



Nature  
Impact  
Collective



# Annual Impact Report 2023-2024

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# Collective action makes us stronger

## A Message from the Chair Jim Phillipson

**I am delighted to be introducing the first annual impact report for Nature Impact Collective.**

The environment is essential to our very existence and funding for nature is as critical as it is complex. Every funder has a role in supporting its protection, yet not all have the capacity to give effectively in this vitally important space.

That's where Nature Impact Collective steps in with the networking, research and partnering required to create secure, proven funding pathways. Together members of the Collective direct significant funding to address urgent needs and achieve long-term, transformational outcomes for nature.

Our mission centres on working together to amplify our impact for nature. By creating a space for learning, our collective efforts achieve results that no single philanthropic organisation could accomplish alone.



Our commitment to collaboration extends beyond our membership and we invite others to join us. Together we can strengthen ecosystems and communities across Australia.

At Rendere Environmental Trust, our commitment to spend down by 2030 reflects the seriousness of nature's plight. Nature Impact Collective enables us to dedicate more resources to secure a healthy environment for future generations.

It is an honour to introduce the first annual impact report for the Nature Impact Collective. We invite you to explore our shared journey towards a sustainable, thriving future.

***Jim Phillipson***  
***Rendere Environmental Trust Founder***  
***Nature Impact Collective Chair***

# A collaboration of philanthropic funders who are passionate about nature and committed to acting urgently to protect Australia's iconic wild places and species.

## Beginnings

In 2023, three Australian philanthropic funders - The Gum Tree Foundation, Rendere Environmental Trust and Upotipotpon Foundation - came together to form Nature Impact Collective. Each was committed to stepping up their nature giving and working more closely with like-minded funders to give back to nature.

With no time to spare, Nature Impact Collective Ltd. was registered as an Australian charity in April 2024.

We developed our first collective giving strategy and provided funding to five organisations leading conservation and restoration of our fresh water ecosystems.

By joining forces we are building momentum and growing philanthropic funding to deliver better outcomes for nature. As a funding Collective, we are building a community of people who share the joy and excitement of making the world a better place for the plants, birds and animals who share Earth with us.



Budj Bim Ranger Ben Church\_Photo by Annette Ruzicka  
Courtesy Country Needs People

## Measuring Impact

We measure our impact by maintaining close relationships with the organisations we fund.

We track qualitative and quantitative measures and share the results.

Our 4 Goals represent the key areas we monitor to understand our impact:



### GROWING

Growing philanthropic funding for nature.



### GIVING

Giving significant and sustained funding in this critical decade.



### DEMONSTRATING

Demonstrating effective and collaborative philanthropic funding.



### BUILDING

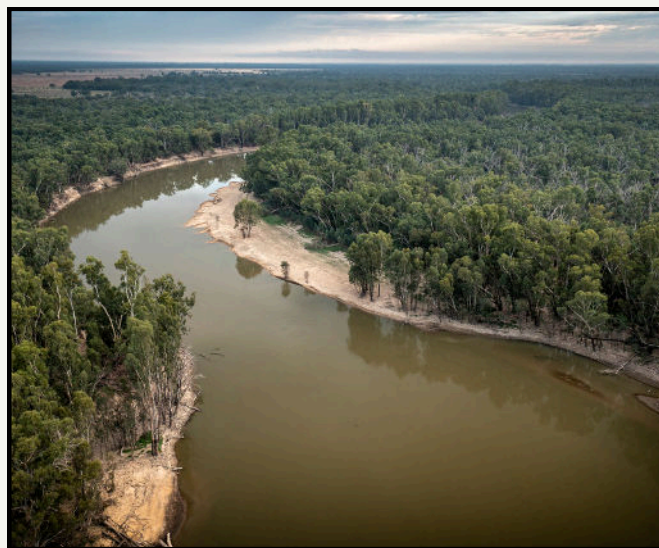
Building stronger, more effective environmental organisations

# GOAL 1

## Giving significant funding in this critical decade

We progress this goal by:

- Committing to giving significant funding for nature and encouraging others to do likewise.
- Providing larger gifts to organisations selected through our collective giving process.



Nature Impact Collective members have committed to \$500,000 annually for collective giving. For some, this means a step up in their nature giving in relation to giving amounts and/or the speed with which they distribute their funding. For others, this funding represents a step towards becoming more focused and strategic in their giving.

We share our resources and welcome other philanthropic funders to align their giving.

Our funding strategy focuses on giving larger amounts to fewer organisations, maximising their ability to create impact in this critical decade.

**“The satisfaction of the journey of learning and investing has delighted my partner Jo and I and encouraged us to increase our contribution to the environment so that we are now giving 3 times greater than our original plan. Nature Impact Collective is a pathway to giving, learning and making a difference in nature.”**

***William Crothers, Upotipotpon Foundation***





# GOAL 2

## Growing philanthropic funding for nature - land, sea, freshwater, ecosystems, threatened species

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We progress this goal by:

- Focusing on high priority, under-funded aspects of nature.
- Selecting organisations that, in combination, work across a wide geographic area and apply a variety of approaches for change.
- Pursuing opportunities to leverage our funding for the organisations we fund and beyond.

### Achieving Leverage

Leverage is an important objective of the Nature Impact Collective. We seek opportunities to make our gifts multiply, resulting in more funding for individual organisations and more funding for nature overall. Organisations supported this year either achieved or worked towards three different types of leverage:

**Direct leverage:** where our funding triggers additional funds for an organisation

**Indirect leverage:** where our funding contributes to or influences funding for an organisation. For instance, building the confidence of other funders to contribute their funds or provide flexible rather than project funding.

**Potential leverage:** where our funding enhances capacity for an organisation to campaign for stronger government or philanthropic funding for nature.

Funds leveraged to date:

**DIRECT \$270K**

Donor matched  
funding

**INDIRECT**

1 brought more  
funders onboard  
1 encouraged funders  
to make flexible gifts

**POTENTIAL - \$10B +**

2 organisations  
campaigning for  
increased government  
funding

6

## Our Strategic Focus in Year 1

Year one funding was focused on inland waterways, responding to the identification of freshwater ecosystems as a 'big funding gap' in the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network's Nature Funding Framework. Five organisations each received \$270,000 total funding from members of Nature Impact Collective.

### Environment Centre Northern Territory

The Environment Centre NT works closely with communities to protect the territory's unique biological diversity, building more capacity to defend massive, aquifer-fed rivers that are under threat from agribusiness, fracking and inadequate environmental laws.

### Country Needs People

Country Needs People supports Indigenous communities to manage land and sea Country. Working with more than 50 Indigenous partner organisations, their advocacy builds government funding and support for Indigenous ranger roles and the Indigenous Protected Area program.

### Nature Glenelg Trust

Nature Glenelg Trust started life in the cross-border area of South Australia and Victoria to increase on-ground environmental action in the region. Taking a holistic approach to biodiversity conservation, the trust now works across four states, has restored more than 70 wetlands and established 10 of its own reserves.

### Murray Darling Conservation Alliance

This new alliance of state based organisations is ramping up a high profile campaign to restore the health of the Murray-Darling Basin. Heavily cleared, degraded and over-extracted while facing a hotter, drier climate, the future of the Basin rests upon an upcoming review of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

### Environmental Justice Australia

Environmental Justice Australia combines environmental legal expertise with strategic campaigns to protect the environment. With a long history of work on water and the Murray-Darling Basin, they are stepping up their focus on Ramsar-listed wetlands in the southern Basin.

#### Characteristics of organisations funded:

All consider & respect aspirations of First Nations peoples;  
1 is First Nations led

All widen the pool of nature active community members

All build capacity in the wider movement for nature

# GOAL 3

## Strengthening environmental organisations capable of leading transformational change

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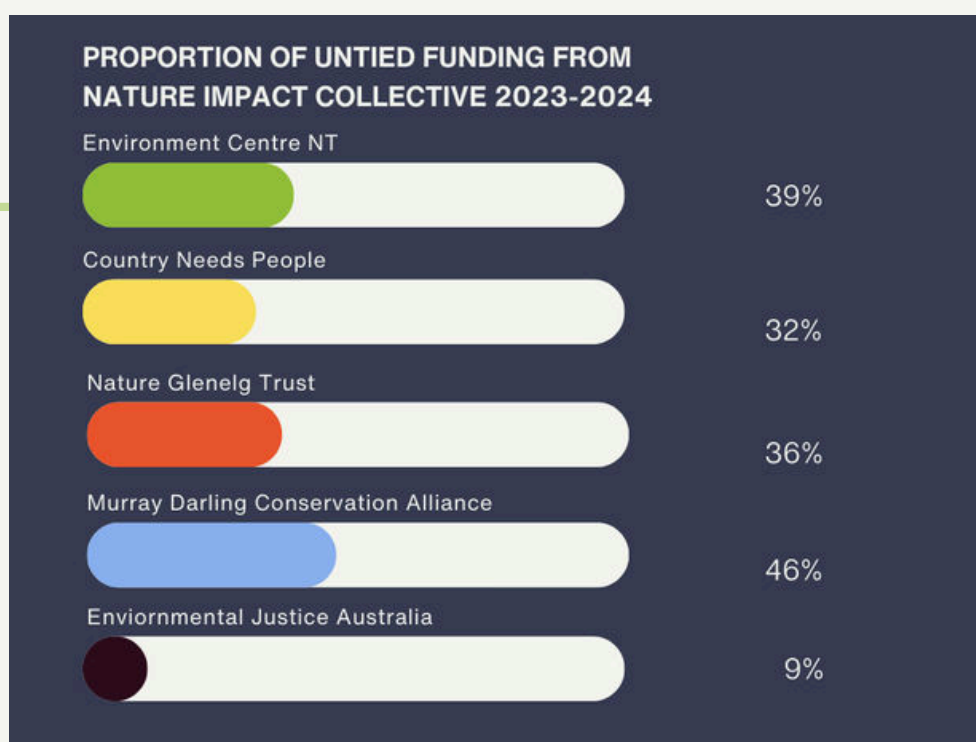
We progress this goal by:

- Investing in organisations, providing flexible funding to be allocated where resources are most needed and over the timeframe that suits the organisation.
- Preferring organisations that broadly meet the ACNC definition of 'medium size' so they are big enough to make a broad impact, but small enough for our funds to make a significant difference.

### Flexible Funding

We understand that environmental NGOs highly value flexible funds and funds they can use to support core functions - such as operational staff salaries or paying rent and overheads.

Collectively, the organisations funded generated \$16.5 million in revenue in the last financial year and \$10.7 million of this was tied to a specific project, campaign or activity. Nature Impact Collective funds made up a third or more of the flexible funds received by four of the five organisations in the last financial year.





## Organisational Impact

**Environment Centre NT** has decided to allocate the funds across two financial years, to support their Nature and Water program and cover core operational costs, particularly salaries.

“Nature Impact Collective’s funding has been transformational. The flexibility of core funding means we could respond quickly to the greatest area of need, with the biggest opportunity for impact.”

**Kirsty Howey,**  
**Executive Director Environment Centre NT**

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**Nature Glenelg Trust** are using the funds to complete a much-needed upgrade of their financial management system which requires expenditure on the development and implementation of new software and associated training over two to three years.

“Nature Impact Collective’s un-tied investment is underpinning a much-needed upgrade of our internal systems to ensure we can sustain and grow our environmental impact in the future. Core operating requirements of this type are fundamental to the success of not-for-profit environmental organisations.”

**Mark Bachmann,**  
**Managing Director/Founder**

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**Environmental Justice Australia** allocated the funds to their ecosystems team for their nature work and expect to use the funds in the 2024-25 financial year.

“The legal strategies that have the biggest impact are often multi-year. This untied funding means we are moving ahead with our Murray-Darling Basin work with confidence, while giving us the flexibility to innovate and adapt swiftly to emerging challenges over the next crucial two years.”

**Nicola Rivers & Elizabeth McKinnon,**  
**CEOs**

**Country Needs People** intends to use the funds this financial year, supporting their Indigenous partner groups as needs arise.

“Federal Indigenous Ranger funding has now been allocated to over 100 organisations and many have never had Ranger funding before. Nature Impact Collective’s funding approach ensures we can work in a context-relevant way with Indigenous community led organisations to improve their ability to deliver land and sea management across Australia.”

**Paddy O’Leary,**  
**CEO Country Needs People**

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### **Murray-Darling Conservation Alliance**

Nature Impact Collective funding enabled the Alliance to assemble their staff team at a critical time for the new organisation.

“This is our most significant gift to date, and means we have been able to take the Murray Darling Conservation Alliance from a start-up project to a fully fledged national campaign.”

**Craig Wilkins,**  
**Conservation Alliance National Director**



# GOAL 4 Demonstrating impactful collaborative philanthropic funding

We progress this goal by:

- A commitment to achieving and promoting best-practice funding and to demonstrating a transparent and effective model for working together.
- Constantly evaluating our progress and adjusting our approach, to keep us moving towards this goal.

## Guiding Principles

Our approach to philanthropy is guided by four key principles:

### Trust-Based

We seek out and fund organisations with leadership we trust.

### Brave & Bold

We are comfortable taking risks in order to catalyse and amplify needed work.

### Fit-for-Purpose

We empower organisations through providing flexible and mainly core funding.

### First Nations

We acknowledge the ongoing custodianship and care for Country of Australia's First Nations people. We are committed to developing our philanthropic approach to support the self determination and aspirations of First Nations people and communities.

## Communicating our Work

In 2024 we developed a communications strategy to guide the actions we will take to share our work - including a commitment to an annual Impact Report.

In May we launched our first promotional booklet and participated in a workshop at the AEGN annual conference. This stimulated interest from a small number of foundations interested in working with us and/or joining Nature Impact Collective.





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