

Breathing Life into Boodja

Social and ecological restoration in an ancient land



I've seen the film, now
what are MY NEXT STEPS?



www.gondwanalink.org

We can all care for Boodja and make a difference

"We need to breathe life back into the nostrils of mother Boodja to make sure that her heart is pumping again and that blood is running through her veins."

Ezzard Flowers, Noongar Wirlomen Elder



As a Noongar man, Ezzard comes from one of the world's oldest continuous cultures, people who have thrived on this continent since time immemorial. There is so much to learn from Noongar culture and ways of being part of Boodja - country. For Gondwana Link, showing respect for and supporting the aspirations and needs of Noongar and other First Nations' people is as integral to our work as protecting, restoring and reconnecting nature.

We all have opportunities to breathe life back into our country. As Eddy Wajon says in the film *'You can do something, but you have to want to do it. And it isn't difficult, I mean we're just ordinary people.'*

He is modest - there's nothing ordinary about Eddy and his wife Donna - or the many other wonderful people we see in the film. They are living and working with their eyes wide open – they see the beauty and wonder of the world, they see the damage it is carrying, and they are working to make a positive difference. They are the exceptional people the world needs right now.



Be exceptional and join them

Wherever you are, whoever you are, you can be exceptional too. If you wish to help Gondwana Link inspire, mobilise and support even more good work across the Link, we ask that you consider these options:

- Join and support some of the many groups working across the Link. See www.gondwanalink.org/aboutus for links to a wide range of groups working within the Link. If you live locally, one of them is your local group – join up, help out.
- If you already own land, think about the inspiring farm stories Sylvia Leighton, Alan Hordacre and Peter Luscombe have shown us, and consider your own options. Both Gondwana Link and your local group have skills in match-making – bringing landholders together with those who can help them. The Green Skills partnership with Alan and family at Balijup has been so very rewarding. Each year, for a number of years, Greening Australia has replanted over 600 hectares on other people's land across the Link, with funding they secure, using their own staff and local planting teams.
- Consider investing in a conservation property – either individually or with a group of friends. It's been a great honour to help Bill and Jane Thompson, Eddy and Donna Wajon and others find their dream properties, and then connect them with those who can help them restore, manage and enjoy those properties. We follow the land market closely and have some experience in purchase negotiations. Get in touch for a discreet discussion.



- Join in one of the many survey efforts underway to deepen our knowledge of what's needed and what changes are working best. Twin Creeks and Chingarrup have a fantastic regular survey program that just keeps discovering more, and then more. Nic Dunlop and the Conservation Council's volunteer teams are at the cutting edge in understanding restoration and landscape change. Link in directly, or ask us for details.
- Don't be a quiet Australian. Make sure your local councillors and MPs know of the support we all need to continue and expand this work. Write letters, chew ears, recruit your friends and neighbours, make your voice heard. Good government policy is integral to expanding our current program. We can do much more with much more.
- Give Local. We still find it awkward to ask, but the reality is that we need ongoing donations to maintain and grow the current work. There are two ways you could chose to give. You can give directly to a group you respect which works in Gondwana Link. But just as importantly you can donate directly to Gondwana Link to support the whole program. At the core of Gondwana Link is a tiny team operating over a vast area on very low overheads – so every dollar gets well used. To donate see <http://www.gondwanalink.org/Donate.aspx>.
- Consider a bequest in your will, or better still a living bequest so you can see the good work your support enables. We have colleagues who have helped establish bequest programs and 'living wills', and are very happy to provide advice and contacts to help your decision making.
- Above all, be proud of what is being achieved in our part of the world.

Our Gondwana Link program began in 2002. We've grown a lot since then, with many great people and groups joining in the effort. From 2020 onwards we will be operating as part of a national collective, still growing the work across the Link but also leading a network of other large connectivity efforts emerging in Australia. In 2021, the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration begins, with countries around the world already pledging, or started on, multi-million hectare regeneration commitment. Let's get Australia up there as well.

We looking forward to being part of this mighty effort with you.

Voices from 'Breathing Life into Boodja'



"We had this fantastic biodiversity in the south-west of WA and in the last 40 years I have just seen it disappearing right under my eyes from a variety of things [...] and so this is an attempt from us to hold the bulwark at least at our property and to set an example for other people that, in fact, it can be done. You can do something but you have to want to do it."

Eddy Wajon, conservation landholder, Chingarrup Sanctuary

"This particular day, it was a hard day ... I went for a drive and this rakali [native water rat] ran across the road in front of me. I'd never seen one before and I thought, well that's it, that makes it all worth it. I can deal with all that other stuff because I know he's here and that's probably because of all the work that we've done — he's got an environment here that's good enough for him to live in."

Heather Adams, farmer and Oyster Harbour Catchment Group



"What brings joy to me in particular is when I see a difference in someone's life once they've come out here [to Nowanup] and had time out, and had an experience of a lifetime — families come out to do seed collecting and then the planting... and watching these people grow in cultural knowledge—Noongars call it mabarn. It's a power, it's an energy that was used to make unwell people well again, and seeing the people that come here, whether they're non-Aboriginal or Aboriginal, always go away feeling a lot better."

Associate Professor Eugene Eades, Nowanup

"When the decision came about five years ago to return to this farm with my partner Peter it was very much like it was the right thing to do. ... We have this amazing opportunity to redesign the farm and think about what we're going to do with it and how we're going to do it. We made the decision that the remaining native vegetation is the most precious thing in this landscape and it's the core of the farm and everything we do away from it is to ensure that we don't cause any more damage to this bushland."

Sylvia Leighton, Wilyun Pools Farm



"Conservation is a human endeavour... The only thing that can hold it together is the connections between people, the social networks. The science isn't going to hold it together by itself, the funding isn't going to hold it together, it's only the social networks that have that capacity to say, well, we're connected to each other and this is what we do."

Nic Dunlop, conservation scientist, Conservation Council of WA

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