

Flourishing Nature Flourishing Culture

Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary
Draft Strategy 2020 – 2045
– for public comment



MULLIGANS FLAT
WOODLAND SANCTUARY



Warabin, Bush Stone-curlew

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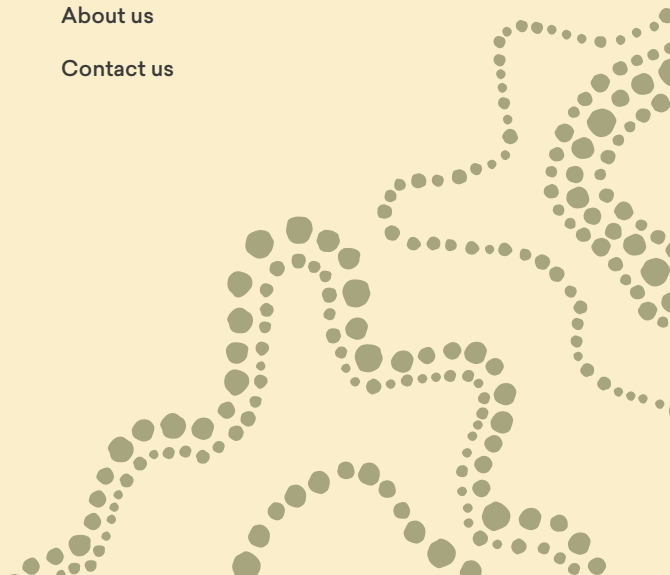
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Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee



Yuma

Dhawura Nguna Dhawura Ngunnawal

**Yanggu ngalawiri dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari
dhawurawari**

Nginggada Dindi yindumaralidjinyin

Dhawura Ngunnawal yindumaralidjinyin

*Artwork by Richie Allen, Ngunnawal man and Sanctuary neighbour.
The Ngunnawal songline artwork depicts the stories that were
followed through Mulligans Flat. They flow from what is now west
Belconnen and finish at Lake George in the north.*

Hello,

This is Ngunnawal Country

Today we are meeting on Ngunnawal country

We always respect Elders, male and female

We always respect Ngunnawal Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as Canberra's first inhabitants and Traditional Custodians. We recognise the special relationship and connection that Ngunnawal people have with this Country. Prior to the dislocation of Ngunnawal people from their land, they were a thriving people whose life and culture was connected unequivocally to this land in a way that only they understand and know, and is core to their physical and spiritual being.

The segregation of the Ngunnawal people from Culture and Country has had long-lasting, profound and ongoing health and well-being effects on their life, cultural practices, families and continuation of their law/lore. We acknowledge the historic dispossession of the Ngunnawal people of Canberra and their surrounding regions. We recognise the significant contribution the Ngunnawal people have played in caring for Country. For time immemorial they have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to these lands and waters.

Flourishing Nature Flourishing Culture

Our Vision: A thriving grassy woodland on the edge of Canberra: a place for nature, community, culture and learning to flourish.

Imagine 2045...

Bettongs and quolls
scurrying through the night
on Mt Majura woodlands
and curlews calling out
across Canberra – driven
by community action

Our woodlands
flourishing with abundant
native wildflowers and
wildlife not seen today

Ngunnawal
culture is practiced
and embedded into
the management of
the Sanctuary

10 great
ideas – generated
from learning at the
Sanctuary – helping
to chart a healthy and
biodiverse future
for Australia

Our Shared Future

This Strategy sets the direction and tone for a new phase of engagement, marked by a shared vision, clear objectives, a renewed partnership, stronger community engagement, enhanced management of natural and cultural heritage, and strengthening the Ngunnawal people's connection to Country.

United Ngunnawal Elders Council co-chairs

Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee

Minister

WWT Chair



Welcome to Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

Ngunnawal
connection to
country for tens
of thousands
of years

100,000
visitors
annually

Australia's
first fox, cat,
rabbit and hare
free Sanctuary

280

species of
native plants

1278

hectare sanctuary
inspired by the local
community

22.8km
of fox and
cat proof
fence

Long term
woodland research
experiment since
2005

1384

hectares of critically
endangered Yellow
Box-Red Gum Grassy
Woodland

20

minutes from
Australia's
Parliament
House

177

species of
birds

Thriving
populations of
threatened species
including Eastern Bettongs,
Eastern Quolls, Bush Stone-
curlews, Superb Parrots,
Golden Sun Moths,
and many more.

Over 400
peer reviewed
research
publications



LOCATION

The Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

The Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary is located in the Gungahlin area of Canberra, ACT, adjoining the north-east border between the ACT and NSW. The Sanctuary comprises the Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo Nature Reserves.

The Sanctuary has a conservation role far beyond its own borders. It generates world-class learning and lessons for other conservation efforts. In Mulligans Flat, reintroduced wildlife is highly protected from threats, and animals bred here may be shared with other sanctuaries to seed other populations and safeguard the species. In the longer term, the Sanctuary could also help our native fauna return to landscapes outside of the fox-proof fences. With the expansion of the Sanctuary into Goorooyarroo, new possibilities for experimentation and learning are opened up, that could progress the “pathway to the wild” for our native species. This new area will allow us to build on our knowledge of species reintroductions and could include challenging and ‘training’ populations to withstand pressures they will face beyond the fence. Central to the success of the pathway to the wild is an adaptive research program to inform each step of the journey.

-  NSW/ACT border

 Main highway

 Horse Park Drive

 Water

 The reserve
-  The sanctuary (fox & cat proof fence)

 Public access gate

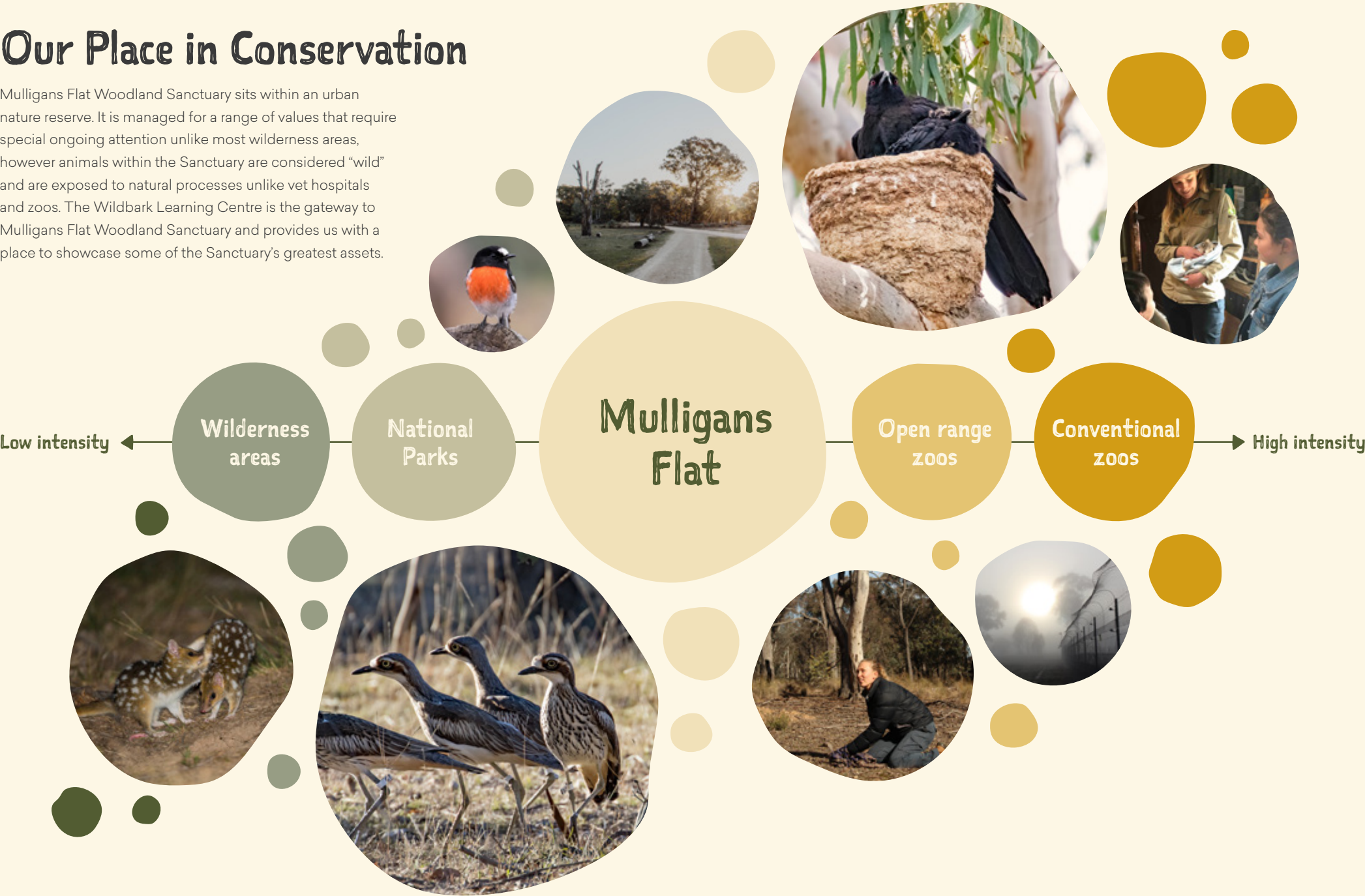
 Wildbark Learning Centre

 The Woolshed

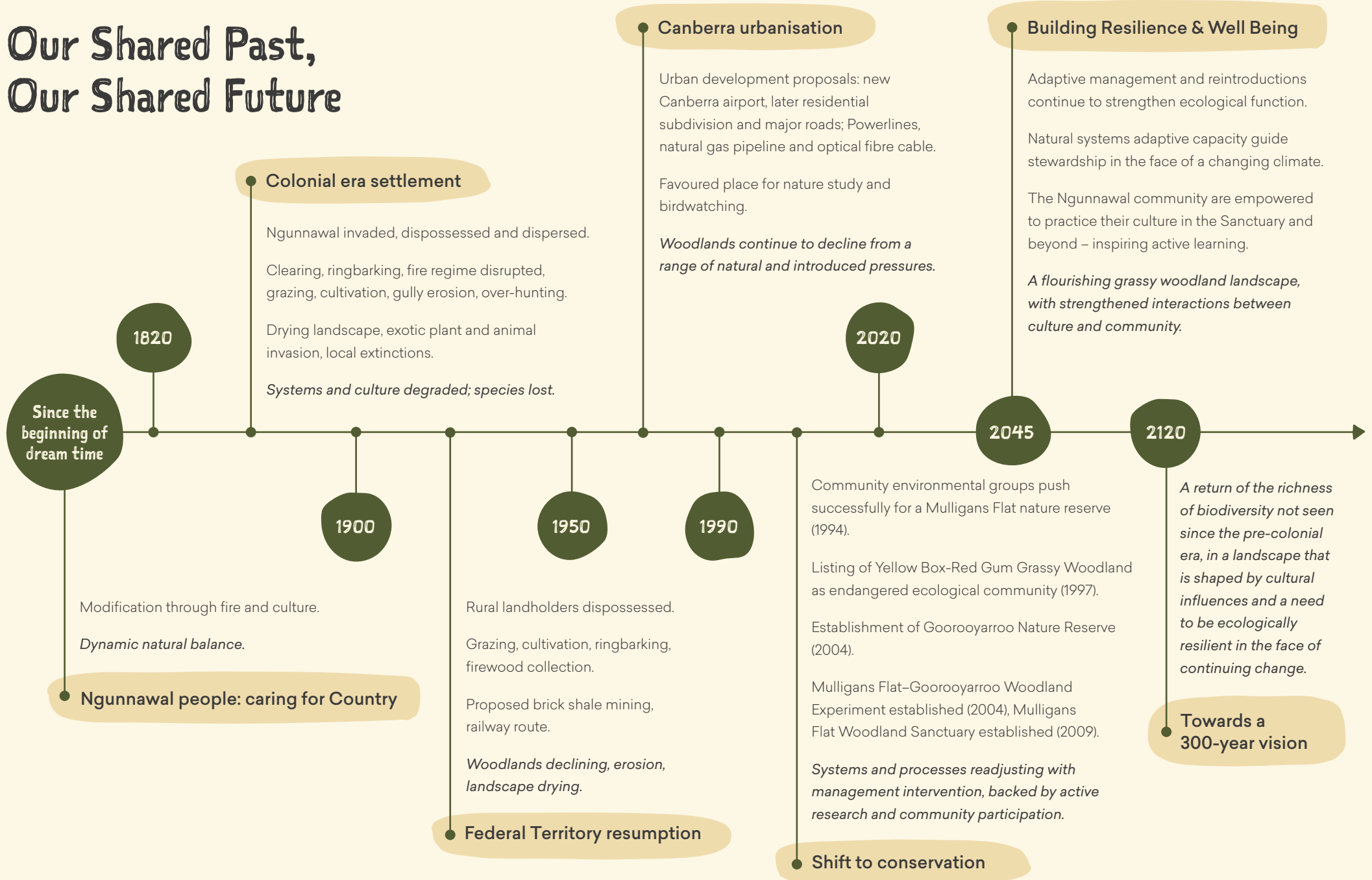


Our Place in Conservation

Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary sits within an urban nature reserve. It is managed for a range of values that require special ongoing attention unlike most wilderness areas, however animals within the Sanctuary are considered “wild” and are exposed to natural processes unlike vet hospitals and zoos. The Wildbark Learning Centre is the gateway to Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary and provides us with a place to showcase some of the Sanctuary’s greatest assets.



Our Shared Past, Our Shared Future



Our Achievements

Over the past 25 years we have conceived, managed and delivered major innovations including:

Building knowledge through research

- The ANU led long term innovative woodland ecology experiment; now extended to sociology and science communication.
- Ground-breaking research in reintroduction biology and ecosystem management.
- Research to expand understanding of community connection to history and cultural heritage of the Sanctuary area.

Outreach and education programs

- Outreach and education program using innovative methods.
- Engagement of rural landholders across the NSW border to help enhance landscape connectivity.
- Evolution of the Wildbark Learning Centre as the key gateway to the Sanctuary.

Inspiring change and action

- Developing the capacity of students and Trust staff through Sanctuary internships, activities and the long term ecological experiment, helping to create future leaders.
- National and international interest generated in the Trust and Sanctuary.
- Strong and enduring partnerships between government, community, business and education.

Sharing knowledge

- Embedding cultural reconciliation that includes the empowerment of the Ngunnawal community.
- Community driven; socially and culturally aware, adapting and evolving.
- Working with Ngunnawal community to share knowledge e.g. 'Kids on Country'

Protecting and enhancing the values

- Recognising cultural and social values.
- 1278 hectares of Sanctuary enclosed in a fox and cat proof fence.
- Reduction of exotic weeds, domestic stock and introduced pests.
- Enhancing ecological function through reintroducing species and fostering natural regimes.

Creating opportunities for different experiences

- Community participation strengthened by building a sense of place, identity, and collective ownership and stewardship.
- Collaboration through citizen science.
- Infrastructure to support community engagement.

Knowledge development and innovation

- Capturing and sharing data and information.
- Interdisciplinary research and enquiry.
- Building community awareness and involvement.

Fostering adaptive management

- Building of a world-class ecological laboratory to inform evidence-based conservation.
- Shaping expectations for restoration and level of investment required.
- Learning by doing; with strong volunteer participation.
- Lessons learned being applied elsewhere in Australia.

Our Principles

In making decisions and undertaking actions we are guided by these principles:

Measuring success against the ACT Wellbeing framework.

We gauge our success and our legacy against the domains and indicators of wellbeing which will help us understand our impact on the life of Canberrans and Australians.

We communicate openly and clearly about what we are doing and learning, and how we are adapting.

Fostering innovation, creating the confidence to try and fail, and inspiring transformative management of landscapes and ecosystems.

We understand that all aspects of the Sanctuary are to some extent an experiment, so we are driven by questions and possibilities, and we are 'learning by doing'.

We undertake and share research to inform evidence-based management.

Partnering with the community to build community health and well-being.

We willingly accept our role as landscape curators - collaborating to research, share and communicate - being active and creative in caring for nature and culture.

Applying the best available information in decision making including Ngunnawal knowledge, scientific understanding, and broader community expertise.

We develop, apply and share the best available science and knowledge, and welcome the perspectives and insights of others to strengthen our learning.

Integrating Ngunnawal knowledge and practice to connect community to Country and to restore ecological function.

We affirm the traditional custodians, the Ngunnawal peoples' identity; embrace and support their connection and cultural belonging to the Mulligans Flat landscape; and embed and value their knowledge and cultural practices to support their social, spiritual and economic participation at Mulligans Flat.

We respect the importance of the place to the people and the importance of the people to the place.

Acting as stewards to protect and enhance ecosystem function and cultural landscapes.

We accept our responsibility as stewards of the Sanctuary, acting on behalf of future generations in addition to today's community: as we restore nature, we restore people.

We are changing the public face of science, communicating its importance as an agent of change in direction and behaviour, and as a guide to stewardship and responsibility.


Embedding adaptive management, facilitating successful adaptation in a changing climate using innovation and rigorous science.

We anticipate and respond strategically to environmental, social and economic trends and changes.

Flourishing Nature Flourishing Culture


Over coming decades we will be guided by our Vision, facing challenges such as climate change, while building resilient ecosystems through our strong research, management, cultural and community initiatives embedded in our three pillars.

Nature and culture in and around the Sanctuary has dramatically changed over the past 200 years, and we can never turn the clock back. Through learning we are on a voyage of healing and discovery, reflecting the realities of climate change and modified ecosystems, seizing opportunities in the complex natural and human systems within which we work.




Pillar 1

Restoring the wellbeing of nature and communities



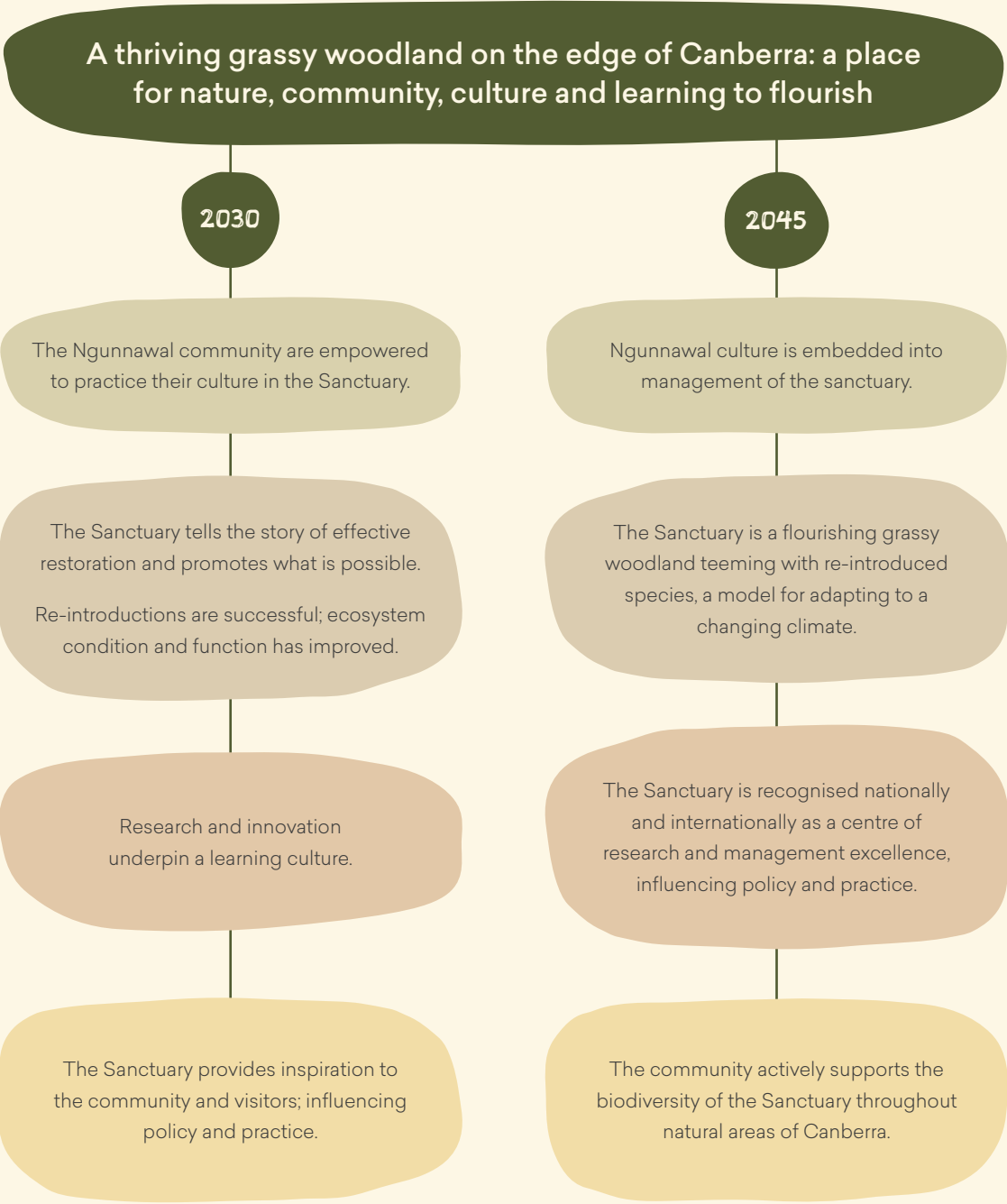
Pillar 2

Learning about nature



Pillar 3

Inspiring change to benefit future generations





Pillar 1

Restoring the wellbeing of nature and communities

Species re-introductions are successful, helping to improve ecosystem function and create a flourishing grassy woodland landscape. We proactively curate flora and fauna to reduce pressures on ecosystems and provide optimal habitats in a changing climate.

We tell the story of effective restoration, promote what is possible, and establish links with the surrounding landscape. The community responds, expecting improved biodiversity throughout the natural areas of Canberra and surrounds.

What we are working towards – In 2045:

We are nationally and internationally recognised and valued as a leader in creating flourishing landscapes – rebuilding natural and cultural values, systems and processes to become more resilient despite complex threatening processes such as a changing climate.

We bring Nggunawal knowledge and western science together to create contemporary practices that support and acknowledge Nggunawal cultural and traditional land management practices. We value the Nggunawal people's traditional land management practices which will support the conservation pillars of Mulligans Flat.

Our woodlands, forests and grasslands are some of the best-understood ecosystems in Australia, due to world-class adaptive research and monitoring in the 'outdoor laboratory'. Our success provides valuable lessons and guidance for other places, showing what can be achieved through curating based on research evidence, at a landscape and whole-system scale.

Reintroduced native fauna have established themselves beyond the Sanctuary's fox and cat proof fence, with strong support from local and regional communities. Linking with the landscape has inspired changes to ecosystem management beyond the fence, bringing a welcome diversity into our landscapes.

Our work engages the broader community to understand and act for the environment, helping to restore health and wellbeing to the community. We help bring social benefits, mental health benefits, and individual restoration through inclusion, learning, changed perceptions, ignited passion, and motivation to act.



New Holland Mouse



Pillar 2

Learning about nature

Since its inception the Sanctuary has been a place of learning and research, changing how people think about and interact with woodlands. Understanding how people relate to nature shapes our programs. Outreach affirms the Sanctuary as a place of thinking and learning about the environment.

Sharing and learning about culture is fundamental to our vision. We empower the Ngunnawal people to share and implement their cultural knowledge and practices ensuring Ngunnawal culture and values enhance the Sanctuary ethos and become embedded into management and decision-making.

Research and innovation will continue to underpin our learning culture with the research agenda consolidating and expanding across disciplines. Data and knowledge are shared and integrated into management priorities. The Sanctuary is recognised internationally as a model of research and management excellence.

What we are working towards – In 2045:

The Sanctuary is widely recognised and valued highly as a place of education, learning and thinking – both as an outdoor laboratory and an outdoor classroom. It is firmly established as a must-experience place for both residents and visitors across all seasons.

Schools from the local region and beyond visit to experience being up-close to flourishing nature, and to learn about the long history of Aboriginal and European interaction with the natural world. The Ngunnawal community practice their culture in the Sanctuary, actively participate in managing the Sanctuary, building knowledge of Ngunnawal people, Country and culture.

Students and researchers from Australian and international institutions come to see and participate in world-class research as it continues to unlock secrets and mysteries guiding us to a better future.

Much of our work is 'learning by doing', and it changes the ecosystem and processes over time including in our environmental offset areas, so we are constantly innovative and adaptive in our stewardship of natural and cultural resources and values.

The Wildbark Learning Centre is a much-loved community facility and meeting place, education and research centre, and a gateway to inspirational learning about nature. Reinforcing this, the Centre and its grounds are held up as a model of best practice in sustainability.



Ngalduda, Eastern Bettong



Pillar 3

Inspiring change to benefit future generations

The Sanctuary experience...

provides
inspiration
to community
and visitors

guides local
and regional
policy and
practice

influences
national and
international
policy and
practice

What we are working towards – In 2045:

We influence people's perception of nature and culture – not just while they are visiting the Sanctuary, but across all aspects of their lives and across their lifetimes.

We provide renowned cultural, nature-based, and heritage-based experiences which build awareness, understanding and support locally, nationally and internationally.

People have a better understanding of historical and contemporary Ngunnawal culture and feel inspired by the strength of the connection to people, Country, and culture.

We engage and help to inspire people to act for the environment, adapt to a changing climate and build hope in future generations.

Our success is built on the efforts of highly committed people, in our highly capable and enthusiastic staff and volunteers, and our partners. Together we help to build local, national and international support to sustain and extend conservation efforts – both here and elsewhere.

Innovative models for funding and partnership demonstrate the potential of linking environmental, social, cultural and financial sustainability, with benefits flowing to local and regional communities and beyond.

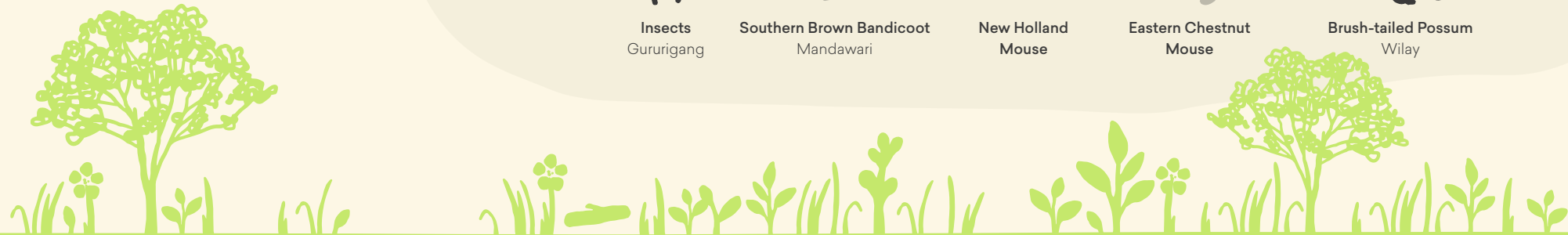
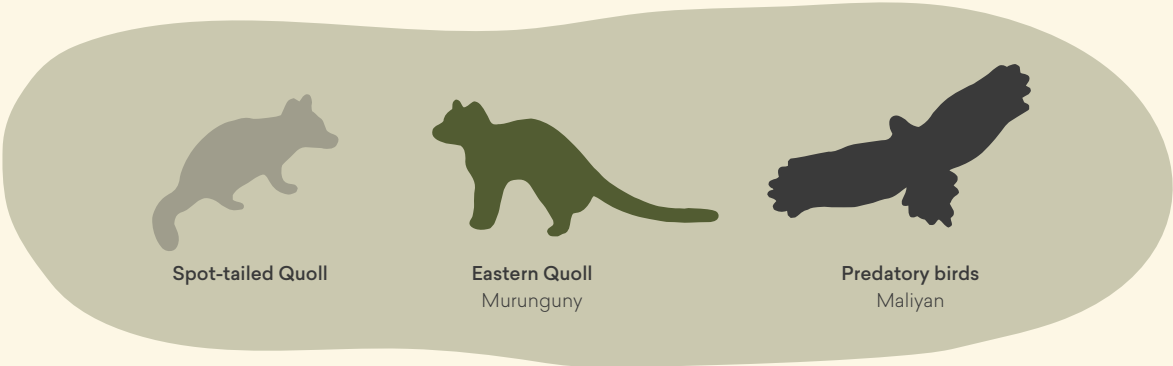
The Sanctuary is internationally renowned as a conservation effort sustained by collaborative stewardship. Essential to this is strong and enduring partnership between traditional custodians the Ngunnawal people, government, local and regional communities, research and education institutions, and business sector supporters, united in respecting and caring for the environment that sustains us all.



Species re-introductions strengthen ecosystem function

We have embarked on a journey to enhance biodiversity, building a more resilient ecosystem within the Sanctuary and beyond. Thinking about the plants and animals in the Sanctuary as a ‘food web’, represents feeding relationships within the ecosystem and shows the transfer of food energy from plants through herbivores to carnivores. Reintroduction and management of additional native animal and plant species is the next step in reinforcing a functional food web across the landscape.

- Tertiary consumers
- Secondary consumers
- Primary consumers
- Animals we have reintroduced
- Existing animals
- Animals we will consider for reintroduction
- Resource pool – plants, seeds, fruit, nectar, flowers, logs, litter, carrion



Who we are

The Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary is managed by a partnership that binds together the ACT Government, the Woodlands and Wetlands Trust ('the Trust'), and The Australian National University (ANU), with input from the community.

As partners we collaborate to deliver the goals of Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. At the same time, each partner brings specific skills, expertise and resources.

The Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee will engage, connect and work with the Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) to identify and implement cultural understanding within the Directorate and to provide guidance, direction and decisions on environmental and land management matters including land, fire, air and water to better manage Ngunnawal Country together on EPSDD managed lands.

The ACT Government leads operational management and is responsible for conserving, researching, managing and presenting the natural and cultural environments of the Territory, and supporting ParkCare volunteer programs.

The Trust leads on engaging with the community to build better understanding and awareness of the importance of the Sanctuary and the natural environment. By encouraging active participation by community groups and citizens in projects and activities in the Sanctuary, the Trust aims to build a stronger sense of ownership for the Sanctuary and appreciation of its unique value in representing the natural world in an urban setting. The Trust also takes a leading role in engaging with business and corporate sector fundraising to support the Sanctuary and in community engagement through education, recreation and tourism.

ANU leads research programs at the intersection of studies in ecology and biodiversity, science communication and society-nature relations to develop long-term, whole-system insights on species reintroductions in particular, and the Mulligans Flat-Goorooyarroo Woodland Experiment more broadly. This is made possible by an exciting new collaboration, featuring interdisciplinary researchers based in world-class science, social science and humanities areas.

As partners we also work collaboratively with the community – the local residents, the volunteers, the members of community groups and schools – because collectively they are a huge source of ideas, energy and ambition for the future of the Sanctuary.

Delivering the Strategy

Within our strong management partnership everyone has an important role to play. This Strategy sets the direction, and subsequent 5-year implementation plans will provide guidance for decision-making, on-ground action, and adaptive management. The implementation plans will set out real actions and indicators that move us towards achieving our shared future.

The most important part of the Strategy is you. Drop into the Wildbark Learning Centre in Throsby to speak to one of our friendly staff or volunteers to find out how you can become involved.

Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary

Tour enquiries:

0428 224 904 (during office hours)

tours@woodlandsandwetlands.org.au

mulligansflat.org.au

The partners recognise the inspiration of Zealandia, Wellington, NZ in developing our Sanctuary and Strategy.



Superb Parrot