



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water

Discussion Paper

Updating Australia's Strategy for Nature

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Introduction

The Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) is leading the update of [Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030](#) (the strategy). The strategy will continue to set a framework for action across all Australian governments and non-government sectors to strengthen our national response to biodiversity decline. The framework will help us shift toward a nature positive Australia by repairing, protecting, and better managing our natural assets so we can leave nature better off for future generations.

This discussion paper should be read in conjunction with the strategy. It provides the background, context, objectives and issues associated with the update of the strategy. Your responses to questions in this paper will be used to inform new biodiversity targets and support planning for its implementation.

1.1 Background

In December 2022, Australia was one of 188 countries to adopt the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (the GBF) at the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP15) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The GBF is a once-in-a-decade agreement that sets out an ambitious framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and to live in harmony with nature by 2050. The GBF has 23 action-oriented targets to achieve by 2030 and 4 outcome-oriented goals to achieve by 2050. The goals and targets aim to conserve and restore biodiversity, enhance First Nations stewardship, strengthen benefit sharing, encourage private investment in nature, and mainstream biodiversity considerations into decision-making.

Parties are required to submit a revised or updated national biodiversity strategy, with national targets, before the 16th meeting of the COP in late October 2024 (COP16).

The GBF targets are multifaceted, reflecting the breadth of issues impacting biodiversity globally. [Section H.13](#) of the GBF requires each Party to the CBD to contribute to the GBF's goals and targets in line with their 'national circumstances, priorities, and socio-economic conditions'.

The strategy will be updated to reflect Australia's contributions to the GBF. Australia's current was adopted nationally with states and territories in 2019. It sets a strategic framework for action to 2030 and provides a basis from which to scale up Australia's biodiversity agenda in line with the GBF. To meet initial international timeframes for COP16, Australia is first focused on developing ambitious national biodiversity targets to include in the updated strategy.

Following the update of the strategy, more work will be needed to support implementation design and delivery. This may include developing further policy positions, action plans, progress measures, indicators and monitoring strategies. The level of implementation work will vary by target. Some targets are supported by considerable work underway nationally, while others will require additional planning, coordination and resourcing. There will be future opportunities to contribute to this work.

The intent of the updated strategy will continue to focus on uniting and guiding all Australians. This recognises that managing and protecting Australia's environment is a shared responsibility. Achieving

the targets will require action from governments, the private sector, First Nations people, philanthropic groups, non-governmental organisations, landholders, academia and the community. The updated strategy aims to provide the ambition and direction to guide all actors' contributions to greater collective outcomes.

1.2 Australia's national priorities

There are many reasons to reverse trends relating to the loss of biodiversity. From the intrinsic belief that nature has a right to exist, through to a recognition of the services nature provides. Australians depend on nature for food, medicine, clean air and water, and security from natural disasters.¹ Australia's economy is dependent on the services and benefits provided by nature, particularly for industries like agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism and manufacturing. Australia's environment supports our health and wellbeing.² First Nations people, in particular, have a special relationship with nature, based on a profound spiritual connection that guides cultural practices.³

The strategy sets a vision that Australia's nature, now and into the future, is healthy and resilient to threats, understood, and valued in its own right and for its essential contribution to our health, wellbeing, prosperity and quality of life. In updating the strategy, this core vision will be reconsidered to better align with the GBF's global mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and live in harmony with nature by 2050.

While recognising that all 23 GBF targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss are globally important, Australia's environment ministers have identified priority areas for action between now and 2030, to address key pressures facing Australia's biodiversity. The 2021 [State of the Environment report](#) found that Australia's environment is in poor condition and is deteriorating. Australia's environment is facing significant and compounding pressures from drivers of biodiversity loss including climate change, land and sea use change, invasive species, pollution, and unsustainable use of natural resources⁴. Focusing Australia's efforts and resources on priority areas that address these pressures will allow us to make the best possible contribution to the GBF targets.

In recognition of this, [in November 2023](#), the Australian Government and state and territory environment ministers agreed to develop ambitious national biodiversity targets, in line with the GBF, to better protect nature. These targets will direct focus to areas where collaboration between jurisdictions and other organisations would be beneficial.

¹ United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (Montreal: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022), Decision 15/4, Section A.1, page 4.

² Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2019), pages 5-6.

³ Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's Strategy for Nature 2019-2030* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2019), page 5.

⁴ Cresswell ID, Janke T & Johnston EL (2021). Australia state of the environment 2021: overview, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. DOI: 10.26194/f1rh-7r05

Australia's environment ministers agreed on **6 priority areas** for new biodiversity targets. These are:

- Priority area 1: Effective restoration of degraded terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems.
- Priority area 2: Tackling the impact of invasive species.
- Priority area 3: Building a circular economy and reducing the impact of plastics on nature.
- Priority area 4: Minimising the impact of climate change on nature.
- Priority area 5: Protect and conserve 30% of Australia's land and 30% of Australia's oceans by 2030.
- Priority area 6: Work towards zero new extinctions.

Ministers also agreed on 3 enablers of change required to support the achievement of the national targets as well as support delivery more broadly against the GBF. These are:

- Enabler 1: Ensuring environmental data and information is widely accessible and supports planning.
- Enabler 2: Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into government and business decision-making, including in financing, policies, regulations and planning processes.
- Enabler 3: Ensuring equitable representation and participation in decisions relating to nature, particularly for First Nations peoples.

These priority areas and enablers are closely related. Delivery against each of them may also result in outcomes for other priorities and enablers. Action on restoration, for example, can also improve species resilience and minimise the impacts of climate change on nature. Invasive species management supports work towards zero new extinctions and conserving 30% of Australia's land and oceans. Building a circular economy is consistent with mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into government and business decision-making to reduce pressures on nature.

Australia will also continue to deliver on the existing policies and programs that support biodiversity conservation and address the remaining GBF targets.

All governments are already delivering on the priority areas and enablers. For the purposes of this discussion paper, a relevant selection of Australian Government initiatives has been included at **Attachment A**.

Australia will report on progress towards targets under the monitoring framework agreed as part of the GBF.⁵ Over time, priorities will be reassessed and reset, as required, based on progress to reach the GBF's longer-term outcome-oriented vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050.

National targets for priority areas

DCCEEW is seeking your feedback on draft targets for Australia. These draft targets have been framed to align with the relevant GBF targets, build on existing efforts, and to be applicable to the Australian context. The draft targets have been developed in consultation with state and territory

⁵ United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (Montreal: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022), Decision 15/5.

officials. The phrasing of each target represents policy thinking on relevant issues to date. Your feedback will help shape continued thinking on these ambitious targets.

The drivers of environmental decline are local, national and global in origin. Halting and reversing biodiversity decline requires concerted action at different scales. DCCEEW invites you to consider the draft targets, including the roles government and non-government sectors need to play in contributing to the draft targets, and what is ambitious and achievable.

Priority areas

Priority area 1: Effective restoration of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems

GBF target 2:

Ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services.

Australian context

In November 2023, [Australia's environment ministers agreed](#) to develop targets that prioritise national action to support the effective restoration of degraded terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal ecosystems.

The GBF defines degradation as the persistent (long-term) reduction in the capacity of an ecosystem to provide ecosystem services. This arguably impacts a significant proportion of Australia's ecosystems. The 2021 State of the Environment Report found:

- 86% of Australia's threatened species are subject to cumulative and compounding threats;
- 47-78% of saltmarshes and mangroves have been lost since European settlement;
- many native ecosystems have been extensively cleared and 50% of remaining habitats are highly degraded; and
- at least 19 Australian ecosystems have shown signs of collapse or near collapse⁶.

Ecosystem degradation in Australia has historically been, and continues to be, driven by multiple threats including:

- increased frequency of bushfires and droughts from climate change;
- land use change (such as urbanisation, mining);
- loss of environmental water flows;
- pollution;
- unsustainable use of natural resources; and

⁶ Cresswell ID, Janke T & Johnston EL (2021). Australia state of the environment 2021: overview, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. DOI: 10.26194/f1rh-7r05

- invasive species and unsustainable agricultural practices.

Conserving existing ecosystems and restoration is a critical conservation response to deal with these cumulative pressures. The proposed national target closely reflects the ambition of the GBF target. The target aims to focus national efforts on ensuring 30% of priority degraded areas are under effective restoration by 2030.

In delivering this proposed target there are a range of issues that will need to be addressed including identification of which degraded areas have the highest potential to improve biodiversity outcomes. Given the scale of the problem, the proposed target focuses efforts on the identification of priority degraded areas. This will require strategic planning, national coordination, and improvement of environmental data and information systems. This proposed target would focus on, and build on, work already underway across all jurisdictions to manage and improve biodiversity outcomes across the landscape.

Proposed Australian target

30% of priority degraded areas under effective restoration by 2030.

Discussion questions

We welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What do you think of this target?
 - a. Does this target appropriately apply GBF target 2 to the Australian context? If not, what needs to be included or removed from this target to improve the national focus?
2. What additional action needs to occur for Australia to reach this target?
 - a. Any barriers to overcome or opportunities to harness?
 - b. How could the enablers of change (environmental data; mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into decision-making; and equitable participation in nature related decisions) contribute to this target?
3. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to the target? If so, what contributions are you making and which enablers are you using?

Priority area 2: Tackling the impact of invasive species

GBF target 6:

Eliminate, minimise and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species in biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands.

Australian context

In November 2023, [Australia's environment ministers agreed](#) to develop targets that prioritise national action around tackling the impact of invasive species.

Invasive species are the second biggest threat to Australia's native plants, wildlife and ecosystems, and have been implicated in the extinction of many Australian species. These introduced species have become established in all parts of the country, along the coasts and in the marine environment.

Invasive species threaten our unique environment and ecosystems, they also devastate the agriculture sector, reduce business access to export markets, impact social amenity and well-being, eco-tourism and culturally significant plants, animals and places for First Nations peoples⁷. Each year it costs Australia's agricultural sector approximately A\$24.5 billion to manage invasive species and businesses losses.⁸ This figure does not include the costs to the environment or the cost to manage invasive species in our protected areas.

The proposed target focuses on the impact of the invasive species elements of the GBF target, in recognition that Australia already has a mature biosecurity system that aims to prevent the introduction of invasive species. Given the scale of the problem in Australia, the proposed target focuses efforts on important biodiversity areas. In delivering the proposed target, Australia will need to define and determine the precious places for focusing invasive species actions to improve biodiversity outcomes. This could include areas such as those provided in the Australian Government's Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032.

This proposed target would focus on, and build on, work underway across all jurisdictions in Australia to reduce the impact of invasive species already present in Australia.

⁷ Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, *Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032* (Canberra: Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, 2022), 4, <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/threatened-species-action-plan-2022-2032.pdf>

⁸ Corey J.A. Bradshaw et al., "Detailed assessment of the reported economic costs of invasive species in Australia," *NeoBiota* 67 (2021): 511-550, doi: 10.3897/neobiota.67.58834

Proposed Australian target

Minimise the impact of invasive species on biodiversity in our most precious places by 2030.

Discussion questions

There is significant ongoing work towards this target. To specifically inform work on setting a target in the context of the broader strategy, we welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What do you think of this target?
 - a. Does this target appropriately apply GBF target 6 to the Australian context? If not, what needs to be included or removed from this target to improve the national focus?
2. What dedicated initiatives would you like to see for managing invasive species in Australia?
 - a. For example, research initiatives, international collaboration, on-ground work, information sharing etc.
 - b. How could the enablers of change (environmental data; mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into decision-making; and equitable participation in nature related decisions) contribute to this target?
3. What do you think will increase community support for the need to control invasive species to avoid species extinctions?
 - a. What is the best method to enable and support individual contribution and behaviour changes from members of the community?
4. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to the target, if so, what contributions are you making and which enablers are you using?

Priority Area 3: Building a circular economy and reducing the impact of plastics on nature

GBF target 7:

Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering the cumulative effects, including: reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.

GBF target 16:

Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks, improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, and by 2030, reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, including through halving global food

waste, significantly reducing overconsumption and substantially reducing waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth.

Australian context

In October 2022, [Australia's environment ministers agreed](#) to accelerate Australia's transition to a circular economy by 2030. Transitioning to a circular economy involves reducing waste and pollution, keeping materials and nutrients cycling in our economy for longer, and conserving natural resources and regenerating nature.

In November 2023, [Australia's environment ministers agreed](#) to develop targets that prioritise national action for a circular economy and reducing the impact of plastics on nature. This draws from the sustainable consumption and plastic pollution elements of GBF targets 7 and 16.

Australia's commitment to a more circular economy addresses 2 drivers of biodiversity loss – pollution and habitat destruction. Both are driven by inefficient resource use⁹.

Pollution, including from chemicals, waste and contamination, is driving ecosystem change within freshwater and marine habitats.¹⁰ Freshwater pollution can also have significant impacts on human health and wellbeing.

The United Nations has advised that plastics are so prevalent throughout the environment that they are becoming part of the Earth's fossil record. Without significant changes to the way plastics are managed across the globe, it is projected that the volume of plastic in the ocean could triple by 2040.¹¹ Habitat destruction is driven by wasteful use of resources. It is estimated that the land required to grow the food wasted in Australia is the same size as the state of Victoria.¹² Maximising the use of resources within our economy, by reusing, repairing and recycling materials also reduces the demand for new raw materials.

This proposed target would focus on, and build on, work underway to ensure that plastic used for packaging is more efficiently designed and can be more consistently recovered and recycled. It also builds on work by states and territories to phase out problematic single use plastics and implementing deposit collection schemes that have significantly reduced the littering of drink containers.

⁹ [Circular solutions can halt biodiversity loss – The food and agriculture sector can make the largest contribution - Sitra](#)

¹⁰ "Global Biodiversity Framework Target 7", Convention on Biological Diversity, <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/7>; "Global Biodiversity Framework Target 16", Convention on Biological Diversity, <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/16>

¹¹ United Nations Environment Program ([Visual Feature | Beat Plastic Pollution \(unep.org\)](#))

¹² "Reducing Australia's food waste" Waste and Recycling – Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, published July 2023, <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protection/waste/food-waste#:~:text=Australia%20uses%20around%202%2C600%20gigalitres,than%20the%20state%20of%20Victoria>

Proposed Australian target

[Expand/grow/maximise/increase] the circularity of Australia's economy by 2030, to reduce the impact of pollution and habitat destruction.

Discussion questions

The Australian Government is developing a new national Circular Economy Framework which will identify priority activities to improve the circularity of our economy. We welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What do you think of this target?
 - a. Does this target appropriately apply GBF targets 7 and 16 to the Australian context? If not, what needs to be included or removed from this target to improve the national focus?
2. What additional action needs to occur for Australia to reach this target?
 - a. Any barriers to overcome or opportunities to harness?
 - b. How could the enablers of change (environmental data; mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into decision-making; and equitable participation in nature related decisions) contribute to this target?
3. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to the target, if so, what contributions are you making and which enablers are you using?

Priority Area 4: Minimising the impact of climate change on nature

GBF target 8:

Minimise the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimising negative and fostering positive impact of climate action on biodiversity.

Australian context

In November 2023, [Australian environment ministers agreed](#) to develop targets that prioritise national action around minimising the impact of climate change on nature.

The 2021 State of the Environment report recognises climate change as a direct and compounding threat to biodiversity. The risk is present in changing fire regimes, extreme weather events and sustained changes to temperature regimes and rainfall patterns. The changing climate is affecting species and ecosystems in many ways, such as driving shifts in species distribution and behaviour,

altering the composition and functioning of ecological communities, and exacerbating the impacts of other threats.^{13,14}

Australia is participating in global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to minimise the impact of climate change on nature and human health and wellbeing. For example, the Australian Government has committed to net zero emissions by 2050. Both adaptation and mitigation are essential to reducing the expected impacts of climate change. The proposed target reflects the need to complement the significant work underway to mitigate climate change, with a strong focus on adaptation.

Delivery against the other proposed national targets also aims to build the resilience of species and ecosystems, or its capacity to adapt, by conserving more land and sea, building connectivity through restoration, and managing the threats of invasive species and plastic pollution.

For some ecosystems and species these actions will not be enough to address the impact of climate change. Before ecosystems and species reach limits in their capacity to ‘naturally adapt’, it will be necessary to consider other interventions to enhance resilience, improve adaptive capacity to climate change, or both.^{15,16,17}

The proposed domestic target focuses on increased consideration of adaptation in all relevant decision-making to further boost the resilience of biodiversity to the impacts of climate change. This should include consideration of whether an adaptation action will have a negative environmental impact and what other options are available, such as nature-based solutions. Actions taken to achieve this target should incorporate nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions can also be beneficial at helping reduce the risk of disasters *and* reducing emissions.

¹³ Cresswell ID, Janke T & Johnston EL (2021). Australia state of the environment 2021: overview, independent report to the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. DOI: 10.26194/f1rh-7r05

¹⁴ Prober SM, Raisbeck-Brown N, Porter NB, Williams KJ, Leviston Z, Dickson F. Recent climate-driven ecological change across a continent as perceived through local ecological knowledge. PLoS One. 2019 Nov 22;14(11):e0224625. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0224625. PMID: 31756177; PMCID: PMC6874335.

¹⁵ Prober, S., Doerr, V, A. J. Broadhurst, L. M., Williams, K. J. and Dickson, F. (2018). Shifting the conservation paradigm: a synthesis of options for renovating nature under climate change *Ecological Monographs* **89**(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/ecm.1333>

¹⁶ IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, M. Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3–33, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.001.

¹⁷ Williams R, Dunlop M, Carwardine J, Nicol S, Gooding K, Erhart D (2021) Climate-ready biodiversity conservation: A methodology to help local government in Queensland adapt biodiversity management in the face of climate change.

Proposed Australian target

Embed climate change adaptation into decision-making by 2030, to support increased resilience of biodiversity.

Discussion questions

1. What do you think of this target?
 - a. Does this target appropriately apply GBF target 8 in the Australian context? If not, what needs to be included or removed from this target to improve the national focus?
2. What are key considerations for embedding climate adaptation into decision-making? Noting this is related to one of the enablers of change (mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into decision-making).
3. What challenges do you foresee in integrating climate change and biodiversity policies, and how might we best overcome these?
4. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to the target, if so, what contributions are you making and which enablers are you using?

Priority Area 5: Protect and conserve 30% of Australia's land and 30% of Australia's oceans by 2030

GBF target 3:

Ensure that by 2030, at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognising indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognising and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.

Australian context

In October 2022, [Australia's environment ministers committed](#) (ahead of COP15) to work collectively to protect and conserve 30% of Australia's landmass and 30% of Australia's marine areas by 2030 ('30 by 30'). This set the domestic target for this element of the GBF.

Implementation of this target is underway. Currently, 48% of marine areas and 22% of land areas are protected in Australia. An additional 8% of land (equivalent to 60 million hectares) needs to be protected or conserved to meet our 2030 target.¹⁸

In June 2023, [environment ministers agreed](#) to develop a National Roadmap by 2024 to achieve 30 by 30 on land. The National Roadmap will be a unified plan on how all sectors can work together to achieve the target. The roadmap is expected to:

- Explain the role of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in reaching the 30 by 30 target
- Identify conservation priorities for the purposes of 30 by 30
- Raise awareness of programs that support progress towards 30 by 30
- Identify progress measures towards the 2030 target

Environment ministers also agreed to develop a new national framework to recognise OECMs to complement the growth in protected areas. Development of the framework is underway. Find details about the consultation process [here](#).

The Australian Government will focus on improving the effectiveness of its marine protected estate. Opportunities being explored include:

- enhanced marine protection through the development of Australia's [Sustainable Ocean Plan](#),
- the 10-year management plan reviews of the [South-east Marine Parks network](#) and Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve, and
- the development of a new management plan for [Indian Ocean Territories Marine Parks](#).

Australian target

Protect and conserve 30% of Australia's land and 30% of Australia's oceans by 2030.

Discussion questions

There is significant ongoing work towards this target, including upcoming public consultation on the National Roadmap and OECM Framework in the coming months. To specifically inform work in the context of the broader strategy, we welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What factors should inform where we focus our efforts to achieve the 30% target on land?
2. What should be the priorities in understanding the effectiveness of our marine protected estate and strengthening protection of our oceans?
3. What do you consider the barriers and opportunities to reaching the 30 by 30 target?

¹⁸ Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water, Collaborative Australian Protected Areas Database (CAPAD), www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/land/nrs/science/capad; The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, 'World Environment Day: Macquarie Island Marine Park to triple in size', [World Environment Day: Macquarie Island Marine Park to triple in size | Ministers \(dcceew.gov.au\)](#).

Note since CAPAD 2022 data was collected in June 2022, 4 additional Indigenous Protected Areas have been dedicated, increasing Australia's level of protection to 22.4% (or approximately 172.4 million hectares).

4. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to the target, if so, what contributions are you making and which enablers are you using?

Priority Area 6: Work towards zero new extinctions

GBF target 4:

Ensure urgent management actions to halt human-induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimise human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.

Australian context

In October 2022, [Australia's environment ministers agreed](#) to accelerate work towards achieving zero new extinctions by 2030. The Australian Government's existing Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032 includes an objective to prevent new extinctions.

Working collaboratively towards zero new extinctions sets the domestic target for this element of the GBF. It recognises the importance of halting extinctions and reducing the extinction risk of threatened species through actions that assist their recovery.

This target is ambitious, but achievable, if we work together with governments, researchers and other partners to monitor and support threatened species.

Australian target

Work towards zero new extinctions.

Discussion questions

There is significant ongoing work towards this target. To specifically inform work in the context of the broader strategy, we welcome your feedback on the following:

1. Where should efforts be focused to help meet this target?
2. What do you think will increase community support for actions to prevent species extinctions?
3. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to the target, if so, what contributions are you making and which enablers are you using?

Enablers

In November 2023, Australia's environment ministers agreed that, alongside priority areas, there are 3 enablers essential in achieving any national targets. These enablers will be implemented to support all priority targets.

Enabler 1: Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into government and business decision-making, including in financing, policies, regulations and planning processes

The decline of Australia's biodiversity has drivers including climate change, land and sea use change, invasive species, pollution and unsustainable use of nature resources. These direct drivers result from underlying indirect drivers related to our socio-economic values and behaviours¹⁹. Overall, nature remains undervalued and often neglected in financial and business decision-making²⁰.

To address the decline in biodiversity, Australia must also address these indirect drivers. Nature needs to be elevated as a key consideration when making decisions at all levels. Businesses, financial institutions and governments will need to better understand nature's contributions to their interests as well as to the broader economy and wellbeing; and consider this when taking any action. This enabler is focused on achieving this.

Discussion questions

We welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What are the current barriers, and potential solutions, to mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into decision-making across government, financial institutions and business?
 - a. What are the solutions and how can these be implemented across Australia's priority areas?
2. What would encourage you (or your organisation) to increase your investment in nature?

Enabler 2: Ensuring environmental data and information is widely accessible and supports planning

Data and information are critical for the effective protection of Australia's biodiversity and restoration of degraded ecosystems. Improved data sharing will help identify areas of particular importance for biodiversity conservation, while also fostering greater collaboration between

¹⁹ United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (Montreal: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022), Section A.2, page 4.

²⁰ Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water, Financing Solutions for Nature, <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/environmental-markets/financing-solutions-for-nature>

governments, industries and communities. Data and information are also needed to track and report progress under the updated strategy at the overall level as well as at the individual target level. Data will underpin implementation efforts.

The establishment of Environmental Information Australia (EIA), which will develop the National Environmental Standard for Data and Information (as part of the Nature Positive Law reforms), and the Biodiversity Data Repository are expected to be game changers in this field. They will enable data and information of an appropriate form, quality and coverage to be made available and usable for government, business and the public; and support biodiversity protection and ecosystem restoration being considered and addressed in decision-making.

Discussion questions

We welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What are the current barriers to ensuring environmental data and information is widely accessible, and supports biodiversity protection planning?
2. To effectively assess, disclose, and reduce biodiversity risks, what specific data do businesses need from regulators to overcome data limitations?
3. What are the solutions and how can these be implemented across Australia's priority areas?
4. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to this driver, if so, what contributions are you making?

Enabler 3: Ensuring equitable representation and participation in decisions relating to nature, particularly for First Nations peoples

Caring for nature is the shared responsibility of all Australians. Ensuring the full and equal participation, engagement and leadership of groups and individuals across Australia is critical to delivering action that can halt and reverse biodiversity decline. Including diverse perspectives and voices across age, gender, location, ethnicity and other backgrounds in decision-making ensures policy actions are effective at local, regional, national and global scales.

The Australian Government recognises First Nations peoples' enduring management, custodianship, and cultural and spiritual connection to Country. First Nations people have managed Australian ecosystems for tens of thousands of years, and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge is vital to restore biodiversity. Implementation of the updated strategy will work with First Nations communities and organisations to embed respect for, and protection of, Indigenous cultural and intellectual property.

Implementation of the updated strategy will integrate equitable and shared decision-making and support First Nations people to be actively involved in, participate in and lead conservation efforts. The strategy will reflect the principles of priority reform area 1 under Australia's National Agreement on Closing the Gap, *Formal partnerships and shared decision-making*. The Australian Government recognises that First Nations peoples have developed shared decision-making structures across the

country. Actions under this driver of change will not replace these arrangements but build on their successes and expand and strengthen decision-making arrangements.

Discussion questions

We welcome your feedback on the following:

1. What are the barriers for ensuring all Australians have equal representation and participation in discussions and decisions relating to nature?
2. What are the solutions to these barriers and how can these be implemented across Australia's priority areas?
3. What are the barriers for First Nations people to be actively involved in, participate and lead conservation efforts?
4. Are you (or your organisation) taking action to contribute to this driver, if so, what contributions are you making?

Looking ahead: Implementation

Once Australia's targets have been set, efforts will shift to delivering work to achieve them by 2030. This includes further work on policy positions, action plans, progress measures, indicators and monitoring strategies as required to support and track implementation.

The Australian Government will continue to work with state, territory and local governments, First Nations peoples, community groups and private sector stakeholders to develop effective implementation for targets agreed under the updated strategy. The level of implementation work will vary by target. Action in some target areas is already well underway, while other areas will require additional planning, coordination and activity.

Australia will need to establish indicators and report on progress under the monitoring framework agreed as part of the GBF²¹. Over time, priorities will be reassessed and reset, as required, based on progress to reach the longer-term outcome-oriented goal of living in harmony with nature by 2050. The Government's establishment of Environment Information Australia is a significant first step towards better, more transparent data for decision-making and to track whether we are meeting our commitments.

²¹ United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (Montreal: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 2022), Decision 15/5.

Attachment A

All governments are already delivering on the priority areas and enablers of change. This attachment includes a selection of current Australian Government initiatives.

Australian Government Initiatives	
Priority Area / Enabler of Change	Australian Government Actions
Effective restoration of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing the Nature Repair Market. Establishing Environment Information Australia. Passing the <i>Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Act 2023</i>. The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder's support for river health in the Murray-Darling Basin.
Tackling the impact of invasive species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threatened Species Action Plan 2022-2032. Saving Native Species Program and Natural Heritage Trust. Threat abatement plans, recovery plans and conservation advices under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>. National Environmental Science Program.
Building a circular economy and reducing the impact of plastics on nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a National Circular Economy Framework in 2024. Strengthening the National Waste Policy Action Plan. Developing a national packaging regulation under Commonwealth law, including mandatory packaging design standards and minimum recycled content thresholds. Leading in negotiating an ambitious legally binding global instrument to address plastic pollution. Investing in systems to monitor and assess the impacts of plastic pollution on the environment.
Minimising the impact of climate change on nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 Annual Climate Statement, including a commitment to articulate a plan for achieving Net Zero by 2050. Developing a National Adaptation Plan. The National Climate Risk Assessment. National Environmental Science Program. Saving Native Species Program and Natural Heritage Trust.
Protect and conserve 30% of Australia's land and 30% of Australia's oceans by 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 by 30 National Roadmap by 2024. Developing a new national framework to recognise OECMs. Developing Australia's Sustainable Ocean Plan. South-east Marine Parks network and Heard Island and McDonald Islands Marine Reserve -10-year management plan reviews. Indian Ocean Territories Marine Parks- development of a new management plan.

Work towards zero new extinctions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened Species Action Plan 2022- 2032. • Published guidance on identifying species at high risk of imminent extinction. • Saving Native Species Program and Natural Heritage Trust.
Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into government and business decision-making, including in financing, policies, regulations and planning processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia's Nature Positive Plan to reform Australia's environmental laws to better protect, restore and manage our unique environment. • The Australian Sustainable Finance Strategy is a framework for reducing barriers to investment into sustainable activities, as part of Australia's pathway to net zero. • Continued work on Environmental-Economic Accounting to capture and organise environmental information in a way that improves our understanding of our natural systems' contribution to economic and human wellbeing and the impact that our economy has on our natural assets. • The Nature Repair Market - a voluntary, but legislated market enabling private finance to repair and protect the environment and biodiversity. • The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNDF) framework allows business and financial institutions to assess, disclose and reduce biodiversity-related risks and negative impacts. • Establishing the Nature Finance Council to advise the Australian Government on increasing private sector financial flows to benefit nature. • Hosting the first Global Nature Positive Summit in October 2024. • Establishing Environment Information Australia and Environment Protection Australia to improve the availability of data and information to governments, businesses and the public and allow for better and faster decision making for the protection of the environment.
Ensuring environmental data and information is widely accessible and supports planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Environmental Information Australia. • Developing National Environmental Standards for Data and Information. • Developing the Biodiversity Data Repository.
Ensuring equitable representation and participation in decisions relating to nature, particularly for First Nations peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Indigenous Protected Areas and the Indigenous Rangers Program. • Developing the National Environmental Standards for Indigenous Engagement under the EPBC Act reform.