



WWF

AUSTRALIA

# A BLUEPRINT TO REGENERATE AUSTRALIA

WWF-Australia's policy priorities for the incoming  
federal government

May 2022



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WWF-Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and WWF-Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work throughout Australia. We acknowledge their continuing connection to their lands, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to Elders – past and present, and their emerging leaders.

WWF-Australia has been working to create a world where people live in harmony with nature since 1978. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

### 1. Strengthen Australia's nature laws

- Set strong national environmental standards, enshrined in law
- Create an independent and well-resourced national EPA
- Improve monitoring, data collection and evaluation
- Ensure Indigenous Australians' knowledge, customs and interests are recognised under national environmental laws

### 2. Become a world leader in forest protection and land carbon

- Commit to protecting 30% of land by 2030
- Establish single sources of truth for deforestation, reforestation, land carbon and carbon farming
- Lead development of natural capital markets and establish a Natural Capital Fund
- Develop and fund a forestry transition package
- Strengthen supply chain traceability for deforestation-free claims

### 3. Reverse Australia's extinction crisis

- Commit to a national target to halt species extinctions
- Establish a comprehensive threatened species recovery package
- Establish a national wildlife healthcare network
- Drive national action and investment in rewilding programs

### 4. Save Australia's Great Barrier Reef

- Increase the ambition of Australia's emissions reduction targets to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees
- Establish a special management area and additional net-free zones
- Increase and target investment to improve Reef water quality

### 5. Protect Australia's marine wildlife

- Commit to protecting 30% of oceans as highly protected zones by 2030
- Be a driving force for greater MPA protection in Antarctica

### 6. Keep plastics out of the environment

- Legislate the 2025 National Packaging Targets and introduce a plastic reduction target
- Ensure Australia takes a lead role in developing a global agreement
- Implement Australia's National Plastics Plan

## CLIMATE AND ENERGY PORTFOLIO

### 7. Make Australia a renewable export superpower

- Develop a Renewable Exports Strategy for Australia
- Establish a \$3 billion Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts Program

## INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS PORTFOLIO

### 8. Expand Indigenous Protected Areas and ranger programs

- Increase the Indigenous ranger program and achieve gender equity
- Commit \$5 million to support a women rangers support network
- Broaden the distribution of Indigenous ranger programs across Australia
- Increase investment for effective management of Australia's IPAs

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

### 9. Build a nature-positive international development program

- Mainstream nature-positive approaches across Australia's international development programs

## INNOVATION PORTFOLIO

### 10. Invest in community-led economic, social and environmental regeneration

# POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE INCOMING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

An environmental tragedy of unparalleled proportions is unfolding across Australia. Plants and animals unique to this continent are disappearing. Landscapes prized internationally are deteriorating. Our deforestation and mammal extinction rates are among the highest in the developed world, and raise the very real spectre of losing iconic species like the koala. The future of the renowned Great Barrier Reef teeters in the balance as the graveyard of bleached corals grows. Record-breaking temperatures within and above our oceans, wildfires and floods are but a harbinger of what's to come as our climate dramatically changes.

The health of our natural landscapes and species is fundamental to our own. Nature not only sustains economies; it sustains our cultural identity, our traditions and sense of place. Protecting it in a warming world demands a deeper understanding of the threats, improved monitoring and evidence-based strategies that underpin policy. It also relies on the stewardship of Indigenous Australians, committed and capable of caring for Country on behalf of us all. Even in the face of unprecedented global challenges, we possess the ancient wisdom, modern science and creative solutions needed to secure a brighter future for Australia's environment.

The international community is responding to these inherently global issues. This year, the world's attention turns to the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in Kunming, China

– a critical opportunity to secure global agreement on reversing nature losses. Progress on climate change targets and action will also be advanced at the UN Climate Change Conference in November, while the newly established UNEP Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee seeks to progress a global agreement to curb plastic pollution.

But Australia cannot afford to wait on international signals. The environmental crisis demands immediate national action of the kind we've never seen before – a call that sounded loud and clear during the federal election. Voters have endorsed representatives that champion the protection of our special places and species. They implored our government to act – without delay – to address climate change, halt environmental destruction and biodiversity loss, and to reposition our nation as a renewables superpower.

This is a defining moment in our history. The incoming Australian Federal Government has a mandate to champion the environment, and to build a stronger and more sustainable nation. The policies and actions outlined in this brief, drafted by experts and grounded in science, provide a blueprint for that new agenda. Today's investment in the rich natural heritage of our continent is also an investment in the wellbeing of all Australians for all time. It must start now.



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# 1 STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S NATURE LAWS



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Australia's nature laws are failing to protect species from human-induced extinction. The independent review by Professor Graeme Samuel found that our natural environment is in an overall state of decline, and the EPBC Act has failed to protect matters of national environmental significance.<sup>1</sup> The review is a damning assessment of current national environmental protection laws, and concludes that these laws need fundamental reform.

To stem the decline of our iconic places and extinction of our threatened species, Australia needs to embrace a new generation of national environmental laws. Professor Samuel made 38 recommendations to address loopholes and failures that have allowed the destruction of threatened species' habitat. WWF-Australia calls on the incoming government to respond, in full, to these recommendations and commit to environmental laws that will protect our fragile and unique wild places and wildlife.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### First year of government:

- Set strong national environmental standards, enshrined in law
- Create an independent and well-resourced national EPA
- Improve monitoring, data collection and evaluation

### During term of government:

- Respect Indigenous Australians' rights and ensure Indigenous knowledge, customs and interests are recognised and valued under national environmental laws

<sup>1</sup> Independent Review of the EPBC Act, *Final Report*, 2020.

# 1

# STRENGTHEN AUSTRALIA'S NATURE LAWS

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 1.1 Set strong national environmental standards, enshrined in law

FIRST YEAR

The Samuel Review recommended new, legally enforceable standards as the foundation for an improved, outcomes-focused approach to the Australian Government's environmental responsibilities. These standards would ensure a consistent national approach to environmental protection and restoration, and serve as a platform for reforms in a range of other areas, including offsets and Indigenous engagement.

## 1.2 Create an independent and well-resourced national EPA

FIRST YEAR

The Samuel Review painted a damning picture of compliance with and enforcement of Australia's national environmental laws. The best way to address this problem is for the incoming government to establish and adequately fund an independent national Environment Protection Authority responsible for compliance and enforcement under the EPBC Act. This should be a statutory body, enshrined in law to ensure its independence.

**Funding: \$70 million over four years.<sup>2</sup>**

## 1.3 Improve monitoring, data collection and evaluation

FIRST YEAR

Improved environmental monitoring, evaluation and reporting is key to the shift from the process-oriented administration of the EPBC Act to environmental outcomes recommended by the Samuel Review. The incoming government should fully respond to the Samuel Review recommendations for better data collection, management and evaluation and ensure that environmental data is made publicly available. In particular, WWF supports the need for a custodian for the national information supply chain and the development of a National Environmental Standard for Data.

<sup>2</sup> \$70 million over the forward estimates period is based on 2019 costings for the Australian Labor Party's election commitment to reform Australia's environmental law and establish a new national Environment Protection Authority.

## ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO



## 1.4 Respect Indigenous Australians' rights and ensure Indigenous knowledge, customs and interests are recognised and valued under national environmental laws

DURING TERM

The Samuel Review identified the failures of the EPBC Act with respect to Indigenous Australians and recommended a series of key reforms. Implementing these reforms as a matter of priority is a crucial part of fixing Australia's environmental laws. The incoming government should ensure that Indigenous Australians have a central role in the design of environment protection laws, programs and policies.

# 2

## BECOME A WORLD LEADER IN FOREST PROTECTION AND LAND CARBON

Australia's precious forests are being lost at an alarming rate. These crucial natural ecosystems help to regulate the environment, maintain biodiversity, and support human health and livelihoods. However, every year an estimated 500,000 – 1,000,000 hectares of native forest and woodland is cleared across Australia. Successive bushfires, droughts and floods have also taken a devastating toll. It is estimated that up to

19 million hectares, supporting 3–7 billion trees, were burnt and 3 billion animals impacted by the catastrophic 2019–2020 bushfires alone.<sup>3</sup>

Protecting and restoring forests is a nature-based solution to the climate and nature crises. Australia needs to urgently transition from a deforestation hotspot to a world leader in reforestation, and move away from native forest logging to plantations. Becoming a world leader in reforestation could help achieve Australia's 2030 emissions reduction targets by cutting our emissions by 10–15%.<sup>4</sup> It would also support farmers and regional communities to achieve their carbon neutrality goals, create resilient landscapes and regional communities, bolster nature-based tourism and, importantly, conserve habitat for threatened species.

<sup>3</sup> WWF Australia, *Impacts of the Unprecedented 2019-20 Bushfires on Australian Animals*, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> National Inventory Report for forest loss of 40-45 MtCO<sub>2</sub>-e, plus 30-38 MtCO<sub>2</sub>-e emissions from native forest logging, based on NCAS data and peer-reviewed scientific studies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

First year of government:

- Commit to protecting 30% of land by 2030
- Establish single sources of truth for deforestation, reforestation, land carbon and carbon farming
- Lead development of natural capital markets and establish a Natural Capital Regeneration Fund

During term of government:

- Develop and fund a forestry transition package
- Strengthen supply chain traceability for deforestation-free claims



# BECOME A WORLD LEADER IN FOREST PROTECTION AND LAND CARBON

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 2.1 Commit to protecting 30% of land by 2030

FIRST YEAR

Target 3 of the draft Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), is for 30% of land areas and 30% of sea areas to be protected globally.<sup>5</sup> Currently, Australia protects approximately 21% of its land.<sup>6</sup> To meet these international obligations, we need to expand our terrestrial protected area network by up to 107 million hectares. This is achievable, particularly through a growth in Indigenous Protected Areas and farm-friendly nature covenants. Under the GBF, all bioregions and ecosystems should be adequately represented, which will require restoration or reforestation in highly cleared landscapes.

## 2.2 Establish single sources of truth for deforestation, reforestation, land carbon and carbon farming

FIRST YEAR

Australia lacks a national single point of truth for detecting and reporting change in the extent of forest and woodland. Detailed national information systems are essential for monitoring changes in tree cover (in almost real time) to enable accurate carbon accounting, underpin the annual reporting of changes in land sector carbon stocks and sources, and to detect illegal clearing.

WWF-Australia recommends the incoming government implement a nationally consistent, timely and accurate vegetation monitoring program, such as a national version of the State-wide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS), based on the Queensland SLATS methodology. In addition, a thorough, independent review of the National Carbon Accounting System (NCAS) should be undertaken to increase the accuracy of land carbon reporting. NCAS reports changes in forest cover annually, which is the basis for Australia's National Inventory Reports of greenhouse gas emissions for the land sector. Currently, NCAS significantly underestimates deforestation, and thus land carbon emissions. For example, NCAS reported 369,900 hectares of forest loss nationally in 2018, but the Queensland Government's woody vegetation change monitoring program for 2018-19 reported 681,000 hectares of landclearing in that state alone.

<sup>5</sup> In 2021, the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) released the first draft of a new Global Biodiversity Framework, to guide actions worldwide through 2030, to preserve and protect nature and its essential services to people.

<sup>6</sup> The Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database 2020 states that 19.75% of Australia's land area is protected. However, the establishment of two IPAs in October 2020 added an additional 7 Mha, raising the terrestrial protected areas network to at least 160 Mha or 20.8% of the land. New protected and conserved areas established by state/territory governments and private protected area managers has increased this figure further.

## 2.3 Lead development of natural capital markets and establish a Natural Capital Regeneration Fund

FIRST YEAR

Globally, there is increasing private sector interest in nature-based solutions to climate change including support for ecological restoration. A natural capital market allows governments to leverage and direct private capital to achieve nature conservation, carbon emissions reductions and other social and economic co-benefits. Australia currently has a number of government-led initiatives to catalyse private sector investment in natural capital, such as the Queensland Government's Land Restoration Fund and the NSW Government's Primary Industries Productivity and Abatement Program. While these programs are encouraging, their success will require sustained public investment, closer integration and stronger assurance mechanisms to guarantee integrity. The Australian Government plays a critical role in ensuring that the various schemes complement and reinforce one another and that credible accounting for carbon and other environmental and social outcomes underpins both supply and demand.

Stimulating demand, reducing barriers to private sector participation and building stakeholder confidence is essential to creating effective markets for natural capital. This could be achieved by deploying the many levers at the government's disposal – such as environmental disclosure requirements, new environmental rights and liabilities, and fiscal policy reform – rather than assuming the private sector will engage in natural capital markets on a purely voluntary basis. As a first step, the incoming government should establish a federal Natural Capital Regeneration Fund, and directly enable and leverage private investment through an initial public investment of \$500 million per annum. A national fund would support land managers and regional communities with new revenue opportunities, increase nature-based carbon sequestration and emissions.

**Funding: \$500 million per annum initially.<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> (\$500 million is a preliminary estimate of federal government investment needed to establish a national Natural Capital Regeneration Fund. It is based on research by Mappin et al, 'The costs and benefits of restoring a continent's terrestrial ecosystems', Journal of Applied Ecology, 2021. This research estimates that spending approximately \$2 billion annually for 30 years could restore 13 million ha of degraded land, resulting in almost all of Australia's degraded terrestrial ecosystems reaching 30% vegetation coverage. \$500 million per annum of initial public investment is based on a conservative assumption of a private-to-public funding leverage ratio of four to one, derived from experience in other countries.)



# BECOME A WORLD LEADER IN FOREST PROTECTION AND LAND CARBON

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 2.4 Develop and fund a forestry transition package, including structural adjustment support for timber communities

DURING TERM

Native forest logging emits approximately 6% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions each year, or an estimated 30-38 MtCO<sub>2</sub>-e.<sup>8</sup> Efforts to complete the transition from native forest logging to a plantations-based timber and pulp sector could therefore play a significant role in reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions while also producing net economic benefits. The declining size and profitability of the native forestry sector, coupled with its declining social licence, provides an opportunity for governments to end native forest logging and transition communities to more productive and profitable uses of standing forest.

In recent years, the Victorian and West Australian governments have announced a timetable to cease their native logging businesses and provide structural adjustment support. The federal government can play an important role in supporting and funding the end of native forest logging at a state and territory level to a plantations-based timber and pulp sector, with native forests managed for multiple uses (e.g., biodiversity conservation, carbon sinks, ecotourism, Indigenous jobs, economic diversification). WWF-Australia recommends the incoming government fund a package of \$800 million over the next 10 years, with an allocation of at least \$400 million over the next four years. This package would provide structural adjustment support for forestry workers, enable the purchase of wood supply agreements, subsidise the expansion of plantations, and grow investment in innovation and mill upgrades.

**Funding: \$800 million over the next 10 years.<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>8</sup> 30 MtCO<sub>2</sub>-e is based on analysis by Dr Heather Keith, Griffith Climate Action Beacon, Griffith University, using NCAS and other forest carbon data. 38 MtCO<sub>2</sub>-e is based on Macintosh, A, 2011. Potential carbon credits from reducing native forest harvesting in Australia, ANU Centre for Climate Law and Policy, Australian National University, Canberra.

<sup>9</sup> Proposed \$800 million funding package complements state based phase-out programs (e.g. Victoria and Western Australia).



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## 2.5 Strengthen supply chain traceability for deforestation-free claims

DURING TERM

Global retailers, brands, manufacturers and processors are increasingly committed to removing deforestation from their supply chains. Such commitments are starting to be regulated, including in the UK, EU and US.

However, there are limited means to validate and verify deforestation-free claims in Australia. Initiatives that increase transparency and traceability around the sourcing of products are therefore key to retaining Australia's access to major export markets and supporting a transition from deforestation to reforestation. Support for practices in the food system that are multi-use, such as agrobiodiversity and regenerative agriculture on grazing lands, will be important to trace a reduction in deforestation and to ensure that ecosystem services benefit both biodiversity and farmers. The incoming government should support the development of remote-sensing capabilities and supply chain traceability, and invest in the use of platforms for open-source environmental credentials in the beef sector. One example of how this could be achieved is through Meat and Livestock Australia expanding the National Livestock Identification System to also include tracing carbon and deforestation. This would assist farmers and exporters to verify that their beef is carbon-neutral and nature-positive, and was not produced on land deforested after 2020, and would also enable consumers to support environmentally-friendly produce.

# 3 REVERSE AUSTRALIA'S EXTINCTION CRISIS



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Australia's global reputation for having some of the most intact ecosystems in the world is being threatened by mass local extinctions across our continent. It is estimated that Australia has lost more biodiversity than any other developed nation in the past 200 years.<sup>10</sup> Many of Australia's species are threatened primarily by human impacts, especially the clearing of habitat and poor management of invasive species. Changes to temperature and rainfall, including the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, is further exacerbating ecosystem degradation and habitat loss.

Scientists estimate that nearly three billion native animals were killed or displaced in Australia's devastating 2019–20 bushfires.<sup>11</sup>

The survivors of Australia's fires and recent floods and our most iconic species, especially those listed as threatened, need our protection now more than ever. The government must stop the cycle of loss by actively reversing species decline and protecting Australia's unique biodiversity. With leaders from across the globe expected to strike a deal this year to finally halt the extinction crisis, Australia can no longer avoid action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### First year of government:

- Commit to a national target to halt species extinctions
- Establish a comprehensive threatened species recovery package
- Establish a national wildlife healthcare network

### During term of government:

- Drive national action and investment in rewilding programs

<sup>10</sup> Waldron et al., Reductions in global biodiversity loss predicted from conservation spending, *Nature*, 2017. 551: 364–367

<sup>11</sup> WWF-Australia, *Australia's 2019-20 Bushfires: The Wildlife Toll*, 2020.

# 3 REVERSE AUSTRALIA'S EXTINCTION CRISIS

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 3.1 Commit to a national target to halt species extinctions

FIRST YEAR

More than 1,700 species are known to be threatened and at risk of extinction in Australia.<sup>12</sup> To stop species extinction, the Australian Government must commit to halt human-induced extinctions, and play a leadership role to ensure this commitment is reflected in the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Halting species extinctions is achievable. The NSW Government recently set a target of zero extinctions of native wildlife in the state's national parks estate, and other developed countries have already made this commitment, including New Zealand and member states of the European Union. As a wealthy nation with science-based solutions, Australia can and should commit to halting human-induced species extinctions through a national target dedicated to a nature-positive future.

## 3.2 Establish a comprehensive threatened species recovery package, including time-bound, costed recovery plans for all threatened species

FIRST YEAR

Australia's ongoing species loss and growing threatened species list is a direct result of inadequate funding for environmental protection and targeted species recovery. Research shows that the more a country spends on conservation, the fewer species it loses.<sup>13</sup> In the United States, strong investment in threatened species recovery has resulted in 39 species being de-listed due to recovery efforts.<sup>14</sup> Promising results have been achieved in Australia; for example, the eastern barred bandicoot is no longer listed as extinct in the wild due to sustained recovery investment in Victoria. However, government expenditure on environmental management throughout Australia has declined over the past decade, and compared to countries of comparable wealth, Australia underspends on biodiversity conservation.<sup>15</sup>

To halt the extinction of Australia's iconic species, the government must invest adequately in threatened species recovery and protection. Legally binding, costed and time-bound recovery plans are essential for every threatened species. Currently, less than 40% of Australia's threatened species have a recovery plan<sup>16</sup>, and oftentimes these plans do not

<sup>12</sup> Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, *Threatened species under the EPBC Act*, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Waldron et al., 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Wintle et al., *Spending to save: What will it cost to halt Australia's extinction crisis?*, *Conservation Letters*, 2019, 12(2)

<sup>15</sup> Australian Conservation Foundation, *Federal Government spending on Australia's environment and climate, 2021*; and Wintle et al., 2019.

<sup>16</sup> [The Guardian](#), *Australian threatened species at risk with no recovery plans finalised in past 18 months*, 2020.

clearly state the need to limit threatening processes (e.g., stop habitat loss or control invasive species).

**Funding: A cohort of Australia's eminent scientists has estimated the cost of recovering Australia's listed threatened species at approximately \$1.69 billion per year.<sup>17</sup>**

## 3.3 Establish a national wildlife healthcare network

FIRST YEAR

The number of injured animals requiring care after Australia's bushfires and floods has overwhelmed wildlife rehabilitation organisations and veterinary professionals. General practitioner and specialist wildlife veterinary hospitals provide frontline care for animals, yet an estimated 90% of veterinary practices never or rarely receive reimbursement for their wildlife work.<sup>18</sup> A lack of coordination and funding for resources and wildlife training continues to pose additional challenges.<sup>19</sup>

With environmental disasters forecast to become more frequent and intense, investment in wildlife response teams and veterinary professionals is needed to ensure disaster preparedness and future response capabilities. National coordination of this network is critical to ensure clear communication, consistent standards of treatment, and the provision of resources. The implementation of a shared database and standardised data collection for wildlife receiving veterinary care would improve cohesion across the network. To support wildlife impacted by Australia's devastating natural disasters, the incoming government should establish an official wildlife health network complementary to and aligned with existing facilities.

**Funding: \$33 million over four years.<sup>20</sup>**

<sup>17</sup> Wintle, et al., 2019.

<sup>18</sup> B. Orr and A. Tribe, *Animal welfare implications of treating wildlife in Australian veterinary practices*, *Australian Veterinary Journal*, 2018, 96: 475-480.

<sup>19</sup> R. Hearing, V. Wilson, A. Zhuo and P. Stathis, *A survey of veterinary professionals about their interactions with free-living native animals and the volunteer wildlife rehabilitation sector in New South Wales, Australia*, *Australian Zoologist*, 2021, 41 (2): 254-282.

<sup>20</sup> \$33 million over four years is the estimated cost of establishing a wildlife health network which supports veterinary services, emergency response and disease initiatives. Based on consultation with Wildlife Health Australia and the Australian Veterinary Association and through data extrapolation of wildlife veterinary costs through the NSW DPIE.

# 3 REVERSE AUSTRALIA'S EXTINCTION CRISIS

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 3.4 Drive national action and investment in rewilding programs

DURING TERM

In the context of Australia's extinction crisis and ongoing threats, it is no longer sufficient to simply prevent further extinctions or ecosystem degradation; we need to restore what we've lost. Rewilding is a relatively new concept in Australia that aims to enhance the resilience of our landscapes to current and future threats by reintroducing native species and restoring populations that are vital to productive and healthy ecosystems.

Government support plays an essential role in coordinating and funding rewilding projects. WWF-Australia is currently working with state and territory governments and natural resource management agencies on a range of rewilding programs across Australia. This work is critical to restoring key species and ecosystems, however government support is urgently needed to expand these programs. WWF-Australia committed \$2.6 million over the past 18 months to test and implement rewilding strategies in 13 locations, and is now requesting \$7.4 million over four years to support its program. Additional federal support for programs that reintroduce Australian apex species to mainland landscapes, including the Tasmanian devil and dingo, would be beneficial to test their effectiveness in mitigating the impact of overabundant herbivores and introduced species.

**Funding: \$7.4 million over four years.<sup>21</sup>**

<sup>21</sup> WWF-Australia's integrated rewilding program was costed at \$10 million over four years. This comprised of \$5 million for island safe havens, \$2 million for fenced safe havens and \$3 million for rewilding managed landscapes. WWF-Australia has committed \$2.6 million and requires \$7.4 million over the forward estimates to support the program.



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# 4

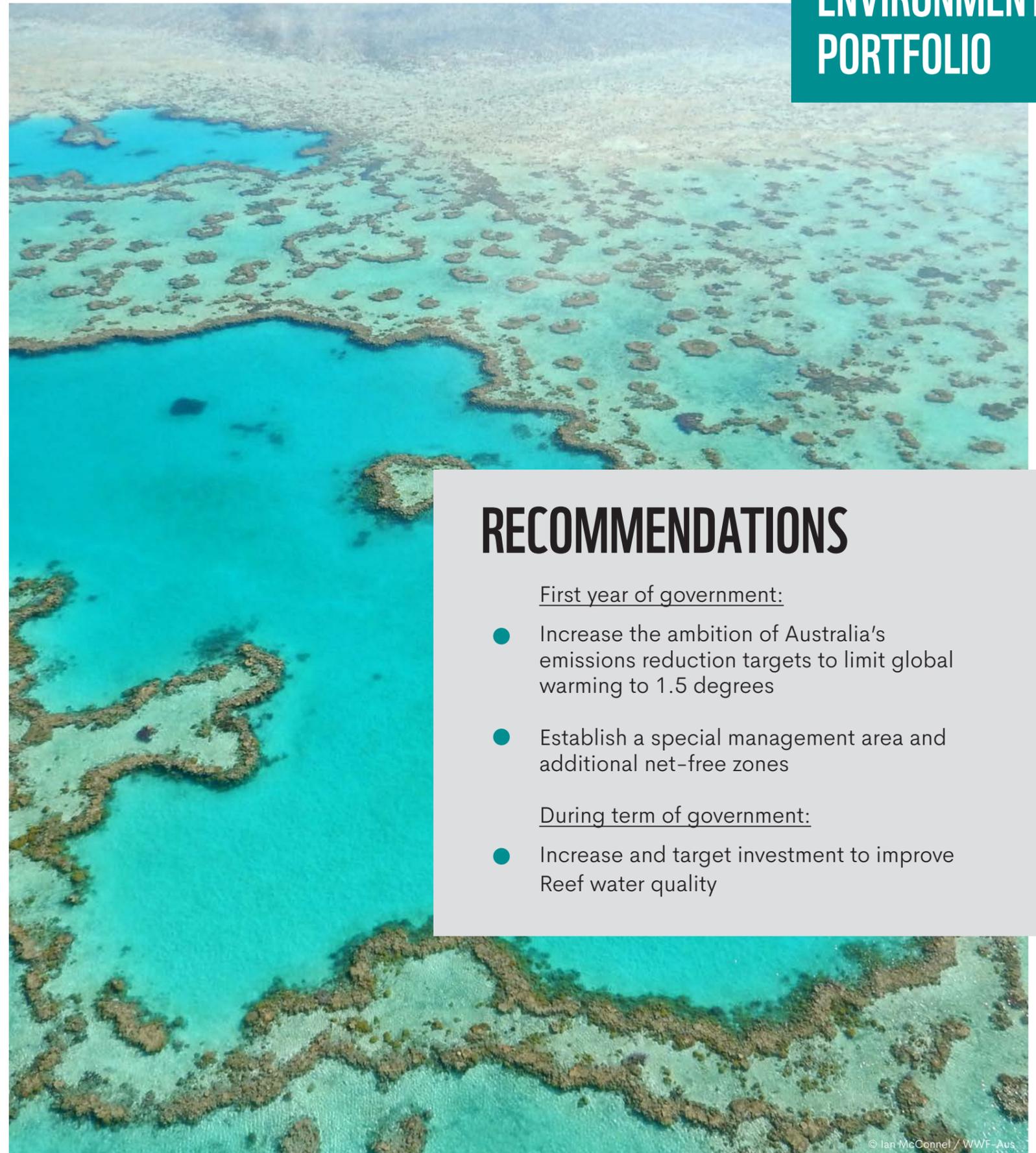
## SAVE AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF

Australia's Great Barrier Reef is one of the seven natural wonders on Earth. It is renowned for its beauty, diversity, spectacular marine wildlife and vibrant corals. This rich diversity means the Reef is also one of the most complex natural ecosystems on the planet, responsible for supporting thousands of marine and terrestrial species. In addition to its conservation value, the Reef supports a global tourism industry, generating jobs and contributing significantly to the Australian economy.

But all of this is at grave risk because the Reef is now highly vulnerable. In 2019, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority downgraded its future outlook from 'poor' to 'very poor'. UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee are actively considering whether to place the Reef on the list of World Heritage properties 'in-danger' – something that only occurs when a property is facing extreme pressure.

Global warming, water pollution and unsustainable fishing practices remain the key threats to the Reef. In March 2022, it experienced an underwater heatwave caused by global warming that resulted in a mass coral bleaching event.<sup>22</sup> Australia's national treasure has now suffered mass bleaching events in 1998, 2002, 2016, 2017, 2020 and 2022. Polluted water run-off from poor and outdated farming practices has also caused the Reef's water quality to decline, and commercial gill nets continue to threaten its iconic wildlife.

<sup>22</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, *The Reef*, 2022



### RECOMMENDATIONS

First year of government:

- Increase the ambition of Australia's emissions reduction targets to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees
- Establish a special management area and additional net-free zones

During term of government:

- Increase and target investment to improve Reef water quality

# 4 SAVE AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 4.1 Increase the ambition of Australia's emissions reduction targets to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees

FIRST YEAR

The science is very clear: 1.5°C is a critical threshold for the Great Barrier Reef. Without action this decade, coral reefs will be lost. However, Australia is a long way from an effective national response that will keep 1.5°C within reach. WWF-Australia recently commissioned independent expert analysis from leading climate scientists that found that the former government's emissions reduction commitment under the Paris Agreement of 26–28% by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050 are seriously inadequate.<sup>23</sup> The analysis concluded that Australia is failing in its duty under Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention to protect, conserve and transmit to future generations the natural heritage of the Great Barrier Reef.

Our policies and actions on climate change must be corrected in order for Australia to fulfil its international obligations and play its part in protecting the Great Barrier Reef from its greatest threat. To do so, the government needs more ambitious emissions reduction targets, to limit warming to 1.5°C and to strengthen its nationally-determined contribution in line with this ambition.

## 4.2 Establish a special management area over the Reef's far north and additional net-free zones in critical habitats

FIRST YEAR

The Great Barrier Reef faces a number of threats from the fishing that still occurs across approximately two-thirds of its systems. Commercial fishing, in particular, is responsible for the incidental catch of threatened species such as dugongs, turtles, dolphins and sawfish, as well as overfishing, illegal fishing and damage to vulnerable habitats. Gill nets are sometimes described as "walls of death" because they are indiscriminate killers of non-target species, which easily become trapped and drown.

Net-free zones provide a safe haven for marine life and are beneficial to tourism operators and recreational fishers, too. In early 2022, WWF-Australia purchased and retired the last commercial gill net licence in the far Northern Great Barrier Reef, effectively creating a 100,000-square-kilometre refuge for dugongs, inshore dolphins and turtles.

<sup>23</sup> Z. Nicholls and M. Meinshausen, *Comparison between Australia's 2030 and 2050 emission reduction targets and 1.5°C pathways*, 2022.

WWF has proven that a net-free north can be achieved and now calls on the incoming government to permanently protect this part of the Reef by creating a dedicated far north management area. Additional net-free zones to safeguard threatened species and create new tourism opportunities are also needed for critical habitat along other parts of the Queensland coast.

## 4.3 Increase and target investment to improve Reef water quality

DURING TERM

Sediment and excess fertilisers spilling from farmland into the Reef's waters continue to degrade inshore ecosystems. Although water quality targets have been set to reduce these pollutants, progress to date has been slow. In 2021, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority concluded that: "Poor water quality still remains a major threat to the Reef and improving water quality is critical and urgent".<sup>24</sup>

The total committed funding for the Reef still falls significantly short of the projected \$8.2 billion needed to meet the government's Reef 2050 water quality targets.<sup>25</sup> Given the health crisis the Reef is facing, it will be critical that investment in the Reef is front-loaded over the next three years and coordinated with the Queensland Government to deliver projects that demonstrate a reduction in pollutants entering the Reef. The investment also needs to target major pollution sources, and prioritise gully and wetland restoration rather than farming practice change.

These efforts would be bolstered by funding that matched the Queensland Government's \$500 million Land Restoration Fund, including targets to increase native vegetation sinks in Reef catchments.

**Funding: \$500 million over five years.**<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, *Position statement: Water quality* (Document no. 100516), 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Alluvium, *Costs of achieving the water quality targets for the Great Barrier Reef*, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Co-investment in broad-scale land restoration is required to sufficiently scale up support for existing Reef restoration projects for the next five-years and ensure catchment restoration contributes to meeting the 2025 water quality targets and to emission reduction targets by restoring and protecting carbon sinks for decades to come.

# 5

## PROTECT AUSTRALIA'S MARINE WILDLIFE

Australia's oceans contain some of the richest, most diverse life on Earth. However, our marine ecosystems face myriad threats from global warming, overfishing, industrial coastal developments and pollution. Oceans sustain all life. If we can't halt and reverse the unsustainable demands on our oceans, then Australia's long-term wellbeing and prosperity is also threatened.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

First year of government:

- Commit to protecting 30% of oceans as highly protected zones by 2030

During term of government:

- Be a driving force for designating a network of Marine Protected Areas in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean



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#### 5.1 Commit to protecting 30% of oceans as highly protected zones by 2030

FIRST YEAR

While 36.7% of Australia's oceans are Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), only 25% of MPAs are protected from commercial fishing.<sup>27</sup> With oceans facing rising temperatures and other threats, highly protected MPAs are powerful tools for safeguarding habitats from destructive fishing practices, providing refuge for endangered species and allowing depleted fish populations to recover. Permitting commercial fishing in these zones defeats the regenerative purpose of these instruments.

WWF-Australia encourages the incoming government to significantly increase the percentage of highly protected zones (those that exclude commercial fishing) within its existing Marine Protected Areas network. This is in line with Target 3 of the draft Global Biodiversity Framework, which asks that 30% of land areas and 30% of sea areas be protected globally.

#### 5.2 Be a driving force for designating a network of Marine Protected Areas in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

DURING TERM

The Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica is one of the last great wildernesses on Earth. Isolated by ice, wind and wild seas, it's a place of natural beauty and a vital refuge for iconic wildlife such as penguins, seals, seabirds and whales. However, as global fisheries are depleted, interest in expanding fishing throughout the Southern Ocean is growing. As global temperatures rise, changing environmental conditions are also putting increasing stress on Antarctic wildlife.

Marine Protected Areas are critical for boosting resilience to climate change and human activities such as fishing. A network of large MPAs is our best way of protecting the species who call the Antarctic region home – the foundation of the Southern Ocean food chain. The incoming government should be a driving force for greater species and spatial protection in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean by working with member nations of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and other key stakeholders to implement new MPAs, specifically in East Antarctica, the Antarctic Peninsula and Weddell Sea.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Agriculture Water and Environment, CAPAD, 2020.

# 6 KEEP PLASTICS OUT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Australians use more single-use plastics per person than any other country in the world except Singapore.<sup>28</sup> Of the 3.5 million tonnes we

use annually, an estimated 130,000 tonnes leaks into the environment.<sup>29</sup> Once plastic enters the ocean, it never disappears, causing major adverse impacts for ecosystems and species. Without national and international action, plastic leakage into the ocean is forecast to triple by 2040.<sup>30</sup>

Government regulation of plastics is increasing rapidly to address pollution. State and territory governments have shown great leadership in working to prevent the most harmful plastics entering the environment. However, further action is required at the national and international level to drive a transition to a circular economy and limit consumption to more sustainable levels.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

First year of government:

- Legislate the 2025 National Packaging Targets and introduce a plastic reduction target

During term of government:

- Ensure Australia takes a lead role in developing a global agreement
- Implement Australia's National Plastics Plan

<sup>28</sup> D. Charles, L. Kimman and N. Saran, *The Plastic Waste Makers Index*, Minderoo Foundation, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> BCG and WWF-Australia, *From plastic revolution to reality*, 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Pew Charitable Trusts and SYSTEMIQ, *Breaking the plastic wave*, 2021.

# 6

## KEEP PLASTICS OUT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Policy priorities for the incoming government

### 6.1 Legislate the 2025 National Packaging Targets and introduce a plastic reduction target

FIRST YEAR

Packaging waste is a persistent problem in Australia. As a category, it comprises the largest share of Australia's plastic consumption and consistently ranks as the largest contributor to marine plastic debris. In 2018, Australia established the 2025 National Packaging Targets, which remain voluntary. We are not on track to meet these targets, and progress has flatlined or gone backwards on two targets, despite substantial government investment in recycling infrastructure.<sup>31</sup> Only 16% of plastic packaging is recycled.<sup>32</sup>

While the former government was committed to increasing the recycling and recyclability of plastic packaging, these voluntary measures have proven inadequate in driving change at the pace and scale required. The incoming government should mandate packaging targets and ensure that investment in reducing plastic consumption, building the re-use economy, and supporting recycling systems is adequate to achieve them.

These targets should also include a reduction target. Other international jurisdictions that consume less plastic are introducing regulatory mechanisms to reduce plastic consumption and specifically, virgin plastic consumption. The incoming government should develop and legislate a mechanism to reduce all single-use plastic consumption, including a specific focus on virgin plastic consumption.

### 6.2 Ensure Australia takes a lead role in developing a global plastics agreement

DURING TERM

At the United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2022, the overwhelming majority of UN member states agreed to begin working on a global agreement on plastic pollution, with the goal of completing this work in 2024. This is a major milestone. The negotiating mandate paves the way for an instrument that includes global rules and obligations for the full life cycle of plastic, and standards for reducing production, consumption and pollution. An effective agreement could drive a global transition to a circular economy for plastics, and end their leakage into the environment.

However, this unanimous agreement by more than 170 UN member states is just the beginning. Strong leadership, sustained effort and resourcing is needed to ensure the

<sup>31</sup> APCO, *APCO Collective Impact Report*, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

agreement stops plastic pollution in its tracks, and Australia should be driving and shaping this process. WWF-Australia calls on the incoming government to take a lead role in developing a comprehensive instrument that has real impact on the plastic pollution crisis.

### 6.3 Implement Australia's National Plastics Plan

DURING TERM

Australia published its first National Plastics Plan in April 2021, containing welcome and substantial commitments to reducing plastic consumption, driving a circular economy for plastics and reducing plastic pollution. WWF-Australia strongly supports this plan but notes limited progress in several areas more than a year after its publication, including the establishment of a task force to combat cigarette butt pollution and a national phase-out of all oxo-degradable plastics by July 2022. Effective implementation and strengthening of this plan would put Australia in an excellent position to support Pacific-wide circular economy transition, and lead negotiations on specific elements of a global agreement, through its experience with domestic policy and regulation.

# 7

## MAKE AUSTRALIA A RENEWABLE EXPORT SUPERPOWER

As the world shifts to a low carbon future, Australia is in a unique position to become a renewable energy export superpower. We have clean energy resources sufficient to power the entire nation, and still have plenty leftover to sell to our neighbours. Queensland, alone, receives more energy from the sun in 16 days than the entire world uses in a year.<sup>33</sup> An expansion of Australia's renewable industry can power a new generation of exports, stimulate vast new onshore manufacturing industries and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

However, seizing this potential requires leadership and urgent government action. If Australia fails to act, other countries will beat us to the opportunity, and our economic future will be tied to industries incompatible with a safe climate.

There is a groundswell of support among the wider Australian population and business for us to step up and bring innovative clean-energy solutions to the world. Some 136 businesses, including Atlassian, Unilever, Mirvac and Australian Ethical, have joined WWF-Australia in calling on the federal government to invest in a renewable future. Three in four Australians agree that tackling climate change creates opportunities in clean energy for new jobs and investment.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> WWF analysis based on data from Our World in Data, Energy Production and Consumption, 2022. and Global Solar Atlas 2.0, 2022.

<sup>34</sup> The Australia Institute, All time high of 75% of Australians concerned about climate change, 2021.

## CLIMATE & ENERGY PORTFOLIO



## RECOMMENDATIONS

First year of government:

- Develop a Renewable Exports Strategy for Australia
- Establish a \$3 billion Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts Program

# 7 MAKE AUSTRALIA A RENEWABLE EXPORT SUPERPOWER

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 7.1 Develop a Renewable Exports Strategy for Australia

FIRST YEAR

Along with the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and Australian Conservation Foundation, WWF-Australia

has identified six types of renewable exports that can fuel Australia's growth in the low emissions economy. These include:

1. Exporting hydrogen or ammonia produced using renewable energy;
2. Processing and exporting higher value metals (e.g. steel and aluminium) using renewable energy;
3. Exporting minerals critical to the production of clean-energy technology;
4. Exporting batteries manufactured in Australia;
5. Exporting education and training services built on our strong clean-energy economy; and
6. Providing clean-energy services.

These six clean export opportunities are significant. By conservative estimates, they have the potential to generate \$89 billion of gross value added and 395,000 Australian jobs by 2040.<sup>35</sup> This is larger than the gross value added of today's Australian fossil fuel industry and represents many more jobs. While Australia has a range of policies to support clean-energy exports, there is no comprehensive strategy to fully harness the opportunities.

A national strategy with clear targets would put in place the fundamentals for the clean-energy export sector to develop and accelerate private investment. It would catalyse Australia's transition to a low emissions economy, creating jobs, growing industry, stimulating investment, lowering emissions and helping to build a resilient Australian economy. Without a clean-energy exports strategy, Australia will be unable to capitalise on our natural advantages including abundant sunshine and wind, and fall behind the nations already taking advantage of growing markets.

## 7.2 Establish a \$3 billion Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts Program

FIRST YEAR

Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts (REIPs) are clusters of industry and manufacturers powered by 100% low-cost renewable energy. They are either located within or near Renewable Energy Zones or connected to renewable energy generation through high-voltage transmission lines. WWF-Australia and Beyond Zero Emissions have identified a number of priority REIP locations in regional Australia in existing industrial areas with supporting

infrastructure, such as transport connections (deep-water port, rail and road), brownfield land and skilled workforces (see map below).

Australia has the opportunity to modernise, re-energise and expand its manufacturing and industrial sector through the establishment of REIPs. These precincts will help Australian industry and manufacturers to capitalise on the growing global demand for low-emissions products. They will serve as a vehicle for maintaining existing manufacturing capacity, reskilling workforces, particularly in areas affected by the ongoing energy transition, and creating new jobs. To achieve this, WWF-Australia recommends the incoming government commit to developing a Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts Program to deliver seven REIPs over the next four years, in collaboration with state and territory governments.

**Funding: \$3.3 billion over four years.<sup>36</sup>**

<sup>36</sup> Comprised of \$800m for infrastructure and coordination funding and \$2.5 billion for renewable manufacturing precinct implementation funding over four years to coordinate and launch at least seven REIPs across Australia. Further detail is provided in WWF-Australia and Beyond Zero Emissions Joint 2022-23 Budget Submission.



<sup>35</sup> Accenture, Sunshot: Australia's opportunity to create 395,000 clean export jobs, 2021.

# 8

## EXPAND INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS AND RANGER PROGRAMS

Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous rangers provide the foundation for more effective and equitable nature conservation across Australia. They have catalysed the development of an Indigenous land and sea-based economy, empowering Indigenous landowners to manage their Country in accordance with their priorities. Indigenous rangers bring a depth of cultural authority and unique land and sea management skills to the nationally and internationally important task of caring for Country. As such, Indigenous rangers are perfectly placed to help manage Australia's most pressing conservation issues, including the loss of threatened species and the risk of bushfires.

For more than a decade, WWF-Australia has partnered with Indigenous ranger groups to co-design and deliver conservation and sustainable land and sea management. We have seen firsthand the significant environmental, social and economic benefits of Indigenous-led approaches and have been encouraged by the increasing interest in traditional land management practices, particularly during and in the immediate aftermath of the 2019-20 bushfires. Proper resourcing and investment in Indigenous-led approaches is critical to caring for Country and the alleviation of similar disasters.



INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS PORTFOLIO

### RECOMMENDATIONS

During term of government:

- Increase the Indigenous ranger program to fund 2,000 full-time equivalent Indigenous ranger positions by 2022-23, with a long-term goal of 5,000 rangers by 2030, and the achievement of gender equity by 2026
- Commit \$5 million over three years to support the expansion and operation of a women rangers support network
- Broaden the distribution of Indigenous ranger programs across Australia
- Increase investment for effective management of Australia's IPAs

# 8 EXPAND INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS AND RANGER PROGRAMS

Policy priorities for the incoming government

## 8.1 Increase the Indigenous ranger program to fund 2,000 full-time equivalent Indigenous ranger positions by 2022-23, with a long-term goal of 5,000 rangers by 2030, and the achievement of gender equity by 2026

DURING TERM

There is a significant conservation need for more Indigenous rangers, and a strong desire from Indigenous communities to participate. As such, WWF recommends further expansion of the Indigenous ranger program, with a major focus on women.

In many Indigenous communities, women have distinct roles and responsibilities in caring for Country. Some of the most important aspects of Indigenous land management and biodiversity protection are considered women's business. However, it is estimated that women represent less than one-third of Indigenous rangers in Australia and face numerous obstacles to participation and professional advancement. WWF urges a stronger focus on equity and inclusion, by growing targeted and tailored support for Indigenous women ranger programs. A goal of achieving gender equity by 2026, to ensure that women enjoy equal participation in caring for Country, is the first step.

## 8.2 Commit \$5 million over three years to support the expansion and operation of a women rangers support network

DURING TERM

To date, Australian Government investment in women rangers has been relatively recent and modest. This contrasts with the many benefits women bring to their work on Country, as well as to their communities. In addition to growing the number of women ranger positions, women rangers need specialised professional training and mentoring. A support network to enable the sharing of experiences, ideas and information, that connects women rangers across the country, is also vital.

Since 2017, WWF has been partnering with Indigenous land councils, rangers and Indigenous land and sea management groups to facilitate professional networks for Indigenous women rangers to share their experiences and knowledge and come together to collectively address the challenges they face working on Country. Significant demand exists and there is a unique opportunity to facilitate stronger connections between Indigenous women rangers nationally and internationally. Achieving this requires targeted support and resourcing. An investment in Indigenous ranger positions must be accompanied by measures that provide leadership, mentoring and training opportunities for women rangers across Australia.

**Funding: \$5 million over three years.**

## 8.3 Broaden the distribution of Indigenous ranger programs across Australia

DURING TERM

The Indigenous ranger program provides significant social and community benefits in remote and isolated communities. Research commissioned by the federal government in 2016 demonstrated that every dollar invested in Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous ranger programs delivered at least a \$4 social return on investment.<sup>37</sup> However, the current program is sparsely distributed, and absent from many urban Indigenous communities and regions facing some of the greatest environmental challenges.

We need greater numbers of Indigenous rangers across a broader geographic area. WWF-Australia encourages the incoming government to expand the Indigenous ranger program to areas facing the greatest environmental challenges, such as the Great Barrier Reef, southwest Australia, the Murray-Darling Basin and areas of biodiversity significance still recovering from the 2019-20 bushfires. It should also ensure that Indigenous rangers are represented in large, urban and regional centres with the highest populations of Indigenous people, including Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

## 8.4 Increase investment for effective management of Australia's IPAs

DURING TERM

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) play an important role in conserving biodiversity in Australia. To protect 30% of land by 2030, as required in the draft Global Biodiversity Framework, the Australian Government will need to expand IPAs that are effectively and equitably managed.

Current government funding does not meet the demand from Traditional Owner groups, nor the levels needed to effectively protect and manage the vast areas of land and sea Country covered by IPAs. Increased investment in ranger activities on Country will accelerate the rate of social return and ensure that Indigenous people can play an important role in meeting Australia's commitment to protecting 30% of land by 2030.

<sup>37</sup> Social Ventures Australia, *Healthy Country, Healthy People*, 2016.

## 9

BUILD A NATURE-POSITIVE INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

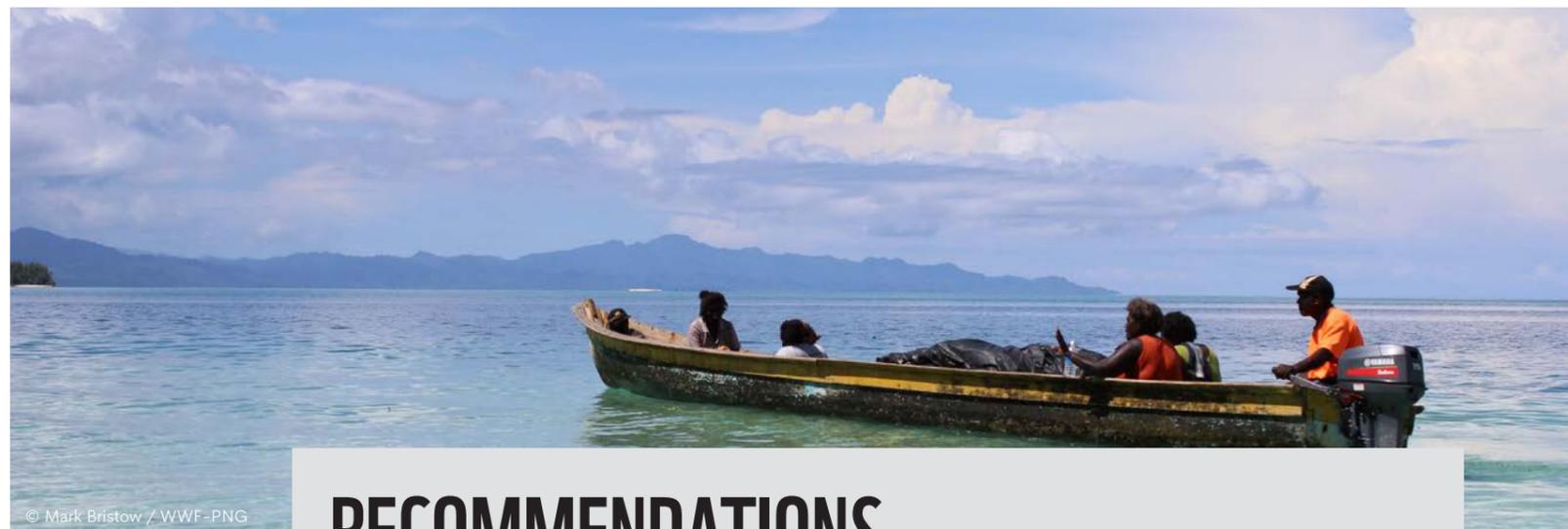
Most of the world's poorest people depend on natural resources for all or part of their livelihoods, and climate change and environmental degradation are key obstacles to sustainable and inclusive development. In the Pacific, coastal fisheries – which depend on careful, ecosystem-based management – provide 50–90% of animal protein in rural areas and 40–80% in urban areas,<sup>38</sup> and fishing serves as the primary or secondary source of income for nearly half of all households in 17 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs).<sup>39</sup> The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, however, warns that 75% of PICTs' coastal fisheries will be unable to meet their food security needs by 2030.<sup>40</sup>

Through recent investments supporting community-based coastal fisheries management, forest carbon and regenerative agriculture projects, Australia's aid program is helping communities to manage their resources and protect the ecosystems upon which they and their economies depend. The 2021 launch of Climate Resilient by Nature, in partnership with WWF, and the creation of DFAT's Climate Integration Unit, signals a growing commitment to scaling up these investments in a more systematic and integrated way. However, Australia's aid program still lacks a clear strategy or target for ecosystem protection and restoration.

38 Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Fish and Food Security*, 2016.

39 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program, *Pacific Fisheries: General Overview*, 2017.

40 R. Gillett and I. Cartwright, *The future of Pacific Island fisheries*, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Nouméa, New Caledonia and Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Honiara, Solomon Islands, 2010. p. 46.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

FIRST YEAR

9.1 Mainstream nature-positive approaches  
across Australia's international development programs

WWF-Australia recommends the incoming government implement a "twin-track" approach to mainstreaming nature across Australia's international development program by:

1. Investing at least \$100 million annually in initiatives that have the primary objective of achieving development outcomes through the protection and restoration of nature and climate-critical ecosystems; and
2. Introducing a strategic target that at least 80% of aid investments, regardless of their objectives or sectoral focus, effectively address environmental issues and protect nature in their design and implementation.

**Funding: \$100 million annually, ongoing.<sup>41</sup>**

41 WWF believes \$100 million annually, targeted specifically to support high-integrity, equitable nature-based solutions, is a reasonable next step towards Australia paying a meaningful proportion of the estimated USD114 billion per annum of international public finance currently being invested in nature-based solutions (UNEP, 2021).

# 10

## INVEST IN COMMUNITY-LED ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL REGENERATION

### INNOVATION PORTFOLIO



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

DURING TERM

Finding innovative solutions to regenerate Australia's environment, local economies and communities is now more important than ever. WWF-Australia has launched the Innovate to Regenerate program to identify and support the most promising solutions that deliver social, environmental and economic benefits. WWF has received applications to support a portfolio of innovative community-led projects, such as new models for community energy, regional circular economy 'micro-factories', regenerative agriculture mutual funds and bio-carbon initiatives.

WWF is deploying \$2 million to support an initial portfolio of approximately 30 solutions that can be replicated in communities around Australia. We are prioritising solutions that champion authentic community participation, drive wealth back into communities, create local jobs, build social capital, reverse environmental damage, champion First Nations wisdom, and ultimately create a positive impact for people and the planet.

However, following an overwhelming response from communities and social entrepreneurs after our initial launch in March 2022, there are now many more impactful projects than funding to support them. Our current portfolio requires funding of around \$20 million. Having contributed the first \$2 million, WWF-Australia is working with corporate partners and philanthropists to grow the funding pool. The incoming government can play a pivotal role in bringing these projects to life by investing \$10 million a year over three years to help scale and replicate these inspiring solutions and position Australia as a global leader in regenerative economic development.

**Funding: \$30 million over three years.**



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