



BUSH HERITAGE AUSTRALIA

Construction begins at Bush Heritage's world-class research hub

\$1 million field station underway in Western Australia

A new Bush Heritage Australia field station in south west Western Australia will facilitate much-needed research into the ecologically rich Fitz-Stirling region, providing a central base for ecologists, field staff and volunteers, as well as a destination for day visitors.

Construction of the *Michael Tichbon Field Station* has begun at Bush Heritage's Red Moort reserve, 150 kilometres north east of Albany, WA, between the Stirling Range and the Fitzgerald River National Parks. It's the first time in Bush Heritage's 27-year history that a purpose designed and built station has been commissioned.

Bush Heritage Australia's Chief Executive Gerard O'Neill, said the new field station would draw scientists from around the country and the world to the area.

"This will be a world-class research hub, allowing us to look after an even wider landscape by providing a much-needed base for scientists, ecologists, field staff and volunteers," O'Neill said.

"The Fitz-Stirling region is globally recognised as a biodiversity hotspot, but has needed a lot

of love after being subjected to decades of heavy land clearing. It will allow scientists, researchers and students to spend more time on the ground, observing and monitoring the incredible animals and flora present, which will lead to more data, stronger results, collaborative ideas, better outcomes and hopefully more exciting discoveries."

The build is made possible through the generosity of notable Australian conservation advocate, Michael Tichbon, who has donated nearly \$1million to Bush Heritage over the past decade, and naming this Field Station in his honour is a fitting acknowledgement for his tireless conservation work.

"I am proud my contribution is helping to create a space that will allow many others to play a part in protecting the unique Fitz-Stirling environment," Tichbon said.

His donation will be supported by a \$490,000 Lotterywest grant.

The organisation's CEO, Susan Hunt PSM, said through its grants program, Lotterywest was committed to strengthening environmental protection and biodiversity conversation in WA.





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“Here at Lotterywest we’re all about supporting the things that make WA great,” Ms Hunt said.

“The Fitz-Stirling region is recognised across the world for its biological diversity and richness and its right here in our backyard. Lotterywest is proud to play a part in safeguarding it for future generations.”

The research station, designed by H+H Architects, will feature a number of sustainable elements, being completely off the grid and including solar power system with battery storage, a rainwater collection and reticulation system and composting toilets.

It will have simple amenities and a mix of single rooms and dormitory style accommodation.

KBuilt Construction Ltd anticipates a six-month build on the remote site. With construction complete and off-the-grid systems commissioned and operating, Bush Heritage expects to have a functional facility operative by year’s end.

Red Moort is one of six significant bushland areas Bush Heritage protects between the Stirling Range and the Fitzgerald River National Parks. It forms part of Bush Heritage’s Monjebup cluster which also includes Monjebup and Monjebup North reserves.

KEY FACTS FOR EDITORS

- Bush Heritage acquired the 1,042 hectare Red Moort reserve in 2014.
- Originally known as ‘Bob’s Bush’ after its long-time previous owner, the reserve was renamed after a vegetation survey of the new reserve showed it to be a stronghold for the Corackerup Moort (*Eucalyptus vesiculosa*) - a small mallee eucalypt that flowers red in summer.
- Moort is also the word for ‘family’ in the language of the Traditional Owners of the area, the Noongar people.
- The reserve is home to a number of threatened species including Malleefowl, Tammar Wallabies, and Red Moort *Eucalyptus vesiculosa*.

