

BULLO RIVER STATION



2025

SUSTAINABILITY

REPORT



**BULLO RIVER STATION IS ON MIRIWOONG AND
GAJIRRAWOONG COUNTRY, THE TRADITIONAL
CUSTODIANS OF THE EAST KIMBERLEY REGION.**

**WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO THEIR ELDERS
PAST AND PRESENT. WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE
THAT THEY WERE THE ORIGINAL SUSTAINABLE
FARMERS AND MANAGERS OF THIS LAND AS
WE LOOK TO CONSTANTLY LEARN AND
IMPROVE OUR OWN PRACTICES.**

FOREWORD

Words by Julian Burt, Proprietor

What if we could find new ways which were less impactful on the natural world? New ways where the necessity to produce food is still an ever important objective, but doing it in a way that allows the natural world to still have a home.

To drive broad change you need to act broadly. The purchase of Bullo River Station was a considerable acquisition of 400,000 acres, with a dual purpose of improving the pastoral enterprise and equally creating a utopian plan for conservation. A unique vision for the future was with us, one where you could have a profitable food-producing business with an utterly thriving natural environment. If this was achieved, then it represented a profound change in the pastoral business model and approach.

Providing rigour and integrity with respect to achieving and then measuring this goal, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) was engaged to run a layer of ecological management over Bullo in concert with the pastoral and hospitality businesses. Heading into the seventh year of the partnership, we are still trying to understand what species are extant on this vast property. However, the fire regimes and feral animal eradication programs are well ingrained in our annual management plan and we have seen good improvement in both of these areas.

Our mission is also to put back what we have lost by our own hand. Thus, we will commence planning this year to reintroduce a number of mammals that have been lost since the arrival of Europeans in Northern Australia.

This we hope will see the extent of known Taxa calling Bullo River Station home again. A challenging goal, but at The Landsmith Collection we do things differently and this is essential to our core belief of sustainability.

The inaugural partnership with AWC has now been duplicated by pastoral organisations such as Northern Australian Pastoral Company (NAPCO/AWC) and Hewitt Agriculture with Bush Heritage. These are significant achievements of which we are quietly proud.

This, being our first Bullo River Station Sustainability Report by The Landsmith Collection, provides a frank assessment of where we are in respect of our goal for sustainable conservation and food creation. It will provide key direction in various areas needed for improvement, but it also tells us the wins we have had. It will set out staged cultural and system changes to enable pathway improvement, allowing us to measure that progress to be set out in our next report.

If we were to sit back and be asked, "what does eternal sustainability look like?", then it's essentially the four pillars of social, environment, human and economic, these pillars, of course, being adapted to the Bullo model. Ultimately, as an organisation, the way we treat our land, our animals, our own people and our guests is what will sustain us, eternally.



OUR COMMITMENT

Overseeing more than 400,000 acres (around 162,000 hectares) of incredible ecosystems – from spectacular rocky gorges to sprawling green floodplains and savanna woodlands – Bullo River Station is a remote property that brings together a working cattle station, an exceptional visitor experience and biodiversity conservation.

As the current stewards of this remarkable land, our three core priorities and goals are:



CONSERVATION

An intact, biodiverse ecology within a low-impact tourism operation.



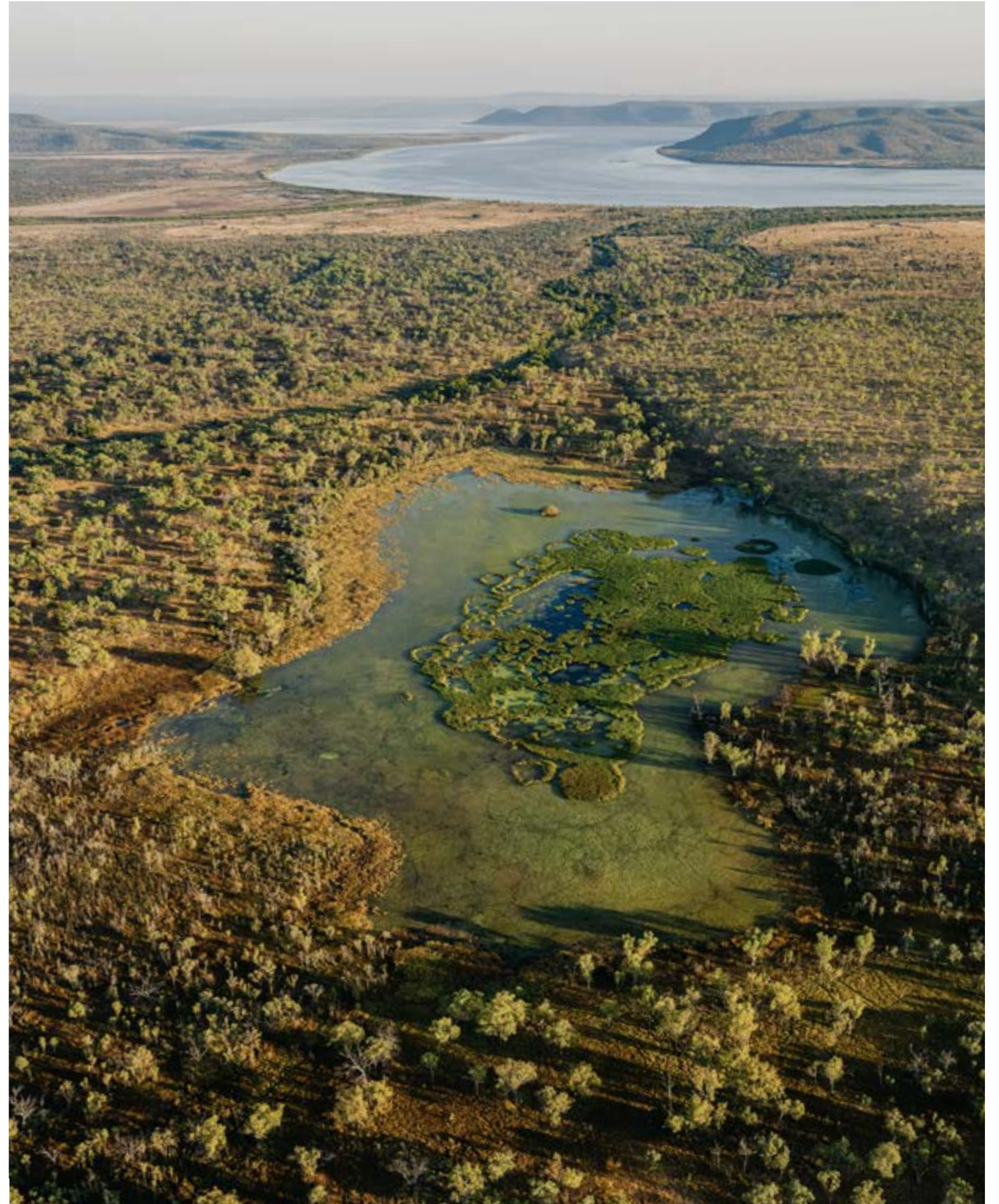
REGENERATION

A working, profitable cattle station within a healthy and thriving landscape.



CULTURE AND EXPERIENCE

An immersive and life-changing remote guest experience bringing food, land and culture together.



DISCOVER BULLO



LOCATION

Victoria River District, Northern Territory

TOTAL STATION SIZE

162,000 ha (approx. 400,000 acres)

CLIMATE

Tropical, with two distinct seasons: wet and dry

PASTORAL AREA

18,400 ha (~45,500 acres)

CONSERVATION AREA

141,600 ha (~350,000 acres) Special Management Zone surrounding pastoral area.
3,600 ha (~8,900 acres) selected conservation areas within pastoral area

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

17 broad habitat types, containing 33 distinct vegetation communities

TOTAL NO. SPECIES

395 species, made up of 47 mammals, 93 reptiles, 222 birds and 33 frogs

CATTLE BREEDS

Wagyu and Brahman

NO. CATTLE

2,500 as of September 2024

NO. OF GUEST ROOMS

12 rooms

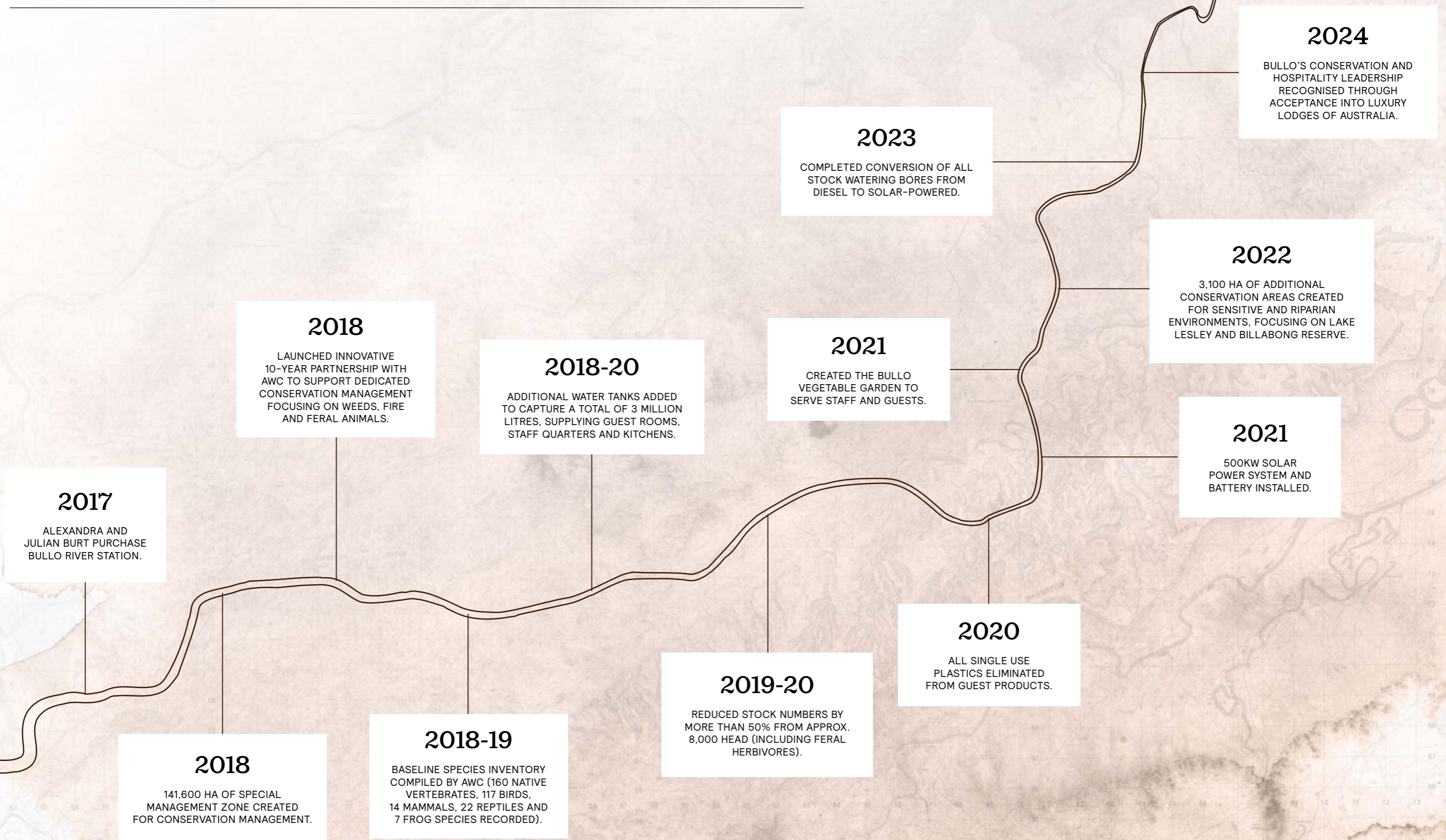
AVERAGE ANNUAL GUEST NIGHTS

1,100 nights

GUESTS TO DATE (SINCE 2019)

1,891 guests

THE JOURNEY SO FAR



CATTLE AND CONSERVATION: WORKING TOGETHER

For most people, when we think of 'conservation', we don't think of putting 'cattle' in the same sentence. When owners, Alexandra and Julian Burt, embarked on a groundbreaking, 10-year partnership with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) in 2018, this work was firmly focused on turning those old ideas on their heads and moving towards a future where conservation and pastoral activities can co-exist.

Bullo and AWC are working together to deliver scientific biodiversity monitoring plus taking on the big land management challenges for any pastoral property – fire, ferals and weeds. This work includes an ongoing planned 'mosaic' burning program, regular feral animal control programs, and comprehensive surveys to monitor threats and introduced species to help with management programs.

We have created dedicated conservation areas at Bullo, such as the Special Management Zone and conservation areas that are collaboratively managed with AWC. These areas effectively wrap around the best areas for pastoral grazing, as well as pockets of ecologically significant and sensitive habitat areas. However, what makes Bullo different is that we take a holistic approach that goes beyond only separation and exclusion. We bring conservation thinking and practices into the pastoral areas to create a win-win situation.

For example, we have completed a Long-Term Carrying Capacity Assessment, to work out a herd number that will allow land recovery and improvement. We are gradually reducing stocking rates as a result, installing

more water points and dividing up some paddocks to help with rotational grazing (meaning it's easier for paddocks to be rested). The two other case studies in this report tell more of the story of how we bring cattle and conservation together – through managing the timing of grazing in certain, sensitive habitats (page 11) and our weed management program (page 16).



"The whole idea with Bullo is to consider both cattle and conservation, and not to degrade the country, to look after it, to make it better than it was, to have more biodiversity than when you found it."

JULIAN BURT, CO-FOUNDER

CATTLE AND CONSERVATION: WORKING TOGETHER



There are some promising and notable early results from the collective impact of our pastoral, tourism and conservation work:

- In 2021, AWC made the first captures of the carnivorous marsupial the False Antechinus (*Pseudantechinus sp.*), previously only seen on camera trap images. The team has also encountered a range of grass finches including the Star Finch (*Neochmia ruficauda*), the Masked Finch (*Poephila personata*), and large numbers of the endangered Gouldian Finch (*Chloebia gouldiae*).
- After seven years of AWC fire management in the Special Management Zone, the AWC 2023 Fire Analysis reported the significant changes in the seasonality of fire, with planned burn-offs in the early dry season making up a higher proportion of fire-scars, despite several challenging years of dry conditions with heatwaves in the last seven years.
- Targeted culling in the last two years has removed close to 2,000 feral animals from across the property including pigs, buffalo, donkeys and cattle. The regular program of feral animal control by station staff and AWC indicates that some habitats are showing signs of less destruction, particularly sensitive riparian and wetland areas. This is in line with the desired trend and pattern.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

When it comes to biodiversity and land management, Bullo is on a pathway of generational change.

We are at the start of a long-lived journey, however, there are some promising and notable early results across our pastoral, conservation and tourism work.



SUN POWER

On average, 55% of our electricity comes from on-site solar power generation (including battery storage) throughout the year, with the rest from diesel generators. Most outback stations rely entirely on diesel. We have experienced one major solar system breakdown in the last five years, resulting in solar generation at around 50% that year.



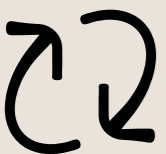
Paddock-to-Plate

20% of vegetables are now grown on-station with staff only eating Bullo beef and pork. Roughly 70% of all beef served to guests is Bullo-grown beef. This has helped us reduce food miles and avoid packaging, where possible. The remaining fresh food is sourced from local orchards and growers in Kununurra. Only a small amount of remaining food is sourced from commercial suppliers outside the region.



SINGLE-USE PLASTIC REDUCTION

100% of guest products are compostable or biodegradable, and we now purchase and decant bulk quantities, reducing packaging waste. We no longer offer single-use plastic water bottles to guests, and gift them a refillable water bottle instead.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

We purchase recycled bamboo toilet paper from social enterprise Emotions, which donates 50% of proceeds to mental health charities. In 2024, we moved to local indigenous businesses, Garingbarr and Yaye, for bathroom amenities.



COMPOSTING

Most organic waste on Bullo is dealt with naturally and ends up back in the soil. We make our own compost from cattle yard hay and manure, and food preparation scraps are fed to pigs and chickens.



CONSERVATION FIRSTS

First Northern Territory captures of the carnivorous marsupial False Antechinus (*Pseudantechinus sp.*), previously only seen on camera trap images.

The Mitchell's Water Monitor (*Varanus mitchelli*) was detected at Bullo for the first time, a highly vulnerable species in the Northern Territory.

The first live trapping of the Scaly-Tailed Possum (*Wyulda squamicaudata*) in the Northern Territory, a rare and vulnerable species.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

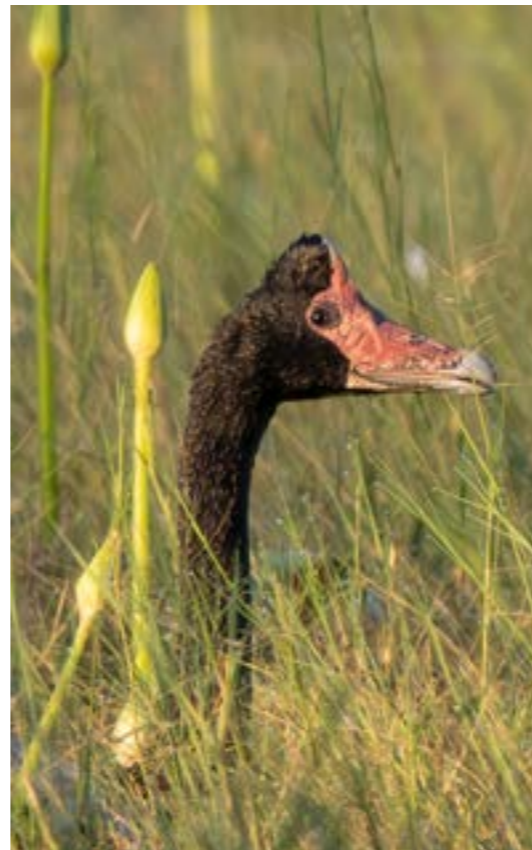
In-kind support for the Kununurra Rodeo, Campdraft and the Kununurra Show in 2023 and 2024. Annual Bullo stay (worth \$16,200) as an auction prize to support organisations like the Isolated Children's Parents' Association and the Women and Infants Research Foundation. We also sponsored the Kununurra Race Club in 2023 and are currently sponsoring the cattle section presentation at the Kununurra Show.



LOCAL BUSINESS

The Station supports over 20 businesses on a regular basis through the procurement of goods and services. The guest operations team actively work with and promote 15 different Kununurra-based tour and hospitality businesses for pre- or post-Bullo travel experiences.

PROTECTING HABITAT IN GRAZING AREAS



Bullo River Station is a well-known bird watcher's paradise with 200 resident and migratory bird species spotted on the property. To observe and enjoy these birds is a hallmark of the Bullo experience, and an opportunity for anyone to reconnect with the landscape and be immersed in the sounds and sights of bird watching.

Bullo has implemented two initiatives in the pastoral areas to protect and support wetland habitats. Among the spectacular diversity of waterbirds at Bullo, the Magpie Goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*) is a firm fixture

and much-loved sight at the station. The Magpie Goose is widespread throughout coastal northern and eastern Australia and inhabits floodplains and wet grasslands.

According to Birdlife Australia, during the breeding season Magpie Geese build their nests in secluded places, usually close to wetlands. The nest is almost single-handedly constructed by the male, and usually consists of a simple unlined cup placed either in a floating platform of trampled reeds or built in tree tops. Pairs of geese mate for life, but a male may have two females.

Two females may occasionally use the same nest to lay the large, oval, off-white coloured eggs. All adults share incubation and care for the young.

It's no coincidence that 'Magpie Paddock' (48ha) at Bullo is home to a Magpie Goose nesting area, with pairs of Magpie Geese and chicks seen regularly every breeding and nesting season. In 2019, a new 2.5km boundary fence was installed around the wetland and nesting area used during breeding season. Stock are excluded from this paddock during breeding season, and grazing only takes place when the geese have all migrated elsewhere.

Further habitat improvement also took place in 2024, with the first round of dedicated weed management to remove Parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), a highly invasive plant that loves wetter areas – like wetlands! Parkinsonia forms dense, thorny thickets along watercourses, competing with native plants and spreads into paddock areas, significantly reducing pasture production.

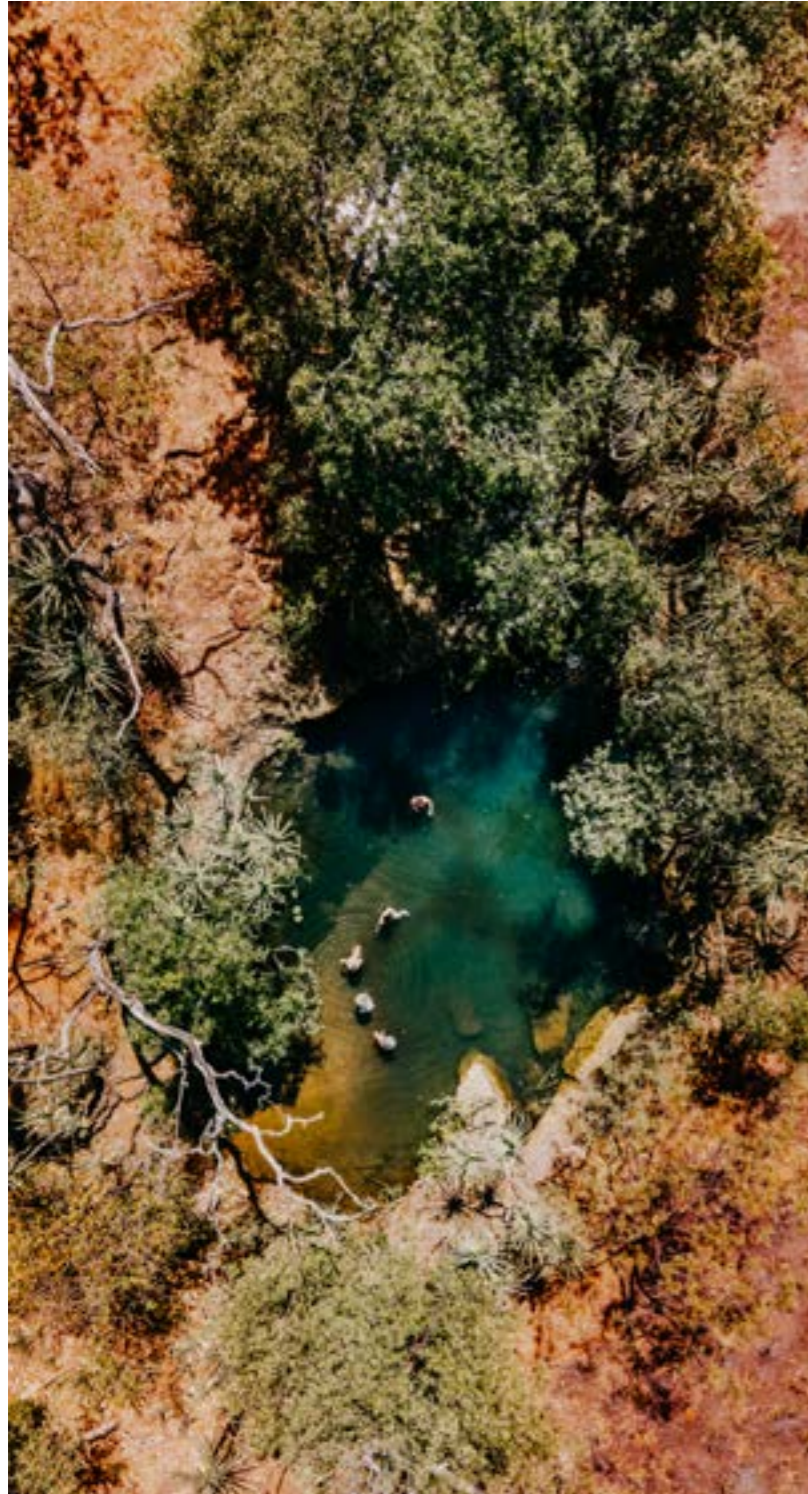
Our second wetland habitat initiative takes place in nearby Desert Paddock (330ha), and involves creating a contour bank to slow the movement of water during the wet season. The massive downpours we receive in Northern Australia are truly spectacular – and like any natural process, can be harnessed for good, or can bring damage and destruction! In this case, we are looking to harness and shift the speed and flow of the water, slow it down, and direct this water into a place where it is held in the landscape for longer. This is what creates the wetland environment and habitat, and also means that water seeps more slowly into the soil over time as the dry season approaches.

The Desert Paddock contour bank has created a beautiful wetland area which lasts until approximately June every year, and attracts a multitude of birds including the magnificent Jabiru (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*).



MAGPIE GEESE AT BULLO RIVER STATION

GUEST EXPERIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT



Bullo River Station encourages guests to embrace a new kind of luxury – one that transcends opulence and encourages a thoughtful connection to nature and culture.

Our sustainability commitment may have foundations in wildlife and habitat conservation, but it also includes responsible travel and respect for our natural environment with guests and visitors. Our guest experiences are focused on the appreciation of and learning about outback wildlife. This is why people come here, and why we want to protect and share this precious landscape with them.



We do this through:

- Delivering comprehensive guide recruitment and training that enables the team to confidently answer knowledgeable questions from guests. Most staff are provided the opportunity to participate in conservation activities with AWC throughout the year, for example, assisting with condition assessments, and setting up or collecting camera traps.
- Offering immersive experiences, which encourage care and respect for natural and cultural heritage, including Aboriginal rock art tours, spectacular Gorge boat trips and visits to special conservation projects such as Lake Lesley.
- Providing an up-to-date native fauna and bird species list for guests from AWC.
- Providing a dedicated, sustainability-focused tour called 'Keeping the Lights On', where guests learn more about our solar power generation, rainwater capture and storage, flourishing vegetable garden, extensive weed management work, composting and soil building.
- Documenting our natural environment with the [iNaturalist app](#), allowing staff and guests to upload observations of plants, frogs, mammals, insects and trees.
- Facilitating opportunities for a wider reach of supporter engagement for AWC. Every year, AWC hosts an annual three-night stay for their regular supporters with focused, conservation-led itineraries. We are discussing this model with BirdLife Australia to deliver a similar opportunity for their supporters at this bird-watcher's paradise.

LAND MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND ACTION

In 2022, we prepared a Land Management Plan to help guide on-ground management, planning, budgeting and action. The Plan covers three key, practical components of our work, and the desired outcome or change (right).

At the same time, we completed a high-level (and conservative) long-term Carrying Capacity Assessment – the number of animals that can be run over a 10+ year period without affecting land condition. Matching stocking rate to carrying capacity is the fundamental pillar of all grazing management systems. It’s effectively a moving target, as you might expect – the number of animals throughout the year naturally fluctuates, but overall, we want to manage the number of animals to allow recovery of grasses, keep the soil covered, and manage weed infestations.

There is no easy way to match carrying capacity and stocking rates, and it’s a work in progress at Bullo. We have undertaken careful investment in water and fencing to divide up paddocks (which makes rotational grazing easier). So far, we have reduced our stock numbers by over 60%, and as of September 2024, we have approximately 2,500 head of cattle in the Bullo herd.



CONSERVATION MONITORING SUMMARY

Monitoring seeks to understand the status and trend of the following key environmental indicators and / or threatening processes.

FOCUS	HEADLINE INDICATOR	DESIRED OUTCOME
GRAZING MANAGEMENT	Land condition and carrying capacity.	Land condition stable or improving. Stock rate as close to carrying capacity as possible.
HABITAT & BIODIVERSITY	Threatened or iconic species. Indicator* species. Vegetation and habitat. Threats (fire, ferals, weeds).	Threats are below ecologically-significant thresholds. Habitats are maintained and species are persisting over time.
OPERATIONAL IMPACT	Carbon emissions. Resource efficiency (water, energy, waste and materials). Sourcing (products and inputs).	Net emissions are decreasing. Energy, water and waste is reducing or stable. Sourcing is as self-sufficient, local and sustainable as possible.

**An indicator is a representative species, guild or assemblage selected as the focus of survey effort and monitoring within an ecological community.*

LAND MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND ACTION

Understanding our baseline measuring progress and monitoring.

We've all heard the adage 'what gets measured, gets managed'. When that measurement happens across 400,000 acres though, where do you start?

We track our sustainability progress through a series of detailed biodiversity monitoring and analyses from AWC and our own land condition monitoring and tracking.

We undertake extensive annual monitoring to understand the status and trend of a range of key environmental indicators and/or threatening processes.

These indicators include grass and ground cover, native fauna species presence (numbers) and distribution, including threatened or vulnerable species, feral animal numbers, wetland condition, and energy use, to name just a few.

Our recent focus of activity and monitoring has been more on grazing management, habitat and biodiversity. We measure some elements of our operational impact (see page 9), however, this is an area of greater focus in the coming year and beyond.



MEASURING LAND HEALTH

We use two well-established methods for assessing how our land management is going: land condition, and AWC's Eco-Health Model. While we measure these annually, we are playing the long game here – seasonal variations and other factors can affect what happens each year, but by tracking data over time, we'll see patterns emerge that help us improve our land management.

LAND CONDITION:

Rapid, broad assessment of a range of indicators on a scale of Excellent (A), Good (B), Fair (C), Poor (D), compared to what is expected for that land type. These indicators are ground cover, pasture species types, weeds present and woody thickening. We do this across a wide range of paddocks to get good representation of different land and soil types.

ECO-HEALTH:

Scientific framework and comprehensive monitoring program developed by AWC that focuses on threatened / iconic species, surveillance monitoring of wildlife and vegetation, and threats to biodiversity (fire, ferals, weeds).

IT'S A WATCH, ACT AND WAIT GAME (AND ACT AGAIN)

The Bullo River Station weed management program is where our collective focus on pastoral, conservation and tourism values really takes shape. Paddock-by-paddock, bit by bit, we are tackling some of the most problematic species through a range of different and targeted practices. Those pervasive and damaging weeds that compete with pastoral production are among the key initial targets, as well as those that may particularly impinge on sensitive habitats and environments, and detract from our guest experience.

Some of these key species include:

- *Passiflora Foetida* ('Passiflora'), which is pervasive in sensitive waterway and gorge environments.
- The invasive *Vachellia Farnesiana* (we call it 'Prickle Bush'), a woody weed which rapidly spreads and crowds other plants around it.
- *Parkinsonia Aculeata* - ('Parkinsonia'), which loves wetter areas.



An extensive program to reduce the reach and damage done by *Passiflora* has been underway at Bullo since 2019. Alex and Julian's commitment to testing and trialling different approaches to this incredibly aggressive weed has been unwavering. These include foliar spraying and the 'cut, scrape and paint' method, using herbicides in a targeted way. It has also been observed that fire is effective in reducing Stinking Passionfruit biomass, as seen in certain riparian and gorge areas, however, only with further immediate follow-up weed control.

We are still learning and integrating some lessons about adequate vine treatment for vine weeds like *Passiflora*. Overall, there have been marked and documented decreases in *Passiflora* in the targeted management zones since the program started in 2019.



IT'S A WATCH, ACT AND WAIT GAME (AND ACT AGAIN)



To tackle the dense thickets of Prickle Bush that have taken hold in the pastoral areas, Bullo staff have spent over 1,500 hours over the last four years on machinery undertaking an extensive stick raking program, followed by mulching or slashing. What's a stick-rake, you ask? It's a massive clean-up tool that attaches to the front of a dozer, pushing out woody weeds in its path, taking roots and all. The piles of weeds are burnt when dry. A stick-rake is used in areas where the weeds are too thick for the mulcher. When regrowth occurs, the slasher can then go into these areas.

From there, it's a waiting game and balancing act to see which grasses and species come back, and when it is suitable to bring cattle in for grazing.

One of the targeted paddocks, Heifer 2 Paddock, first received treatment in 2022, with mulching, slashing and then grazing. Heifer 2 Paddock has been included in part of our Land Condition Monitoring Program for the last two years. Again, it's early days for this work; the woody weeds are shifting and, in the first instance, are being replaced by sedges and sida, or the common wireweed (*Sida Acuta*). Over time, the goal is that through managed grazing and time for recovery, the more palatable and desirable pasture grasses will come through.

In 2023 we kicked off a trial with the stick-rake in Desert Paddock, this time to tackle both Parkinsonia and the Prickle Bush infestations. After one wet season, grasses are starting to come back with little regrowth of the Prickle Bush. We are continuing this work in 2025 and beyond.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our key focus areas for action over the next three years are to continue building on our land improvement work, continue Eco-Health monitoring by AWC, commence work on understanding our greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce some of our operational impacts.



LAND HEALTH

Trials and implementation of ongoing weed management and reduction to tackle high and medium priority weeds.

Annual, comprehensive program of monitoring in pastoral and conservation areas, in collaboration with AWC.

Review ongoing carrying capacity estimates and adjust stocking rates accordingly.

SOCIAL AND RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

Review our suppliers and continuing to switch to local and/or 'for-purpose' suppliers (e.g. environmentally-focused and social enterprises), or products and materials that create less waste.

CARBON BALANCE

Preparing a baseline carbon footprint for pastoral, tourism and conservation activities, to understand our best opportunities for reducing emissions.

Investigating options for understanding the carbon benefits from some of the work we do, including early dry season burning, and carbon sequestration in vegetation.

ADDITIONAL LINKS, PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- [Luxury Lodges of Australia](#)
- [iNaturalist](#)
- [BirdLife Australia](#)
- Matt Bolam from MB Consulting

We are grateful to our collaborators and contractors for the work they do in bringing our sustainability goals to life, and for providing the operational metrics and results that have informed some of this report:

- [Australian Wildlife Conservancy](#)
- InRock Landscaping and [East Coast Bush Regeneration](#)
- [Northern Land Management](#)