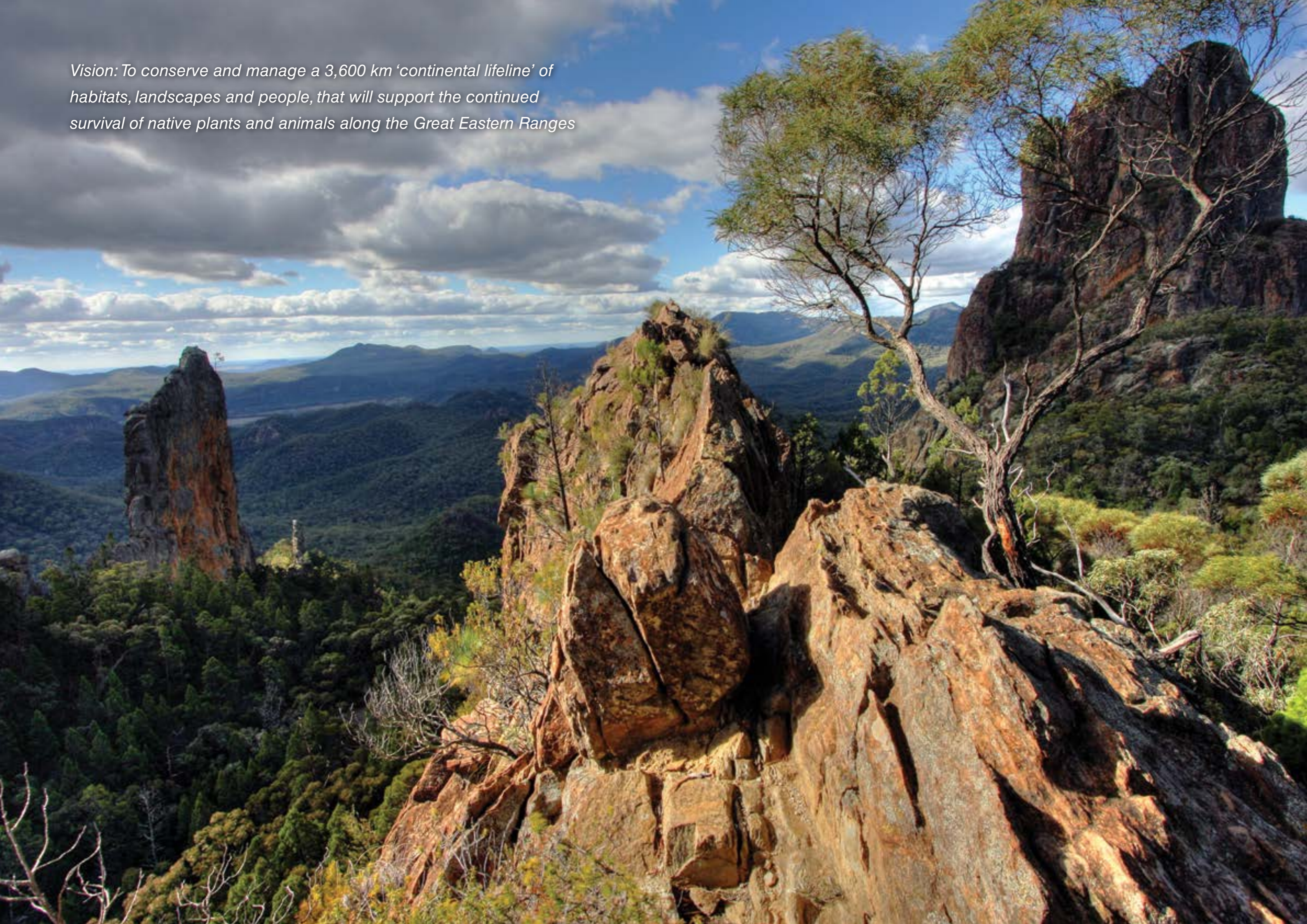




Great Eastern Ranges Initiative
An Investors Guide

Vision: To conserve and manage a 3,600 km 'continental lifeline' of habitats, landscapes and people, that will support the continued survival of native plants and animals along the Great Eastern Ranges





Our Iconic Ranges

The Great Eastern Ranges form a mountainous spine that runs the length of the continent, separating the coast from the arid interior. They span a vast 3,600 kilometres (2,237 miles) stretching from the majestic Grampian Ranges in western Victoria, along the Great Divide and Eastern Escarpment of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, to the wet tropics and remote Cape York Peninsula in Queensland's far northeast.

From their undulating heath covered slopes to the towering cliffs of Mount Kosciuszko the Great Eastern Ranges are a biodiversity hotspot, supporting 60% of Australia's threatened animals and 70% of its plants. Living fossils like the Wollemi Pine and the world's richest diversity of ancient flowering rainforest plants provide living connections to our deep geological history.

The Great Eastern Ranges form the watershed and headwaters for the major river catchments of eastern Australia, providing clean water for over two thirds of the continent's population. Their dense forests soak up vast amounts of carbon from the atmosphere and filter the air we breath. Run-off from the ranges flows westwards into the Great Artesian Basin, creating a reliable source of water for much of inland eastern Australia. To the east, rivers flowing into the Pacific Ocean provide fresh water for most of our major cities.

The beauty and high diversity of the Great Eastern Ranges, their rich cultural and social history, and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation attract millions of local and international visitors every year boosting our economy.

In the future, the Great Eastern Ranges will play a vital role in helping to reduce the impacts of climate change, ensure resilient ecosystems and provide critical refuge areas for a plethora of native species enabling them to move and adapt to a warming climate.

However our spectacular landscape is under pressure: habitat for a range of unique species being lost and fragmented by rapid development, an expanding coastal population encroaching from the east and climate change forcing cooler conditions upslope from the increasingly arid west.

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER) has a bold mission to protect, restore and relink habitat to enable nature and people to continue to thrive.



“ The GER vision is an internationally significant investment in a better Australia and a continental scale response to climate change. ”

Dr. Graeme Worboys, Former Vice Chair Mountains and Connectivity, International Union for Conservation of Nature World Commission on Protected Areas

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER) brings people and organisations together to protect, link and restore healthy habitats over 3,600km, from western Victoria through NSW and the ACT to far north Queensland.

GER has been developed to stem the loss of native species, provide natural solutions to a changing climate, protect precious resources and ensure a healthy, resilient landscape for wildlife and people.

Since 2007, GER has been working with partner organisations on all land tenures across the ranges to deliver innovative solutions that will:

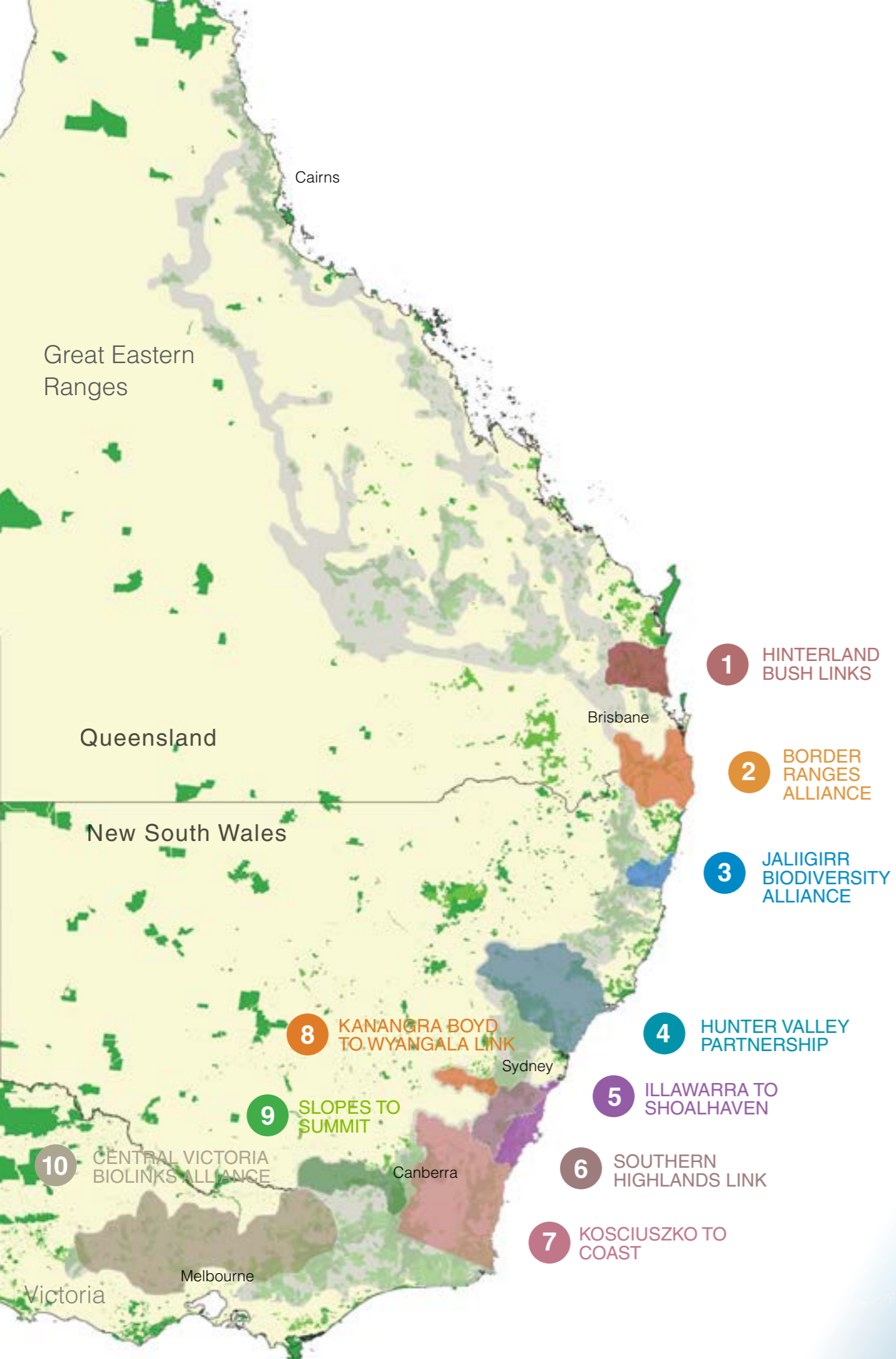
- Sustain the habitats and migration routes of a multitude of native animals and plants.
- Secure and rebuild carbon in one of the world's most resilient living carbon stores.
- Preserve the rivers, wetlands and lakes that supply three quarters of Australia's 24 million residents, farmers and industries with fresh water.
- Maintain the many cultural, social, scenic and recreational values of the ranges for the health and wellbeing of local communities.
- Ensure productive living landscapes.
- Build the next generation of skilled and empowered decision makers, resource stewards and innovators through opportunities for learning and involvement.

We support and enable voluntary partnerships involving more than 250 local, regional and national organisations representing a broad spectrum of natural resource managers and conservation stakeholders: Aboriginal people and field naturalists, Landcare and local government, public land managers and research institutions, businesses and educators, policy makers and scientists.

We take a strategic and scientific approach to conservation, working on collaborative projects to:

- Apply science to communicate what nature needs;
- Promote connectivity principles across sectors, tenures and landscapes;
- Mobilise a network of coordinated efforts that restore connectivity for native species; and
- Enable communities through fundraising.

By supporting efforts in the highest priority places, we are achieving something far greater than the sum of our parts – securing the future of one of the world's great landscapes and the wildlife and people that depend upon it.





Unique Species

The Great Eastern Ranges are home to more than 60% of Australia's threatened animals and 70% of its plants, and contain the continent's richest diversity of Eucalypt and Acacia species. Unique species like the Cassowary, Richmond Birdwing Butterfly, Koala, Wollemi Pine and Mountain Pygmy Possum all live within its valleys and peaks. In the future, the more reliable rainfall and higher altitudes of the Great Eastern Ranges will serve as vital climate refuges for species migrating from the dryer coastline and inland Australia.



Living Fossils

Thought to be long extinct, the Wollemi Pine was rediscovered in a gorge in the Blue Mountains in 1994. One of the world's rarest tree species dating back 200 million years, this living fossil is one of several ancient rainforest plants found in the Great Eastern Ranges.



Tree-dwelling Kangaroos

Superbly adapted to moving across the tree canopy, the extraordinary Tree-kangaroos of Queensland's Wet Tropics have become restricted to high altitude areas and ever decreasing patches of remnant vegetation.



Koala

The iconic koala recognised around the world gets its name from the Aboriginal word meaning "no drink". Once common across Australia, populations of this unique marsupial have declined dramatically over the past few decades primarily due to habitat loss and fragmentation.



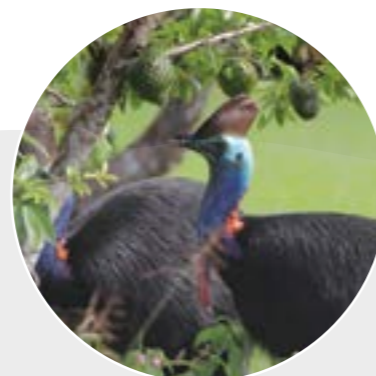
Native Australian Cats

The cat size Tiger Quoll is mainland Australia's largest carnivorous marsupial. Since European settlement populations of this native predator have been decimated and quolls now remain in only isolated patches of rugged terrain.



Gliding Possums

Australia is home to nine species of gliding possum, ranging in size from the world's smallest gliding mammal, the Feather-tailed Glider, to one of the most vulnerable, Queensland's critically endangered Mahogany Glider.



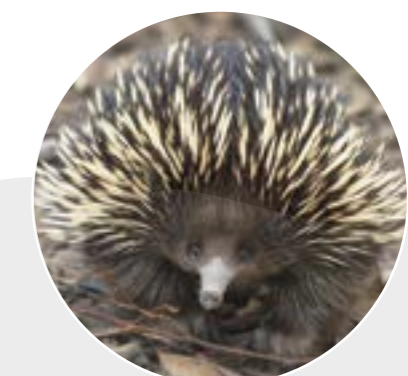
Dinosaur Birds

Shy and solitary, the unmistakable Cassowary of far north Queensland sports a vivid blue neck, long drooping red wattles and high helmet. Cassowaries play an important role in maintaining the diversity of rainforest trees by helping to disperse seeds over vast distances.



Painted Frogs

Unique amongst the frog world, coroboree frogs produce their own poison rather than obtain it from their food. These tiny, striking frogs are restricted to a small 400km² patch in the sub alpine regions of southern NSW and Victoria.



Egg-Laying Mammals

Inhabiting the riverbanks and forests of eastern Australia, the Platypus and Echidna are two of only five species in the world that lay eggs and suckle their young.

Iconic Landscapes

Grounded in the bedrock of the third longest land-based mountain system on Earth, the Great Eastern Ranges provide a spectacular backdrop to life.

Reflecting a unique geological heritage, they are underlain with vast expanses of sandstone, interspersed with volcanic outcrops and pock-marked with limestone caves. These iconic landscapes support a thriving nature-based tourism industry and attract millions of national and international visitors.

The Great Eastern Ranges encompass:

- World Heritage Listed tropical rainforests, hanging swamps, striking views and sandstone pagodalands;

- Australia's highest waterfall, Wallaman Falls, largest exposed granite monolith, Bald Rock, and tallest mountain, Mount Kosciuszko;
- Ancient volcanic remnants (Mount Surprise, Glasshouse Mountains, Border Ranges, Warrumbungles); and
- Vast limestone cave systems (Jenolan, Wombeyan and Buchan).



Snowy River and the Australian Alps

The Snowy Mountains are inland Australia's highest mountain range and contain Mount Kosciuszko, the continent's tallest mountain which stands at 2,228 metres (7,309 feet). The "Snowies" form part of the larger Australian Alps National Heritage Area, a major tourist destination renowned for its scenic beauty and opportunities for outdoor recreation, particularly skiing and hiking.



The green cauldron

Occupying the lush subtropical cauldron formed by the extinct shield volcanoes of the Border Ranges, the World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests include the most extensive areas of subtropical rainforest in the world and nearly all of the Antarctic beech cool temperate rainforest. These ancient forests provide habitat for more than 200 rare or threatened plants and animals including the Spotted-tailed Quoll, Koala and Albert's Lyrebird.



Gariwerd: Birthplace of the Ranges

Known to the local Aboriginal people as 'Gariwerd', the rugged Grampian Ranges of western Victoria comprise a series of sandstone mountain ranges of outstanding natural beauty. With a history stretching back thousands of years, the National Heritage listed Grampians National Park contains one of the richest Indigenous rock art sites in south-east Australia and today continues to hold a special place in the heart of the Aboriginal people.



Ranges, Rainforests and Reef

The Wet Tropics span a vast 2.2 million hectares, encompassing the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the breath-taking Great Barrier Reef which lures 2 million visitors every year with its rainbow waters. This part of the Great Eastern Ranges is home to a rich diversity of tropical species, including over 3,000 species of plant and a multitude of unique animals such as Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo and the Cassowary.



Looking to the Outback

The forests, woodlands, rivers and hills flanking the Great Divide form a complex network of connections reaching westwards from the main range out to the dry ridgelines and savannah woodlands of the inland. These landscape ribs create important natural east-west corridors enabling species to migrate away from the extremes of Australia's inland.

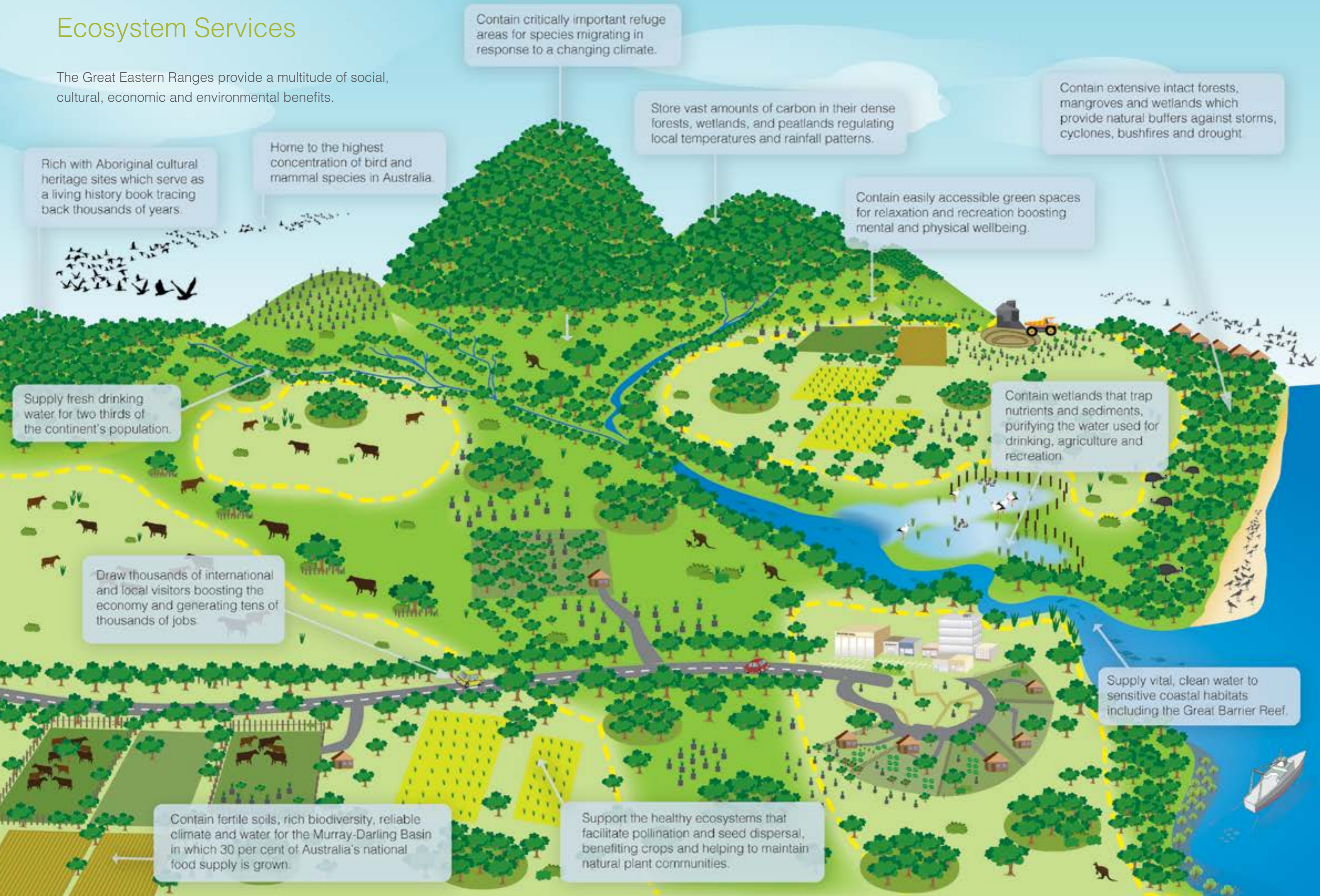


Greater Blue Mountains

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, New South Wales' largest integrated system of protected areas, is renowned for its natural beauty and historical and cultural significance. Close to the burgeoning city of Sydney, the Blue Mountains serve as a welcome retreat for locals, providing a chance for city dwellers to reconnect with nature whilst also attracting millions of international visitors.

Ecosystem Services

The Great Eastern Ranges provide a multitude of social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.



Contain critically important refuge areas for species migrating in response to a changing climate.

Store vast amounts of carbon in their dense forests, wetlands, and peatlands regulating local temperatures and rainfall patterns.

Contain extensive intact forests, mangroves and wetlands which provide natural buffers against storms, cyclones, bushfires and drought.

Contain easily accessible green spaces for relaxation and recreation boosting mental and physical wellbeing.

Rich with Aboriginal cultural heritage sites which serve as a living history book tracing back thousands of years.

Home to the highest concentration of bird and mammal species in Australia.

Supply fresh drinking water for two thirds of the continent's population.

Contain wetlands that trap nutrients and sediments, purifying the water used for drinking, agriculture and recreation.

Draw thousands of international and local visitors boosting the economy and generating tens of thousands of jobs.

Supply vital, clean water to sensitive coastal habitats including the Great Barrier Reef.

Contain fertile soils, rich biodiversity, reliable climate and water for the Murray-Darling Basin in which 30 per cent of Australia's national food supply is grown.

Support the healthy ecosystems that facilitate pollination and seed dispersal, benefiting crops and helping to maintain natural plant communities.



“ The Great Eastern Ranges are arguably the terrestrial equivalent of the Great Barrier Reef: a massively complex, diverse and iconic part of our global heritage. ”

Bob Debus, Former NSW Environment Minister and current Chair of the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.

Why do we need GER?

Faced by an increasing number of threats including habitat loss and degradation, a rapidly expanding population and climate change, the Great Eastern Ranges is a landscape under pressure. In the past, natural landscapes were well connected and continuous. Today roads, fences and buildings serve to carve up the land into small islands, acting as blockages to species movements, reducing available habitat and impacting on precious natural resources.

Research has shown that the traditional method of conserving isolated pockets of habitat does not on its own ensure the long-term survival of species and ecosystems. To truly conserve our air, water and unique wildlife a whole-of-landscape approach to conservation is needed. This will become increasingly important as climate change forces species to seek new habitat and refuge areas, and ecosystems are put under further pressure.

A Focus for Effort

GER is unique in providing a common vision, geographic focus, agreed priorities and locally-led partnerships to deliver coordinated projects and activities across the full length of the ranges. Together with our partners, we work to identify projects and opportunities at the local scale, bringing together the skills and strengths of different organisations and individuals to find innovative solutions to address common landscape conservation goals. We work across all land tenures and jurisdictions, sharing data, science, and capacity to achieve our objectives.

Providing Leadership

Experience in GER and elsewhere demonstrates the essential role local leadership plays in delivering successful projects on the ground. Coordination at a regional scale enables the often disparate conservation activities of groups and organisations to work in sync. Regional partnerships provide a forum to facilitate agreement on strategic priorities, develop greater understanding of contributions made via on-ground delivery and coordinate activities across different groups and project sites.

Strengthening Capacity

GER invests strongly in building and enabling the capacity of partner organisations, landholders and the wider community to increase skills, raise awareness of conservation and improve coordination of local conservation activities.

Cross Tenure Solutions

With partners representing the full spectrum of private land instruments in Australia, we are in the unique position of being able to offer and guide landholders on the range of options open to them to contribute to the GER. This is an essential prerequisite to developing commitment to contribute to a wider outcome and in many cases helps to refine priorities or scheduling of work to better complement neighbours' efforts.



Leadership and action partnerships

GER is built on a foundation of collaborative partnerships. Affiliated Regional Alliances and major projects involving our partner organisations encourage local action and bring together landholders, agencies, non-government organisations, community and indigenous groups, researchers, councils and industry to plan and act together.

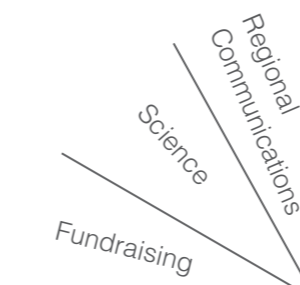
Over 250 regional, state and national organisations have chosen to align their own activities with the GER vision. By leveraging the combined power and knowledge of both our Partners and Regional Partnerships we are able to expand our reach to create corridors of effort encompassing the full extent of the Great Eastern Ranges.

GER is led by an independent Board, a small national executive with program management, business development, marketing, coordination and partnership facilitation skills, supported by advisory groups with specialist expertise in capacity building, communications, science and fundraising.

To achieve our vision we:

- Encourage landholders to protect vegetation on their land to provide core habitat for native animals and plants and maintain vital migration routes;
- Develop innovative approaches to enhance natural habitat connections and maximise carbon storage;
- Work with researchers to increase knowledge and track achievements;
- Enable the sharing of traditional land management practices and knowledge; and
- Build the next generation of skilled and empowered decision makers, resource stewards and innovators through opportunities for life-long learning and involvement.

GER Advisers



Great Eastern Ranges Ltd.

A national independent organisation responsible for:

- Science & Context
- Advocacy
- Network Support
- Resource mobilisation

Affiliated Regional Alliances

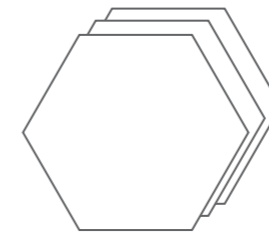


Partnership Agreements



for area operations

Agreements on specified joint actions



Conservation Organisations



Achievements

The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER) has grown to become one of the world's largest connectivity conservation projects.

Established in 2007 by the NSW State Government, GER has successfully transitioned to a mature public-private partnership with independent leadership and a presence across four states and territories. The original AU\$11 million invested by government has leveraged \$44 million in co-investment from private foundations, government grants, aligned program investment and private contributions.

Thanks to the support of our investors, partners and volunteers, GER has been able to achieve many significant results in a relatively short timeframe:

- Protection and improved management of over 26,000 hectares of native habitat on private land.
- Strategic management of invasive species over 120,000 hectares since 2013.
- Over 168,000 individual plantings and a further 41,500 hectares of habitat restored to strengthen vital habitat connections.

- Close to 2,000 people trained through capacity building workshops resulting in almost 600 landholders adopting improved land management practices.
- Establishment of a GER Science Panel to develop a prospectus to inform priorities and stimulate investment in research.
- Established ten regional partnerships encompassing a network of more than 250 national, state and regional organisations.
- Reached an estimated 4.5 million people through communications materials and media coverage.
- Influenced the development of Australia's 'National Wildlife Corridors Plan', a world-leading policy developed in 2012 to link broader community involvement in landscape conservation.

GER continues to be a focus for collaboration, bringing together the skills and capabilities of a broad range of people and organisations to achieve connectivity at the whole-of-landscape level.



“ The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative will make a globally significant difference, as well as a difference to the lives and future of every Australian. ”

Harvey Locke, a founder of Yellowstone to Yukon





An investment in GER is an investment in the future of eastern Australia's natural resources, wildlife and people. By investing in GER you are supporting a strong proven partnership to deliver effective and long term conservation benefits across the Great Eastern Ranges.

© David Gallan

Opportunities for investment

The funds you provide will be used to support a wide range of onground projects in priority locations, and to maintain critical capacity at national and regional level including:



Red-capped Robin © patrickavanagh, Flickr

Facilitating on ground action

Helping to secure our landscapes by funding local collaborative projects that help to re-establish natural connections between private land and protected areas across the Great Eastern Ranges to preserve their ancient rainforests, rich biodiversity and vital natural infrastructure.

Supporting National Leadership

Investing in our national leadership so that GER can continue to provide strategic science, network support, implementation and advocacy to help mobilise communities across Australia.

Empowering local communities

Mobilising the skills and capacity of local landholders, students and Aboriginal people to improve and maintain the health and productivity of their land, manage threats and increase the resilience of local ecosystems.

Major projects	Flyways, Glideways and Stepping Stones connections	Projects linked across landscapes to support the seasonal and climate-driven movements of wildlife
	Eastern Shield	Collaborative efforts across protected areas and private land to reduce the impacts of pests, weeds and infrastructure on nature
	Natural Capital	Protecting our carbon forests and water catchments as globally-significant 'natural infrastructure'
	Rainforest Recovery	Mainstreaming effective restoration techniques to restore the unique rainforests of the GER
Science	Context and priorities	Collating existing information on wildlife movements, natural capital and priorities for action
	Priority research projects	Delivering a yearly program of priority science projects commissioned by invitation
	Accounting for natural capital	Refining methods to account for the value of ecosystems services
	Measuring change	Mobilising citizen scientists and leading researchers to track changes in nature across the GER
Network Support	Strategic advice	Presenting advice on effective connectivity conservation to support network development
	Regional forums and the annual GER Conference	Information and knowledge sharing events to promote key achievements



“ Seeing the evolution of great ideas taking shape, being moulded by great champions and slowly becoming realities on the ground, that is the story of GER. ”

Penny Figgis, AO
Vice Chair for Oceania IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas



To find out more about how you can invest in
Australia's largest conservation initiative visit

www.ger.org.au

or contact Gary Howling, Executive Director

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