

Australian Conservation Foundation Strategic Plan 2026-2030



AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION

The Australian Conservation Foundation acknowledges that the First Nations Peoples of Australia hold unique knowledge and rights inherited from their ancestors and Country and have cared for this country since time immemorial. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded, and that colonisation was unjust, often violent and continues to adversely impact on First Nations Peoples today.

As Australia's national environment organisation, we understand we have a responsibility to help right this historical wrong. We pay our respect to the First Nations Peoples of Australia, past, present and future. We respect their leadership in caring for Country and support their rights to continue to do so. We support their authority to speak for Country, right to self-determination and recognise that rightful recognition of and genuine reconciliation with First Nations Peoples is fundamental to protecting nature in Australia.

We are ready to meet this moment

Challenging times require bold vision. And with six decades of protecting nature behind us – and momentum for real, tangible change, powered by everyday Australians who care – we are building a movement that can meet this moment.

We are entering a decade of profound change. The climate and extinction crises are accelerating, while cost-of-living pressures, economic insecurity and global instability are reshaping politics and public life. Trust in institutions is declining, many people feel disconnected from decision-making, and forces that rely on fear, division and misinformation are gaining ground.

At the same time, Australians yearn for something better. So many of us understand that there is a better way. We want a future that is safer, fairer and more hopeful, one where people and nature can thrive together. That is our vision for the rest of the 2020s. A better way. A better life. A better Australia.

This future won't be delivered with half-measures or tinkering around the edges. Our goals are ambitious, and purposefully so. Our aim is to stop the harm and change the system.

Ending coal and gas expansion, stopping forest destruction and transforming our broken food system will require deep change across politics, business and society. We need to change the rules, the story, the systems that shape Australia's future, while building the critical people power needed to make this change unstoppable.

That is ACF's role. ACF 'protects nature and advocates for all living things to live in harmony on the planet that sustains us', as our Constitution reminds us. We connect people who care, drawn together with shared values, to a joyful and positive vision of the future and the belief that collective action can change what is politically possible. It's been done before, we can do it again.

Through local campaigns, national moments and movement-building at scale, we will create the pressure needed to shift decisions, win lasting change and build a good life for all. This is the scale of change the moment demands. And it is the future we are determined to help build.

The most exciting part this strategy is rallying people from all walks of life to stand up for nature and powerfully challenge those who threaten it. Our mission is to build Australia's biggest ever people-powered movement for nature, climate and a good life for all.

With more than a million supporters behind us, our movement is already strong. And we're going to get even stronger.

The values that have made ACF Australia's leading national environment group haven't changed. We remain grassroots, independent and bold. So, who are the ACF in the next chapter of our journey? And what is it that we do?

Simply:

we turn love for nature and fury about the climate crisis into pressure decision-makers cannot ignore, to create a fairer, safer and more hopeful world and a good life for all. This strategy is for nature, for our future and for all of us.



Ros Harvey,
ACF President
and Chair



Adam Bandt,
ACF CEO



Our vision

We believe that people power can overcome big corporate greed and lead to an Australia where people and nature thrive.

An Australia where:





Our theory of change

The forces shaping our future right now are not on the side of people or nature. A handful of powerful corporations currently hold too much influence in the halls of power.

Decades of political influence has allowed – even encouraged – ‘Big’ powers – like Big Gas, Big Coal, Big Food – to accelerate climate change and decimate the nature we love.

But our future is not yet written. We can change the story. We can change the system. And we’re building a movement to do just that. Because the power of the people is always greater than the people in power.

Alongside everyday Australians who care about a better future, we will:



Take on vested interests

- expose, disrupt and stop governments and corporations that harm nature and our way of life.



Create solutions

- bringing to life those solutions that make people’s lives better and help build a good life for all.



Change the story

- sharing our vision in a way that inspires, connects and makes hope and joy a springboard for action and our path to a better future.



Grow the movement

- bringing together Australians from all backgrounds and cultures to build a movement powerful enough that governments and corporations cannot ignore.



Our goals

By 2030, we have:

-  **Grown a powerful, diverse and hopeful movement,** and unstoppable momentum to achieve our vision
-  **Stopped new coal and gas mines** and coal and gas exports are phasing out, so people and nature can have a good life
-  **Ended native forest logging and degradation. Ended deforestation** so the way we grow our food restores nature.

Each of these goals is connected, and therefore any strategy chosen to deliver one goal must always help us deliver the other goals as well.

Climate pollution is accelerating nature devastation, while deforestation, logging and ecosystem collapse weaken nature’s incredible ability to store carbon, protect biodiversity and support healthy communities.

Australians are already feeling the consequences of decades of successful lobbying from the fossil fuel industry. Climate-fuelled disasters are getting worse and more frequent and impact our health, homes, livelihoods, food systems and the places we love. When nature suffers, people suffer.

We cannot protect and restore nature while expanding coal and gas. Nor can we build the future people and nature need, unless polluters are held accountable for the damage they cause.

By connecting climate and nature, we can tell a bigger and more hopeful story about Australia’s future: clean energy that works for people and nature, thriving forests and landscapes, stronger communities, and an economy that makes people’s lives better.

None of this will happen fast enough without people power. By growing a powerful movement, we can build the momentum needed to win lasting change and create the future we deserve.



GOAL 1: We have grown a powerful, diverse and hopeful movement, and unstoppable momentum to achieve our vision.

Big corporations are cooking the planet while ripping off Australians. The current government doesn't feel enough political pressure to do anything about it.

From fracking in the north to bulldozing forests for corporate profit, powerful vested interests are destroying the places Australians love, and our government is letting them.

ACF is building a people powered movement strong enough to halt the corporate and political forces destroying Australia's climate and wreaking havoc on nature and people's lives. ACF Community Groups are connecting national issues to their local community – showing that people everywhere are ready to act for nature.

What gives us power — and hope — is showing that Australians from all walks of life care deeply about these issues and are ready to act. We are building a movement as diverse, determined and united as the communities we serve: a place where people come together to take action and demand a good life for all. We work with First Nations communities to protect Country, and as we support our movement to connect with nature, we are inspired by the world's oldest continuous culture. In turbulent times, we provide a pathway to take action that makes people feel hope and optimism, while building power.

Lasting change depends on people power being visible and undeniable, so we must show the strength, scale and optimism of a community that won't back down until people and nature are protected and everyone has what they need to live a good life.

Strategies	Our impact by 2030
Define the stories that build power • Create a compelling narrative that inspires participation and sustains pressure for change. • Align our campaigns behind a shared story and vision. • Champion a good life for all: practical solutions that are good for people, nature and climate. • Connect our vision to the issues that matter most to Australians.	Media mentions: 60,000 Share of voice with peers: 35% Share of voice with opponents: 30% Messengers / Ambassadors: 10 new
Ensure resilient and deep people power by investing in leadership and infrastructure • Build the relationships, leadership and infrastructure needed to sustain long-term people power. • Invest in leadership development, group autonomy, digital organising tools and strong local and national alliances. • Pilot scalable projects, strengthen our ability to work across diverse communities, and build movement solidarity through broader civil society partnerships.	Grow our leaders by +200 (baseline 256) Grow our Instigators by +5,000 (baseline 2078) 1-3 Lighthouse projects established and demonstrating scalable wins <i>These metrics are being reviewed and will be updated in November 2026.'</i>
Grow and deploy people power through visible mass mobilisation and create compelling pathways for new supporters. • Mobilise people at scale to build momentum and pressure for change. • Grow membership and deepen participation across the movement. • Create accessible pathways for people to take action and build their power. • Unite local, national and online organising into visible demonstrations of people power.	New people taking 2 or more actions in 6 months: 45% ACF will measure progress (growth and momentum) in number and scale of events in ACF's agreed target electorates - peaking in the election year and then maintaining momentum through to 2030 • 2027: 2-3 events with at least 70 people in each target electorate • 2028: 3+ events with at least 120 people in each target electorate • 2029: 2 events with at least 80 people in each target electorate • 2030: 3 events with at least 100 people in each target electorate Double membership from 5,000 to 10,000 <i>These metrics are being reviewed and will be updated in November 2026.'</i>



GOAL 2: By 2030, we have stopped new coal and gas mines, and coal and gas exports are phasing out, so people and nature can have a good life.

Australia's biggest climate impact is its export of coal and gas. We are one of the top three global exporters of climate pollution. When burned overseas, these exports result in 1.1 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year, almost three times Australia's domestic emissions.

Federal Governments continue to approve gas and coal projects and support the industry through legislation, regulation and subsidies.

Regardless of where Australia's gas exports are burnt, they contribute to global warming, with impacts on nature, communities, and industries. Around half of Australia's Global Domestic Product comes from sectors that are highly dependent on nature.

To protect Australia and its people, Australia must phase out coal and gas exports and adopt an economic plan that ensures prosperity and jobs. ACF must win the narrative battle that coal and gas are causing harm to people and nature and that gas is a dangerous fossil fuel.

As AUKUS continues to drive interest in nuclear, ACF will continue its critical work on uranium, nuclear power and nuclear waste, seeing existing work through to conclusion and winning the argument that nuclear is not right for Australia, now or ever. We do this noting that our resources are much more limited for nuclear than for other climate and nature work, and that we will be focussed when deciding on activities we will undertake.

Strategies	Our impact by 2030
Stop coal and gas projects that harm people and nature • Stop the harmful Beetaloo, Browse and Winchester projects, which will increase climate pollution and nature destruction if they proceed • Convince decision makers that approving or financing these projects is harmful. • Expose the threats coal and gas pose to people, water and nature. • Build visible opposition in collaboration with First Nations and affected communities. • Shift public opinion so coal and gas become known as harmful to people and nature.	Burrup Hub/Browse, Beetaloo and Winchester Coal are rejected.
Show that coal and gas harm people and nature • Change the story: make it clear that coal and gas harm people, nature and our way of life. • Show how coal and gas are driving climate disasters and rising living costs. • Mobilise communities during key moments to build pressure for action. • Have coal and gas understood as the next tobacco and asbestos.	Critical mass in key constituencies understand that coal and gas cause harm, and the 2028 federal election delivers a Parliament more supportive of no new coal and gas.
Pressure the federal government to deliver a fossil fuel phase out • Increase pressure for a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels. • Reduce political and corporate support for fossil fuel expansion. • Champion industry principles for a prosperous, jobs-rich future beyond fossil fuels. • Build broad support for a thriving economy that works for people and nature.	The federal government implements key elements of a fossil fuel phase out. Unions, civil society and the private sector are calling for no new coal and gas projects, and backing ACF's Industry Principles.
Support renewables that are good for nature. Clean up old uranium mines and stop new ones to help deliver a nuclear free Australia • Contribute to building public support for renewables that work for people and nature. • Protect Australia's nuclear-free future. • Make the case for renewables over risky and expensive nuclear power. • Close the 'mining chapter' of Kakadu, ensuring tenure changes and full rehabilitation costs are met by corporations.	We have stopped new uranium mines. We have shown that nuclear power is a 'false solution' and have stopped its expansion. We have supported stakeholders and communities impacted by nuclear waste and ensured nuclear safety risks are widely understood.

GOAL 3A: We have ended native forest logging and degradation.

Australia’s native forests are among the most important ecosystems on Earth. They are vital for biodiversity, climate stability, water security, cultural heritage and the wellbeing of communities. Yet native forest logging and degradation continue through landclearing and biological means like buffel grass - threatening species, weakening ecosystems and undermining one of Australia’s most powerful natural climate solutions.

This is a critical moment. National nature laws, climate commitments and emerging policy debates will shape the future of Australia’s forests for decades to come. At the same time, many in the conservation movement have identified a need for stronger national leadership to help end native forest destruction.

ACF is stepping back into this work after a period focused on other priorities. Guided by a set of Board-endorsed principles, we are consulting with partners across the movement, recruiting dedicated campaign capacity and determining where we can make the greatest contribution as part of a collaborative strategy development process.

As this work develops, ACF will refine the strategies, measures of success and annual plans needed to achieve this goal.

There is still much work to do to find ACF’s most powerful place and position in ending native forest logging. We will do the work and then update this Strategy with our pathway to win by 2030.

GOAL 3B: We have ended deforestation and the way we grow our food restores nature.

Australia is one of the world’s most biodiverse countries, yet we lead the developed world in mammal extinctions and land degradation, driven largely by the way we produce food. Our food system is the biggest cause of habitat destruction and a major driver of climate change, wiping out carbon sinks and pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. But agriculture covers more than half the continent, so it’s also one of our biggest opportunities to restore nature.

Australia is the only wealthy nation to make the list of global deforestation hotspots - and beef production is the leading cause. In fact, more forest is lost in Queensland every year than Indonesia loses to palm oil.

Most farmers care for their land, but a minority of producers, pushed by powerful buyers, are driving destruction. Behind them sits a system of perverse incentives: supermarkets, fast food chains, banks and governments prioritising volume and short-term profit over the ecological foundations they rely on.

Despite these shocking statistics, Australians don’t realise food is a leading driver of nature destruction. However, food is culture, identity and connection, which makes it a powerful lever for change. A broader network of voices, from chefs to culture leaders, can help build the public pressure needed to move governments and corporations.

If major retailers, banks and governments act, ending deforestation and supporting farmers to keep nature healthy, we can stop the bulldozers and truly put nature on the path to recovery.

Strategies	Our impact by 2030
Pressure food companies and supermarkets to implement deforestation free policies and incentivise nature-positive farming. • Pressure major beef buyers to adopt and implement deforestation-free commitments. Target industry laggards to drive sector-wide action to end deforestation by 2030. • Support farmers to keep trees in the ground and adopt nature-positive practices. • Hold companies accountable for their commitments and strengthen standards across the sector. • Drive industry-wide momentum to eliminate deforestation from food supply chains.	Australia’s major supermarkets and fast-food outlets have eliminated deforestation from their supply chains and are incentivising nature and climate friendly farming.
Pressure banks to commit to deforestation free beef and incentivise nature and farming. • Expose links between bank lending and forest destruction. • Mobilise investors, customers and supporters to drive change in the banking sector. • Build support for stronger lending standards that protect nature. • Secure deforestation-free commitments and nature-positive finance policies from major banks. • Use the finance sector to prevent deforestation before it happens.	Australia’s largest banks have commitments in place to not lend to agricultural properties linked to deforestation and are incentivising nature and climate friendly farming.
Federal government adopts a whole of government approach across environment, climate, food and agriculture to stop deforestation and support nature positive farming. • Ensure strong implementation and enforcement of Australia’s environment laws to reduce deforestation. • Expose illegal land clearing and hold governments and corporations accountable. • Align forest protection with Australia’s climate goals and commitments. • Make ending deforestation a central objective of national food and agriculture policy. • Build support for farming systems that protect and restore nature. • Work across the food and farming sector to drive lasting policy change.	The Federal government is halting deforestation and has adopted policies to accelerate farming that support nature and climate outcomes. The federal government takes a whole-of-government approach to deforestation – one that integrates environment, climate, and agriculture policy into a coherent and enforceable framework that supports recovery rather than destruction.
Create public demand to fix the food system • Build public understanding of the impacts of food production on nature and climate. • Broaden our people power on food, using new audiences to ACF’s mission. • Expose the role of Australia’s food system in driving deforestation and nature loss. • Grow support for food systems that restore nature and strengthen communities.	The Australian public understands that the way we currently grow food is driving deforestation, biodiversity loss and climate impacts, and that the system must change. People believe Australia can produce food in ways that restore nature, strengthen communities and improve long-term food security.



The story we need to win

Australia can be a strong and prosperous nation where nature thrives and everyone has all they need to live a good life. But getting there requires more than policy change, it requires changing what people believe is possible, necessary and fair.

For too long, powerful interests have framed nature destruction and climate pollution as the unavoidable price of prosperity. As long as that story is the dominant narrative, harmful industries and governments can continue to spin destruction as acceptable. The result is we don't win fast enough.

By exposing the gap between industry spin and people's lived experience, and clearly naming who benefits from the status quo and who pays, we can build the social and political pressure needed to make business-as-usual untenable.

In its place, we can create a new common sense: that new coal and gas make life less safe and more expensive; that nature is essential to our health, prosperity and security; that forest destruction and deforestation are choices, not necessities; and that people and nature thrive together.

The real divide is not between jobs and nature, or people and climate action. It is between a small number of powerful interests profiting from destruction and the broad public interest in a safer, fairer Australia where people and nature thrive.

We cannot change everyone's mind. To maximise our impact, we will focus on the constituencies and places where we can have the biggest impact, building support for these ideas and demonstrating that when people come together to demand better, they can win lasting change.

The beliefs we must shift to win

Current belief

New belief

Current belief

New belief

Coal and gas might be bad, but we need them.

Coal and gas are harmful to people and nature, as is nuclear.

Coal and gas are driving the climate crisis, making our lives harder/ riskier.

Coal and gas are outdated and costly.

Renewables can power our country and our economy.

The way we grow our food is something I don't think about.

The way food is produced is decimating Australia's land, water and wildlife and hurting farmers too.

Bulldozing bushland is fueling climate change, the links are undeniable. But it can be fixed.

Big corporations are a necessary evil and can't be changed.

Governments and corporations should be held accountable for the impacts of their decisions on people and nature.

Big corporations are misleading us about the harm fossil fuels cause to people and nature.

It is farmers versus nature.

It is farmers AND nature versus a broken system.

It's Big Food, not farmers, who are behind this destruction.

The way we grow food should work for both nature and farmers.

Energy is complicated, change is disruptive, costly and hard.

Renewables are a cheaper and smarter option, why would we do anything else?

Governments must ditch coal and gas and prioritise the roll out of nature-friendly renewables as fast as possible.

Protecting nature is a nice to do, but not a must.

Protecting nature is critical for Australia's economy, a safer climate, our health and future.

People like me can change the food system for the benefit of people and nature.

Individuals are powerless against big players.

People power changes everything. People just like me CAN and DO influence positive change.





Join us and power our plan

This is an ambitious strategy. To deliver it, we need a significant boost in donations. That's where you come in. We don't receive funding from governments or fossil fuel companies. We rely on donations from Aussies all around the country to boldly hold decision-makers to account without fear or favour. Because of people like you, ACF is an independent, non-partisan and fearless people-powered organisation.

Please contact us if you'd like to find out more and help create an Australia where people and nature thrive.

Our values:



Bold

we aim high and act with courage. We're curious, innovative and unafraid to try new things. We learn from failure. We stay committed to big goals and to the scale of change needed.



Fair:

we fight for fair outcomes for people and nature. We work to transform the systems driving the climate and extinction crises. We listen to and work alongside First Nations Peoples who have cared for Country since time immemorial.



Evidence based:

the truth matters. We use evidence and judgement to guide decisions and fight mis and disinformation.



Stronger together:

we work with partners, communities and teams because that's how we have the biggest impact.



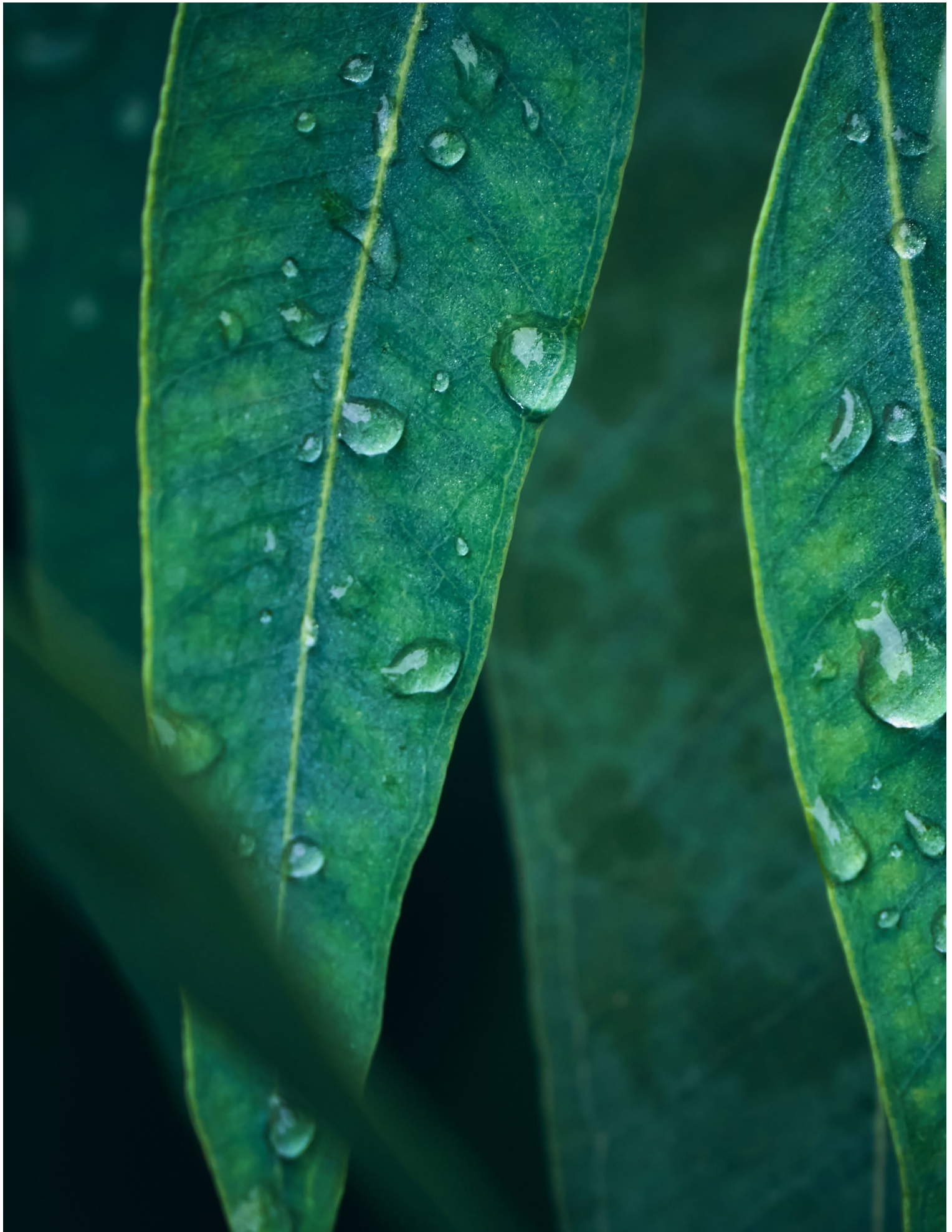
Fun:

we bring joy, hope and fun that connects people with nature and each other, making people feel part of something bigger. We celebrate wins and nurture the relationships that sustain long-term change.



Diversity is strength:

we're inspired by the ecosystems we work to protect. Diversity makes us strong. Ours is a movement where people of all walks of life are welcome and belong, and where many perspectives help us solve big challenges.



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