



# TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE PROTECT OUR NATIONAL PARKS

*The Greens' plan to safeguard our national parks*

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Our national parks are under attack like never before from shooting, logging and cattle grazing. Will state governments let national parks be mined next? We need national protection for national parks.

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## > WE NEED NATIONAL PROTECTION

The Australian Greens want to see our national parks protected under our national environment laws.

### **We are proposing that:**

**National Parks be added as a new matter of environmental significance under our national environment law – the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.**

This would mean that all activities that will significantly impact upon national parks would require federal approval. This would allow our federal Environment Minister to say no to logging, mining, damaging tourism developments, land clearing, grazing and, in certain circumstances, also shooting in our national parks.

## > OTHER PARTIES FAILING

These attacks are why we need national protection for national parks. The Labor Government has been all talk, no action. They promised almost two years ago to protect national parks from particular damaging activities, but have not done so. Instead they have stood by as Tony Abbott's state government cronies stripped back state national park protections with their extreme agendas.

Only the Greens will stand up to big business and factional interests and give our national parks the national protection they need and deserve.

## > VALUE OF NATIONAL PARKS

Australia's national parks are home to many of our continent's unique wildlife and their precious habitats. As our cities grow and industrial and agricultural activities have expanded, our national parks, where properly managed, have increasingly become critical refuges for survival of regionally and nationally threatened species.

The beauty of our national parks attracts millions of domestic and international tourists each year<sup>1</sup>, bringing in over \$4 billion in revenue in 2012<sup>2</sup>.

National parks are also important places where Australians enjoy time in the great outdoors with our families and friends, or quiet time away from it all. More than half of Australia's adults visited a national park or botanic garden in 2011-2012<sup>3</sup>, showing how much we value these iconic areas.

Our national parks, from our tropical rainforests to our snow-capped mountains, are too precious to lose. Yet our national parks are under attack like never before. Despite covering less than four percent of Australia, state governments are allowing shooting, logging, cattle grazing and tourism developments within these wildlife sanctuaries.



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## > NATIONAL PARKS UNDER THREAT

While many Australians reasonably assume our national parks are set up and protected under national laws, they are in fact only a creature of state laws. Yet they are a critical part of the protecting our biodiversity across Australia's landscapes. The Greens believe they are of national significance and deserve national protection<sup>4</sup>.

On 24 August 2011 Environment Minister Burke announced his intention to protect national parks from grazing, mining, logging or large scale land clearing. Nothing happened. On 28 March 2013, Senator Waters moved a motion in the Senate calling on the Government to act on that promise to protect national parks under our federal environment laws – the Senate voted in favour of the motion, but still nothing happened.

Meanwhile, the Newman Government in Queensland has opened up national parks to cattle grazing, and commenced a review to identify parks to open to loggers, the New South Wales Government has allowed shooting in national parks and are under pressure to allow logging and grazing, and the Victorian Government continues to push for cattle to graze in the Alpine National Park.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2011, 2.4 million international visitors and 10.4 million domestic travellers visited a national or state park in Australia: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2011 and International Visitor Survey, 2011

<sup>2</sup> Almost two thirds (61%) of all inbound visitors to Australia selected nature-based activities as the key purpose of their visit, bringing in over \$4 billion in revenue in 2012: Tourism and Transport Forum, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 26 March 2013, Community Engagement with Nature Conservation, Australia, 2011-12, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ProductsbyReleaseDate/B58ED9EDEB6CF1BECA257B39000F3870?OpenDocument>

<sup>4</sup> Currently, some national parks will have *some* national protection – if they are World Heritage listed, national heritage listed, contain Ramsar wetlands, contain nationally threatened species or ecological communities **and** the activity proposed is likely to have a significant impact on that protected matter. It's piecemeal protection at best, and rarely results in protection. Our proposal is for *all* of the environment within national parks to be able to be protected from activities likely to have a significant impact upon them.