



WWF

AUSTRALIA

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest of tall trees, likely eucalyptus, stretching to the horizon. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a golden glow and long shadows across the canopy. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and some clouds.

TREES SCORECARD 2023

CALLING ON GOVERNMENTS TO MAKE AUSTRALIA
A LEADER IN TREE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION
JULY 2023

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of concentric, irregular white lines that resemble the growth rings of a tree trunk, set against a dark green background.

Acknowledgements

WWF-Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, water and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

WWF-Australia wishes to express our gratitude to the Environmental Defender's Office (EDO) for their comprehensive analysis that informed the scoring for the commitment and land clearing indicators (Indicators 6, 7 and 8), and Frontier Economics for their comprehensive analysis that informed the scoring for the native forest logging indicators (9 and 10).

WWF-Australia wishes to express our gratitude to Barraband Consulting, 11 Butterflies, Acacia Consulting, Australian National University and Kuril and Currawong Consulting, which also contributed expertise to assist in developing the Scorecard.

We thank governments for their time in reviewing the accuracy of information used for the Scorecard, and for feedback and insights into differing government approaches that informed the scoring.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with all jurisdictions to share the highlights, improve on the lowlights, enhance alignment and to drive ambition towards Australia becoming a leader in protecting and restoring trees.

WWF-Australia acknowledges the generosity of our supporters and donors who have made the development of the Trees Scorecard possible.

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisations, with more than 30 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF-Australia is one of Australia's most trusted conservation organisations. For 45 years, WWF-Australia has worked to protect threatened species and habitats, meet the challenge of climate change, and build a world where people live in harmony with nature.

WWF-Australia National Office

Suite 3.01, Level 3, 45 Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: +1800 032 551
enquiries@wwf.org.au

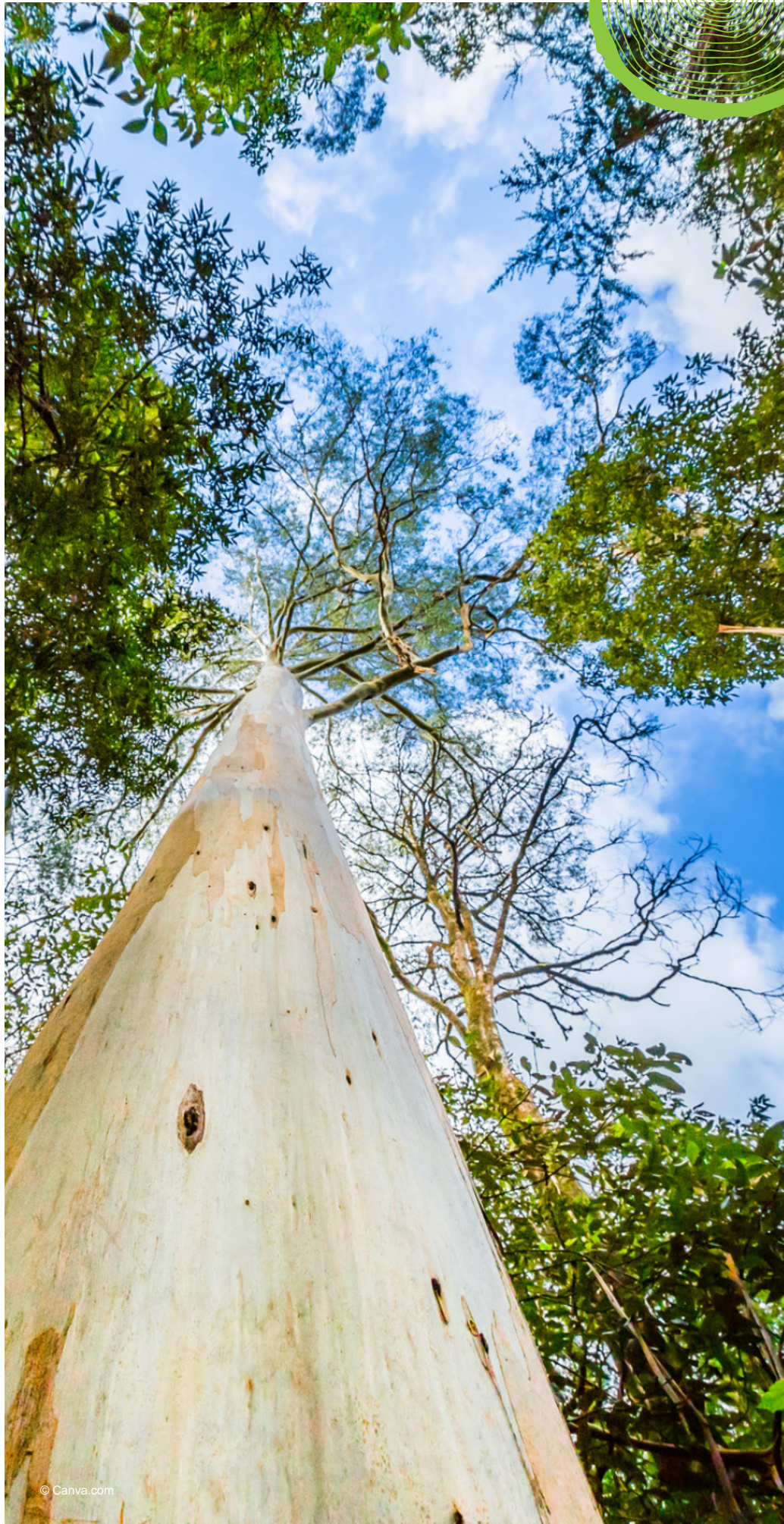
WWF® and World Wide Fund for Nature® trademarks and ©1986 Panda Symbol are owned by WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature (formerly World Wildlife Fund). All rights reserved. For contact details and further information, please visit our website at wwf.org.au.

For contact details and further information, please visit our website at wwf.org.au

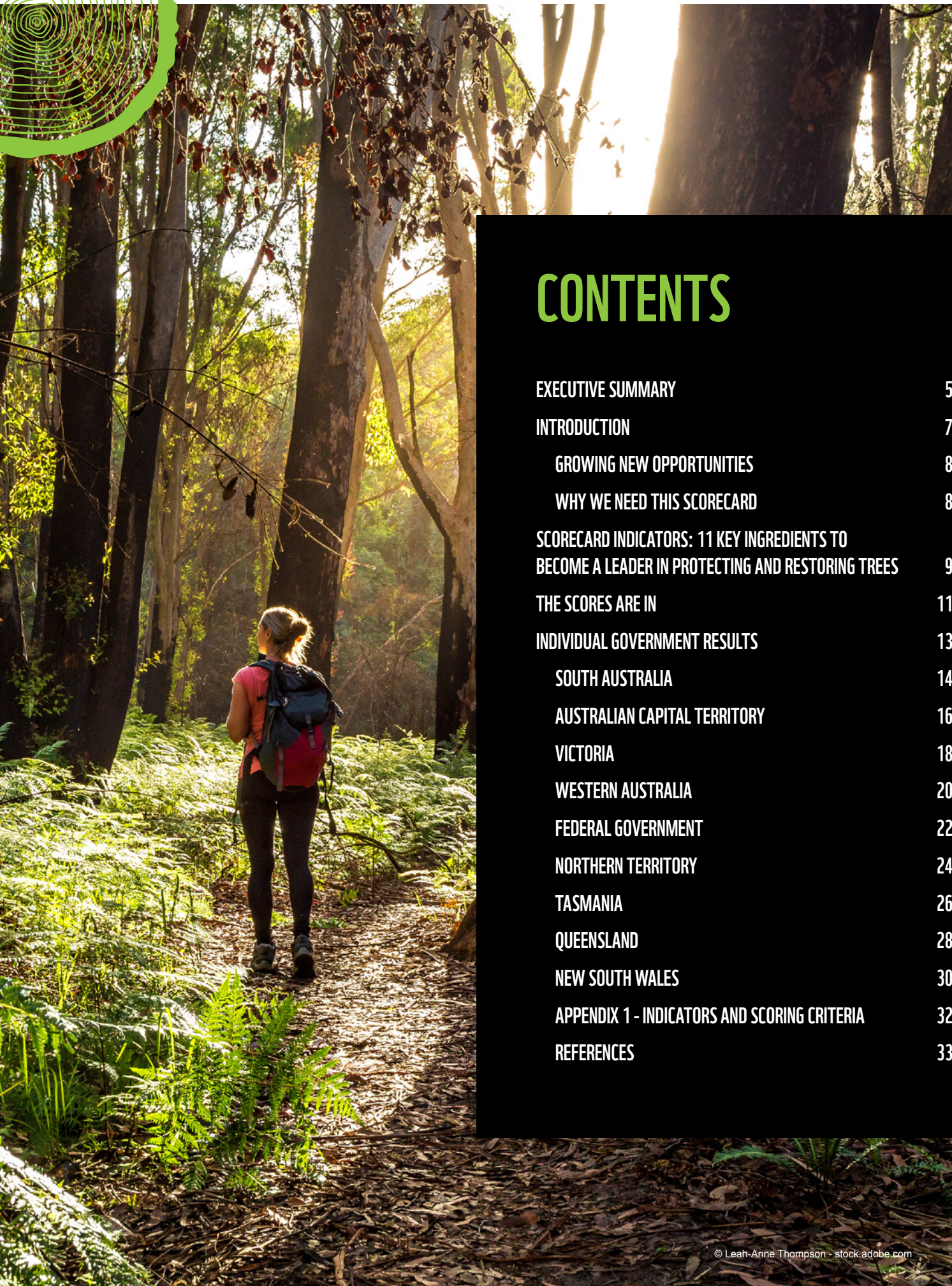
To be cited as:

Keogh, V., Ward, M., Stewart, R., Cronin, T., Dawson, S., Blanche, S. 2023. WWF-Australia Trees Scorecard 1 2023. WWF Australia.

Front Cover photography:
© iStockphoto.com / Charlie Guo



© Canva.com



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	7
GROWING NEW OPPORTUNITIES	8
WHY WE NEED THIS SCORECARD	8
SCORECARD INDICATORS: 11 KEY INGREDIENTS TO BECOME A LEADER IN PROTECTING AND RESTORING TREES	9
THE SCORES ARE IN	11
INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENT RESULTS	13
SOUTH AUSTRALIA	14
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY	16
VICTORIA	18
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	20
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	22
NORTHERN TERRITORY	24
TASMANIA	26
QUEENSLAND	28
NEW SOUTH WALES	30
APPENDIX 1 - INDICATORS AND SCORING CRITERIA	32
REFERENCES	33

© Leah-Anne Thompson - stock.adobe.com



© WWF-Australia / Woody Spark

FIRST NATIONS VISION FOR HEALING COUNTRY

“This Scorecard begins to consider how First Nations Peoples want to be recognised and engaged through assessing government commitments to involve First Nations in ending native forest logging. First Nations Peoples’ connection to Country speaks truth to power of who they are and why they exist. It speaks to their past, present and future, their people, country and culture. They understand that Country is sick and needs our healing.

This scorecard assesses and scores a range of factors that are important to Australia shifting from a global deforestation hotspot to a reforestation nation by becoming a world leader in tree protection and restoration. Crucial to this is the role of First Nations People.

In future scorecards, WWF-Australia intends to have a greater focus on First Nations involvement in becoming a leader in tree protection and restoration. This will involve deeper engagement to understand their perspective on what is needed to realise this transition, the role that First Nations would like to play and the potential benefits to First Nations. There must be proper and meaningful engagement with Indigenous Traditional Owners to ensure inclusive conservation. The transition is big but achievable when all Australians work together.”

Cliff Cobbo

Wakka Wakka man and Senior Manager,
Indigenous Engagement,
WWF-Australia



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We're calling on our leaders to take Australia from a deforestation hotspot to a reforestation nation by becoming a world leader in protecting and restoring trees.

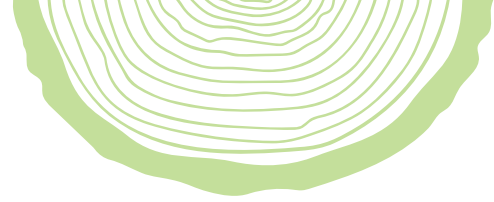
In doing so, Australia can be a beacon of hope for the world - a nation that not only protects and preserves its trees, but also leads the way in sustainable tree management and conservation. Because we all need trees - for our health, our communities, our wildlife, and our planet.

This leadership would see Australia recover our unique biodiversity and ecosystems and achieve net-zero carbon emissions. It would support a thriving and world-class ecotourism industry and provide opportunities for First Nations Peoples to connect with Country. It would help restore and protect our agricultural landscapes to make them more productive, competitive, sustainable, and resilient into the future.

For the first time, WWF-Australia's Trees Scorecard provides a snapshot of how state, territory and federal governments are performing in tree protection and restoration, using a methodology to assess, applaud and encourage progress. The Scorecard assesses each jurisdiction's performance in ending both native forest logging and land clearing, as these are the main drivers of forest loss. It shines a light on where governments are standing tall and where governments must do more to protect these precious natural assets. No government received a score above 'Average' showing there is plenty of opportunity for all governments to take action and become leaders in restoring and protecting trees.

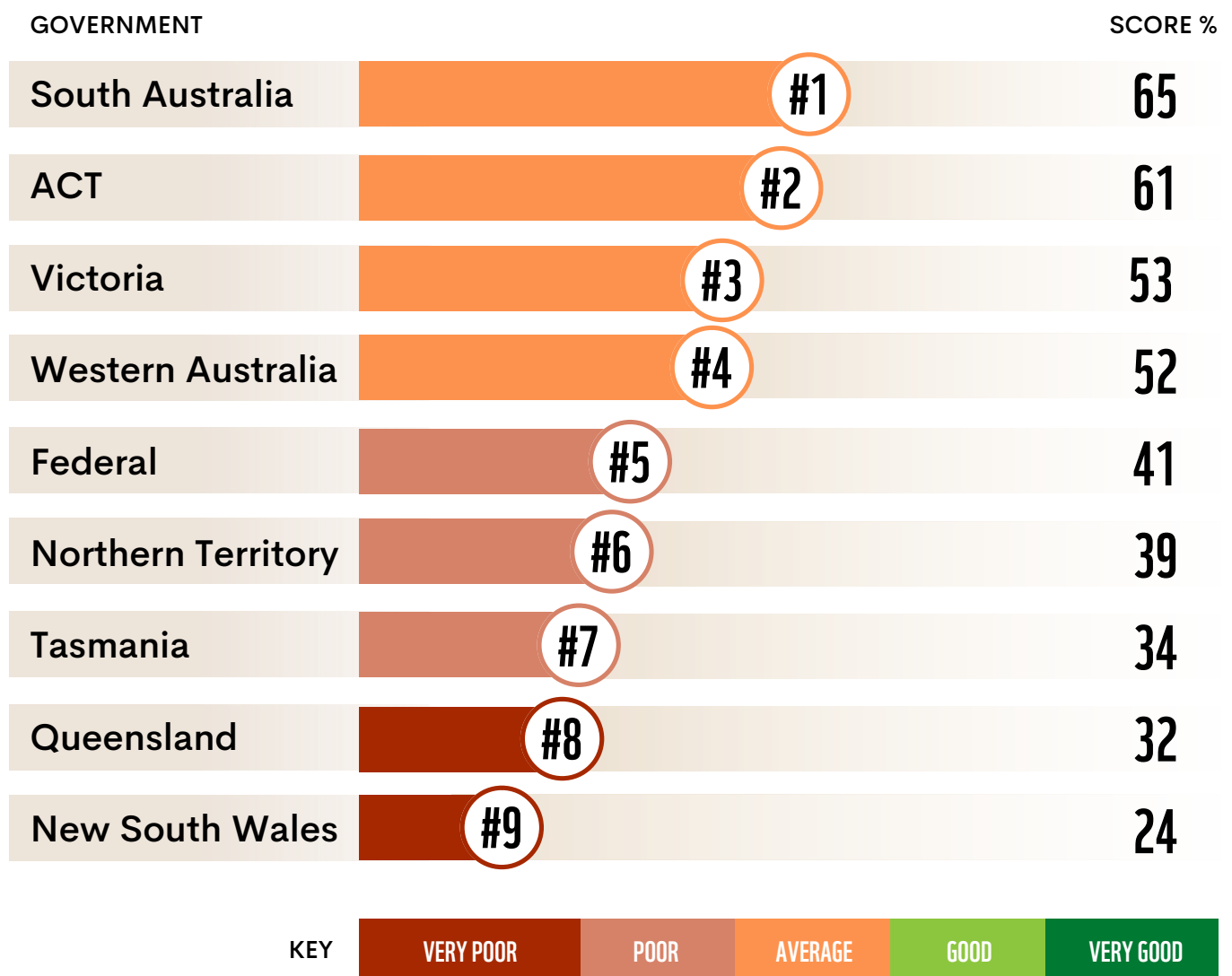
HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF WHERE THE GOVERNMENTS RANKED:

- Standing tall in first place on the leaderboard is South Australia (SA), with no native forest logging, strong commitments, and a range of conservation programs.
- Landing next was the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Victoria (VIC) and Western Australia (WA). These three jurisdictions all received an 'Average' score, showing that while all have work to do, there has also been progress.
- The recent announcement of an end to native forest logging in VIC has provided a welcome boost to VIC's score.
- The Australian Federal Government (Federal Government), Northern Territory (NT) and Tasmania all placed midway with 'Poor', but for different reasons.
- New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (QLD) sit at the bottom of the leaderboard, both scoring 'Very Poor' with opportunities for both states to increase their rank with the right type of commitment and action.



TREES SCORECARD 2023

Which states are leading the way in protecting and restoring trees?



The scores in this first Trees Scorecard are backed by a rigorous and transparent assessment for each jurisdiction as detailed in the full technical report available at [wwf.org.au](https://www.wwf.org.au).

The Trees Scorecard shows that governments must take bold action to urgently make Australia a leader in protecting and restoring trees for the sake of nature, climate, and our future.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Australia, along with more than 100 other countries, signed an agreement called the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) to end deforestation by 2030 through:

“... working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting an inclusive rural transformation.”¹

The time is now for Australia to act on this commitment and become a leader in protecting and restoring trees to address the global crises of mass species extinctions and climate change.

Only 52 per cent of Australia's forests and woodlands remain intact.² Deforestation continues at a globally significant rate. In the time it takes to read this sentence, 20 Australian native trees will have been cut down or damaged— that's almost two trees lost every second, 93 lost each minute, 50 million lost every year.³

The ongoing rate of forest loss sees eastern Australia listed as one of 24 global deforestation fronts, alongside the Brazilian Amazon, the Congo Basin and Indonesian Borneo.⁴ Sadly, Australia is the only developed nation in the world on the list. It's estimated that over 70 million animals are killed each year from deforestation across Australia.⁵ Not even Australia's most loved animals, such as koalas, greater gliders, swift parrots, numbats and quolls, are spared. It's no surprise Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate of any country in the world.⁶

Preserving our trees and keeping our forests intact is critical to maintaining the health of our planet and vital for a sustainable future. Not only do trees provide habitats for countless species of wildlife, but they also play a crucial role in mitigating climate change and provide a wealth of ecosystem services essential for our well-being and economic prosperity and provide connection to Country for First Nations People.



“It's estimated that over 70 million animals are killed each year from deforestation across Australia.”⁵



GROWING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

There are promising signs that Australia is starting to recognise the benefits of tree protection and restoration—and the economic folly of forest loss. The phase-out of high-impact native forest logging is happening in many parts of the country, driven by government policy, community-led litigation, and responsible sourcing by timber companies and retailers.

New carbon and biodiversity markets are creating new mechanisms for forest conservation and restoration. Indigenous Traditional Owners are getting their land back and regenerating Country. This all helps to create jobs, recover biodiversity, and improve community well-being.

Banks and super funds are moving to assess and disclose forest risks in lending and investments. International markets are creating new demand for deforestation-free products. Consumers want to see an end to deforestation⁷ which is adding pressure to retailers to remove products linked to deforestation from their supply chains. Australian farmers are diversifying incomes and becoming competitive in a world which is demanding more deforestation-free products⁸. These are potential game-changers in seeing an end to forest loss in Australia if harnessed to scale through visionary, science-based government leadership.

WHY WE NEED THIS SCORECARD

WWF's Trees Scorecard is an urgent call to action for government because real leadership is needed. Strong leadership by federal, state and territory governments is essential to halting and reversing forest loss. This is central to Australia's efforts to become net zero and align with the Paris Agreement, and to becoming nature positive. The worsening droughts and bushfires of the past two decades show the terrible impacts of global heating on forests, and the role of forests as a nature-based solution to stopping dangerous climate change. It is government's role to provide the policy settings, data, standards, and incentivise private sector action and investment into forest conservation and restoration.

This Trees Scorecard is designed to benchmark and advance Australia towards the goal of the [Glasgow Declaration](#) to halt and reverse forest loss and hold Australia to account to deliver on this commitment.⁹ It does so by:

1. Defining forest-fit policy, regulatory and investment settings at national and sub-national levels needed to halt and reverse forest loss in Australia.
2. Establishing a baseline and measuring progress against these settings across nine national and sub-national jurisdictions that supports transparent and robust reporting.
3. Revealing a pathway for accelerated action and leadership by highlighting those commitments, policies, actions and outcomes that are demonstrating what can be done and where action is needed.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration with all jurisdictions to share the highlights, improve on the lowlights, enhance alignment to policy commitments and drive ambition.



SCORECARD INDICATORS

11 key ingredients to become a leader in protecting and restoring trees

The 11 Scorecard indicators collectively represent the pathway for Australia to become a leader in tree protection and restoration. The Scorecard adopts a pressure / state / response framework, with 11 indicators used to assess the current state of forests and woodlands, and the key drivers of loss and degradation, including land clearing and native forest logging, and the effectiveness of government response in managing these pressures that align to international policy commitments.

THE INDICATORS ARE FOCUSED ON THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Current state (one indicator):

- 1: Forests and woodlands remaining intact.

Key pressures (three indicators):

- 2: Ending of primary forest and woodland clearing (ha).
- 3: Ending of regrowth forest and woodland clearing (ha).
- 4: Ending of native forest logging (log volume).

Government response (seven indicators):

- 5: Subregions achieving 30 per cent protection target.
- 6: Commitment and programs to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation.
- 7: Land clearing—Comprehensive regulatory framework.
- 8: Land clearing—Strong enforcement and compliance.
- 9: Native forest logging—Commitment to end native forest logging.
- 10: Native forest logging—A clear, resourced, inclusive transition pathway.
- 11: Transparency of information—Land clearing, logging, restoration and emissions.

Criteria for each indicator can be found in Appendix 1, and full details of the scoring methodology, along with evidence to inform scoring for each jurisdiction, can be found [here](#).

AUSTRALIA IS FLYING BLIND

Knowing how much land clearing is happening each year sounds simple enough, but Australia is unable to consistently report on land clearing in an accurate, transparent, and timely manner. The only national data is the National Carbon Accounting System (NCAS), yet this data is highly inaccurate when compared with Australian states that have more accurate monitoring systems, such as QLD and NSW.¹⁰

From financial year (FY) 2018 to 2020, land clearing reported for Australia was 810,377 hectares.¹¹ However, land clearing for QLD (just one out of nine jurisdictions) for the same period was almost double at 1,491,344 hectares.¹² How can land clearing from one state be almost double the national total? The answer: NCAS is highly inaccurate and substantially underestimates land clearing.

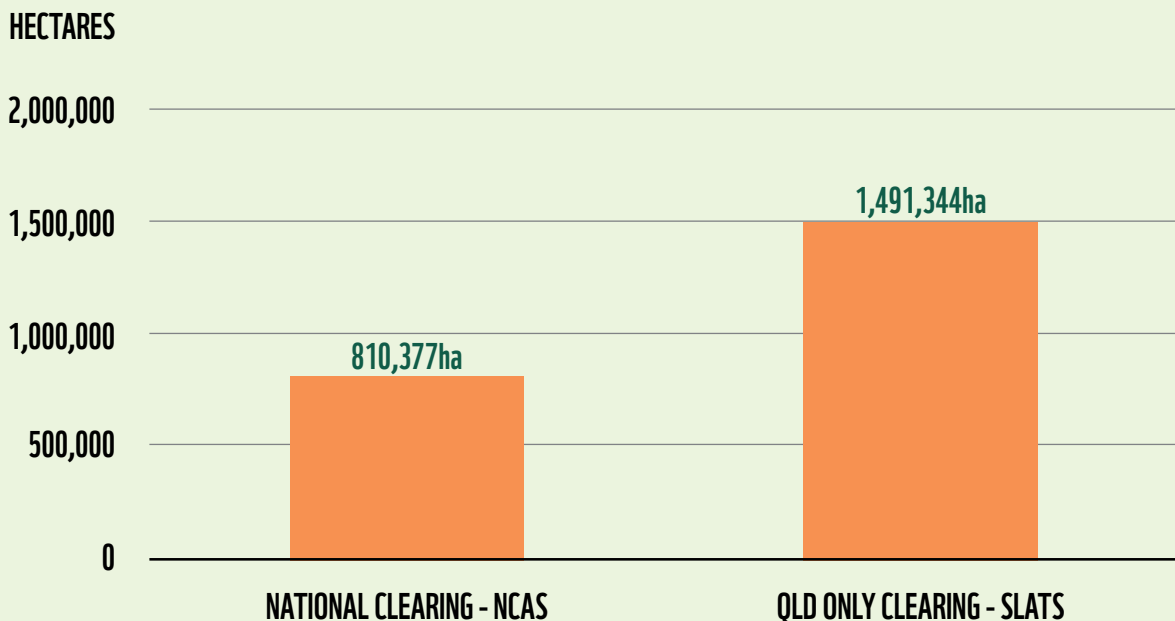
Alarming, this inaccurate data is used when Australia reports on emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

WWF-Australia has formed a collaboration with the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists and external remote sensing experts to develop a national vegetation change monitoring method and product.

WWF-Australia hopes that this will lead to the Federal Government establishing a national deforestation and reforestation monitoring and reporting program to provide an accurate picture of land clearing and emissions for Australia. Otherwise, we are just flying blind.

“NCAS is highly inaccurate and substantially underestimates land clearing.”

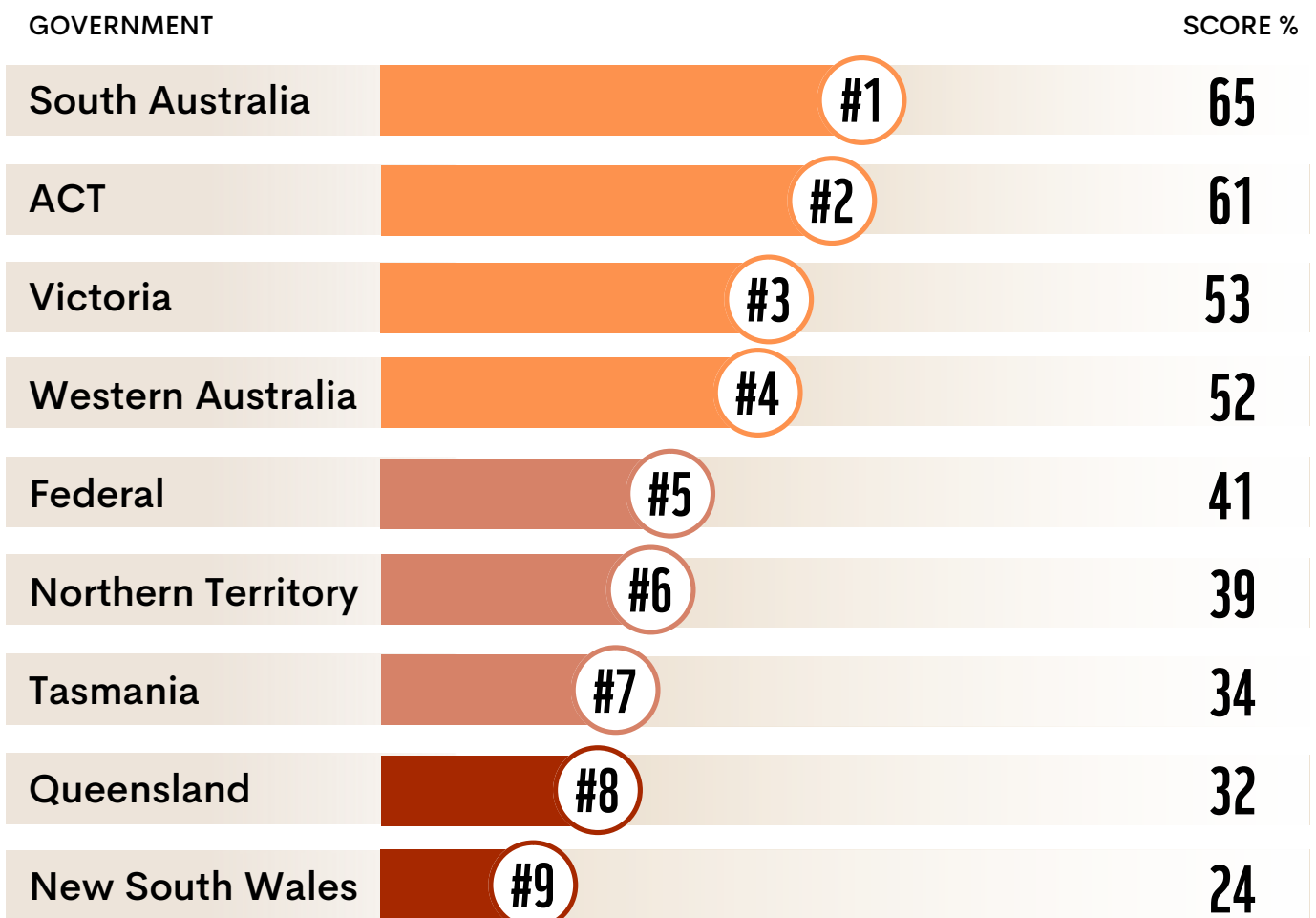
FY18-FY20 CLEARING RATES



THE SCORES ARE IN

TREES SCORECARD 2023

Which states are leading the way in protecting and restoring trees?



KEY

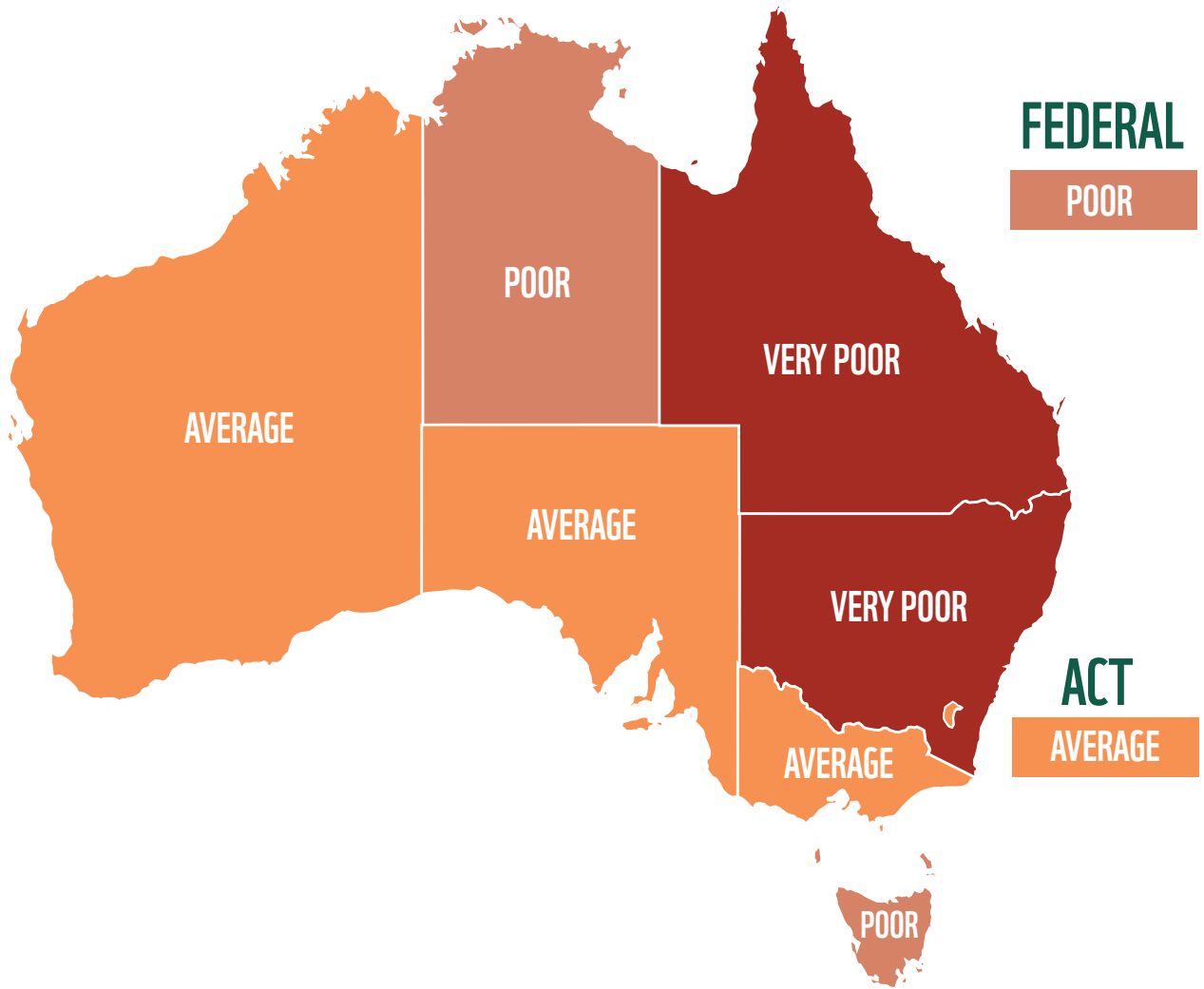
VERY POOR

POOR

AVERAGE

GOOD

VERY GOOD



SA leads the way, closely followed by ACT, VIC and WA.





INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENT RESULTS

© iStockphoto.com / mauricallan

South Australia Government Scorecard

RANK
1

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

CURRENT STATE

1: Forests and woodlands remaining intact



KEY PRESSURES

2: Ending of primary forest and woodland clearing (Ha)



3: Ending of regrowth forest and woodland clearing (Ha)

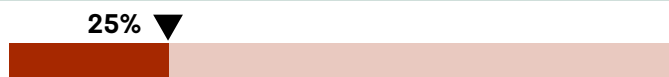


4: Ending of native forest logging (log volume)



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

5: Subregions achieving 30 per cent protection target



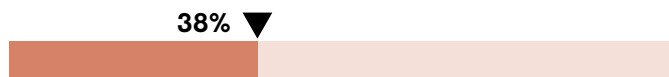
6: Commitment and programs to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation



7: Land clearing: Comprehensive regulatory framework



8: Land clearing: Strong enforcement and monitoring



9: Native forest logging: Commitment to end or prevent native forest logging



10: Native forest logging: A clear, resourced, inclusive transition pathway



11: Transparency of information: Land clearing, logging, restoration and emissions



OVERVIEW

Standing tall in first place on the leaderboard is SA, with 58 per cent of forests and woodlands intact, no native forest logging, strong commitments, and a range of conservation programs in place. However, SA only scores an 'Average', so if SA wants to retain the top spot, it will need to address areas such as improving regulations and enforcement and data transparency.

STANDING TALL



- **No native forest logging:** The SA Government ended native forest logging many years ago, and this position is backed by legislation and major investment in plantations and innovative wood manufacturing.
- **Policy commitments:** South Australia has a standalone *Native Vegetation Act* which includes the protection and enhancement of the native vegetation of the state.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Fit-for-purpose nature laws:** To ensure the protection of forests and woodlands into the future, the SA Government must ensure offsets are a last resort and deliver a net gain in habitat and strengthen enforcement.
- **Attract private capital into nature repair:** The SA Government has an opportunity to develop a program to value and increase private investment in natural capital.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** The SA Government Climate Change Action Plan 2021–2025 must be updated to clearly show the emissions benefits of ending land clearing and retaining vegetation.
- **Show me the data!:** Spatial data relating to area that has been restored using government funds was not publicly available. Greater transparency relating to the outcomes from investment of public funds is required.



Once soaring across SA's mainland, there is only a small population of glossy black cockatoos remaining in the state on Kangaroo Island. Sadly, much of their woodland habitat has been cleared away.¹³ Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

32,714ha
of land clearing in SA
(FY18–FY21)



That's 2 trees bulldozed every minute.

Australian Capital Territory Government Scorecard

RANK
2

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

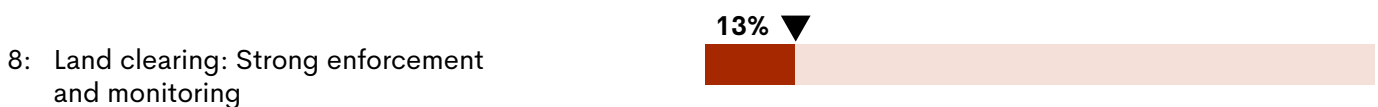
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

Hot on the heels of SA is the ACT sitting in second place on the leaderboard scoring 'Average'. The ACT ended native forest logging prior to 1980 and has strong policy commitments. However, with only 33 per cent of forest and woodland areas remaining intact, and weak regulations and enforcement, the ACT will need to tackle these issues to secure the top spot in future scorecards.

STANDING TALL



- **Native forest logging ended:** There is no public or private Native Forest Logging in the ACT. There has been a focus on conservation and recreation in the public native forest estate since 1980, with no harvesting of native forests for sawlog timber since that time.
- **Commitments:** The ACT Government has clear policy commitments to maintain and improve native vegetation and biodiversity.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Protect what's left:** Given the historic loss of mature native trees, especially in the lowland areas at risk from urban expansion, there are opportunities to strengthen the regulatory framework. This includes addressing inadequacies with the offsets framework and increasing the detection and enforcement of illegal clearing.
- **Attract private capital into nature repair:** The ACT Government has an opportunity to develop a program to value natural capital and protect and restore threatened grassy woodland ecosystems.
- **Stop flying blind:** Like other jurisdictions, the ACT Government is flying blind when it comes to data on land clearing which is vital in understanding clearing rates, effectiveness of regulations and emissions. This must be improved.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** The ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–25 must be updated to clearly show the emissions benefits of ending land clearing and retaining vegetation.
- **Show me the data!:** Spatial data relating to area that has been restored using government funds was not publicly available. Greater transparency relating to the outcomes from investment of public funds is required.



Though they're immortalised on the ACT's emblem, the beautiful gang-gang cockatoo has seen its population decrease by up to 69 per cent in the past three decades and was officially listed as Endangered in 2022.¹⁴ The gang-gang cockatoo is one of many species that needs trees for its survival. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

565ha
of land clearing in ACT
(FY18–FY21)



**That's 60 trees
bulldozed a day.**

Victoria Government Scorecard

RANK
3

OVERALL GRADE

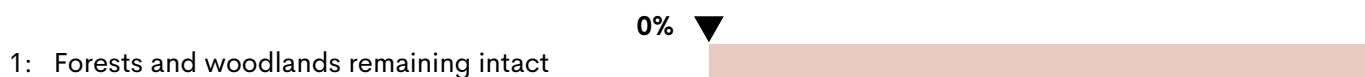
OVERALL SCORE



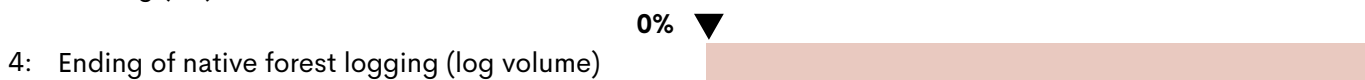
CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

Joining the podium at third place behind the ACT and SA is VIC with a score of 'Average'. The recent announcement of an end to native forest logging in most areas of VIC demonstrated leadership and boosted their score, giving them the opportunity to overtake WA. However, with just 22 per cent of forests and woodlands left and weak land clearing laws and enforcement, we need to see more action from the southern state, so it continues up the leaderboard.

STANDING TALL



- **Ending native forest logging:** The VIC Government has committed to phasing out native forest logging across most of the state by 2024¹⁵. This includes a comprehensive and inclusive structural adjustment package.
- **Emissions reduction plan:** The ending of native forest logging is incorporated into VIC's emissions reduction plan. The recognition of these benefits provides durability to the commitment to end native forest logging.
- **Programs that value natural capital:** The VIC Government is investing in BushBank, a program that aims to attract co-investment in restoration and carbon projects.
- **Transparent information—logging and funded restoration:** The VIC Government is the only jurisdiction to provide publicly available spatial information on the areas of native forest harvesting and areas of restoration.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Close logging loopholes:** VIC's commitment to end native forest logging is very welcome, opportunities now exist to create the Great Forest National Park as a global tourism icon, expand certified plantations to increase sustainable timber production and jobs, and regenerate forests. Extending the commitment to end logging in all areas is now needed.
- **Protect what's left:** With only 22 per cent of forest and woodlands remaining intact, the VIC Government must strengthen laws to protect what's left. This includes strengthening the regulatory framework and improving detection and compliance of illegal clearing.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** VIC's Climate Change Strategy must be updated to clearly show the emissions benefits of ending land clearing and retaining vegetation.
- **Stop flying blind:** Similar to other jurisdictions, VIC is flying blind when it comes to data on land clearing which is vital in regulating clearing and understanding emissions.



Did you know that tree hollows are essential for many Australian wildlife species and can take up to 250 years to form?¹⁶ The greater glider, which is Endangered in VIC, is one of the many species that needs trees for its survival. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

57,607ha

of land clearing in VIC
(FY18–FY21)



That's 1 tree bulldozed every 10 seconds.

Western Australia Government Scorecard

RANK
4

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

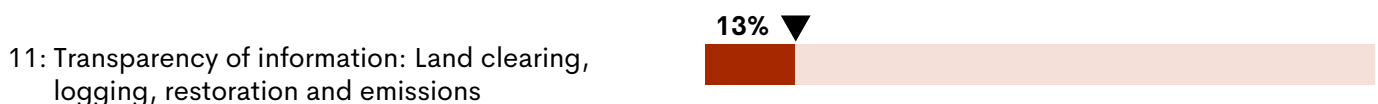
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

Just missing out on a podium position is WA, sitting in the middle of the leaderboard with an 'Average' score at fourth place. WA Government has made a funded commitment to end native forest logging in the southwest by 2024, has 62 per cent of forests remaining and a range of conservation programs. However, for WA to improve its score, weak regulatory frameworks need to be strengthened.

STANDING TALL



- **Ending native forest logging in the south-west:** The WA Government has committed to phasing out native forest logging in the south-west by 2024, with a comprehensive transition package.
- **First Nations involvement:** New conservation reserves will be created following consultation with Traditional Owners to ensure permanent protection of high-conservation-value areas. The Noongar People and the WA Government will enter into formal agreements to recognise their mutual rights and obligations in managing the South West Conservation Estate.
- **Programs that value natural capital:** The WA Government has established the Carbon Farming and Land Restoration Program, which aims to deliver environmental, social and economic co-benefits.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Policy confusion:** The WA Government's reasons to end native forest logging in the south-west were to save the forests and preserve the carbon stocks. However, significant areas of native forest will remain vulnerable to bulldozing and logging to clear land for new or expanding mining throughout the south-west. The WA Government must fix this policy confusion.
- **Fit-for-purpose nature laws:** The introduction of the new Native Vegetation Policy presents an opportunity to strengthen the regulation of native vegetation clearing in Western Australia. This must address clearing associated with mining activities, the effectiveness of the WA Environmental Offsets Policy, and the lack of third-party enforcement provisions.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** The Western Australian Climate Policy must be updated to clearly show the emissions benefits of ending land clearing and retaining vegetation.
- **Show me the data!:** Spatial data relating to the area of land clearing, the area that has been restored using government funds, and the area of native forest logging was not publicly available. Greater transparency of information is required.



© Leonie Sii / WWF-Aus

Did you know that many of our iconic wildlife eat different parts of trees and use trees and forests for shelter? The iconic quokka, one of our most photogenic marsupials, is listed as Vulnerable in Western Australia.¹⁷ Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore trees.

75,090ha

of land clearing in WA
(FY18–FY21)



That's 1 tree bulldozed
every 10 seconds.

Australian Federal Government Scorecard

RANK
5

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

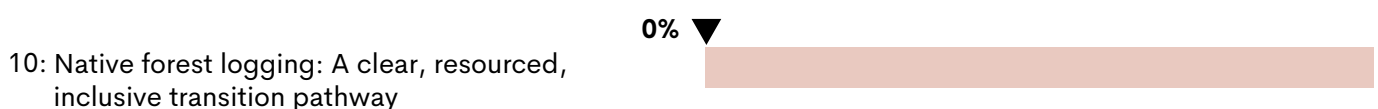
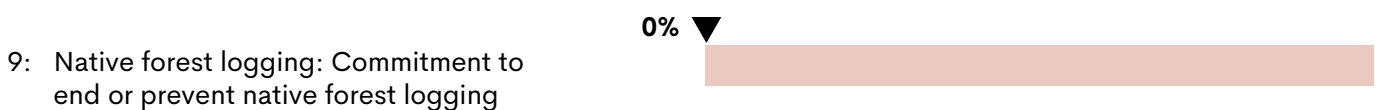
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

Despite strong commitments and announced significant reforms, the Federal Government comes in with a disappointing score of 'Poor'. Native forest logging continues to degrade our forests and land clearing continues at a globally significant scale. The Federal Government needs to lead by example, standing tall at the top of the leaderboard. Strong and urgent leadership at a national level which accelerates action in line with these commitments is needed to get there.



STANDING TALL

- **International commitments:** The Federal Government has made international commitments to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030 and to restore all ecosystems by 2050.
- **Attract private capital into nature repair:** The Federal Government is planning to establish a nature repair market, which seeks to attract private capital to conservation and restoration outcomes.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Stop flying blind:** Australia is effectively flying blind when it comes to understanding how much forest and woodland has been lost and gained as the current national data is highly inaccurate. The Federal Government must improve the accuracy, transparency and standards of this data to meet national and international obligations.¹⁸
- **Fit-for-purpose nature laws to protect what's left:** With only 52 per cent of forest and woodland areas remaining intact across Australia, the Federal Government needs to strengthen laws to protect what's left, including absolute protections for biodiversity. The development of National Environmental Standards is under way and must represent a significant improvement to the status quo.
- **Improve/activate compliance and enforcement:** The Federal Government has failed to proactively and systemically address failures to refer land clearing. Stronger and more visible monitoring and enforcement is required.
- **End native forest logging:** The Federal Government must align its position on the future of timber production in Australia with its international commitments, including an end to native forest logging. This must include a public commitment to end logging, as well as funding and other mechanisms to accelerate the transition.
- **High-integrity markets:** The Federal Government must improve carbon and biodiversity markets through developing standards and mandating a process that ensures verifiable, high-integrity, measurable outcomes.



Australia has some of the most unique wildlife in the world, with more than 80 per cent of Australia's mammals, reptiles and frogs found nowhere else.¹⁹ From marsupials like the iconic koala and greater glider to distinctive birds such as the swift parrot, our wildlife is truly unique and under real threat from habitat loss. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

1,264,426ha

of land clearing in AUS
(FY18–FY21)



**That's more than 1 tree
bulldozed every second.**

Northern Territory Government Scorecard

RANK
6

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

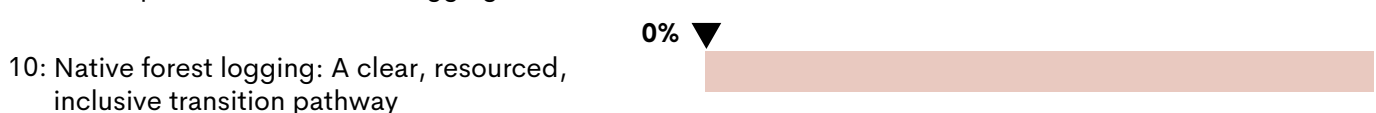
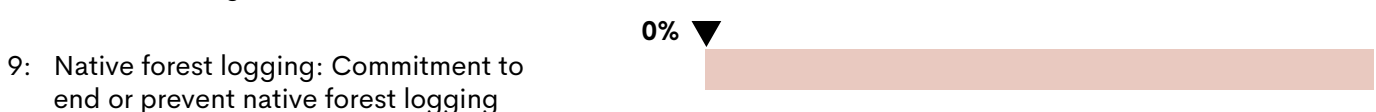
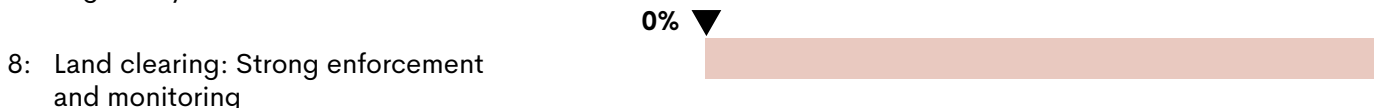
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

NT's rank of 'Poor' reflects that the NT Government has not made any commitments to prevent future land clearing and has weak and permissive land clearing regulations. Unless these factors change, we are likely to see deforestation occur in future years and NT dropping further down the leaderboard. The NT Government is at a crossroads and needs to choose a pathway which sees them improving their score. Will NT choose a path based on regenerative approaches and economies, which enhances natural capital, or a path focused on extraction, which is unsustainable and depletes natural resources?



STANDING TALL

- **Remaining forests and woodlands:** 73 per cent of forests and woodlands remain intact.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Fit-for-purpose commitments and nature laws:** To ensure protection of forests and woodlands into the future, the NT Government must:
 - Make a commitment to prevent future land clearing.
 - Introduce policies and regulations that aim to protect forest and woodlands, such as a standalone cross-tenure native vegetation law.
 - Improve existing decision-making frameworks relating to land clearing.
 - Start monitoring land clearing and undertaking compliance activities.
- **Preventing future native forest logging:** The NT Government is actively exploring the development of commercial scale native forest logging, with limited acknowledgement of alternative opportunities or the wider environmental costs. Some focus appears to be on supporting low-impact selective logging on Aboriginal lands by Indigenous-owned businesses, which WWF-Australia supports.
- **Attract private capital into nature repair:** The NT Government has an opportunity to develop a program to value natural capital and protect and enhance Northern Territory environments.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** The NT Government must finalise an emissions reduction plan and include the protection of trees as an emission abatement opportunity, recognising the value of standing forests and woodlands.
- **Stop flying blind:** The NT is flying blind when it comes to data on land clearing which is vital in regulating clearing and understanding emissions.



The red goshawk, which is Endangered in the NT, is one of Australia's rarest birds of prey and the NT is one of its last remaining strongholds. Red goshawks have disappeared from a third of their breeding range.²⁰ They are just one of the many species that need trees for their survival. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

14,403ha

of land clearing in NT
(FY18–FY21)



That's 1 tree bulldozed every minute.

Tasmania Government Scorecard

RANK
7

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



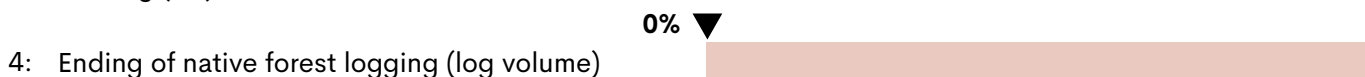
CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

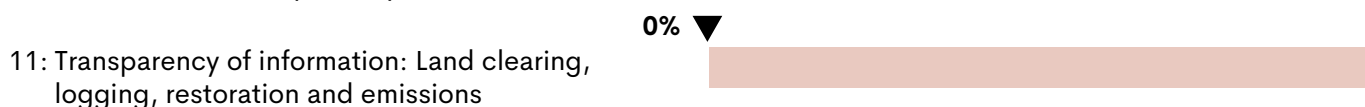
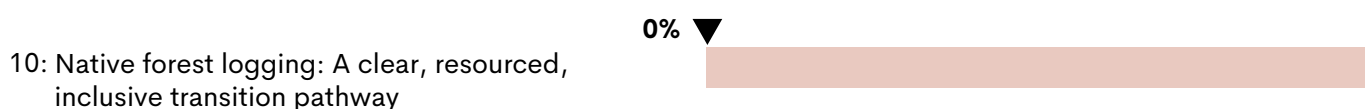
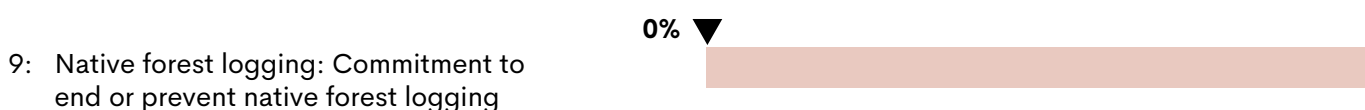
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

Tasmania is renowned for its pristine forests and wilderness, which has assisted the state to achieve its net-zero emissions commitment. However, for many of the Scorecard categories, Tasmania has scored poorly coming seventh on the leaderboard. Tasmania has an opportunity to stand taller and rapidly climb up the leaderboard by committing to end native forest logging by 2025 following in the footsteps of its neighbors in VIC.

STANDING TALL

- **Enforcement:** Tasmania has established a Forest Practices Authority, an independent body responsible for managing the Tasmanian forest practices system on public and private land. The Authority has increased enforcement in recent years.
- **Institutional settings:** The Regional Forest Agreements and conservation measures that have been enacted, as a result of previous native forest logging agreements, provide a basis for implementing future commitments to end native forest logging.
- **Protected areas:** Tasmania has significant areas of forest and woodland that are protected, including World Heritage listing of forests, however, there is still work to be done in ensuring that all habitats and vegetation types are adequately included.



OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER

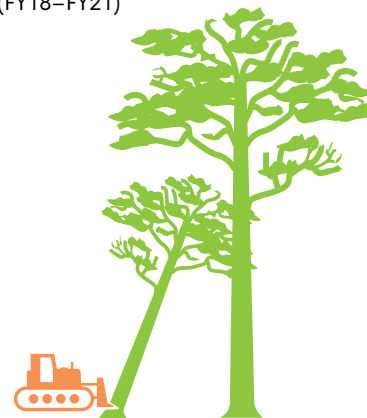
- **End native forest logging:** The Tasmanian Government must end native forest logging before 2025 through a public commitment and funded transition package.
- **First Nations engagement:** There is an opportunity to explore benefits for First Nations People through ending native forest logging, through the hand-back of formerly logged state forests for cultural benefits, forest restoration, wildlife conservation and carbon sequestration.
- **Fit-for-purpose nature laws:** The Tasmanian Government claims to have ended broadscale land clearing, however this policy is not clearly reflected in legislation. To ensure this ban on deforestation is properly implemented, the government should review and update its laws accordingly.
- **Show me the data!** Spatial data relating to the area of land clearing, the area that has been restored using government funds and the area of native forest logging was not publicly available. Greater transparency of information is required.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** The Tasmanian Government must finalise an emissions reduction plan. As part of this plan, the Tasmanian Government could integrate a ban on native forest logging, recognising the value of standing forests.



The beautiful, orange-bellied parrot, which is Critically Endangered in Tasmania, is one of the rarest Australian birds with estimates of fewer than 50 of them existing in the wild today.²¹ Orange-bellied parrots mainly breed on the west coast of Tasmania and are one of the many species that need trees for their survival. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

20,210ha

of land clearing in TAS
(FY18–FY21)



That's more than 1 tree
bulldozed every minute.

Queensland Government Scorecard

RANK
8

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



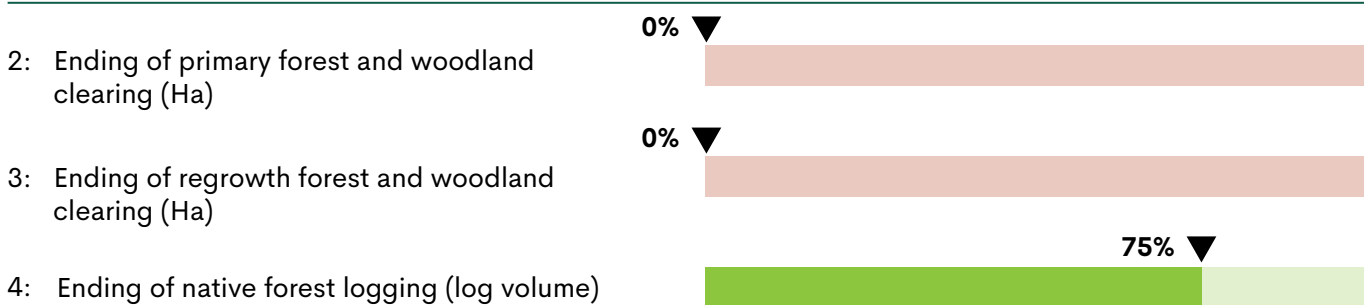
CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

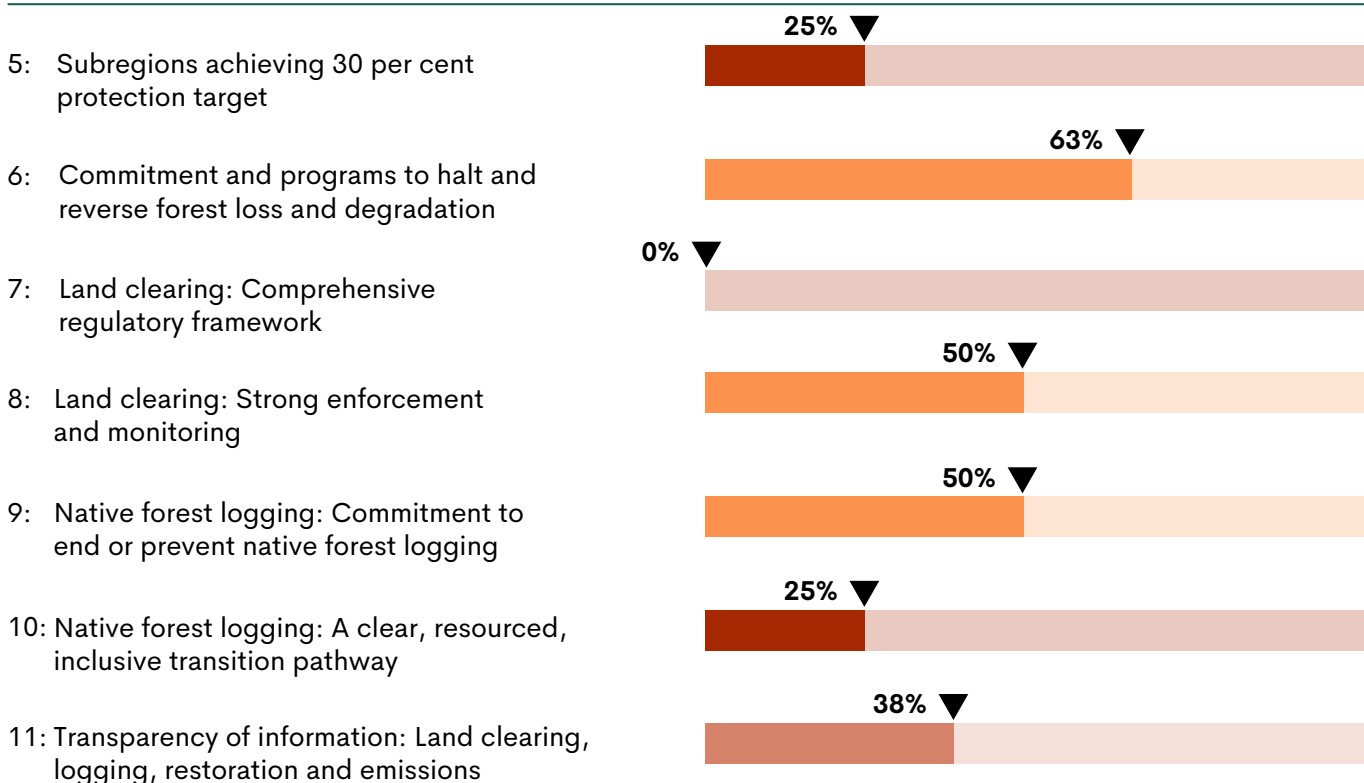
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

Qld is falling behind the pack, coming in second to last place with a score of 'Very Poor' due to the highest rates of clearing and some of the weakest regulatory frameworks. QLD has a significant opportunity to do better by supporting and incentivising farmers to produce deforestation-free produce to take advantage of the increasing global demand for deforestation-free products. Regulations must be strengthened, and incentives improved if Qld is to harness this opportunity and make their way up the leaderboard.

STANDING TALL



- **Seeing the forest and the trees:** The QLD Government has world-class land clearing data—SLATS— and uses this information to detect illegal clearing across the state. QLD is the only government to make spatial data related to land clearing publicly available, showing leadership in transparency of this information.
- **Ending native forest logging in the southeast:** The QLD Government has made commitments to end native forest logging in the southeast and has committed to transferring up to 20,000 hectares of State Forest land to the conservation estate before the end of 2024, with opportunities for First Nations co-management.
- **Attract private capital into nature repair:** The QLD Government has established the Land Restoration Fund, a program that supports landholders to deliver carbon abatement actions while providing additional financial support for co-benefits in economic, environmental and social avenues. The fund promotes private sector investment.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **Protect what's left:** The QLD Government needs to strengthen laws to protect what's left, reduce land clearing and help meet emissions targets. Priority reforms must include:
 - Overhauling the land clearing exemptions, particularly in koala habitat areas.
 - Tightening the clearing codes.
 - Increasing fines for illegal clearing.
 - Fixing the offsets framework.
 - Targeted regulation and mobilising incentives to protect Category X areas.
- **End native forest logging state-wide:** The QLD Government must commit to a timely end to high-impact native forest logging across the entire state through a public commitment and funded transition package.
- **Show me the data!** While spatial data relating to land clearing is a notable strength for Queensland, the spatial data relating to the area of land that has been restored using government funds and the area of native forest logging was not publicly available. The QLD Government must improve transparency of information relating to expenditure of public funds and activities on public lands.



© Dr Dean Miller

Lemuroid ringtail possums, which are Critically Endangered in Queensland, depend on tree hollows to find shelter from the heat as they become vulnerable in temperatures above 30 degrees Celsius.²² They are just one of many species that need trees for its survival. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

799,668ha
of land clearing in QLD
(FY18–FY21)



**That's more than 1 tree
bulldozed every second.**

New South Wales Government Scorecard

RANK
9

OVERALL GRADE

OVERALL SCORE



CRITERIA

PERFORMANCE GRADING

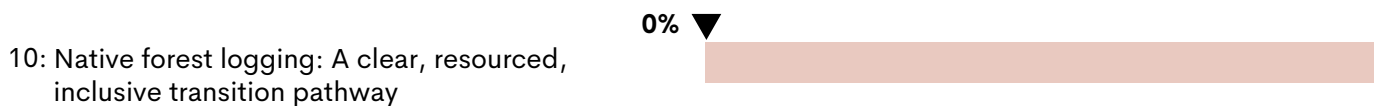
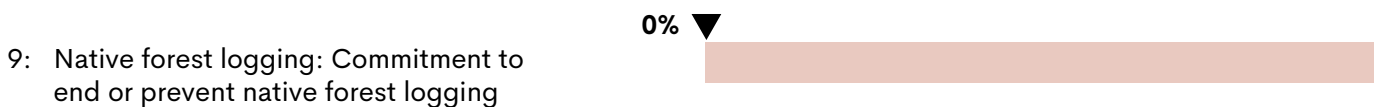
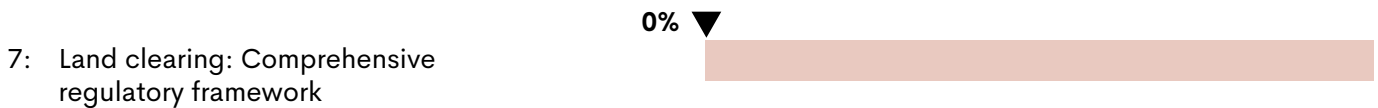
CURRENT STATE



KEY PRESSURES



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE



OVERVIEW

NSW²³ sits at the back of the pack, coming in last place on the leaderboard with a score of 'Very Poor' and no commitment to end native forest logging in sight. Forest and woodland areas in NSW remain under pressure, and only 36 per cent of forest and woodland remain intact. Despite this, native forest logs continue to be harvested from natural forests and land clearing continues. The NSW Government has significant opportunities to move from the bottom of the leaderboard and grow taller through commitment and action to end native forest logging.

STANDING TALL



- **Attracting private capital into nature repair:** The NSW Government has established the Biodiversity Conservation Trust with a range of private land conservation programs and is looking to attract private capital into nature repair.
- **Seeing the forest and the trees:** The NSW Government has accurate land clearing data and uses this information to detect illegal clearing across the state. Unlike Queensland, spatial data is not publicly available.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND TALLER



- **End native forest logging:** The NSW Government has an opportunity to transition from native forest logging to plantations in a way which sees economic benefits for communities²⁴, job creation²⁵, and explores opportunities for increased Traditional Owner engagement in forest management and regeneration.
- **Protect what's left:** The NSW Government needs to strengthen laws to protect what's left, reduce land clearing and help meet emissions targets. This must include reinstating policy objectives to end broadscale land clearing, and strengthening the legal framework to achieve this, especially in rural areas.
- **Emissions benefits of trees:** The NSW Net Zero Plan must be updated to clearly show the emissions benefits of ending land clearing and native forest logging and retaining vegetation.
- **Show me the data!:** Spatial data relating to the area of land clearing, the area that has been restored using government funds was not publicly available. Greater transparency of information is required.



© WWF-Aus / Adam Krowitz

In NSW, up to 62% of the koala population has been lost over the past two decades and are now listed as endangered under our national environmental laws.²⁶ The iconic east coast koala is just one of many species that need trees for its survival. Our wildlife is counting on us to protect and restore our trees.

264,170ha

of land clearing in NSW
(FY18–FY21)



That's more than 3 trees
bulldozed every 10 seconds.

APPENDIX 1

INDICATORS AND SCORING CRITERIA



Indicators and criteria		
1. Proportion of forests and woodlands remaining intact.	Quantitative	State
2. Ending of primary forest and woodland clearing (ha).	Quantitative	Pressure
3. Ending of regrowth forest and woodland clearing (ha).	Quantitative	Pressure
4. Ending of native forest logging (Log volume).	Quantitative	Pressure
5. Subregions achieving 30 per cent protection target.	Quantitative	Response
6. Commitment and programs to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation. All 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy commitment in line with the Glasgow Declaration. • Legislative commitments in line with the Glasgow Declaration. • Restoration program/s providing for a range of approaches to halt and reverse forest loss. • Frameworks to increase private capital into conservation and restoration. 	Qualitative	Response
7. Land clearing: Comprehensive regulatory framework. All 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemptions clearly defined and limited to narrow range of scenarios. • Clearing codes clearly defined, limited to narrow range of scenarios and managed. • Clearing requiring approval has appropriate safeguards to ensure consistent and robust assessment. • Evidence that Offsets deliver net gain against a clear baseline. 	Qualitative	Response
8. Land clearing: Strong monitoring and enforcement. All 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate detection system. • Effective enforcement. • Opportunities for civil proceedings. • Transparency of enforcement and compliance information. 	Qualitative	Response
9. Native forest logging: Commitment to end or prevent native forest logging. 0 = No commitment to end or prevent native forest logging 1 = Commitment to end or prevent native forest logging, part of state by 2030 2 = Commitment to end or prevent native forest logging, part of state by 2025 3 = Commitment to end or prevent native forest logging, all of state by 2030 4 = Commitment to end or prevent native forest logging, all of state by 2025 Or 4 = native forest logging ended.	Qualitative	Response
10. Native forest logging: A clear, resourced, inclusive transition pathway. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports affected communities in the transition. • Funded plantation plan. • Prioritised exit from high environmental value areas, free from loopholes. • First Nations engagement. 4 = No current or planned high-impact native forest logging.	Qualitative	Response
11. Transparent information: Land clearing, logging, restoration and emissions All 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly available, timely and accurate land clearing spatial information. • Publicly available, timely and accurate native forest logging spatial information. • Publicly available, timely and accurate restoration spatial information. • Transparent emissions data in emission reduction plans (or equivalent). 	Qualitative	Response

REFERENCES

1. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement Report of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement on its third session, *UNFCCC* (13 November 2021), FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/10/Add.1, Decision 1/CMA.3, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_10_add1_adv.pdf, accessed 11 January 2023.
2. Analysis undertaken by WWF-Australia using CSIRO Habitat Condition Assessment System (HCAS), <https://research.csiro.au/biodiversity-knowledge/projects/hcas/>, where 'residual' is considered intact.
3. To determine the number of trees cleared, WWF-Australia used data from the Crowther Lab's tree density model (Crowther, TW, et al., 2015. Mapping tree density at a global scale. *Nature*, Volume 525, pages 201–205) to estimate the average number of trees per hectare across Australian forests and woodlands (156 trees/hectare, including both large and small trees). This figure was then compared to other data for tree densities for different vegetation types to check its accuracy. We relied on a report by Kerle (1995) for the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, and a paper by Johnson and Redpath (1997) for the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. WWF-Australia estimates the number of trees cleared in Australia's natural forests and woodlands by extrapolating the average number of trees growing on an 'average' hectare of forest or woodland (156 trees per hectare) to the hectares of forests cleared. Area of clearing is based on primary and regrowth clearing data from Australia's National Greenhouse Accounts, Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Activity Tables 2021 from FY18-FY21, averaged to give a per year result. For Australia, the clearing was 316,107ha. Hence $316,107 \text{ hectares} \times 156 = 49.3 \text{ billion trees cleared}$. The resulting figure was then divided by the number of seconds in a year (31,536,000) to determine number of trees cleared per second.
4. P. Pacheco, K. Mo, N. Dudley, et al., Deforestation fronts: Drivers and responses in a changing world. WWF (Gland, Switzerland, 2021), <https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/deforestation-fronts-drivers-and-responses-in-a-changing-world-full-report>, accessed 3 March 2023.
5. S. Blanch and M. Taylor, Towards 2 Billion Trees, *WWF-Australia* (2009), https://assets.wwf.org.au/image/upload/v1/website-media/resources/WWF-Towards-Two-Billion-Trees-report-Nov29?_a=ATO2BfgO, accessed 20 January 2023
6. B.A. Wintle, N.C.R. Cadenhead, R.A. Morgain, et al., Spending to save: What will it cost to halt Australia's extinction crisis?, *Conservation Letters* (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12682>.
7. Research conducted on a sample of 1,204 Australians in February 2023 by Pureprofile on behalf of WWF-Australia.
8. For example: The European Union regulation on deforestation-free products, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/regulation-deforestation-free-products_en
9. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement Report of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement on its third session, *UNFCCC* (13 November 2021), FCCC/PA/CMA/2021/10/Add.1, Decision 1/CMA.3, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2021_10_add1_adv.pdf, accessed 11 January 2023.
10. M. Taylor, Technical Report: Deforestation in Queensland 2018/19 nearly double what Australian Government reports to the UN, *Research Gate* (May 2022), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360577362_Deforestation_in_Queensland_201819_nearly_double_what_Australian_Government_reports_to_the_UN, accessed 3 March 2023.
11. Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Commonwealth of Australia), Australia's National Greenhouse Accounts, Land Use Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Activity Tables 2021, *Australian Government* (2023), <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dceew.gov.au%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2Fgeis-activity-table-1990-2021-lulucf.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>, accessed 3 May 2023.
12. Department of Environment and Science (Queensland), Statewide Landcover and Trees Study, *Queensland Government* (2023), <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/mapping/statewide-monitoring/slats/slats-reports>, accessed 2 February 2023.
13. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 'Fact Sheet: South Australian Glossy Black-Cockatoo', *Government of South Australia* (n.d.), <https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/environment/docs/pa-fact-glossyblackcockatoo.pdf>, accessed 26 June 2023.
14. Australian National University, 'Get to know the gang-gang cockatoo', *Australian National University* (2 March 2022) <https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/get-to-know-the-gang-gang-cockatoo>, accessed 26 June 2023.
15. Note: this commitment excludes logging under Timber Utilisation Plans.
16. P. Gibbons and D. Lindenmayer, *Tree hollows and wildlife conservation in Australia* (Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing, 2002).
17. Australian Museum, 'Quokka', *Australian Museum* (21 April 2022), <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/mammals/quokka/>, accessed on 26 June 2023.
18. While data allows for relative comparisons of forest loss, it underestimates clearing rates. There is great opportunity for the federal government to follow the lead of the Queensland and NSW governments by developing a nationally-consistent world-class program to monitor forest loss and restoration.
19. H. Murphy and S. Leeuwen, *Australia state of the environment 2021: biodiversity*, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia (2021), Canberra, DOI: 10.26194/ren9-3639
20. C. MacColl and J. Watson, 'Australia's red goshawk is disappearing', *Australian Geographic* (1 March 2023), <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/news/2023/03/australias-red-goshawk-is-disappearing/>, accessed on 26 June 2023.
21. Australian Museum, 'Orange-bellied Parrot', *Australian Museum* (29 July 2022), <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/orange-bellied-parrot-neophema-chrysogaster/>, accessed on 26 June 2023.
22. Queensland Government, 'Lemuroid ringtail possum', *Queensland Government* (19 October 2021), <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/animals/discovering-wildlife/possum/lemuroid-ringtail-possum>, accessed on 26 June 2023.
23. Analyses for NSW relate predominantly to the former government rather than the government elected at the March 2023 state election.
24. *Frontier Economics*, 2022. Transition support for the NSW native forest sector. Report prepared for the World Wide Fund for Nature-Australia, 8 August 2022, see pages 35-38.
25. Ibid.
26. WWF-Australia, 'Koala endangered listing is a grim but important decision: Koala endangered listing is a grim but important decision', *WWF-Australia* (11 February 2022), <https://www.wwf.org.au/news/2022/koala-endangered-listing-is-a-grim-but-important-decision/>, accessed on 26 June 2023.





THE CRITICAL DECISIONS
WE MAKE TODAY WILL
HELP SHAPE AUSTRALIA'S
TOMORROW.

© iStockphoto.com / markuskessler



Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

together possible wwf.org.au

WWF-Australia National Office

Suite 3.01, Level 3,
45 Clarence Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

Tel: +1800 032 551
enquiries@wwf.org.au
[@WWF_Australia](https://www.facebook.com/WWF_Australia)
wwf.org.au