

#GiftYourChristmas



Bilby Update: 2016 in review

Over the course of this year Save the Bilby Fund has achieved a series of major milestones shared with you in the following Bilby Update. As the momentum builds further in 2017, your donations are now more critical than ever in enabling us to continue this essential work. Our Fund does not receive any recurrent government funding and relies on the generosity of everyday people to support our cause.

This festive season we have partnered with everydayhero to help you donate through 'GiftYourChristmas'. So please support our fundraiser and help us to save the much-loved and iconic bilby that is facing extinction in the wild.



The bilby is a flagship species for our increasingly threatened wildlife in the outback. Working to ensure its future also supports the conservation of Australia's arid zone and its other unique species.

Sincerest thanks for your ongoing support and best wishes for a safe and prosperous festive season.

Kev Bradley

CEO, [Save the Bilby Fund](#)

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2017 - All about moving ahead with major milestones

The first few months of 2016 was dominated by the relocation and redevelopment of the [Charleville Bilby Experience](#) that has been the foundation and shopfront for our Fund since its inception in 1999. The new facilities at the historic Charleville Railway Station opened their doors at Easter. Our official opening was held as part of our National Bilby Day celebrations on 9 September by Murweh Shire Mayor Annie Liston and our patron Dawn Fraser AO MBE. We extend our sincerest thanks to Dr Peter Sherwood (Save the Bilby Fund Patron) for his generous donation and considerable support of this ambitious, important and successful initiative. The new Charleville Bilby Experience (CBE) is performing extremely well in its first year of operation with more shows and increased attendance and merchandise sales achieved through the purpose-built facilities.

Mid-year we successfully completed the **upgrade of the 'floppy top'** of the 30-km perimeter of the Currawinya Bilby Fence to improve its effectiveness against feral cats. Many of our supporters helped fund construction of the fence which was completed in 2003. Without their generous support this project would never have been possible.

In July, we finalised and signed a revised memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP) and Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) to deliver against a new **Bilby Release Strategy** for the Bilby Fence at Currawinya National Park. This revised MoU clearly defines roles and responsibilities regarding our intensive bilby conservation breeding program in Charleville, the operation of the CBE, management of the area within the Bilby Fence and its role within the broader National Recovery Plan for the Greater Bilby. The MoU also articulates our agreed commitment to the national recovery effort for the species to re-instate Currawinya as a thriving insurance population and as a soft release site for bilbies back onto the national park when the threatening processes, such as introduced predators, have been controlled.

On 3-4 November DEHP/NPSR handed over the bilby **captive breeding facility** located at the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service headquarters to Save the Bilby Fund. These facilities in Charleville are considered critical to the broader conservation breeding program for the Greater Bilby and to the successful recovery

of the species. This includes future releases to the wild to support declining remnant subpoulations throughout the species' current and former range.



An engaged audience at the Charleville Bilby Experience

Co-ordinating fundraising events and educational activities



Around 200 people attended the inaugural **Fur Ball in Charleville** on 10 September as part of our National Bilby Day activities. The Dawnie Express steam train and attendance by Dawn Fraser AO MBE herself (Patron) and Bilby Brothers Frank Manthey OAM and Peter McCrae, and the 'Luke Curnow Conservation Award' being won by Joanne Johnstone of EnviroPrint (pictured with Frank Manthey at left) were highlights of this Charleville regional extravaganza. This event was held to raise awareness and much-needed funds to support our work and cause on **National Bilby Day**. We successfully had this special day gazetted by the Australian Government in 2005. The weekend's activities attracted significant media attention and brought many people into the town from areas near and far. This helped boost outback towns and suffering regional businesses and

individuals following extended drought and hard times in the west.

We hosted our pilot **citizen science trip** '2016 Bilby Tracks' to Currawinya National Park. This nine-day field trip with 13 citizen scientists worked with Prof. Jean-Mark Hero (pictured with 'Bilby Tracker' Cass) and his team from Griffith University to conduct survey work inside the Bilby Fence. We have received some wonderful testimonials.

The **proposed dates for the '2017 Bilby Tracks'** trips to Currawinya have just been announced and will be confirmed by the end of the year: April 22-29, June 15-22, Sept 9-16, November 4-11. These trips will continue the survey and management work needed to prepare for the next release of bilbies there.

[Find out more and express your interest](#)



Continuing our commitment to educating young Australians about our unique and precious wildlife and the environment we launched our pilot curriculum-linked national schools competition “**Save the Bilby Challenge**”. We asked Aussie school students to inspire public support for saving bilbies. Winners were announced National Schools Bilby Day, 9 September. Our 2017 competition details coming soon.

[Find out more](#)



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Valuing the knowledge of Australia's Traditional Custodians



In June this year there was an incredibly important initiative, the Bilby or 'Ninu' Festival. It involved many Indigenous ranger groups and was hosted by the Indigenous Desert Alliance and conducted in the Kiwirrkurra Indigenous Protected Area. The community at Kiwirrkurra is one of the most remote in Australia. The festival was supported by the Australian Government, Save the Bilby Fund and a host of conservation and wildlife/land management bodies including Bush Heritage, WWF Australia and The Nature Conservancy. Holding this event was a priority outcome from our Fund's initiative of the [2015 Greater Bilby Recovery Summit](#) --- a major milestone in bilby



We continue to provide support for the purchase of trail cameras and travel to important bilby events to Craig Doudle. Craig is a committed and largely self-funded bilby advocate working on bilbies primarily in the remote Kimberley Region of Western Australia who has been a passionate and long time supporter of our fund. It is our intention to continue to support Craig and the many Indigenous groups he works with in addition to his involvement with our programs based in western Queensland.

conservation considering that up to 80% of the remaining wild populations of bilbies currently occur on Indigenous-owned or -managed land in Australia. Watch the short film above to learn more about the festival and its significance.



Feral cat image from a trail camera

Winning grants and sponsor support

Sales of Pink Lady Chocolates (Fyna Foods) Easter Bilby Chocolates raised in excess of \$43 000 for the Fund in 2016. They also released their “**Aussie Bush Friends**” every day range so that chocolate purchases can support bilbies through a percentage-of-sales donation all year round. We are exceptionally grateful for PL’s ongoing support and commitment showing increases of approximately 25% each year in their contribution to our work since establishment of our partnership in 2012.

We received a \$10,000 donation from long-term sponsors **Mondelez International** (Cadbury) for their Easter chocolate sales. This is the third successive year that we have received a donation and we are thankful for the ongoing support

Grant funding received from the **South West Natural Resource Management** assisted with the purchase of field equipment for detecting feral cats and other animals to support citizen science activities on Bilby Tracks trips.

As always we thank these groups for this generous support, vital to our ongoing conservation work.



The gates to the Bilby Fence at Currawinya National Park

Broadening our communication networks and supporter base

The overhaul of our website produced a more contemporary look and improved its functionality. We now also have increased activity across several **social media** platforms for our fundraising and promotional and educational campaigns including on 8000+ likes on FaceBook, Instagram and now have a presence on YouTube as “The Bilby Channel”.

The Wiggles community service announcements ran again this year through WIN, Imparja and Austereo network in the lead up to National Bilby Day and have had hundreds of view through YouTube. Thanks Wiggles!



Developing agreements, strategies and plans

The Currawinya Bilby Release Strategy is nearing completion and is being developed by the Fund in collaboration with the Zoo and Aquarium Association, the Australasian Species Management Program, the DEHP and the NPSR.

The **Currawinya Management Strategy** is in the final stages of development and will be aligned to deliver against agreed obligations set out in our current MoU with DEHP and NPSR, Currawinya Bilby Release Strategy and Interim Conservation Plan 2015.

A new National Recovery Plan based on the outcomes from the STBF-initiated Greater Bilby Recovery Summit and Meta-population Plan for the **Greater Bilby National Recovery Team** are in development and will be available for public consultation and broader comment and input early 2017. It is due for finalisation mid year. STBF is committed to this process as it is critical to effective recovery and alignment with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's 'One Plan' approach agreed to at the Summit. STBF is Chair of the recovery team and provides a secretariat to progress implementation of agreed priorities and better recovery program coordination.



Campsite breakfast during our 2016 Bilby Tracks citizen science trip to outback Queensland.

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