

Annual Report

22/23

Implementation of Conservation
Programs in the Ginninderry
Conservation Corridor



*Photo: Jason Stainthorpe, Critters of the Corridor
Exhibition – Ginninderry Conservation Trust*



**Ginninderry
Conservation Trust**

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, learn and work, and pay our respects to the First Nations Peoples and their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Chair's Foreword - Roz Chivers



The 2022/23 Annual report reflects the significant accomplishments of the Trust over the year. These would not have been possible without the dedicated and passionate members of the Trust team lead by Dr Jason Cummings the CEO and Angela Calliess our Program Director. All members of the team make a valuable contribution to the environment daily and while the team is now too big to acknowledge individually, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to congratulate Kye Moggridge for winning two awards at this year's local NAIDOC Ball - Trainee/Apprentice of the Year and Caring for Country and Culture. Well done Kye.

Highlights of the year include the submission of the development application for the Riverside Parkland and Pavilion to be developed alongside the Murrumbidgee River. When built, the pavilion will host social, educational and recreational activities and will hopefully be a licensed venue to cater for conferences, functions, weddings and other events. These paid events would contribute to the financial sustainability of the Corridor and support conservation and education programs. This is a significant milestone for the project and everyone on the board is impatient for the outcomes of the development assessment and the construction to commence.

Traditional custodianship of the lands of the Corridor, Canberra and parts of surrounding NSW remains a contentious issue and this has impacted on the membership and activities of the Board. We have used

alternate means to ensure that the views and knowledge of the Aboriginal community are considered and respected when decisions are being made.

A five-year review of the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor Plan of Management 2018-2023 has been undertaken with extensive stakeholder input. We have been pleased with the positive feedback received and are looking forward to the revised plan which will take into account the growth of the surrounding development and increased visitation to the Corridor.

Business as usual continues at pace with conservation works occurring alongside expansion of tracks and trails, increased control of weeds and feral animals and extensive research. This report sets out detailed information on what we have accomplished in 2022/23.

The Board are excited to see the progress being made to protect the cultural and environmental values in the Conservation Corridor which envelopes the Ginninderry community, including the Murrumbidgee River. We welcome everyone to visit and enjoy this special place and significant regional project.



Translations

Please scan the QR code for Urdu, Nepali, Punjabi and Hindi translations of the foreword.

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Photo: Barry Ridgeway

1. Introduction

The Ginninderry Conservation Trust (The Trust) has been developed as a strategic initiative of the Ginninderry Joint Venture (the JV), a partnership between Riverview Group and the ACT Government, as a vehicle to manage the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor, deliver the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)* commitments within the Corridor, harness community support for landscape management and present a contemporary leading practice conservation space.

The Trust is guided by a Constitution under the *Australian Corporations Act 2001*, is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and is a tax-deductible gift recipient.

The Trust's on-ground operations are guided by a Plan of Management (POM) for the Corridor (dated 2018-2023) which has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the EPBC Act approval for the Ginninderry Project and endorsed by the ACT Conservator and Minister for the Environment. The Plan of Management is currently being reviewed with the aim of adopting a refined version at the end of 2024.

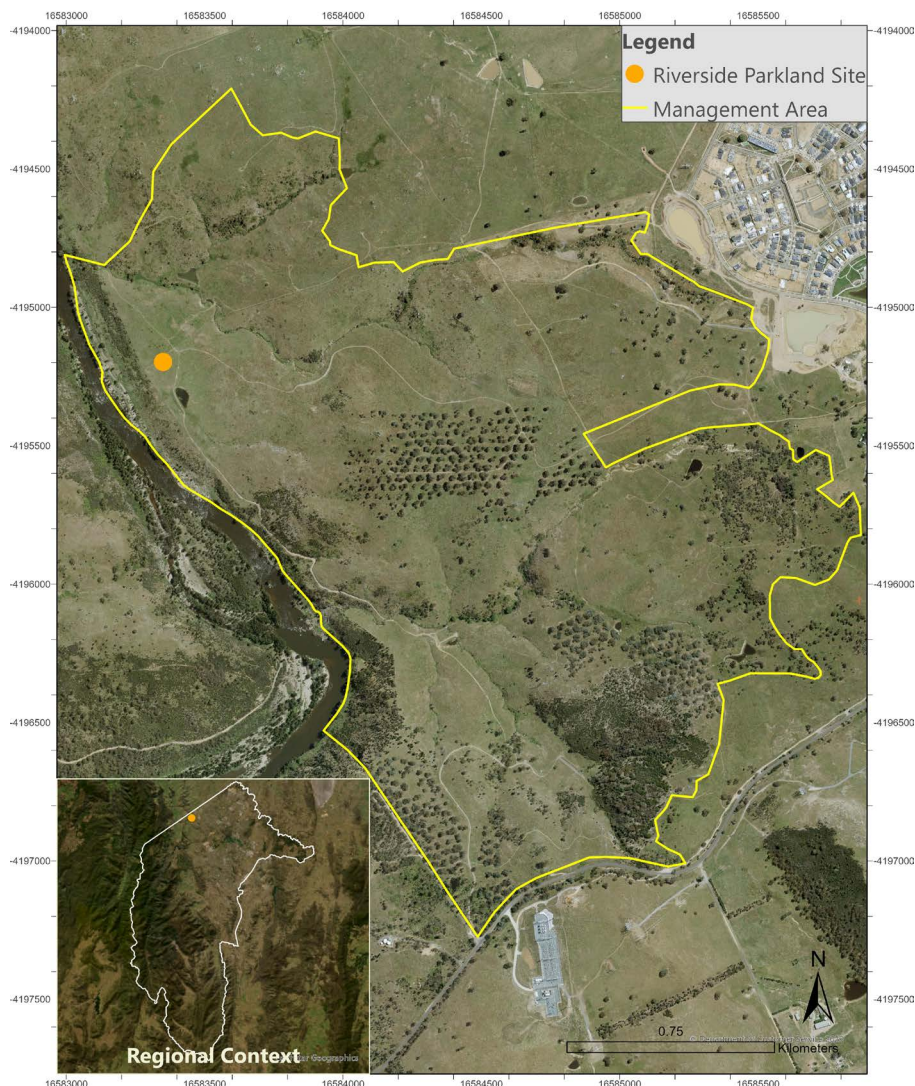
The purpose of this document is to report against all key activities undertaken pursuant to the POM and other supporting initiatives funded by the ACT Government, including:

1. Weed, kangaroo, grazing and habitat management and restoration.
2. Bushfire mitigation to protect ecological values.
3. Establishing recreational facilities and access trails for the community.
4. Protection of Indigenous heritage through annual maintenance and reporting of heritage sites.
5. Develop and provide information and communication on matters such as cat containment promotion.
6. Develop a volunteer engagement program for areas such as monitoring Pink-tailed Worm-lizards.
7. Undertake research related to EPBC Act commitments such as Box Gum Woodland restoration.

2. Conservation Programs Progress and Outcomes

The ACT Government has issued a Section 303 license covering 284 ha of the Conservation Corridor for the purposes of implementing the Plan of Management. The original Licence dated March 2020 has recently been updated and extended for a further five years. The Trust is responsible for approximately 2 km of Murrumbidgee River frontage and the adjacent land up-slope to the developing urban edge. The Corridor will grow in line with the Ginninderry urban development.

Currently public pedestrian access is limited to the Strathnairn to Shepherds Walking Track and the fire track from Shepherds Lookout to the Murrumbidgee River. Five new walking tracks have been approved and construction commenced in September 2023. It is expected at least two of these tracks will be completed by the end of 2023.



Ginninderry Conservation Corridor



Map prepared by Ginninderry Conservation Trust 31 August 2023
Data provided by ACTMapi and Place Logic

3. This Year's Achievements

22 Community events

11 Cultural events

6 School holiday program events

51 Track audits completed

6 Interns and Work Placement students engaged

2.5 km Fences removed

19,911

Visitors on Strathnairn to Shepherds Track

250 Plants propagated

1 Nursery established

2 Farm dams protected and enhanced



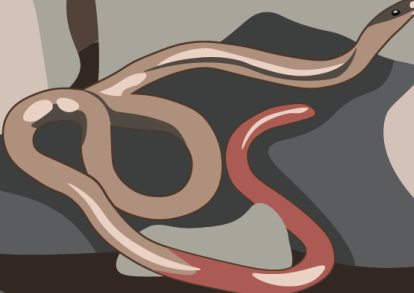
41 Monitoring events

15 ha Woodland enhancement

7 Research projects

114 ha Weed management

123 Turtles translocated



57 Volunteers engaged

1.4 km Riparian enhancement

4. Operations

a. Board and Governance

The Board of Directors has had an active work program through the year, including the consideration and development of:

- Riverside Parkland and second stage of walking track construction;
- Funding partnerships with the ACT Government and Ginninderry Joint Venture;
- Establishment of phase two of the research partnership with The Australian National University;
- Development and approval of business plans and budgets;
- Plan of Management review; and
- Maintaining the Workplace Health and Safety Committee and upgrading WHS systems and processes including Organisational Risk Register and Donesafe.

Regulatory reports to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and Register of Environmental Organisations were submitted on time.

Board of Directors

Roz Chivers

Chair and Community Representative

Master of Environmental Studies, Bachelor Resource and Environmental Management. Executive Director, Policy and Research Australian Local Government Association.

Alistair Henchman

Secretary and Community Representative

25 years NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Government Senior Executive, tourism and protected area consultant.

Rod Griffiths

Treasurer and Community Representative

38 years of chartered accountancy, 40 years of governance experience in not-for-profit organisations, current President of the Conservation Council ACT Region. Life member National Parks Association of the ACT.

David Coutts

Past Chair and Community Representative

Senior officer in Commonwealth Public Service, Member of the Governing Body of UN FAO, Director of Southern Fisheries, CEO of Australian Aluminium Council, President of Friends of Australian National Botanic Gardens, Board member of Tennis ACT and Tennis Seniors Australia.

David Maxwell

Ginninderry Joint Venture

30+ years' experience in real estate and major property developments. Director of Riverview Group and other Corkhill companies. Managing Director of Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd – Ginninderry Development. National Development Manager (Property Development) – Woolworths Limited.

Jasmin Jones

Yass Valley Council

10 years as a local government councillor in Yass Valley representing her community. Chaired a variety of committees including statutory. Former Broadcast Television, Radio & Print journalist in regional and metropolitan markets; and former owner/editor of a local newspaper within Yass Valley. BA Communication Studies.

Jennifer Finlay

ACT Government

15+ years' experience in ACT Government including in Environment, Land Strategy and Policy.

Stephen Alegria

ACT Government

Executive Branch Manager for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. After commencing his career as a ranger in ACT parks, Stephen was responsible for post-2003 bushfire recovery works and later managed Namadgi National Park, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and the Murrumbidgee River Corridor. He has held various senior roles in ACT Government land management agencies including City Services and the National Arboretum Canberra where he facilitated strong philanthropic engagement.



Photo: Jason Stainthorpe

b. Staffing

In the interests of balancing efficiency and effectiveness, a combination of employed staff, partnerships, and sub-contracted/procured services has been engaged. The Trust team currently comprises the following:



Tyson Powell

Caring for Country Team Leader

Responsible for implementation of conservation and land management programs and leading the Caring for Country team. Actions include weed and feral animal management, fencing, managing contractors installing infrastructure (tracks, trails, Riverside Park) and liaising with the Ginninderry Aboriginal Advisory Group.



Kye Moggridge and Leigh Woodward

Caring for Country Rangers

As part of the Caring for Country team, this role is responsible for conducting culturally appropriate land management by maintaining the cultural values of the Corridor and protection of Aboriginal sites.



Rachel Eland, Alex Nguyen, Dimple Dhaliwal, Joe Johnstone, Kieran Webbie, Saru Shrestha and Shama Sharma

Weekend Rangers

Responsible for visitor engagement on walking tracks, track audits, litter patrol and weed management. Two of the rangers are Ginninderry residents, with three of them speaking Hindi and/or Punjabi. There is a strong Hindi/Punjabi speaking community within the Ginninderry urban area.





Ange Calliess

Program Director – Conservation Corridor

Responsible for implementation of land management and conservation programs, input to the design of Riverside Park and the tracks and trails, coordination of the implementation of approval conditions.



Ariana Strmota

Community & Education Officer

Responsible for managing the casual rangers and coordinating and delivering community events.



Bridie Noble

Riparian Restoration and Education Officer

Responsible for the enhancement and monitoring of waterways in the Conservation Corridor as well as organising education programs.



Jason Cummings

Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for strategy, implementation, staff recruitment and management, stakeholder engagement, business establishment and operation.



Natalie Band

Graphic Designer

Responsible for developing signage and interpretative information for new walking tracks to help visitors engage with the landscape.



Violet Marriott

Rehabilitation and Reporting Officer (Acting in role whilst Rachel Eland on maternity leave)

Responsible for the quarterly and annual reporting requirements and implementation of conservation and land management programs.

c. Partnerships

The Trust continues to develop and maintain partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, including the following:

ANU Fenner School

The Trust has an ongoing research partnership with the Fenner School at the Australian National University. Four key research projects are underway; Eastern Brown snake research with Associate Professor Gavin Smith, fox monitoring and control with PhD candidate Tim Andrewartha, herbivore grazing analysis via DNA, and eDNA surveys of Pink-tailed Worm-Lizard populations. Two PhD positions for the eDNA project have been awarded. The Trust is part of a broader Ginninderry Research Committee which meets once a month.

University of Canberra

UC has been engaged to undertake eDNA monitoring of specific waterbodies in the Corridor. Two sampling events have taken place to date, one in December 2022 and in April 2023. Results from the monitoring have been completed and a report written. The report can be found [here](#).

The Woodlands and Wetlands Trust

The WWT has successfully established ACT leading community engagement, interpretation and volunteer programs. The Trust collaborate with WWT on projects related to ecological monitoring, including in the future, potential species reintroduction programs.

Friends of Grasslands

Friends of Grasslands (FOG) assist with annual monitoring of the Scrape and Sow site. The Spring 2022 report is available [here](#).

CSIRO

The Trust collects dung beetles for the CSIRO dung beetle nursery. This is also an educational opportunity for The Trust Team.

Wombat Rescue

Volunteers have undertaken burrow monitoring on the Murrumbidgee River within the Conservation Corridor. Using cameras and physical surveys, wombat health and population data has been collected. This monitoring work also helps identify potential sites for rescued wombats which have recovered and are due for release.

Canberra Birds

Canberra Birds (COG) assisted the Trust with woodland bird monitoring in spring 2023 and continue surveying woodlands in the Corridor four times a year.



d. Performance Management and Reporting

Financial Reporting

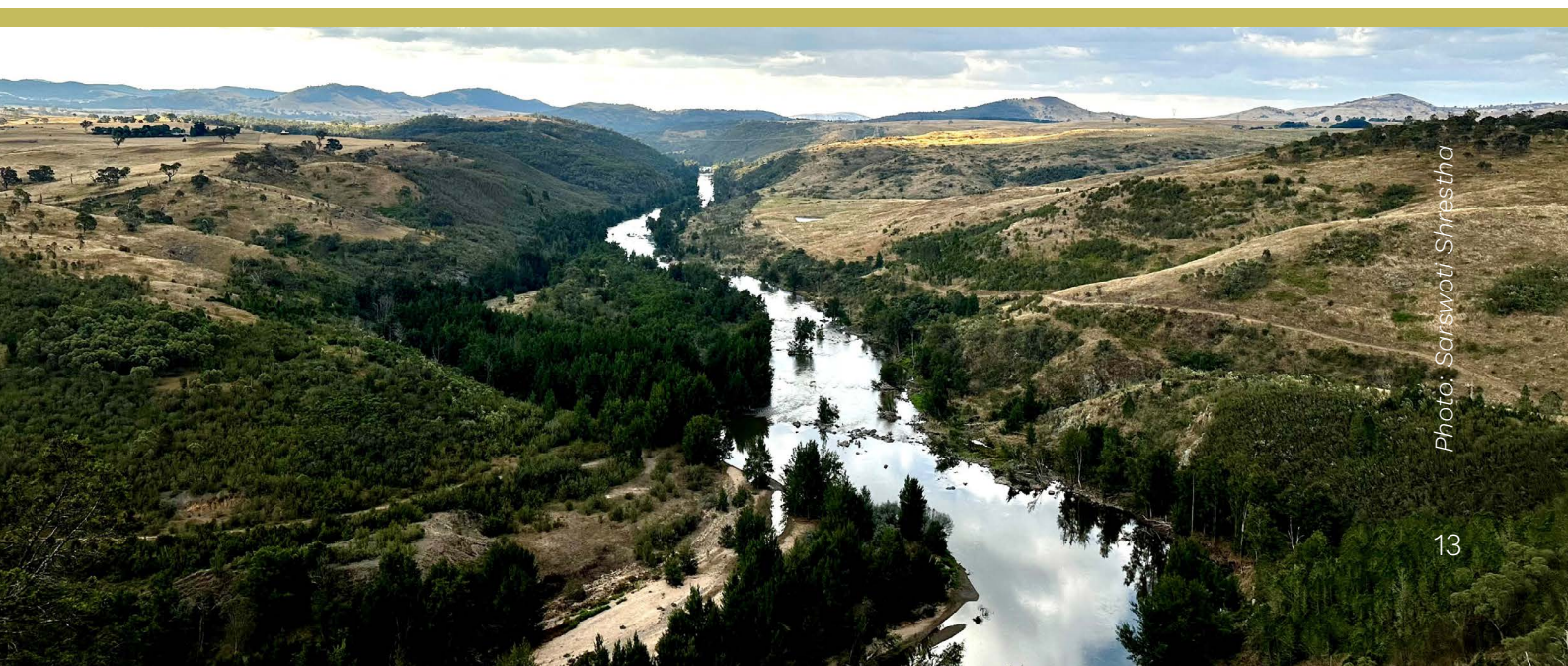
Our 22-23 financial reports were audited during the year, and the audited statements for that year will be published on the Australian Charities and Not-for Profits Commission website (publicly available). This year's financial audit report will also be provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Environmental and Community Performance

This annual report has been prepared for the Board and stakeholders interested in the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor. Quarterly activities reports are provided to the ACT Government, and the Joint Venture submits an Annual Report to the Australian Government pursuant to their EPBC Act obligations. In the past year we have published the following programmatic reports on our website: eDNA Metabarcoding of Vertebrate Biodiversity Throughout the Ginninderry Conservation Corridor 2023, Pool and Bench Vegetation of Goodamon Creek (previously known as Stream E) Ginninderry Conservation Corridor: Spring 2022, Ginninderry Conservation Corridor Biomass Monitoring Report (Cumulative), and the Conservation Corridor Pale Pomaderris Survey 2022. Below we provide a few case studies of the work we have been doing. Further detailed information is available in the reports on our website.

Workplace Health and Safety

The Workplace Health and Safety Committee met four times this year. The Committee reviews systems and processes, incidents/hazards, provides advice and helps foster a positive safety culture. There are no significant incidents to report. A WHS audit was completed which resulted in establishment of an Organisational Risk Register which was accepted by the Board. The Trust adopted the Donesafe WHS platform for completion of inductions, incidents/hazard reporting, Job Safety and Environmental Analysis (JSEAs), and Safe Work Instructions (SWIs).



5. Case Studies

a. Eastern Brown Snake Tracking Project

This project continues to deliver amazing results in terms of the data collected. Every year large numbers of native snakes are removed from residential and commercial properties and translocated to new environments. Until now, little has been known about the welfare or ecological impacts of these translocation practices, particularly survivability rates of individual snakes after release and how different snakes respond to the experience of being displaced. To get a better understanding of these urban adapted snakes, transmitters have been fitted so their movements can be tracked over time.

PhD candidate Hannah Gerke is in the process of ramping up the project by increasing the number of snakes fitted with transmitters for tracking in the Corridor. Hannah will also study the personalities of individual snakes and how this links with their behaviours. The Trust is actively supporting this project and we have in the past tracked snakes released in the Corridor and will continue to help grow this program locally.

The Trust are currently tracking two snakes in the Corridor; male snake Severus and female snake Ari. Severus' movements continue to be quite erratic. He can travel large distances each day (up to 1 km), while Ari has been keeping close to the boundaries of the suburb. Interestingly, Ari moved into the adjoining suburb almost instantly after being translocated to the Conservation Corridor. She then spent winter in a burrow between the Conservation Corridor and the suburb. It will be interesting to monitor their behaviour as the weather warms up.



b. Turtle Translocations

The Trust team has been involved in multiple turtle translocations across the year, removing Eastern long-necked turtles from dams set to be filled in as part of standard development practice and translocating them to areas under environmental protection. In July 2022, the Trust partnered with the Ginninderry development team, Huon, Egis Group and Ginninderra Waterwatch to remove turtles from four dams being dewatered in the new suburb of Macnamara. A total of 96 turtles were rescued and moved into the Conservation Corridor.

The translocation of turtle species is not mandatory as part of development approvals and far too often many species that live in dams set to be dewatered are not considered. The environmental and community mindset at Ginninderry has positively impacted the survival of Eastern Long-necked Turtles and provides the opportunity to educate developers and community on the importance of checking waterway systems before getting backfilled. Subsequently, the Trust team have been involved in similar translocations outside of Ginninderry, including Woodbury Ridge in Sutton and Ngunnawal. We are excited that more developers are concerned about protecting this species and we hope that in future it will become a requirement to clear dams of native wildlife before they are filled in.



c. Caring for Country Team

The Caring for Country team was established in November 2022 when the Trust employed two Aboriginal trainees, Kye Moggridge and Leigh Woodward, in partnership with the Australian Training Centre. Lead by Tyson Powell, the Caring for Country team are responsible for conducting culturally appropriate land management activities and programs in the Corridor. Over the last year, the Caring for Country team have delivered several key projects and events, including the following:

A greenhouse was constructed to facilitate the propagation of native species for use in revegetation projects within the Corridor. To date, multiple species have been propagated from seed and cuttings including casuarinas, snow gums and peppermint gum, native raspberry, grevillea and mountain pepper.

A total of 2.5km of old farm fences have been removed to improve wildlife movement across the Corridor.

Weed control has been focussed on willows, blackberry, hawthorn, serrated tussock and bathurst burr. The team have been using an InJecta device to stem inject the willows and hawthorn with glyphosate tablets. The trees are left dead standing which minimises impact on bank stability of streams and retains some habitat whilst native species establish themselves, either by planting or natural regeneration.

The Caring for Country team hosted activities with the Murrumbung Rangers who undertook manual blackberry control at the rock shelter, as well as the Kids on Country group who have helped with planting along the river and creeks within the Corridor.



d. Community Engagement

Community engagement is a key aspect of our work. The Trust continues to use 'Better Impact' as our database to communicate with our volunteer network and promote volunteer events. Community events are advertised via our website, Eventbrite and our social media. Our program of events for this year has included the following:

School Holiday Programs

The Trust has run multiple programs for kids ages 3-7 and 7-12. Children engaged in activities including painting, collection of natural materials to make art and musical instruments, water bug activities, exploration of the Corridor and writing and singing songs.

Pride Grows

The Trust hosted a Pride Grows planting day alongside Landcare ACT and Meridian with support from the Rural Regional Landcare Facilitator, ACT Parks and Conservation and Molonglo Rural Fire Service. 350+ mid-storey seedlings were planted across 35 plots in woodland with the help of 40+ volunteers and Trust team members. The planting will enhance species diversity and structural habitat within the woodland.

Photography Walks

Award winning photographer Cristy Froehlich partnered with the Trust to deliver photography walks along the Strathnairn to Shepherds walking track. Cristy has shared her tips and tricks on how to photograph flora and fauna at a macro scale.



Guided Walks

The Trust commenced guided walks of our walking track. Our weekend rangers lead groups of people along the track and share their knowledge about the Corridor and the plants and animals that call it home.



Critters of the Corridor

The Trust ran an art exhibition which included photos from residents and visitors. 21 photos were selected from five different artists and their works were displayed in the Link building for a month. This event aimed to encourage local residents to explore the Corridor while also showcasing what it has to offer.



Volunteering in the Corridor

The Trust have been rehabilitating farm dams in the Corridor to improve habitat and species biodiversity. Volunteers have worked with the Trust team on several planting activities. The Trust, Woodlands and Wetlands Trust and volunteers worked together to survey the relative abundance of Pink-tailed Worm-lizards in the Corridor. This involved turning rocks in medium-high quality habitat and counting how many Pink-tailed Worm-lizards were found.



6. Contact Us

Ginninderry.org

The Link, 1 McClymont Way,
Strathnairn ACT 2615

✉ admin.contact@ginninderry.org

📷 [@GinninderryTrust](#)

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Photo: Hannah O'Niell