



AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE & NATURE RECOVERY FUND

RESPOND, RESTORE, AND BUILD A RESILIENT FUTURE

NOVEMBER 2020

THE PATH TO RECOVERY

2019-2020 BUSHFIRE SEASON

Australia's unprecedented 2019 – 2020 bushfire season devastated the nation. Across the country, approximately 47 million acres were burned, with 31 million acres primarily in forest and bushland habitats. Tragically, 34 lives were lost and close to 2,700 homes were destroyed.

In January we estimated that 1.25 billion animals may have been killed by the fires. We now know that the actual number is shockingly higher. Six months after the fires, we published a report, *Australia's 2019-2020 Bushfires: The Wildlife Toll*, which estimated that nearly 3 billion animals perished or were displaced by the fires, pushing many threatened species to the brink of extinction.

Thanks to your generosity and the generosity of other supporters around the world, we raised **\$45 million** for the WWF Australian Wildlife & Nature Recovery Fund. With your help, we were able to act quickly and at scale to deliver emergency funds to the frontline, mobilize resources to help Australia's wildlife, support Indigenous fire managers and local communities adapt and recover, and prepare for the road to greener and safer recovery.

At the peak of the fires, during our first phase of the WWF Australian Wildlife & Nature Recovery Fund, we responded by providing emergency support to our partner organizations on the frontlines that were rescuing and caring for the wildlife impacted by the fires. We now are shifting to the second phase of recovery, working to restore landscapes and protect wildlife. We are also laying groundwork for the third phase of our plan, building resilience for the future of Australia by cultivating multi-year, high impact investments in nature through government, business, and community partnerships.



WWF AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE & NATURE RECOVERY FUND

THEMATIC ALLOCATION OF THE BUSHFIRE FUND



WILDLIFE RESPONDERS

Partner with on-the-ground wildlife response organizations to enhance Australia's capacity to respond and care for wildlife impacted by bushfires

\$6 MILLION



SPECIES RECOVERY & ADAPTATION

Identify key species in high-risk landscapes and implement solutions that will better enable recovery and resilience to a changing climate

\$8 MILLION



LANDSCAPE RESTORATION & PROTECTION

Protect critical habitat by sharing advice, accelerating reforestation plans, and working to restore what we have lost with urgency

\$6 MILLION



WILDLIFE & CLIMATE LAWS

Advocate to ensure a strong case is made to enhance the effectiveness of Australian law in protecting the natural environment

\$2 MILLION



GLOBAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Collaborate with others around the world and share best practices in fire and climate disaster response to better prepare for future emergencies

\$3 MILLION



STABILIZE CLIMATE CHANGE

Draw on leading climate science to assist in mobilizing critical interventions to help stabilize our climate

\$7 MILLION



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

Enhance the number and capacity of Indigenous rangers and fire managers by incorporating traditional knowledge into natural resource management

\$8 MILLION



INNOVATION & ENGAGEMENT

Support global innovation, using Australia as an example for regenerative solutions capable of maximum impact

\$5 MILLION

RESPONSE PHASE I RESPOND WITH URGENCY

At the peak of the fires, our focus was to get emergency support to our frontline partners, rescuing and caring for fire-impacted wildlife. We partnered with over 40 wildlife rescue and care organizations in bushfire zones and directed immediate and urgent funds to the emergency at scale. This included providing medical supplies, transportation, food, and shelter.

This year, we allocated \$15 million of the WWF Australian Wildlife and Nature Recovery Fund to 64 bushfire response projects. These projects by theme include:

-  9 Wildlife Responders
-  10 Species Recovery & Adaptation
-  13 Landscape Restoration & Protection
-  5 Wildlife & Climate Laws
-  4 Global Climate Emergency
-  11 Stabilize Climate Change
-  8 Indigenous Engagement
-  4 Innovation & Engagement





INVESTING FOR IMPACT EXPANDING CAPACITY OF WILDLIFE CARE FACILITIES

Through the WWF Australian Wildlife & Nature Recovery Fund, our early distributions supported on-the-ground partners and bolstered their capacity to respond to emergencies. These investments will also help them prepare for future fire seasons. Koala populations were severely impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfire season. Wildlife responders worked diligently to get the injured koalas the medical care they needed, but some regions were more isolated than others and the nearest wildlife hospitals were hours away.

Friends of the Koala is an organization specializing in rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing koalas in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. Due to the location of their facility, they are not usually impacted by fires and do not have the capability to treat koalas in critical condition. During the 2019-2020 bushfire season, they were overwhelmed with the number of koalas in need of urgent medical care. Though some could be treated on-site, a majority had to be transported out of the region to other wildlife hospitals that had the necessary equipment and capacity to help koalas in critical care. The nearest hospital was an hour and a half drive by car, exposing the animals to a significant amount of stress during transportation. Our support provided critical veterinary equipment to **Friends of the Koala** and helped it become a licensed specialist Koala Hospital - meaning most koalas could be treated on site.

As we shift to *Response Phase II*, we will continue to support our wildlife response partners in critical regions by developing new wildlife hospitals and continuing to expand and modernize existing koala clinics in the New South Wales Northern Rivers region. This will give our partners increased capacity to perform surgery and other specialized medical care, and reduce animals' exposure to stress from being transported to wildlife hospitals outside of the region.

RESPONSE PHASE II

PROTECT & RESTORE WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPES

Now that the fires have subsided, we turn our focus to the road to recovery and future-proofing Australia for the fire seasons ahead. With the generosity of our supporters in Australia and abroad, we are working tirelessly with our partners on the ground to restore what has been lost in the fires and protect remaining wildlife.

Our projects include:

- Further drive the **Towards 2 Billion Trees 10 Point Plan** to save and grow two billion trees by 2030, which will ensure the welfare of native wildlife is addressed while investing in research and development to grow carbon farming opportunities
- Launch the **Greening Australia and WWF Climate Ready National Bushfire Landscape Restoration Program**
- Launch **Koalas Forever**, where we will reforest 10 million hectares of native forest and woodlands on cleared or degraded lands and improve resilience against climate change and drought
- Launch the WWF and Environmental Defender Office partnership called **Protecting the Unburnt** to secure enhanced protection of six priority landscapes that now provide critical refuge for wildlife post-fires
- Build upon our engagement with Indigenous cultural fire practitioners by launching **WWF Right Fire for Country** partnership and **Cultural Fire Mentors** Training Program while expanding the **Women's Rangers Environmental Network**





RESPONSE PHASE III FUTURE-PROOFING AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

Through the WWF Australian Wildlife and Nature Recovery Fund, we have leverage to ensure lasting and long-term impacts. We are calling on individuals, governments, communities, and businesses to come together to build a stronger, more resilient Australia.

Some of the opportunities ahead include:

- Driving the shift to a new regenerative economy
- Securing Australia's natural resources
- Mitigating the impacts of climate change and driving climate preparedness and adaptation
- Identifying and supporting community-led solutions capable of replication nationally

THANK YOU

We couldn't do any of this work without the generosity of our supporters. Thanks to you, we were able to provide emergency funding to over 40 wildlife rescue and care organizations, enabling a quick and effective response at scale.

While there were many stories of tragedy, there are also many stories of hope made possible by the brave first responders, rescuers, and veterinarians who worked around the clock to care for injured native wildlife. You were vital in making these hopeful stories possible. Together, we responded to the 2019-2020 bushfire crisis and are helping secure Australia's natural resources for people and nature well into the future. Thank you.

To learn more, visit worldwildlife.org/AustraliaBushfireFund



Photo Credit

Cover: Koala pictured in a burnt tree on Kangaroo Island © Brad Fleet / Newspix / WWF-Australia

Page 2: Abigail Sexton (WWF-Australia) observing Fabio the ringtail possum © Leonie Sii / WWF-Australia

Page 3: Top left clockwise: Minty, an injured possum © Matthew Harris / WWF-Australia, Kangaroo that survived the fires in Latham Conservation Park © Paul Fahy / WWF-Australia, Aerial of the Kangaroo Island bushfire aftermath © Sii Studio / WWF-Australia, Bushfire aftermath in Australian Outback © Jamen Percy / WWF / Shutterstock, Abigail Sexton (WWF-Australia) observes the aftermath of the bushfires near Surfs Beach © Leonie Sii / WWF-Australia, Bushfire in Bowraville, NSW © Adam Dederer, Bushfire in Western Australia © Richard McLellan / WWF, Unloading carrots for a food drop in the Blue Mountains © Veronica Joseph / WWF-Australia

Page 4: An orphaned swamp wallaby joey in the care of wildlife carer Erika Page © Leonie Sii / WWF-Australia

Page 5: Maryanne the koala with Darren Grover, Head of Healthy Land and Seascapes, WWF-Australia © Mark Symons / WWF-Australia

Page 6: Burnt out forest in the Black Range Fire in Tallaganda National Park © Leonie Sii / WWF-Australia

Page 7: Bushfire at Broulee Beach, New South Wales © mattwilliamsphoto / WWF-Australia

Page 8: Bushfire aftermath at Batemans Bay, NSW © Leonie Sii / WWF-Australia

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