

# Biodiversity Conservation

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## AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

*Australia is one of the most bio-diverse countries in the world. These plants and animals are inherently valuable, as well as being critical to our own well-being. The Democrats believe the protection of biodiversity is essential for Australia's long-term security and prosperity.*

### Our Action Plan

#### Protection of biodiversity and habitat

1. Continue to build on our record of **strengthening the structure and administration of Commonwealth environmental laws.**
2. **Address the threat to biodiversity** from:
  - (a) climate change (see Greenhouse and Energy Issue Sheet);
  - (b) introduced species (see Introduced Species Issue Sheet);
  - (c) inefficient use of water resources (see Water Issue Sheet);
  - (d) unsustainable fisheries practices (see Oceans Issue Sheet); and
  - (e) unsustainable forestry practices (see Forests: Conservation and Management Issue Sheet).
3. **Phase out broad-scale land clearing** of remnant and regrowth vegetation in all States and Territories.
4. **Increase the funds available through the Natural Heritage Trust for biodiversity conservation** and ensure the Trust is administered strategically to ensure the best use of available resources. In particular, **expand the National Reserve System** program to ensure Australia has a comprehensive, adequate and representative terrestrial and marine protected area system.
5. **Create incentives and remove all disincentives to encourage the conservation and protection of biodiversity.** This should include:
  - (a) phasing out subsidies to industries that threaten biodiversity;
  - (b) where subsidies are paid to industries that threaten biodiversity (eg. payment of drought relief to farmers), ensure that the payments of the subsidies are linked to the satisfaction of biodiversity outcomes;
  - (c) aid programs and assistance linked to biodiversity outcomes;

*“All our environmental policies will be a failure if we do not protect biodiversity”*

**Senator  
Andrew Bartlett  
Environment  
Spokesperson**

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- (d) environmental tax reform at the Federal, State and local government level.
- 6. **Establish an inquiry into environmental taxes** to ensure the cost of goods and services reflects the full cost of production. This inquiry should evaluate the impacts of any proposed environmental taxes on the least well off members of our society and means to avoid or alleviate potential impacts.
- 7. **Ensure Indigenous communities are fully involved** in biodiversity conservation and land management programs.
- 8. **Expand research, cultivation and breeding programs** to assist with the conservation of threatened species.
- 9. **Create a national clearing-house mechanism and website** to collect and disseminate information on biodiversity.
- 10. Seek to ensure that:
  - (a) Australia meets its environmental obligations to protect and conserve biodiversity under international agreements;
  - (b) international trade agreements do not impose restrictions on policies that seek to protect and conserve biodiversity;
  - (c) Australia's foreign aid programs promote the protection and conservation of biodiversity in other countries; and
  - (d) Australia plays a lead role in promoting the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the international community.

## Wildlife Trade and Native Species Protection

- 1. **Continue to strengthen wildlife trade laws**, including:
  - (a) prohibit the export of native species unless the harvesting levels are proven to be sustainable; and
  - (b) stronger provisions to ensure the humane treatment of all species that are killed and/or traded for commercial purposes.
- 2. **Increase the resources available** for the administration and enforcement of wildlife trade laws.