

Annual report in brief 2010/2011

As recovery from the impact of the Global Financial Crisis progressed, The Thomas Foundation distributed \$2.45m to six projects for the year ended 30 June 2011 – approximately the same quantum made in 2009/2010.

Grant distribution accounted for 15% of the Foundation's net assets. Since 2004, the Foundation's distributions have averaged 16% of net assets per annum. As at 30 June 2011, the Foundation retains a healthy and sound asset base of over \$16 million.

The largest payment in 2010/11 was \$2m to The Nature Conservancy to meet matching grants made to Thomas Challenge Fund partners. Individual payments covered by this grant included:

- Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Kalamurina Station, support for management, feral animal control, biological surveys.
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Mornington Station and Wongalara Station support for management of these properties.
- Bush Heritage Australia, Craven's Peak and Bon Bon Stations, support for upgrading accommodation to permit scientists and staff to work in a remote environment, employment of a full time Reserve Manager, fencing and erosion control, managing tracks and roads after floods, wildfire management and suppression, control of invasives.
- Trust for Nature, Ned's Corner Station, supply and installation of remote solar power supply, purchase of a tractor for invasives control, fencing, renovation of shearer's quarters to facilitate volunteer and scientific work on site.
- Indigenous Protected Areas, development of management plans and implementation on a wide variety of locations from Cape York to the northern Kimberley, development of the Northern Australia Fire Project.
- Gondwana Link Landscape Manager to assist protection of properties within Gondwana Link.
- Birds Australia, A major study on birds in the Great Western Woodlands.
- Bunya Biolink, completion of the Conservation Action Plan.
- The Nature Conservancy and partners to establish the National Covenanting Secretariat.

Other grants included \$100,000 to the Australian National University for its work on biodiversity monitoring; \$100,000 to The Nature Conservancy for scientific mentoring; and \$76,000 for the David Thomas Conservation Oration.

Three hundred thousand dollars was paid to The Nature Conservancy to maintain the Barbara Thomas Fellowship Fund, enabling four fellows to undertake study or attend conferences in in the USA and Australia (Rod Vogel from USA to Australia to assist Karrkad Kanji develop a fundraising strategy, Veronica Dobson from Australia to USA on indigenous knowledge for conservation exchange, Victoria Marles and Nathan Males from Australia to the USA to attend Land Trust Alliance Rally).

Outside conservation, a grant of \$95,000 was made to the Australian Red Cross for a study of psychological responses to the Queensland floods, with the objective of developing broadly applicable protocols to deal with the trauma experienced by individuals in similar future events.

Tight management of the Foundation's costs was maintained over the year, with operating costs totalling \$143,000 – or just 6% of total outlays. This tight containment of costs has been a hallmark of the Foundation's operations since 2004, with operating costs held to an average 6% of outlays a year over this period.

Operating costs include research and development which has averaged around \$60,000 a year since 2004. However, as the Foundation reviews its terrestrial conservation

achievements and seeks new directions and projects to support, such necessary costs are expected to increase.