



# Forest Chatter



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## Remembering our President

**For the last ten years, this was the place in our newsletter where our beloved President Tony Gilding would welcome you and give you the latest news and updates about our work. But sadly, Tony is no longer with us.**

While winning so many battles to protect orangutans and other endangered species and their habitats, he lost his courageous personal fight against cancer. In remembrance of him and his invaluable contributions to BOS, we would like to dedicate this edition of Forest Chatter to Tony.

However, Tony would have never wanted us to sink into grief and put the focus on him, but on the cause that marked his life. That's why we will continue on the last two pages of this Forest Chatter with what was most important to him: Giving you,



our dear supporters, exciting stories to read so you can learn more about our work and be confident we are doing all we can to save our red cousins from extinction.

Asked about the biggest challenge of saving "the coolest animals on

the planet," as he called orangutans, Tony always answered: "Habitat, Habitat, Habitat." For him, it was clear that "orangutans need enough large tracts of forest to survive and prosper" and that "human removal and defragmentation of habitat is their biggest threat."

Therefore, we decided to use this year's **Tax Appeal** to help rebuild crucial orangutan habitat. Please find out all about our unique reforestation project and your opportunity to help plant new orangutan homes on page 3. And please don't miss the interview with Rahmadi, who makes sure that our newly planted trees grow successfully into vital habitat for countless generations to come.

Thank you for caring about orangutans!

Your BOS Australia Team

*"Tony, thanks for everything you did for orangutans. We may forget what you said, but we will never forget how you made us feel. As a famous host once said, 'Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down', and you proved it. You were hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget." — Dr. Jamartin Sihite, CEO BOS Foundation*

## A life full of dedication

We are very proud to share this image from the 'Tony Gilding Solar Plaza' inauguration with you. It was part of the official solar power plant opening ceremony at our Samboja Lestari centre. Tony's dear friend and project manager Tom Bertinshaw (second from left) joined on behalf of our late President. We let the words speak for themselves: "In honour of Tony Gilding, President of BOS Australia, for his significant contribution toward making the Solar Project at Samboja Lestari a reality. His passion and dedication for orangutans are a shining light for the species."





In Loving Memory



## Big shoes to fill

**It was Tony's wish to hand over the presidency to our former vice president Kerin Welford. We asked her about Tony's legacy and the challenges moving forward.**

### How would you want our supporters to remember Tony?

Tony was a true visionary, conservationist and environmentalist. He volunteered countless hours, ensuring the protection and restoration of vast rainforest areas in Australia and overseas. Tony helped tremendously in protecting endangered species and their habitats, which will have an impact not only now but well into the future.

### Tony worked tirelessly until the very end to save orangutans. How crucial was he for BOS?

During his almost 13 years with BOS Australia, Tony was instrumental in delivering significant revenue to the BOS Foundation totalling over three million Australian dollars.

It was because of his engagement that we secured Salat Nusa Island as a pristine pre-release site and orangutan conservation area. And he drove the trailblazing Samboja Lestari Solar Power Project, saving 150,000 kilograms of CO2 per year.

Tony's huge commitment, leadership, stewardship, passion and wisdom he gave towards the BOS Foundation, its partners, BOS Australia and the orangutans helped make the organisation what it is today.

### Tony left you big shoes to fill. How will you continue his work?

At BOS Australia, we want to make sure Tony's legacy remains well into the future, keeping his vision and memory alive.

We will continue to identify and implement vital infrastructure projects at our sanctuaries to ensure we can secure the future of orangutans and other species who come into our care by rehabilitating and releasing healthy

orangutans back into the wild and also allowing orangutans who may not be able to be released to live out their lives in safety being cared for by our specialist teams.

We will continue to advocate for our orangutan cousins by procuring, regenerating and protecting vast areas of Indonesian forest habitats, which will remain forever unspoiled, as areas where orangutans and other endangered species can be released and have a place to call home.

And most of all, we will continue to respond to the needs of these incredible great apes as a unique species, ensuring they never become extinct in the wild by being their voice, their advocates and their guardians.

We look to you, our wonderful supporters, to help us keep Tony's vision alive as part of the BOS Australia family by walking with us to secure the future of orangutans now and forever.



# Building new forest homes

**Like us, orangutans need a safe place where they find enough food, water, shelter, and room to roam and raise their offspring. But orangutan homes vanish at an alarming rate. In the past 50 years, we have lost over 80 per cent of the Bornean orangutan population, mainly due to habitat loss.**

“Orangutans are the coolest animals on the planet. They are cute, majestic, smart, peaceful and mischievous, but so vulnerable if we take them for granted and don’t protect their forest home.” For our former President Tony Gilding, it was always clear that we need to do more than rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing orangutans. Knowing that the healthiest and happiest orangutan will always be the one we don’t need to rescue in the first place, Tony emphasized that “orangutans need enough large tracts of forest to survive and prosper” and that “human removal and defragmentation of habitat is their biggest threat.”

Our solutions to stop the rapid decline of orangutan habitats are manifold and range from securing safe release sites for our rehabilitated orangutans to protecting and conserving vast forested areas for the remaining wild populations.

Especially our Mawas Conservation Program is a beacon of hope in the fight against habitat loss. It consists of 309,000 hectares of peatland and is home to the largest known wild population of orangutans. Around 2550 individuals call the Mawas their home, and we work on various levels to protect them and their habitat.

Peatlands are unique in many ways. First, they are characterized by continuous or seasonal flooding across the forest floor. These conditions can leave the biotic components waterlogged, impacting the decomposition and, in some cases, thousands of years later, creating peat swamp forests like in our Mawas Conservation Area.

Besides being a critical orangutan habitat, peatlands are of global importance as a carbon reservoir and biodiversity conservation site. They store twice as much carbon as all the world’s forests combined with

the wide variety of plants uptaking carbon from the atmosphere and providing us with fresh air.

The vegetation also helps regulate the water cycle and mitigate runoff, ultimately maintaining the water table and preventing flooding. So, as areas are deforested, they slowly dry out, which increases the likelihood of dangerous floods and puts them at risk for another disaster: wildfires - one of the major threats for orangutans.

The solution seems simple: Planting as many trees as fast as possible to keep up with the decline. Yes, we need to plant trees. But we need to do it sustainably so that orangutans can thrive in their new homes well into the future.

So how do we tackle the challenge of reforesting degraded areas? First, we make sure we work together with indigenous communities bordering our project. Without the locals on our side, we couldn’t protect and save orangutans from extinction. In addition, their traditional knowledge about the rainforest and its inhabitants is crucial for our work.

On the other hand, we need to make sure they make a living while protecting and conserving precious orangutan habitats, for example, by finding timber alternatives, educating them and offering jobs. As part of the team, local workers collect, care for and plant seedlings, and they monitor and protect the area against illegal logging and forest fires.

Maintaining the newly planted forest is another crucial part of each project. We are not just planting trees; we make sure they become vital orangutan habitats. Hence, if you support one of our reforestation projects, you also provide five years of care. And you can be sure that we plant native, mostly endangered varieties, which provide food for orangutans and bring back thousands of other species critical to a healthy ecosystem.

Only with this holistic approach will the seedlings we are planting become a source of food and shelter within as little as ten years. Then we will see mums with their newborn babies raising the next generation of wild orangutans.



## Will you help us build new homes for orangutans?

For this year’s tax appeal, we have an ambitious goal: We want to raise \$110,000 to reforest at least 60 hectares of land within our Mawas Conservation Program. And you are a crucial part of achieving this mission.

By supporting our Mawas reforestation project, you help protect an estimated 2550 wild orangutans and rebuild orangutan habitat for generations to come.

Please **give today** and have your gift matched instantly. Plant twice as many trees with just one donation and give orangutans a new wild home to thrive and survive!

# HELLO, I AM RAHMADI



Please meet Rahmadi, one of our amazing orangutan warriors. He has worked for the BOS Foundation for an impressive 17 years.

During your long time with BOS, you literally got an incredible overview. Can you please tell our readers about your exciting work?

I started my career as a general staff member for the project at Begantung Lake in 2004 but was later trained to pilot the ultralight aircraft we used for air monitoring in the Mawas Conservation Area.

Considering that the Mawas Conservation Area covers more than 300 thousand hectares of peat swamp forest, monitoring is vital to maintain security and track changes in the condition of the forest, which is vulnerable to fire in the dry season.

When BOS stopped using air patrols to reduce operational costs, you began working at the branch office in Buntok, Central Kalimantan...

I was responsible for organising and leading a tree-planting group and the construction of canal blocks, two important activities aimed at restoring the peat swamp ecosystem.

In the past, peat swamp forests within the Mawas Conservation Area suffered severe damage as a result of the efforts made to convert them into agricultural land. Peat swamp was drained by digging thousands of canals to rid the area of swamp water. Thus, BOS carries out replanting and canal blocking to hold the rainwater and help to flood the peat in the Mawas area. These measures help improve the hydrological quality of the peat swamps, to support the wild orangutan population.

How do you help protect the peat swamp forests from the annual fires that are a major threat to the about 2550 wild orangutans in the area?

As part of the technical team, I drill wells in locations across the Mawas Conservation Area. The local communities use these wells to quickly extinguish fires when they emerge.

What is your hope for the future?

I wish to see activities continue to run well and see the parties involved continue to support the sustainable management of natural resources. I want the hard work undertaken by BOS to be long-lasting and beneficial for the environment and the local communities alike and for the BOS Foundation to keep improving its performance and impact.



**BOS Australia**  
primates helping primates

Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia

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Thank you for your continued support.



## We love hearing from you

We know you've been spreading the orangutan word, so why not tell us about what you're up to? Email [contact@orangutans.com.au](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au) or post your photos online at [facebook.com/bosaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/bosaustralia) or [instagram/bosaustralia](https://www.instagram.com/bosaustralia)

## Can you help us?

Your donations provide food, shelter, protection, medicine and companionship for orangutans in our care. Visit [www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au) to help us help them.

Donations by cheque are payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia at PO Box 3916, Mosman NSW 2088.

Make a one-off or regular payment via direct debit or by credit card either online or by calling us on +61 2 9011 5455. We also accept **Paypal** donations. See the link on the homepage of our website.

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