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# MEDIA RELEASE

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**A WIN FOR AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION:  
AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY TO ACQUIRE SANCTUARIES  
FROM EARTH SANCTUARIES LTD**

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) has entered into an agreement to acquire four sanctuaries from Earth Sanctuaries Ltd (ESL), the company founded by Dr John Wamsley. The agreement represents a win for both organisations and particularly for Australian wildlife.

The four sanctuaries, covering over 85,000 hectares in total, are Scotia in western NSW, Yookamurra in the mallee country of South Australia, Buckaringa in the Flinders Ranges (SA) and Dakalanta in the Eyre Peninsula (SA).

Chairman of the non-profit AWC, businessman Martin Copley, said that the four properties were some of the conservation 'jewels' in the Earth Sanctuaries estate.

"As a result of ESL's successful conservation practices, the four properties are home to some of Australia's most endangered species, including Bilbies, Numbats and Mala."

The sale will see AWC acquire its first sanctuaries in NSW and South Australia and will increase the total area of AWC sanctuaries to more than 1.3 million acres.

Martin Copley thanked the Federal Environment Minister, The Hon David Kemp, for the Commonwealth government's contribution of \$1.7 million from the Natural Heritage Trust, which will ensure Scotia and its wildlife will be protected as part of the National Reserve System. AWC will provide the balance of the purchase price for the four sanctuaries of more than \$5 million.

“AWC will launch a national campaign to raise funds to assist with the conservation of its properties. AWC hopes that major donors will come forward from throughout Australia to support this cause. Already a major donor in Sydney and another two in Perth have pledged significant financial assistance toward the acquisition of the four ESL sanctuaries.”

Martin Copley said ESL’s decision to restructure and divest some of its sanctuaries offered an opportunity for AWC to implement one of the most exciting conservation projects in Australia, namely the Scotia project.

Martin Copley also paid tribute to the vision and conservation achievements of Dr John Wamsley.

“Dr Wamsley has had remarkable success in saving endangered species and in raising public awareness about our threatened mammals. AWC hopes to build upon his legacy at these four sanctuaries.”

Dr Wamsley, although disappointed that ESL would not continue in its current form, expressed his support for the sale to AWC and indicated that he was pleased the sanctuaries were going to a good home.

ESL has reached agreement to sell the four properties to AWC subject to receiving approval from a meeting of ESL shareholders and receiving other third party approvals.

Further information on the four properties and on AWC, an independent non-profit environment organisation, is attached.

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## **AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY**

### ***The organisation***

Australian Wildlife Conservancy is an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation of Australian wildlife. The goal of AWC is to establish a network of non-government sanctuaries across Australia protecting a range of habitats and, in particular, providing for the conservation of threatened species.

### ***The sanctuaries***

Australian Wildlife Conservancy currently has five sanctuaries covering over 450,000 hectares in the Kimberley, Shark Bay, the mid-west of WA and the forests of south-western Australia.

Mornington Station, covering 312,000 hectares in the central Kimberley is one of the world's largest non-government conservation areas. Faure Island is a 6000 hectare world heritage listed island in Shark Bay. AWC will shortly finalise the acquisition of a 40,000 hectare property in north Queensland adjacent to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

### ***The personnel***

Australian Wildlife Conservancy was founded by businessman Martin Copley, who is the Chairman of the Board of AWC. The Board of Directors of Australian Wildlife Conservancy includes eminent scientists such as Tim Flannery and Dr Barry Wilson (former head of Nature Conservation at CALM). The Chief Executive of Australian Wildlife Conservancy is Atticus Fleming, former advisor to previous Federal Environment Minister, Senator Robert Hill.

Martin Copley founded the purchase of Australian Wildlife Conservancy's first five sanctuaries. Australian Wildlife Conservancy has now initiated a fund-raising campaign designed to attract a significant number of additional financial supporters, including major donors. This will enable Australian Wildlife Conservancy to continue and expand its operations.

### *Conservation programs*

A special focus of Australian Wildlife Conservancy's work is the conservation of Australia's threatened mammal fauna. Australia has the worst record in the world for mammal extinctions – 20 species have become extinct since European settlement and around 50 others are currently included on the national threatened species list.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy is determined to play a significant role in protecting our threatened mammals by purchasing important areas of habitat and eradicating or controlling feral predators, particularly the fox and cat.

Karakamia and Paruna are Australian Wildlife Conservancy sanctuaries which have been established in the hills east of Perth. Karakamia, covering 250ha, is fully enclosed by 9kms of vermin-proof fence and has had all foxes, cats and rabbits eradicated. At Paruna, a 2,000ha wildlife corridor linking Walyunga and Avon Valley National Parks, Australian Wildlife Conservancy co-operates with the WA government in implementing a regional feral animal control program. Both sanctuaries have now had a number of rare or threatened mammals re-introduced within their protected areas including Woylie, Quenda, Tammar Wallaby, Quokka, Numbat and Western Ringtail Possum. Many of these mammals are now frequently seen on guided night walks which are held at Karakamia. The nationally threatened Black-flanked Rock-wallaby has recently been reintroduced into Paruna.

At our Faure Island sanctuary, a 6,000 hectare island in Shark Bay, Australian Wildlife Conservancy has eradicated cats and is planning to re-introduce several threatened species. By mid-2002, AWC hopes that populations of Shark Bay Mice and the Burrowing Bettong will be resident on Faure Island.

Australian Wildlife Conservancy also has conservation programs underway at Mornington station in the central Kimberley and Mt Gibson station, a 130,000 hectare station on the strategic 'eucalypt-mulga' line in the mid-west of WA.

## **Properties to be Acquired by AWC from Earth Sanctuaries Ltd**

### ***1. Scotia Sanctuary***

Scotia Sanctuary covers around 65,000 hectares in western NSW, around 210 kilometres south of Broken Hill. Dominated by beautiful old growth mallee and casuarinas (Belah), it includes spinifex country and impressive sand dunes. Mammal species reintroduced into Scotia include Bridled Nail-Tailed Wallabies, Mala, Burrowing Bettongs, Bilbies and Stick Nest Rats. Over 145 species of birds inhabit Scotia, including rare species such as Malleefowl, the Grey Goshawk and the Black-eared Miner. Scotia will be managed by AWC in partnership with the Earth Sanctuaries Foundation.

### ***2. Yookamurra***

Yookamurra is a 5,024 hectare property located between the Murray River and the Barossa Valley, around 2 hours drive from Adelaide. Mainly old growth mallee, Yookamurra is home to a range of mammals including Bilbies and Woylies. It is home to perhaps Australia's most successful numbat conservation program.

### ***3. Buckaringa***

Buckaringa is a 2,000 hectare property located in the heart of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia. It is characterised by stunning gorges and a diverse flora typical of the Flinders Ranges. Most importantly, it is home to a large population of the threatened Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby. The Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby is one of Australia's most beautiful mammals.

### ***4. Dakalanta***

Dakalanta is located at the centre of the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. Dakalanta, covering 13,000 hectares, is subject to a heritage agreement which prevents any development other than for conservation. Dakalanta contains mallee on sand dunes and sheoak country, and is inhabited by species such as Malleefowl and Southern Hairy-nosed Wombats.