



AUSTRALIAN
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION

A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR AUSTRALIA'S NATURE & CLIMATE



**Our natural
world is in crisis.**

**Australia's
extraordinary
landscapes,
once teeming
with life, are being
pillaged by unchecked
climate pollution &
habitat destruction.**



Photo: Tom Kinsman

Escalating climate change and the relentless plundering of our environment have pushed our iconic wildlife, pristine beaches, and ancient bushlands and wetlands to the precipice of oblivion. The time for leaders to take decisive action is now.

As we head into 2025, the planet stands at a critical turning point. Every fraction of a degree of warming avoided now will be measured in lives and livelihoods saved. To turn down the heat, we must turn off coal and gas and upgrade to power from sustainable sun and wind. We must also be bolder, go faster and aim higher with our national emissions reduction targets.

The climate and nature crises are right here, right now. And it will only get worse if we don't make the right choices today. Our children deserve a safer future. The most powerful thing Australians can do to avoid the worst is to vote for politicians with a plan to cut pollution, restore nature and transition Australia to renewables this decade.

We, the Australian Conservation Foundation are raising the alarm. Our beautiful country and all the species and creatures who inhabit it are precariously balanced upon a knife's edge. Our vision is one shared by all Australians: healthy, thriving ecosystems and a safer future for our children. It's up to our leaders to take decisive action to leave a better legacy for generations to come.

This is our national agenda: a clear and achievable plan for all candidates to rally behind, an action plan to defend and protect all that we love about this beautiful country we live in. We call on our next leaders to rise to the challenge to co-create a healthier, thriving and prosperous Australia for all of us, and many generations to come. We can and must turn this situation around: because nature needs us, now!

We call on all politicians & parties to commit to:

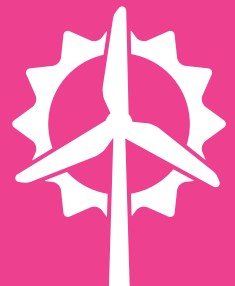
Save nature

Stop bulldozing the bush



Champion renewables & cut pollution

Let's power everything we can with clean, cheap energy from wind & sun



Reject nuclear

Ensure Australia's future is renewable, not radioactive



Stop the climate wreckers

No more green lights for big coal and gas polluters



Save nature

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1. Deliver strong new nature laws to protect Australia's unique wildlife and the places we love

Australia's nature laws have not been updated for over 20 years. And they're failing. Nature is in crisis and our current laws are powerless to stop that. The next parliament must work to restore land, rivers and forests, so the animals, plants, places and communities we love can thrive. This means ending deforestation and restoring habitat.

Australia's strengthened nature laws must reject climate-wrecking projects, increase protections for ecosystems that absorb carbon and support projects that are good for climate and nature. The Australian community should be able to trust that nature laws are doing what they are meant to – protecting nature from harm while providing meaningful opportunities for nature lovers, local communities and project proponents to be involved in transparent decision making.

Here's how:

- Create an overarching legal framework for nature protection with a much stronger role for the Commonwealth government.
- Set strong, legally enforceable National Environmental Standards to get nature laws focused on achieving outcomes for wildlife, ecosystems and heritage places.
- Establish an independent and well-funded National Environment Protection Agency to ensure laws and standards are implemented and enforced.
- Protect threatened species and their habitats with clear legal protections and the prevention of harmful activities like deforestation and forest logging.
- Prevent climate harm by rejecting polluting proposals, increase protection for ecosystems that absorb carbon and ensure laws can respond to climate change impacts.
- Give communities access to information and a genuine voice in decision-making.
- Enshrine the rights of First Nations people under the United Nations: Free, Prior and Informed Consent of all relevant First Nations voices.
- Deliver new national cultural heritage protection laws.



2. Implement a national action plan to end deforestation by 2030

Australia is a land of pristine bushland, stunning forests, rivers and reefs. Shamefully, we are also the only developed nation on the global deforestation list.

Iconic species including the koala, pink cockatoo, quolls and the greater glider are at risk of extinction. To turn this around, the next parliament needs to commit to turning Australia's international climate and nature commitments and goals into reality.

Here's how:

- Deliver a national strategy, with regulation and incentives, in partnership with states and territory governments, to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030 (in line with the Glasgow Declaration).
- Fund and resource Environment Information Australia to establish a national vegetation mapping system that reports destruction of natural ecosystems and provides real-time monitoring.
- Establish a mandatory traceability system to track and trace agricultural products along the supply chain, so retailers can verify that their products are not connected to deforestation and ecosystem destruction.



Photo: Dean Sewell

3. Hold big business accountable for nature destruction

For too long, businesses have damaged nature. The next Australian parliament can fix this. We must reject greenwashing. Businesses need to be held accountable for their impact on nature and be willing and able to transition away from financing the deforestation that is driving extinction.

Globally, governments are putting in place regulations and policies requiring businesses to account for and address their impact on nature. Australia can join them to give Australians confidence that the food, clothes and products they buy are not destroying Australia's forests and wetlands and pushing precious animals and plants towards extinction.

Here's how:

- Introduce mandatory nature disclosure laws that require big business to publicly report their impact on nature.
- Create a well-funded national system to monitor and report on Australia's environmental and economic health.
- Establish nature positive sector plans with targets and actions to halt and reverse nature damage by 2030 and put nature on the path to recovery by 2050.
- Establish a review to recommend reforms to policies, incentives and subsidies that are inconsistent with Australia's commitment to halt and reverse nature damage by 2030.



4. Support farmers to protect and restore nature on their land

Australians need confidence they can make healthy, sustainable food choices without threatening the survival of wildlife. Australia's farmers can be part of the solution, but they need incentives to do the job. We urge politicians to commit to protecting and restoring the biodiversity and ecosystems Australia's food system relies on.

Here's how:

- Make tools for measuring nature on farms readily available to farmers so they can credibly demonstrate their sustainability to consumers, food supply chains and banks.
- Support farmers to transition to sustainable agricultural practices, with funding for research and development, technical advice, education and knowledge sharing.
- Act to ensure vegetation and soil carbon abatement projects have integrity, achieve additional benefits for nature, contribute to good land management and lead to better biodiversity outcomes.
- Reallocate significant funding from the \$2.3 billion annual national agriculture research and development budget to a new First Nations-led agriculture and environment R&D corporation.



5. Boost funding for protecting and recovering nature

Investing in nature is not only the right thing to do, but also essential to meet Australia's international commitments. We need policies that restore nature, support nature-based climate solutions and promote healthy ecosystems.

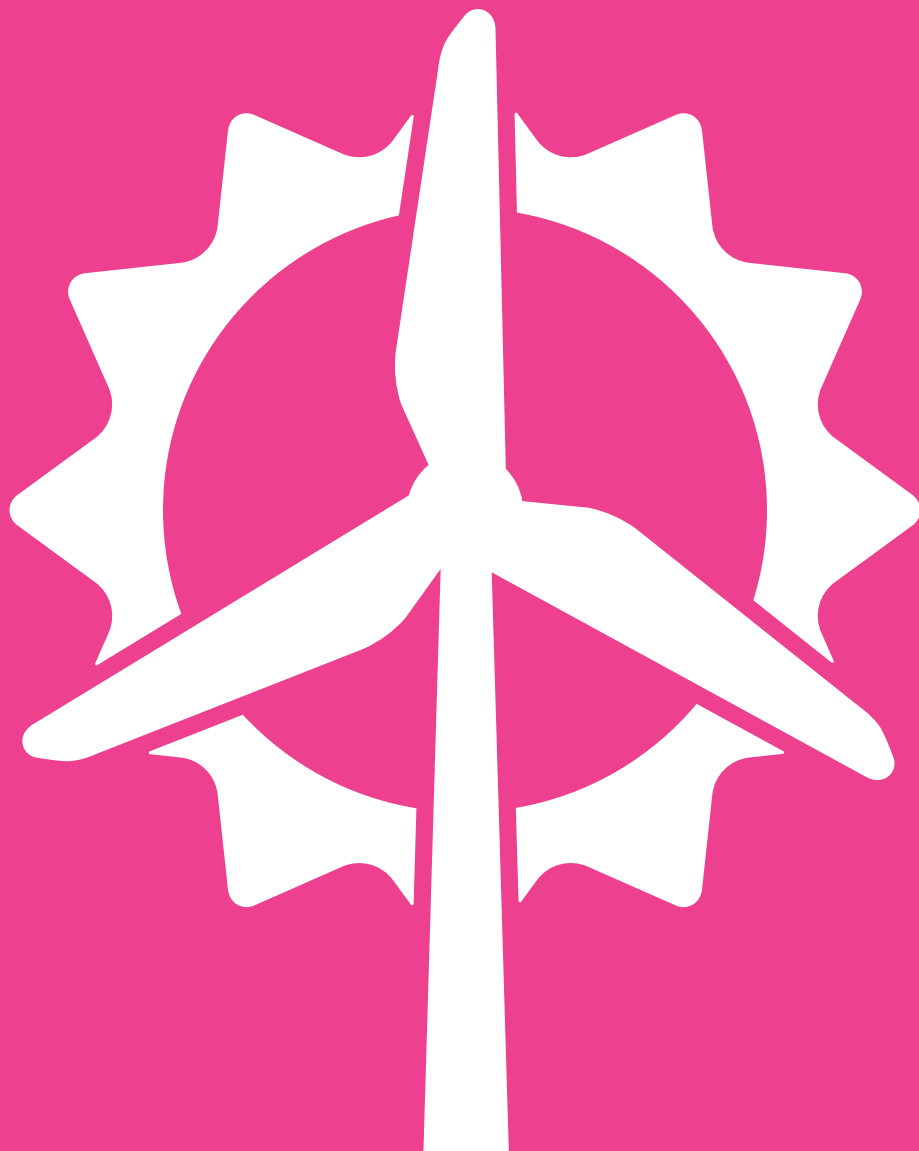
If we get this right, we will end species decline, restore habitats and support wildlife with cleaner air and water. This has economic benefits, too. The environment is chronically underfunded. We currently invest less than a cent of every dollar in biodiversity. Investing in restoration stimulates local economies, attracts tourism, and creates more jobs.

Here's how:

- Create a new fund of at least \$5 billion for the purchase of land of high biodiversity value to create new public, private or Indigenous-protected areas, and help meet Australia's international commitment to ensure 30% of the Earth's land and sea is safe by 2030.
- Invest \$1.9 billion annually from 2025 to 2054 (30 years) to restore 30% of Australia's degraded forests, bushlands and other native vegetation.
- Boost threatened species spending to at least \$1.3 billion annually from 2025 to 2054 to prevent the extinction of Australia's most threatened species and to support their recovery.
- Guarantee long-term funding for the management of Indigenous Protected Areas.

Champion renewables & cut pollution

Let's power everything we can with
clean, cheap energy from wind & sun





1. Build more renewables faster, in the right locations, for the benefit of people and nature

Extreme weather disasters are changing life in Australia forever, but Australia is currently off track in reducing its emissions at the scale and speed the science requires to avert the worst climate harm. Renewables are an essential climate solution and our only viable pathway towards a cleaner, healthier future.

We need to see much greater ambition from our elected representatives to phase out fossil fuels and upgrade to an energy grid powered by renewable wind and solar. Renewable energy, when it's well-sited and managed, is good for people and it's good for nature. But the roll out of renewable energy infrastructure must avoid damaging and ultimately restore important habitats. This can be done. Our future is renewable, powered by energy that's good for people and the places and wildlife they love.

Here's how:

- Accelerate the rollout of renewable energy and increase the Renewable Energy Target to 94% (resulting in 222GW) by 2030.
- Ensure renewable energy projects are built in the right places to avoid damaging important ecosystems.
- Guarantee new renewable energy projects include consultation and participation from First Nations communities and deliver economic benefits to First Nations people (including owner equity) and other local communities.
- Assist communities, especially vulnerable groups, to electrify their homes and save money.



2. Well planned, faster closures of all domestic coal-fired power stations and an orderly phasedown of gas power generation by 2030 and 2035 respectively

The climate crisis is intensifying, and Australian communities are being battered with little time to recover and prepare for the next disaster. Urgent threats demand urgent solutions. The science is clear: we must transition away from fossil fuels this decade.

The era of coal must end, replaced by a clean and prosperous renewables future. Gas, an extremely potent fossil fuel, also needs to be rapidly phased out if we are to keep warming to survivable limits.

The establishment of the Net Zero Economy Authority was a much needed and welcome move to help communities transition away from reliance on fossil fuels and to support traditional coal towns with new jobs and training. As the era of coal ends, it's vital that communities are supported in the transition and can share the benefits of the net zero economy.

Here's how:

- Regulate the orderly phase out of domestic coal fired power by 2030 and fossil gas by 2035.
- Resource regional energy transition plans and net zero hubs, with community input (overseen by the Net Zero Economy Authority) to make sure impacted communities and workers can participate in - and benefit from - the net zero transition.



3. Set an ambitious science-aligned 2035 climate pollution target and action plan consistent with Australia's Paris commitments

In recent years, Australia has been in the spotlight on climate action for all the wrong reasons. New climate targets were announced in 2022, but they still fall short of what's required to protect nature and communities from rising temperatures and extreme weather disasters.

Australia must achieve net zero by 2035. A decade of denial and delay has left us playing catch up on our climate commitments. The next federal government can and must go further to reduce Australia's emissions and reach net zero sooner.

Here's how:

- Legislate a 1.5C degree aligned 2035 emissions reduction target and a revised emissions budget for 2025-2035, in line with Australia's remaining fair share of the global carbon budget.
- Legislate the framework for a whole economy net zero plan, including an obligation that any reforms to the net zero plan represents an enhancement of Australia's level of ambition.



4. Ensure Australia does our part to lift global climate action and ambition

Nowhere is safe from the devastation being wrought by climate change. It is a global problem and requires global solutions. Australia has a role to play, not only to reduce our emissions and fossil fuel exports but to bring nations together to aim higher and go faster on climate action.

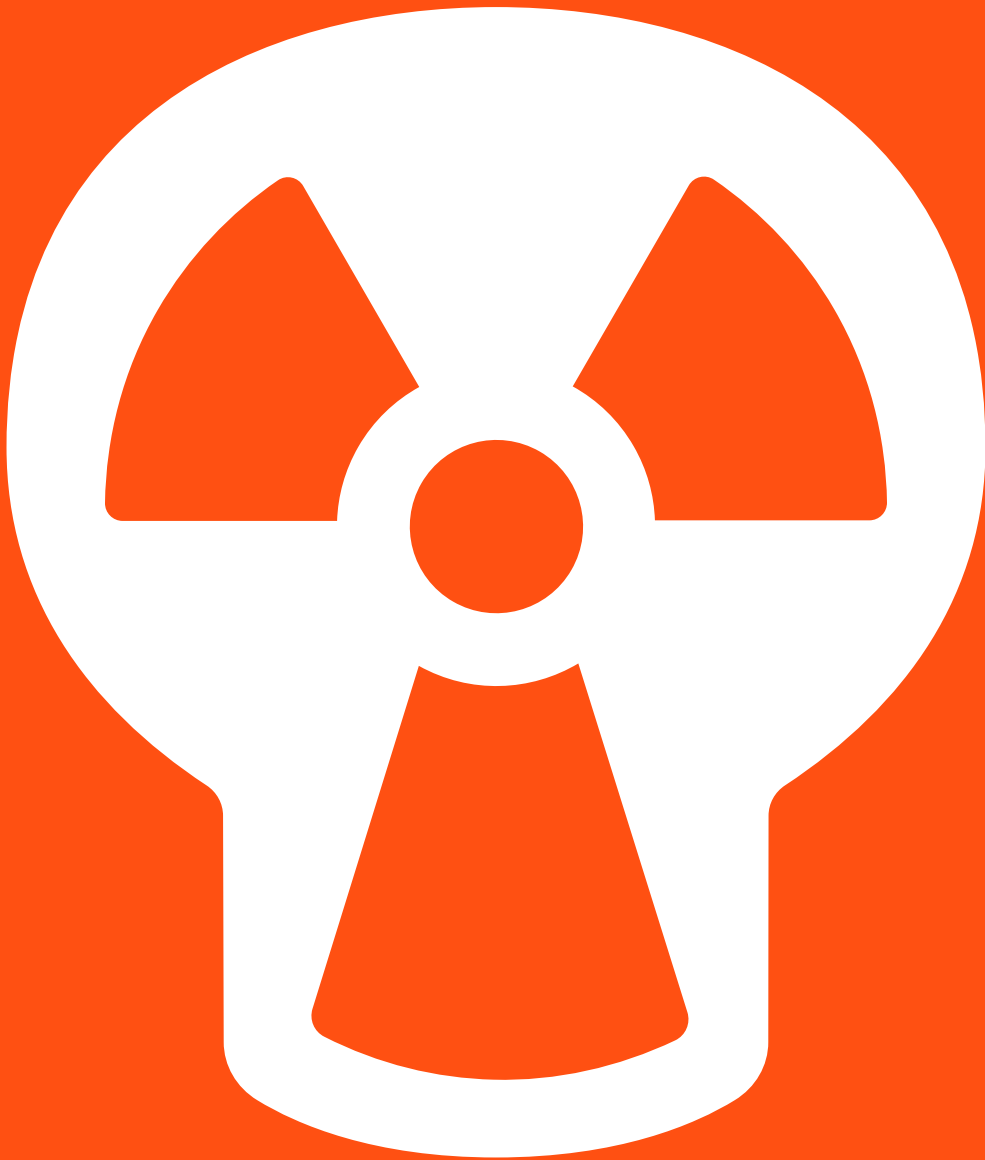
The eyes of the world will be on us, if we host COP31 in 2026, we must harness this moment as a rousing call to action for all world leaders to tackle the climate crisis, in this most critical decade, with the urgency it requires.

Here's how:

- Secure the hosting of a high ambition COP31 in 2026.
- Use Australia's presidency to build momentum for a global commitment to phase out fossil fuel use at COP31.

Reject nuclear

Australia's future is renewable,
not radioactive





1. Reject proposals for dangerous, polluting, illegal and expensive nuclear power stations

The next parliament must affirm that Australia's energy future is renewable, not radioactive. Existing nuclear technology is expensive, dirty, dangerous and completely inappropriate for Australia. Advocating for nuclear reactors to be built in Australia is a cynical ploy to keep climate-wrecking coal and gas in our energy system for many more years.

The next parliament must focus on rapidly scaling up renewable power generation using our abundant natural resources of wind and power as the cleanest, most reliable and cheapest way to upgrade to a low carbon energy system and a safer climate future.

Here's how:

- Retain domestic nuclear prohibitions in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.
- Publicly reject nuclear power and actively debunk disinformation about nuclear being a solution.



2. Sign the Treaty for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction, and the devastating legacy and threat of nuclear weapons hangs heavily on lives and landscapes around the world. The United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons prohibits signatories from testing, developing, producing, stockpiling or threatening to use nuclear weapons.

The next parliament has an opportunity to improve Australia's reputation and reaffirm Australia's commitment to global peace and security, sending a powerful message to the world that we refuse to tolerate weapons of mass destruction that cause indiscriminate human suffering and environmental catastrophe.

Here's how:

- Advance the signing, ratification and implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.



3. Stop approving uranium mines

Mining radioactive uranium for nuclear power pollutes our air, soil and water. It destroys precious landscapes and can damage the genetic and reproductive systems of plants, animals and people. First Nations and rural communities have borne the brunt of the destruction.

The next parliament must work to transform Australia's international identity away from being a source of radioactive rocks. In doing so it should restore First Nations rights and rehabilitate damaged Country.

Here's how:

- Ensure no uranium mines are approved, extended or enter commercial production and phase out existing mines.
- Ensure the Jabiluka Mineral Lease is not extended.
- Resource and advance the Ranger mine site rehabilitation.



4. Responsibly manage Australia's radioactive waste

Nuclear leaves a toxic, intergenerational legacy of radioactive waste that disproportionately harms First Nations peoples and remote communities. The Government's commitment of hundreds of billions of Australian taxpayer dollars to the AUKUS nuclear submarine programme has increased pressure on Australia to further expand nuclear industries, impacts and dangers.

The next parliament must resist this pressure, protect precious Country, elevate First Nations rights and safeguard all communities from nuclear waste.

Here's how:

- Responsible and transparent management of radioactive waste, including First Nations Free, Prior and Informed Consent.
- Commit to safeguard against future international waste pressure from AUKUS arrangement.
- Ensure adequate provision for extended interim Intermediate Level Waste storage at ANSTO/Lucas Heights.

Stop the climate wreckers

No more green lights for big coal and gas polluters





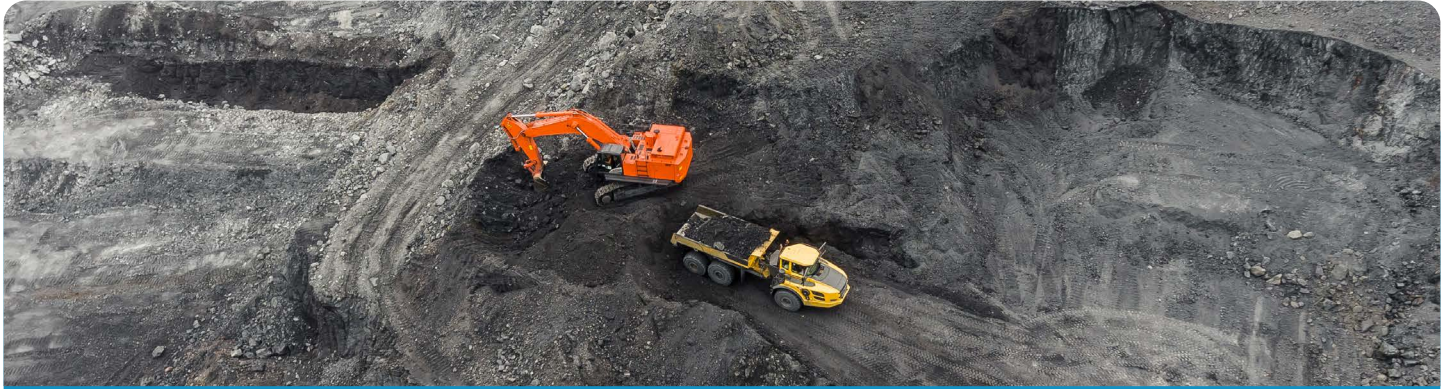
1. Make Australia a renewable manufacturing and export superpower

Wherever Australian coal and gas is burned, whether at home or abroad, it damages our climate, and we all suffer the consequences. Renewable-powered manufacturing and exports are the answer, and the world wants our climate solutions.

Australia can future proof its economy by becoming a world leader in renewable energy know-how, making things with renewable energy and exporting clean energy technology to the world. With our abundant sun, wind and know-how we can power our lives and our industries with renewable energy and have enough to sell renewable powered goods and expertise to other countries. We can make things we need like steel with green hydrogen and revive Australia's manufacturing sector. And we can build a bright and prosperous future with training and secure jobs for young people and for our regional communities.

Here's how:

- Develop and deploy a national renewable exports strategy.
- Accelerate the buildout of Australia's renewable grid, manufacturing and green export industries.
- Develop policies to expand the pricing of climate pollution externalities in the Australian economy.
- Ensure federal government policies and funding exclude support for fossil industries.
- Reform the investment mandate governing superannuation funds so they shift investment from fossil fuels to renewable energy and future facing industries.
- Set regional First Nations employment and procurement targets within renewable manufacturing and export industries.



2. No more taxpayer handouts to coal, oil and gas

Australia spends around \$20,000 every minute subsidising coal, gas and oil projects that heat our climate and unleash more frequent and severe fires, floods, heatwaves and storms. This means handouts given to fossil fuel giants are, in just a few minutes, more than the average Australian earns in a year. But imagine if our governments invested our public money into climate solutions, instead of climate pollution.

The next parliament has an opportunity to stop squandering public money on digging, expanding, exporting and burning coal and gas. By doing this we can upgrade to a renewable powered energy grid more quickly, protect and restore our forests to store carbon and safeguard communities and wildlife from extreme weather disasters.

Here's how:

- Remove access to the Fuel Tax Credit for coal, oil and gas companies.
- Redeploy the \$1.9 billion Middle Arm subsidy to deliver better jobs, clean energy, and climate outcomes.
- Honour the Clean Energy Transition Partnership and legislate no international finance for fossil fuel industries and related infrastructure.
- Make no public funding available for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and ensure all agreements that prevent carbon dumping are honored.



3. No new coal and gas approvals

Our big backyard is at breaking point. Scorching heat. Catastrophic bushfires. Dangerous flooding. Wildlife and communities not having time to recover before the next disaster strikes. This is climate destruction, fuelled by climate wrecking gas and coal companies, and it's getting worse.

But Australia's biggest polluters, like the gas giants Woodside and Santos, are hell bent on pumping out more climate pollution with massive new expansionary projects. A responsible parliament would act urgently to protect us from more climate chaos by bringing down Australia's climate pollution and protecting our precious nature and threatened species from destructive new mines and underwater seismic blasting.

Here's how:

- Stop approving new coal and gas projects.
- Commit to no Carbon Capture and Storage approvals for fossil fuel projects.
- Don't allow the import of Carbon Capture and Storage carbon waste into Australia.
- Commit to reforms to the Safeguard Mechanism policy, following the 2026-27 review, that ensure industrial emissions are declining in line with a 1.5C-degree aligned pathway.
- Set strong legislation for methane mitigation including significantly strengthening monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) requirements for fossil fuel producers.

If elected to the 48th Parliament, will you or your Party commit to?

Save nature: Stop bulldozing the bush ☐

Deliver strong new nature laws to protect Australia's unique wildlife and the places we love. ☐

Implement a national action plan to end deforestation by 2030. ☐

Require big business to publicly report their impacts on nature and take action to halt and reverse nature damage. ☐

Support farmers to protect and restore nature on their land. ☐

Boost funding for protecting and recovering nature. ☐

Champion renewables & cut pollution ☐

Build more renewables faster, in the right locations, for the benefit of people and nature. ☐

Well planned, faster closures of all domestic coal-fired power stations and an orderly phasedown of gas power generation by 2030 and 2035 respectively. ☐

Set an ambitious science-aligned 2035 climate pollution target and action plan consistent with Australia's Paris commitments. ☐

Ensure Australia does our part to lift global climate action and ambition. ☐

Reject nuclear ☐

Reject proposals for dangerous, polluting, illegal and expensive nuclear power stations. ☐

Sign the Treaty for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. ☐

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Responsibly manage Australia's radioactive waste. ☐

Stop the climate wreckers ☐

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No more taxpayer handouts to coal, oil and gas. ☐

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Did you know?

Save nature: Stop bulldozing the bush



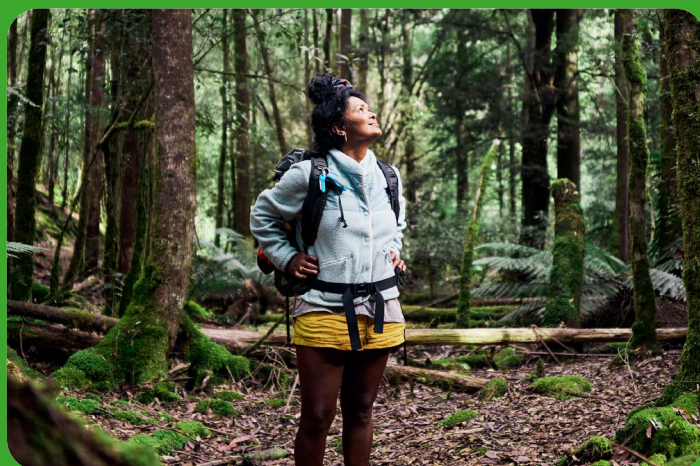
Roughly half of Australia's GDP (49% or \$896 billion) has a moderate to very high **direct dependence on nature**.

In Australia, **more mammal species than any other continent have gone extinct**. Our country continues to have one of the highest rates of species decline in the OECD.

Since Australia's national environment protection law took effect 25 years ago, **more than seven million hectares** of threatened species habitat **has been destroyed**.

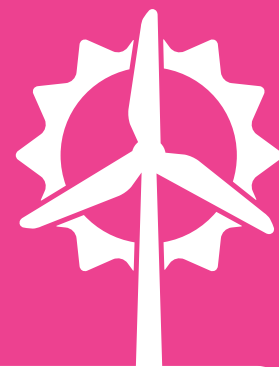
Every hour in Australia bulldozers **destroy the equivalent of 28 Sydney Opera Houses** of threatened species habitat (including precious koala habitat).

Government spending on environment programs **is less than a cent** of every Commonwealth dollar spent.



Did you know?

Champion renewables & cut pollution



Almost half (40%) of the power in Australia's main electricity grid now **comes from renewables**, the clean energy transition is well underway!

The share of electricity from renewables is **27% in QLD**, **36% in NSW**, **40% in VIC**, **98% in TAS**, **74% in SA**, **18% in WA** and **7% in the NT** - and growing.

Today, **3.5 million Australian households have solar panels** on their roofs, generating 20,000 Gigawatt hours of electricity every year.

2023 set a renewable record with 5.9 Gigawatts of renewable capacity added to the electricity grid, up from 5 Gigawatts in 2022.

Australia could generate over **\$100 billion and create over 400,000 new jobs by 2040** by expanding renewables.



Did you know?

Renewable, not radioactive



Nuclear is up to **10 times more expensive** than renewable energy created by solar and wind.

Nuclear power accounts for a **declining share of global electricity generation** (currently 9.2%) whereas the renewables share has grown to 30.2%

Nuclear power plants **consume enormous amounts of water - up to 24 billion litres per year** (between 20 to 83 per cent more than other power stations). That's around 9,600 olympic swimming pools!

A recent survey by the Investor Group on Climate Change asked large institutional investors which energy and climate solutions they believed had good long-term returns. **Nuclear power was ranked last of the 14 options.**

All reactors create **toxic waste**, which has to be securely stored for **thousands of years**. There are no proven options for managing long-lived radioactive waste.



Did you know?

Stop the climate wreckers



Australia is the world's **third-largest fossil fuel exporter**, after Russia and the United States. Australia exports so much coal that our nation is the **second-largest exporter of fossil fuel CO2 emissions**.

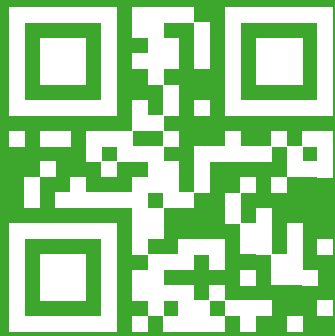
As a result of climate pollution caused by burning coal, oil and gas **2023 was the hottest year on record globally**, with 2024 shaping up to match or exceed this.

More than **740 fossil fuel projects have been approved**, or waved through without assessment, since 1999 under Australia's current national environment protection law.

National data shows that between 2008/09 and 2022/23 there were **240,828 Australians displaced from their homes** as a result of extreme weather events.

84% of Australians say they have been **directly affected** by at least one climate-fuelled disaster since 2019.





**Nature
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