



**2016-2017**

# Annual Report



For more information on Arid Recovery visit [www.aridrecovery.org.au](http://www.aridrecovery.org.au) or call 08 8671 2402.

This document is the 20th in a series of annual reports and outlines the activities of Arid Recovery for the period from 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017.

Arid Recovery is an independent, not-for-profit conservation initiative that has been restoring Australia's arid lands since 1997. Our success is attributed to many supporters including the unwavering support of the local community through volunteers and the long term support of our major sponsors BHP Billiton, SA Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources and the University of Adelaide.

Copies of this report, supplementary information and previous reports are available on the Arid Recovery website.

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REPORT



↑ The Kids of Arid Recovery celebrating 20 Years in April 2017.  
*Photo: Travis Hague*



# CEO's Report

KATHERINE TUFT

It has been a great joy to mark Arid Recovery's 20 years of achievement this year. In connecting with friends old and new over our celebrations at Easter I felt a strong sense of community around our small and well loved organisation. Arid Recovery has a strong history of punching above our weight in conservation and research and this has been driven principally by a dedicated (and growing) group of individuals that love the arid zone, delight in throwing their energy into conserving it and have a willingness to try new ideas and push the boundaries of possibility. Watching our kids gather on the red sand at sunset gave me enormous hope that this spark and energy will be carried on by the next generation also.

Looking to next year, I am thrilled at the outcomes and learnings from the trial reintroduction of Western Quolls and look forward to preparing for a full introduction of these fabulous native predators in the coming year.

Particular thanks are due to my team who go over and beyond to keep the Reserve secure from feral animals, to make our visitors feel welcome and to add new ideas and energy into Arid Recovery.



# Board

For more information on the people of Arid Recovery visit our website at [www.aridrecovery.org.au](http://www.aridrecovery.org.au).

IN NOVEMBER EACH year the Arid Recovery Board meet to undertake a day of strategic planning. This years' planning day was held at the Arid Recovery office in Olympic Dam and looked at progressing the long-term sustainability of the organisation by securing additional support from new partners.



↑ Arid Recovery staff, Board members and Scientific Advisory Panel members mingle on the sunset platform during the November planning visit.

## AR BOARD MEMBERS

### Dr Steve Morton

Chair of Arid Recovery Board  
Independent  
Honorary Fellow, CSIRO Ecosystem Services

### Chad Menzies

Representative for BHP Billiton  
Corporate Affairs, Olympic Dam.

### Professor Philip Weinstein

Representative for the University of Adelaide  
Head of School, School of Biological Sciences, University of Adelaide

### Brenton Grear

Representative for SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources  
Regional Director, Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges

### Allan Holmes

Independent  
Formerly CEO for DEWNR.

### Mark Priadko

Independent  
Financial management, business analysis and business case consultant.

### Andrew Corletto

Independent  
Partner, Kelly and Co Lawyers

# Scientific Advisory Panel for 2016-17

PHIL WEINSTEIN continued his role as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Panel in 2016-17. This year saw the full implementation of Arid Recovery's research application process. Prospective researchers complete a proposal to conduct work at Arid Recovery, nominated as either external or collaborative research. Proposals are developed with input from the General Manager and Research Scientist. They are tabled with the Scientific Advisory Panel for comment and endorsement prior to approval by the Board.

This process allows Arid Recovery to assess the merit of each project and prioritise research in line with the Research Plan.

Phil Weinstein - Chair  
Peter Copley  
John Read  
Reece Pedler  
Jeremy Austin  
Mike Letnic  
Stephanie Williams  
Catherine Herbert  
Allan Holmes

University of Adelaide  
SA DEWNR  
Ecological Horizons  
SA DEWNR / Wild Deserts  
University of Adelaide  
University of NSW  
Ecological consultant  
University of Sydney  
Arid Recovery Board

For more information on the people of Arid Recovery visit [www.aridrecovery.org.au](http://www.aridrecovery.org.au) or call 08 8671 2402.

## Arid Recovery Staff

### General Manager/CEO

Dr Katherine Tuft

### Ecology and Research

Ecologist

Dr Aaron Fenner

### Research Scientist

Dr Katherine Moseby

### Field and Maintenance

Field and Maintenance Officer

John Crompton

### Fence maintenance casual

Marty Kittel

### Education and Community

Scientific and Education

Officer

Kimberley Solly

### Administration

Office Manager

Letitia Sikora

## Scientific Advisory Panel

Phil Weinstein

Peter Copley

John Read

Reece Pedler

Jeremy Austin

Mike Letnic

Stephanie Williams

Catherine Herbert



↑ The 2013 Christmas photo for the Arid Recovery team.  
Photo by: Arid Recovery

# Thankyou to the volunteers of Arid Recovery:

Special thanks to the following people who have volunteered their time over the past twelve months:

Abby Madden  
Adrian Friedel  
Alice Taysom  
Alix Palmer  
Angus Curry  
Annabel Cazdow  
Anni Giles  
Anthony Bryson  
Ashley Stevens  
Barry Dadleh  
Beth Cox  
Caleb  
Cassandra Lazo-Olivares  
Cat Lynch  
Chris Jolly  
Chris Madden  
Chris McGoldrick

Chris Ryan  
Craig Boulderstone  
Deon Vosser  
Diana Hobbs  
Eleanor Saxon  
Emily Gregg  
Emily Tomassian  
Gabrielle Hunt  
Guy Nelson  
Henry Van Oosterom  
Henry West  
Hugh McGregor  
Johan Potgeiter  
Jordy Walkington  
Kate Cornelsen  
Kealyn Madden  
Kim Thomas

Kristi Lee  
Luke McAulay  
Luke Young  
Lynn Pedler  
Madeleine Young  
Mark Young  
Matthew Rostron  
Michelle Kittel  
Millie Young  
Natalie Lioulis  
Nathan Beerkens  
Neil Black  
Patrick Glover  
Pete Copley  
Peter Meadow  
Rachael Loneragan  
Rachel Young

Rebecca West  
Reece Pedler  
Richard Beinke  
Rostron Family  
Ryan Francis  
Sam Bulling  
Sam Fischer  
Sam Matthews  
Samantha Bryson-Kirby  
Sarah Leeson  
Scott Rogers  
Sebastien Delamere  
Susie Stockwell  
Suz Cazdow  
Terina Cornwall  
Tony Pitt

Travis Crompton  
Travis Hague  
Trevor Sikora  
Tyler Spartalis  
Zachary Richardson



# State of the Reserve

## FENCE ASSET

Fence maintenance was completed on 1.8 km of external fencing through replacement of corroded footnetting. Wet conditions in the preceding 12 months resulted in an acceleration of corrosion. This was identified in a more rapid than expected worsening of the state of footnetting between fence audits conducted in 2016 and 2017.

The charge carried by the external electric fence around the Main Enclosure has been returned to full capacity with the replacement of ageing plain wire around 8 km of the fence.

The Dingo Paddock has been made fully feral-proof with addition of 16 km of new external footnetting. This major work was made possible thanks to the efforts of the Port Augusta prison work camp. The workers' conduct was exemplary. In addition to Dingo Paddock work, the team made major contributions to upgrading pitfall trapping sites, replacing ageing footnetting throughout the Reserve, developing signage infrastructure at the front gate and repairing the communal fire pit at the Research Station. We thank the Department for Correctional Services for collaborating with us on these works programs and BHP and Sodexo for facilitating accommodation of the group at Camp 4.



↑ Frankston Rotary Club renovated the Research Station kitchen with new stainless steel benches donated by Richard Bienke.

Photo: Frankston Rotary

## RESEARCH STATION

The Rotary Club of Frankston volunteered their time over two weeks to renovate the ageing kitchen at the Research Station. They installed generously donated stainless steel benches, painted the interior, replaced the flooring and fitted a pump to connect the sink to the rainwater tank. The renovations bring Arid Recovery's kitchen facility into compliance with health codes for storing and preparing food.

## EDUCATION CENTRE

Arid Recovery successfully applied to the Fund My Idea grants program to develop donated second-hand buildings into a classroom and additional bunkroom to increase our capacity to host school and other groups at the Reserve. Works will begin in September 2017.

◆ Members of the Port Augusta prison work camp place 16 km of new footnetting on the Dingo Paddock.

Photo: Department for Correctional Services



# Compartment plan

The Arid Recovery Reserve is composed of six compartments covering 123 square km. A compartment plan has been developed to outline the current state of each section and the strategic direction that they can be put to in future. In keeping with Arid Recovery's long history of delivering innovative conservation research, this plan aims to maximise the experimental potential of the compartments while simultaneously achieving conservation management goals for protection and management of threatened species.

## CORE CONSERVATION AREA

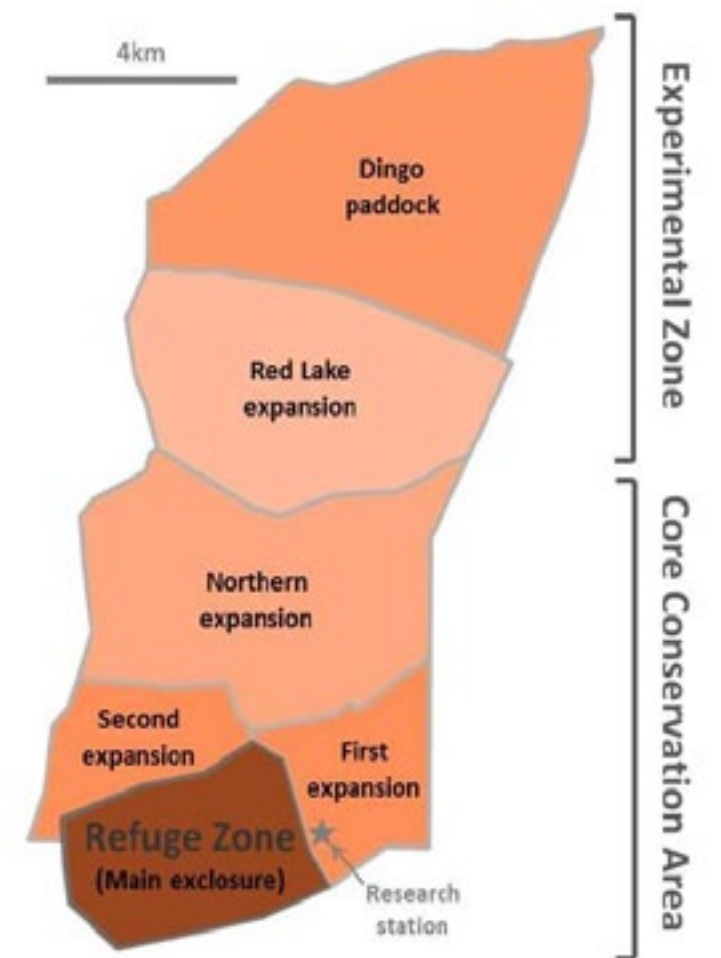
The 46 square km area contained by the First, Second and Northern Expansions serves as a safe haven for medium-sized vulnerable native mammals. It will secure insurance populations of these species and be a source for animals to be translocated to other sites. The area can also be a testing ground for within-fence management of reintroduced populations.

## REFUGE ZONE

Threatening processes are to be minimised within the 14 square km Main Enclosure. This involves excluding and/or reducing the impacts of some species such as burrowing bettongs and western quolls.

## EXPERIMENTAL ZONE

The 63 square km area of Red Lake and the Dingo Paddock is set aside for research into establishing threatened species beyond the fence by trialling methods to enable sensitive species to co-exist



with introduced predators. It is currently the only location in Australia where introduced and native species can be tightly controlled in an experimental framework.

## Feral Incursions

Two rabbit incursions were detected during 2016-17, one in the Second and one in the Northern Expansion.

One of the rabbits was removed within a day of detection. The second rabbit, first detected on the 18th of February along the eastern boundary of the Northern Expansion remains active, despite many nights of control effort.

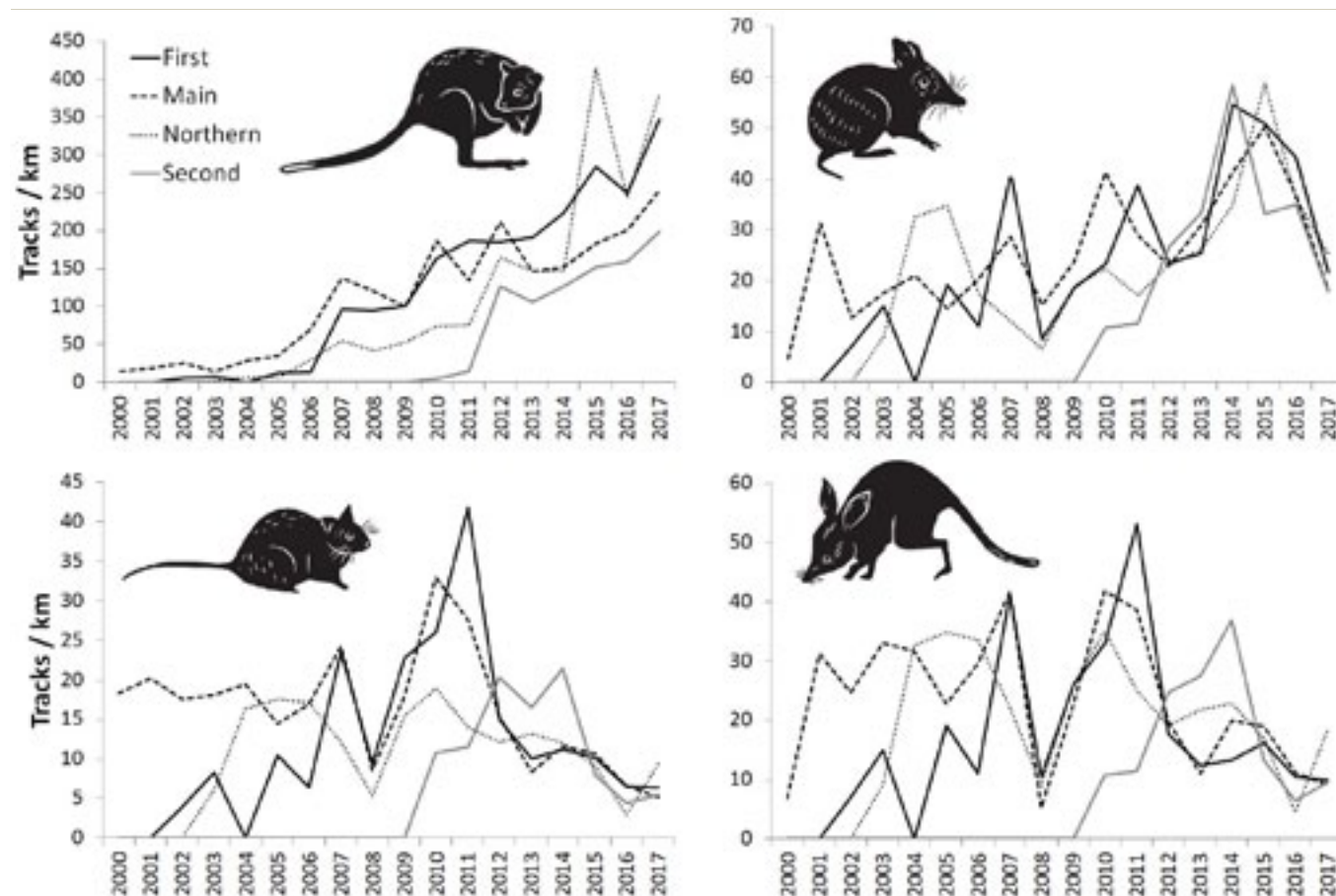
A cat was detected in the Second Expansion over one week but has not been recorded since despite many hours of spotlighting, camera trapping and tracking effort.

Purchase of 20 additional camera traps for incursion surveillance improved our ability to detect incursions and develop control strategies. Using tracking and cameras to profile rabbits movement patterns, followed by many hours dedicated to spotlight shooting in that area has proven to be an effective, if time consuming, strategy for removing rabbits.





# Reintroduced species monitoring



↑ Track count monitoring data for four reintroduced species between 2000 and 2017. Clockwise from top left: Burrowing Bettong, Western Barred Bandicoot, Greater Stick-nest Rat and Greater Bilby.

## Burrowing bettongs

Bettongs are monitored via quarterly track counts within all compartments, and via annual capture-mark-recapture measures of density within the Main Enclosure. Track counts show that the species continues to increase across all parts of the Reserve. Trapping in May estimated the population size of bettongs in the Main Enclosure at 1,176 individuals at a density of 94 bettongs per square km. This is 600 fewer bettongs than were estimated in 2016.

## Western barred bandicoots

Bandicoot track activity has declined in recent years after reaching a peak over 2013-2015. We are monitoring this trend, particularly with respect to potential predation impacts of western quolls on the species.

## Greater stick-nest rats

Stick-nest rat track count activity continues to be low. No marked changes in nest activity have been observed over the last year.

## Greater bilbies

Bilby activity continues to fluctuate with seasonal conditions and in some parts of the Reserve has increased markedly since 2016.



↑ Greater Bilby. Photo: Alexandra Ross

# In situ fauna and flora



↔ (top) Gabrielle Hunt, volunteer, holds a Stripe-faced Dunnart *Sminthopsis crassicaudata*

↔ (bottom) Melissa Jensen checks a pitfall trap

↓ (top) *Diplodactylus conspicillatus*

Photo: Ryan Francis

↓ (bottom) *Lerista labialis*

Photo: Ryan Francis



## PITFALL TRAP UPGRADE

19 swale sites were trapped over four nights in the first week of March. Prior to trapping, a significant effort was put into upgrading the pitfall traps at all sites. The number of pits was doubled at each site, with half of them being new wide and deep pits. Research by John Read indicated that larger deeper pits are more effective at buffering trapped animals from extreme temperatures. Deep pits are also able to catch hopping mice, enabling us to do away with Elliott traps and the bulky excluders needed to prevent bettongs from disturbing Elliott traps. Thanks to staff, the Community Development Program and Department for Correctional Services for their hard work.

## CAPTURES

Rain in the preceding 12 months caused rodents to start booming and a number of reptiles to breed. Total captures were 822 (366 mammals of 7 species and 456 reptiles of 26 species). Total individual captures inside the reserve were 590 (351 mammals and 239 reptiles). Outside the reserve total captures were 232 (15 mammals and 217 reptiles). The most common mammal captured was the Plains mouse (262 captures), breaking the previous record for this species in 2013. The most common reptile was *Ctenotus regius* (64 individuals).

## TRENDS

Of interest is that no small rodents were captured (aside from an introduced house mouse outside the reserve). In previous years small rodents have made up a reasonable proportion of the mammal captures but not a single *Pseudomys bolami*, *Pseudomys hermannsburgensis* or *Leggadina* species were captured in 2017.



# Intern program

Arid Recovery commenced an internal internship program in 2016, advertising for recent biology graduates to undertake voluntary internships over three months. Interns are provided with accommodation and a living allowance.

## FIRST INTAKE

Matt Rostron and Rachael Loneragan were recruited as the first interns in the reinstated program. Both travelled from NSW to complete the internship and assisted in a wide range of activities, from community events, through fence maintenance, infrastructure upgrades to ecological monitoring and research. Rachael conducted an independent project investigating variation in thermal conditions within stick-nest rat nests protected by vegetation versus exposed nests. Matt applied findings from Adelaide University student Kate Butler's Honours project to design positioning of one-way gates for implementation in bettong management planning.

## SECOND INTAKE

Emily Gregg and Nathan Beerkens joined Arid Recovery in February 2017, travelling from Melbourne and Perth respectively. They took part in the annual trapping small vertebrate survey, extending some trapping in order to test false floors developed to prevent predation of reptiles by rodents within pitfall traps. Emily undertook an independent project on conservation messaging by analysing social media statistics and testing different messages via Facebook. She has gone on to commence a PhD at RMIT on this theme. Nathan's project scoped the Reserve's suitability for reintroduction of the Kowari by performing habitat assessments on gibber areas and quantifying prey availability for the species. Nathan has gone on to join the Arid Recovery team as Field Ecologist and Community Coordinator.



▲ Arid Recovery interns.

Top: Rachael Loneragan and Matt Rostron, Sept - Dec 2016

Bottom: Emily Gregg and Nathan Beerkens, Feb - May 2017

## Reintroductions scoping

The Scientific Advisory Panel conducted an exercise reviewing the outcomes of trial and full reintroductions to Arid Recovery and scoping for future reintroductions. Candidate species were drawn from what may have occurred in the region to the best of our knowledge, and ranked according to the conservation benefit the species would gain from protection within a safe haven, the ecological services the species could perform within the reserve and logistical feasibility.

Three species were identified and endorsed as priorities: the Western Quoll, the Woma Python and the Kowari. All species have potential to perform important services as predators within the Reserve, some, such as the woma may be a useful drawcard for community support and involvement.



# Research

## WESTERN QUOLL TRIAL REINTRODUCTION

Adelaide University Honours student Luke Tilley studied the movements of two male western quolls added to the two female quolls already present in the trial reintroduction of the species. Along with Rebecca West, he found that quolls preferred to den and to hunt on dunes and that males covered very wide territories. One male exited the Reserve early in the trial and could not be found despite extensive aerial searching. The other male was recovered after making a foray but exited again and disappeared several months into the trial.

One female successfully bred, producing four pouch young initially and depositing three young in her den. Sadly, she was found dead, shortly before her young were independent. Two of the three young were recovered, hand-raised and released into the Flinders Ranges population. The third appears to have survived and continues to be sighted on camera traps within the Reserve.

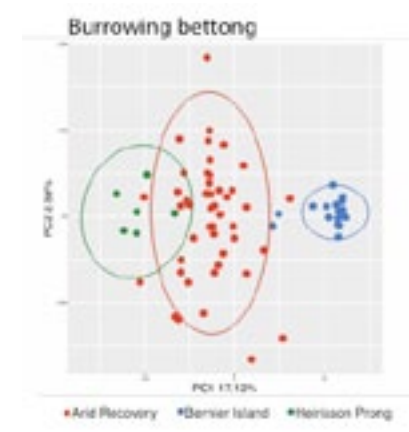
Quoll scats were collected throughout the trial and analysed to identify prey species consumed. These data were compared against proportional availability of those prey as measured from track counts and pitfall surveys. The most common prey item consumed by quolls were rodents, and these were consumed in proportion to their availability. Quolls also ate bettong, western barred bandicoot and stick-nest rats, but in lesser proportion than is available.

The data from the trial reintroduction is being prepared into a translocation plan that will be submitted to approve a full reintroduction of Western Quolls to Arid Recovery.

## GENETIC AUDIT

PhD student Lauren White compared the genetic diversity and inbreeding coefficients for founder individuals and a sample of the current populations for the four reintroduced mammal species. She found that in the case of burrowing bettongs and western barred bandicoots where founders were drawn from two separate populations that the resulting genetic diversity in the current

↓ Juvenile Western Quolls rescued and hand reared after their mother was found dead. Photo: Gini Andersen



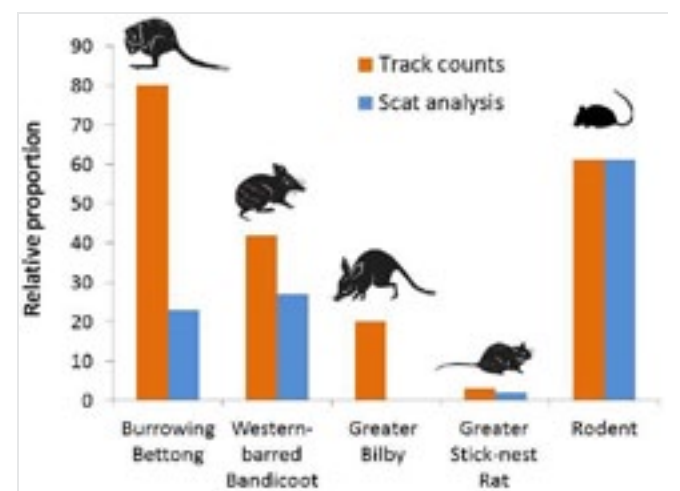
◆ Genetic diversity of burrowing bettongs from the two founding groups (blue and green) compared to the current population at Arid Recovery. Courtesy Lauren White

population is greater than the source populations. This is a great outcome and the result of rapid admixing of the two founding populations. Interestingly, stick-nest rats appear to show either genetic drift or some level of selection for traits from the original founding animals from Reevesby Island off the Eyre Peninsula. Levels of inbreeding were tolerable in all four species and recommended repeating the genetic audit in 5 years to assess whether genetic supplementation is necessary.

## PREY SWITCHING

Hugh McGregor's research through the University of Tasmania and Threatened Species Recovery Hub has investigated the relationship between feral cats and rabbits, particularly how cats adapt their hunting when rabbit populations are reduced dramatically. When rabbits were reduced through shooting in the Dingo Paddock (to simulate Calicivirus) some feral cats switched to hunting small mammals while others left the paddock or starved. These results show that while control of rabbits can be effective in reducing densities of feral cats in the longer term, there is a critical period when cats are still abundant and hungry where native prey are especially vulnerable.

↓ Proportion of prey animals found in quoll scats compared to available prey. Courtesy Luke Tilley / Bec West





# Prey naivete

Australia's native mammals have been devastated by introduced predators in part due to their assumed naivete due to an absence of co-evolution. This project aimed to improve prey responses by exposing them to low levels of introduced predators under controlled conditions. We also aimed to document baseline levels of prey naivete and identify physical and behavioural traits that could lead to improved survival in the presence of exotic predators. Burrowing bettongs and bilbies were reintroduced to the Red Lake paddock (26 square km) and feral cats were added after several months. We also monitored a control group of bettongs translocated from the Main to the First expansion where no predators were present. We documented physical and behavioural traits before each group was moved and then at six monthly intervals for 18 months.

Both bilbies and bettongs have survived and were able to recruit new individuals in the presence of cats. Some mortality was recorded in both species. Results from the behaviour studies suggest that bettongs have improved their anti-predator behaviour, becoming more vigilant when feeding and more likely to flee upon approach compared with control bettongs that are not exposed to predators. Initial results are promising and suggest that this method of predator training may be able to assist in improving future reintroduction outcomes.

One paper has been published this year, with three others submitted for review or in preparation.

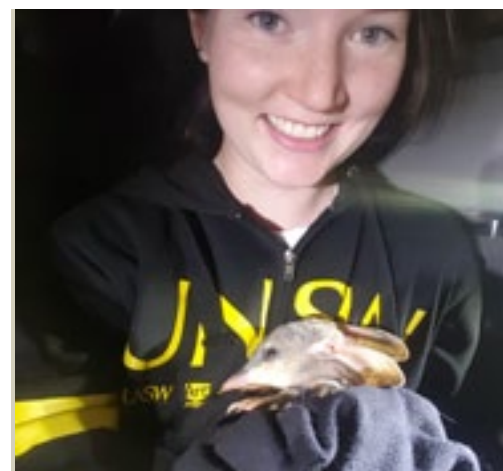


↑ The UNSW prey naivety research team visit the proposed bettong translocation site at Bon Bon. Photo: Kath Tuft

↓ Feral cat. Photo: Hugh McGregor

Rebecca West left the project as Research Officer in 2016 to work for the new Wild Deserts initiative. She was replaced by Cameron Graham in 2017.

A new student, Alexandra Ross, commenced research in 2017 comparing the survival of translocated bilbies that had prior exposure to feral cats and bilbies that were naive.



↑ PhD student Alexandra Ross with a bilby preparing to be translocated into the Dingo Pen.

← Feral cat. Photo: Hugh McGregor

# South Australian Rangelands Alliance

The friendship with Bush Heritage Australia through the South Australian Rangelands Alliance continues to grow. Ecologist Aaron Fenner split his time between Bush Heritage and Arid Recovery programs, conducting bird, small vertebrate and vegetation surveys on Bush Heritage's Bon Bon and Boolcoommatta Station Reserves. Aaron supervised two Honours students through Flinders University researching impacts of invasive buffel grass on reptile and vegetation communities on Bon Bon. The team is scoping Bon Bon as a site for potential translocation of burrowing bettongs from Arid Recovery and have commenced intensive predator control in a core area of the property.

Arid Recovery contributed to Bush Heritage's engagement and fundraising programs throughout the year. Kath Tuft attended a Bush Chat event in Adelaide to connect with supporters of Bush Heritage in South Australia, and attended two other events in Sydney. Supporters and Board members from Bush Heritage visited the Arid Recovery Reserve for evening's camping on sand dunes, with meals cooked on the campfire followed by spotlighting for bilbies. The events were well received, generating much interest and some great conversations.

① Further information on the SA Rangelands Alliance project can be obtained from the Arid Recovery website at [www.aridrecovery.org.au](http://www.aridrecovery.org.au) or the Bush Heritage website at <http://www.bushheritage.org.au>.



↑ Burrowing bettong. Photo: Ryan Francis

↓ Bush Heritage supporter event - campfire meal and camping within the Arid Recovery Reserve before journeying on to Bon Bon. Photo: Kath Tuft







# Community programs

## GREEN ARMY

The third and final Green Army program was completed in January 2017. There will be no further Federal government funding for this project. Led by supervisor Guy Nelson, the Green Army team replaced considerable sections of footnetting as part of ongoing maintenance to ensure the integrity of the Reserve. The team also took part in community events by supporting preparations for tour open night and Bush Banquets. Their assistance was gratefully received by Bush Heritage partners at Bon Bon in constructing new fences to prevent the spread of noxious buffel grass from off-ride driving around rest areas on the Stuart Highway.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Under the supervision of Peter Sach, the Community Development Program assisted Arid Recovery with general reserve maintenance, fence patrols and upgrading of pitfall trapping sites. The Roxby Downs Community Development Program ceased activities at Arid Recovery in February 2017.

← Melissa Jensen weighs a bettong during the annual capture-mark-recapture event in May 2017  
Photo: Kath Tuft



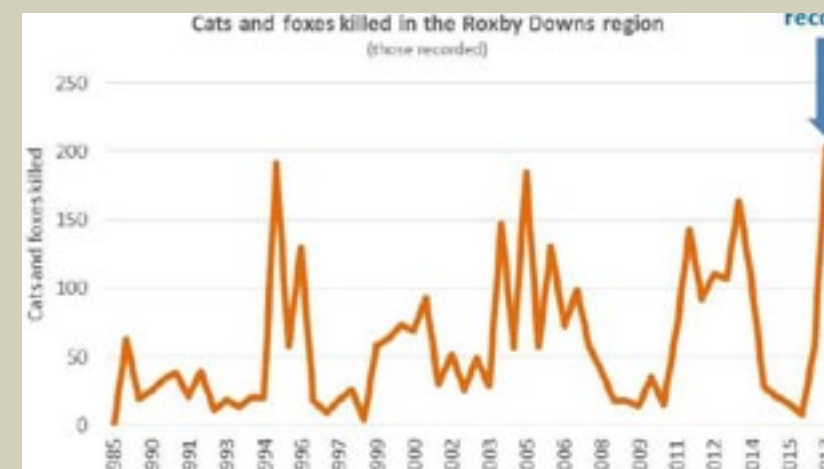
↑ The Green Army strain wire off a new post to prevent vehicles spreading buffel grass from rest areas on Bon Bon Station Reserve.  
Photo: Guy Nelson

## FRANKSTON ROTARY CLUB

In September 2016, the Rotary Club of Frankston travelled from the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, to Arid Recovery, renovating the Research Station's kitchen. They then returned in March 2017 to donate a new crane, generator and chain saw. The crane is now affixed to 'Rhino', our workhorse Hilux. It continues to be a pleasure to work with Rotary and we aim to continue our association into the future.

## Feral control

Over the past 12 months feral control has been an ongoing task for AR both in and outside of the Reserve (see inset on Incursions on page 5). Wet conditions over the preceding 18 months led to a boom in rodent numbers inside and outside the Reserve. This resulted in very



high densities of feral cats and a high replacement rate of cats arriving at the Reserve perimeter after others were removed. John Crompton maintained traps around the perimeter of the Reserve and was supported by the efforts of volunteer shooters who completed over 150 hours of spotlight shooting over 6 months, removing just shy of 200 feral cats - a record since control efforts started in 1985.

Analysis of the gut contents of 130 of these feral cats identified a total of 271 native animals, including 45 native mice, 216 reptiles and 10 birds. One small cat had 9 threatened Plains Mice in its belly.





COMMUNITY



Students from Roxby Downs Area School travel out to Arid Recovery after touring the Olympic Dam mine site.  
Photo: Kimberley Solly

# Volunteers and community

**VOLUNTEERS** contributed over 2,400 hours to Arid Recovery in 2016-17, with 30 new volunteers recruited. The last few years has seen much change in the Roxby Downs community so we were pleased to meet many people new to town and introduce them to the work at Arid Recovery and share our enthusiasm for conservation.

**TWENTY YEARS OF ARID RECOVERY** was marked over Easter 2017 with a reunion of past and present members of the Arid Recovery family. Presentations were held in the Roxby link auditorium celebrating Arid Recovery’s achievements over 20 years and acknowledging the enormous contribution of staff, volunteers , collaborators and the community. Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation Chairman Chris Larkin gave a welcome to country. Over 90 people toasted sunset on the viewing platform at the Reserve before settling around the campfire to reconnect with old friends and yarn over stories. Monadelphous Engineering prepared large laser cut panels of reintroduced animals to grace the front gate area in generous recognition of the milestone.

**EDUCATION VISITS** were attended by 135 students throughout the year, including from Wiltja Indigenous College, the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation, University of Adelaide Law School and local schools from Roxby Downs, Andamooka and Woomera. We visited Roxby Downs Area School twice, for presentations to their special needs and Year 7 classes and hosted an Animal Identification course for the University of Adelaide’s Wildlife Conservation students at the reserve.

**FAR NORTH SCIENCE HUB** events continued a part of Arid Recovery’s hosting on behalf of Inspiring South Australia, a collaborative initiative between industry, government and education groups to communicate science to a wide audience, which we received funding for in early 2016. The Hub’s events engaged 558 people and included “Roxby’s Mad Scientists”, a Lake Torrens Bush Blitz, a “Science for Saving Species” workshop at Arid Recovery reserve, and a sustainability-themed outdoor movie night.

Statistics	
762	tour guests
1,038	people attending events
19,585.5	hours volunteered
135	students on educational visits
68	media articles, newsletters, blogs
4,850	Facebook followers
96,905	people engaged via Facebook
215,533	website visitors



# Two decades for Arid Recovery

Past and present volunteers, supporters, staff and their families came together to celebrate Arid Recovery's 20th birthday over the weekend.

The local conservation research initiative, dedicated to the restoration of Australia's arid lands, began in 1997 by ecologists Katherine Moseby and John Read and today is a 123km-square fenced reserve on the Olympic Dam mine lease where feral cats, foxes and rabbits have been eradicated from a total of 60km<sup>2</sup>.

The birthday celebrations began with presentations held in the Roxbylink auditorium on Saturday afternoon, and kicked off with a Welcome to Country by Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation Chairperson, Chris Larkin.

"Congratulations for reaching your twentieth year, my people absolutely applaud the work that you do," Mr Larkin said.

Current Arid Recovery General Manager Katherine Tuft introduced a range of guests who all spoke about their involvement with the organisation and paid tribute to its achievements over the last 20 years.

"Arid Recovery is a story of in-

spiration, it's a story of inspiration because of hope," Steve Morton, chairperson of the Arid Recovery Board, told the gathering.

"The first time I came here I felt that I had stumbled on something brilliant – it's really inspirational and I'm really glad to be chairing the board and be here today - Steve Morton

"The first time I came here I felt that I had stumbled on something brilliant – it's really inspirational and I'm really glad to be chairing the board and be here today - Steve Morton"

"In the room are the people who made this happen, in particular John and Katherine, but all of you who have helped keep it going."

Dr Morton also paid tribute to the organisations who had supported Arid Recovery over the years, in particular its partners BHP Billiton, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the University of Adelaide.

BHP Billiton Olympic Dam's Jessica Moyle said the company was "exceptionally proud" of Arid Recovery, its team of people and the work and outcomes they consistently achieved.

"We are also really grateful for the

opportunities Arid Recovery provides our workforce and the Roxby Downs community," Ms Moyle said.

"We look forward to continuing this partnership for many years to come."

Co-founder John Read said the 20th birthday was a chance for Arid Recovery to look forward to its fu-

ture, but also look back and remember the many achievements – as well as challenges – the team had faced over the years.

One visit to the reserve by a group of traditional owners from the APY Lands in 2003 had particularly stuck in his mind, he said, and reminded him of the vital link Arid Recovery played in conservation and cultural history.

"None of them had ever seen a bilby before but there were three generations of people following bilby tracks, telling their children the stories, and then they performed a dance inspired by their trip to Arid Recovery," he said.

Co-founder Katherine Moseby took attendees right back to the beginning of Arid Recovery, talking about how she was visiting Roxby Downs through her work as an ecologist and saw the opportunity the release of the calcivirus in 1995 had presented.

Initially called the Ecosystem Re-

search and Recovery Project – ERRP – Arid Recovery was started on land degraded by years of pastoral use and heavy rabbit infestation, but then made rabbit-free thanks to the calcivirus.

Arid Recovery staff, supporters and volunteers worked tirelessly to build a fence around an initial 14km<sup>2</sup> area and completely eradicate it of all rabbits, foxes and cats, with Ms Moseby mentioning the hundreds of hours spent chasing down the last feral animals within the area.

Animals reintroduced to the reserve included the Greater Stick-nest Rat in 1998, Burrowing Bettongs in 1999, Bilbies in 2000 and

the Western Barred Bandicoot in 2001.

Dr Tuft then spoke about 'where to next for Arid Recovery?', telling attendees there were significant opportunities for the project in the future, including looking at other Australian native species that could be introduced.

A number of other presentations by current and past Arid Recovery staff, students/researchers and supporters were also held in the afternoon, before celebrations moved to the reserve on Saturday evening.

A birthday toast was held on the Arid Recovery viewing platform for more than 90 guests – including a number of children – who had travelled from all over Australia to attend, including from as far as Sydney, Darwin, Perth and Canberra.

Guests then enjoyed a dinner and camped out at the reserve overnight.

"It was just wonderful to have so many people back," Dr Tuft said. "It was really touching that people brought their children and families as it was quiet special to see the place mature and the people mature over the 20 years and to come together to reflect and catch up."

## COMMUNITY



◆ RoxbyLink staff tend to camp ovens before serving the campfire meal at the inaugural Starlight Dinner.  
Photo: Kath Tuft

## Publicity and events

INTEREST in sunset tours was at a record high this year, with 148 tours taken over the season. This was in part due to record numbers of travellers exploring the region, and encouraged by the development and distribution of a new Arid Recovery tour brochure and TripAdvisor page. Interns Emily Gregg and Nathan Beerkens took many of the tours, sharing their enthusiasm and growing knowledge of the Reserve.

OLYMPIC DAM Discovery Tours combining a bus tour of the mine with a visit to Arid Recovery continue to be popular, run every Wednesday between April and October.

STARLIGHT DINNERS were trialled as a new tourism offering in partnership with Roxbylink. Chefs from Roxbylink worked with Arid Recovery staff to serve camp oven roasts at tables set under the stars. The trial dinner was well received.

THE WEBSITE has had significant investment this year with new content prepared and the photos updated. Intern Rachael Loneragan contributed to preparation of much of the new content. We are now able to take recurring donations through eWay to facilitate donors to make a monthly pledge in support of Arid Recovery.

SOCIAL MEDIA engagement increased markedly in 2016-17 with the addition of 2,182 new Likes on Arid Recovery's Facebook page. Good content on Facebook has driven more traffic to the website, and particularly more detailed content included in blogs.

A CAMPAIGN was held in 'Stickie September' celebrating and raising awareness of Stick-nest Rats. This resulted in media articles from a number of outlets, including the Age and Sydney Morning Herald and donations of \$3,000 to support Stick-nest Rat conservation.

### PUBLICITY AND EVENTS

➔ New 'Likes' on Facebook. Social media engagement has increased markedly in 2016-17 with a renewed focus on good content.

2,182

902,963

▲ Number of visits to the Arid Recovery website in the past 12 months. This is

3,647

▲ Number of attendees at 68 tours and community events throughout the year





# 2016-17 Financial Report

## FUNDRAISING AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

**I**N-KIND SUPPORT from businesses and individuals continues to be an important source of both income and services to AR. In early 2014 a long term supporter of AR generously donated a house to Arid Recovery. This house, located in Roxby Downs has given our organisation the opportunity to provide staff with subsidised accommodation in town. This will assist us significantly in the future especially during periods where housing is unavailable or unaffordable.

## Balance sheet

ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS	2017	2016
Cash and cash equivalents	\$154,625	\$628,883
Trade and other receivables	\$511,502	\$28,284
Inventories	\$14,349	\$35,565
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$680,476</b>	<b>\$694,546</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Plant and equipment	\$406,999	\$484,412
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	\$406,999	\$484,412
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,087,475</b>	<b>\$1,178,958</b>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	\$22,891	\$30,884
Credit card	(\$973)	\$1,701
Employee benefits	\$46,312	\$37,309
Deferred contribution income	\$435,000	\$400,000
Lease liability	\$12,576	\$33,868
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$515,806	\$42,403
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$571,669</b>	<b>\$675,196</b>
TRUST FUNDS		
Retained earnings	\$571,669	\$675,196
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$571,669</b>	<b>\$675,196</b>

← Western Myall Trees at Moonrise  
Photo by: Diane Coates

## FULL FINANCIAL AND AUDIT REPORT

**A**RID RECOVERY accounts are audited each year by Ernst and Young. The full audited financial report can be found on the Arid Recovery website at [www.aridrecovery.org.au](http://www.aridrecovery.org.au).

## Profit and loss

REVENUE	2017	2016
Sponsorship contributions	\$444,987	\$508,786
Research income	\$117,835	\$81,846
Grants	\$28,870	\$3,000
Fundraising	\$9,633	\$24,169
Donations	\$39,290	\$24,973
Plant & equipment - donated	-	\$200
Other income	\$27,892	\$23,239
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$668,507</b>	<b>\$666,213</b>
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Administration	(\$62,999)	(\$57,519)
Depreciation	(\$55,386)	(\$45,633)
Wages and salaries	(\$460,868)	(\$399,773)
Motor vehicles	(\$29,516)	(\$34,241)
Research	(\$411,851)	(\$36,909)
Reserve maintenance	(\$31,221)	(\$27,890)
Fencing material*	(\$64,616)	-
Flora & fauna management	(\$22,054)	(\$1,904)
Volunteer and community	(\$1,669)	(\$4,716)
Other expenses	(\$10,157)	-
Write-off**	(\$21,697)	-
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>(\$772,034)</b>	<b>(\$608,585)</b>
<b>NET PROFIT / (LOSS)</b>	<b>(\$103,527)</b>	<b>\$49,673</b>

\* \$21,508 of the 2017 expenditure on Fencing Materials is for use of fencing materials in stock as at 30 June 2016.

\*\* Fencing material used from stockpile.



SUPPORTERS

# Thank you to the sponsors and supporters of Arid Recovery



Arid Recovery is a conservation initiative supported by BHP Billiton, the SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, the University of Adelaide and the local community.

Thanks to the many organisations who have assisted us over the past 12 months and continue to support the work of Arid Recovery:

Alliance Airlines	Global Leadership Foundation	Roxby Bakery	RoxFM
Andamooka Yacht Club	Greyhound Australia	Roxby Downs Motor Inn	SAAL NRM Board
Arid Lands Botanic Garden	Inspiring South Australia	Roxbylink	Sodexo
Bianco, BSH	Mitre 10 Roxby Downs	Roxby Fabrication and Engineering	Spotless
Bush Heritage Australia	Monadelphous Engineering	Roxby Pest Management	Toll Group
Cara Edwards Design	NRM Jobs	Roxby Traders	Woolworths
Delicious by Elke	The Monitor newspaper	Roxby Travel and Cruise	
Ernst & Young	Reece Plumbing Whyalla	Roxby Downs Area School	
Frankston Rotary Club	Richard Bienke		

You can assist the ongoing work of Arid Recovery through a variety of ways. Visit the website or contact the Arid Recovery Office on 08 8671 2402 for further information.

## Donate

Donate online or over the phone to assist the work of Arid Recovery.

## Volunteer

Join us for a working bee or assist around the office, there are many opportunities to volunteer with the staff of Arid Recovery.

## Join

Become a follower of Arid Recovery and receive our regular e-news updates.

## Sponsor

Contact the Arid Recovery office if you or your organisation would like to become a sponsor.



↑ Zebra Finch Photo by: Nathan Beerkens

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