

10TH ANNIVERSARY FEATURE

NATURAL HERITAGE



A DECADE OF CONSERVATION COVENANTS

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In 1999 the National Trust launched the first formal conservation covenant program in Western Australia. The launch was in partnership and supported by the Western Australia Lottery Commission and the Commonwealth of Australia's Natural Heritage Trust with in-kind support from the National Trust.

The objective of the conservation covenanting program was to make a significant contribution to natural heritage conservation through supporting landholders in conserving their land. The National Trust operates its covenanting program as a core program of the Trust under the *National Trust of Australia (WA) Act 1964*.

Preceding the formal program the Trust's first conservation covenant was lodged in 1971 when Albert Fidge, a forerunner in Wheatbelt conservation, worked with the Trust to secure a conservation covenant to protect his cherished bush on his property at Narembeen. Interest in conservation covenants remained a National Trust focus, however it was not until current CEO Tom Perrigo undertook to conserve and interpret Western Australia's natural bushland on a larger scale that the program expanded.

Following a decade of working with landowners keen to conserve and protect their bushland, there are now 133 covenants registered in perpetuity on land titles protecting over 15 000 hectares of bushland across the south west of Western Australia.

It was timely that in 2009 the Commonwealth Government conducted a review of covenants across Australia. The Trust was a willing participant and received a grant to undertake an in depth review of the database of the program.

In partnership with CAD Resources, the Trust reviewed every technical detail associated with the conservation covenants and brought all records up to current standards. CAD Resources has previously assisted the Trust with maps and plans for the covenant program. A family business, Brian and Craig White took to the project with a passion, completed it ahead of schedule, and recommended several improvements that have been adopted by the Commonwealth Government and embraced by other States to assist with reporting.



In 1971, the National Trust worked with Albert Fidge to secure the first conservation covenant to protect bush on his Narembeen property.

An outstanding product of the review has been a map showing the coverage of the covenants across the south west of the State, representing significant representation across all Interim Biogeographical Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) regions and benchmarking our natural heritage for the future.

The National Trust expresses its best wishes to all those dedicated current and previous landowners and covenant staff who have assisted in achieving such a high level of private conservation in Western Australia. The Trust anticipates future expansion of the protection of bushland under conservation covenants on private lands with future landowners.

Map showing the distribution of conservation covenants across the south west of Western Australia.

