid Recovery's scientific reputation and strengthen the research program.
- Link with networks of research institutions and end users to maximise the impact of research by scaling outcomes beyond the reserve to whole landscapes.

Questions we want to answer

- How can we create the first dynamic conservation halo around a fenced reserve where there is two-way movement of species to expand the impact of the reserve?
- How can the concept be extended to other locations and beyond the fence entirely to open landscapes?
- What emerging tools can we test for more effective control of feral animals?
- What partnerships will we need to achieve scientific innovation?
- What technology can be harnessed and adapted to assist this innovation?
- How can we optimise uptake of Arid Recovery research for application elsewhere?



2. Working together for greater impact

Vision

Arid Recovery has impact well beyond its size through alliances, collaborations and sharing of knowledge for conservation and recovery.

To move towards this vision we will

- Maximise the potential of our existing partnerships.
- Connect with like-minded organisations and develop collaborative networks in a spirit of sharing ideas for the greater good of threatened species conservation and recovery.
- Measure and communicate Arid Recovery's impact to demonstrate value to existing partners and attract new ones.
- Develop new partnerships to amplify conservation outcomes.



Questions we want to answer

- How can alliances benefit the greater conservation cause?
- How can Arid Recovery maximise the offering of our science and test site to potential allies and collaborators?
- What benefit is there to Arid Recovery's mission of alliances and collaborations?
- How do we determine who we want to partner with?
- When should collaborations involve a financial commitment to Arid Recovery?
- How can Arid Recovery measure and demonstrate the impact of alliances and collaborations?



3. Working together on country

Vision

Arid Recovery supports genuine and enduring partnerships with traditional owners, building understanding through collaboration and incorporation of traditional knowledge into management of landscapes and native species.

To move towards this vision we will

- Start with a commitment to earn the trust of the traditional owner communities around us.
- Begin by building competency in traditional owner relationships and cultural understanding in the organisation and partners.
- Take the time to get to know traditional owner approaches to working with the land and the animals in and around the Arid Recovery Reserve.
- Pursue partnership opportunities and the involvement of traditional owners in the strategy, operations and governance of Arid Recovery.
- Have an ongoing commitment to strong community partnerships based on the reciprocal sharing of knowledge with a shared goal of improving conservation.
- Give back to traditional owner communities by working together to foster knowledge sharing for young people in support of ongoing cultural practices caring for country.



Questions we want to answer

- How can we offer value to traditional owners in working with Arid Recovery?
- What useful opportunities are there to involve traditional owners in our work?
- How can traditional practice and knowledge inform our work?
- Can Arid Recovery set a standard for working appropriately with traditional owners in designing and undertaking research?



4. Understanding climate change and drought

Vision

Arid Recovery will be resilient to drought and ready to adapt to a changing climate. We will have developed a narrative of adaptation for arid landscapes.

To move towards this vision we will

- Develop research to understand the impacts of climate change on native and introduced animals.
- Facilitate and test adaptation strategies for the Arid Recovery ecosystem to be more resilient to climate change.
- Contribute, even in a small way, to mitigation by reducing Arid Recovery's greenhouse gas emissions in line with science-based targets to minimise global warming to under 2°C.
- Share our story of how climate change affects arid landscapes and how we can adapt.

Questions we want to answer

- How does climate change threaten the persistence of species and arid ecosystems?
- What are the physiological limits of thermal tolerance for arid zone species?
- What are the implications of climate change for the effectiveness of conservation reserves in the arid zone?
- How can we mitigate the impacts of climate change, especially the extremes of more frequent droughts and heatwaves?
- Can we build resilience to climate change and drought by maintaining vegetation condition and developing drought refugia?
- How can we use our long-term datasets to best advantage to understand and describe these stories?
- How can we work with others to extend the impact of focal research on climate change at Arid Recovery for application at larger scales?



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