



STOPPING OUR BIODIVERSITY CRISIS

Our species are too precious to lose

The Greens' plan to secure the future of Australia's threatened species

Many of Australia's precious plants and animals are under threat like never before, from climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, invasive species and disease, as well as a rapidly expanding resources sector. We need to make big changes urgently if they are to survive.

> OUR BIODIVERSITY IN CRISIS

Australia is recognised globally as "mega-diverse" - over 80% of our mammals, reptiles and flowering plants exist *only* in Australia. But Australia's wildlife is facing an extinction crisis. Many of our famous and important animals and plants are classified as in danger of becoming extinct.

The latest State of the Environment Report (2011) reported declines in many of our mammal species in all states, with the situation continuing to deteriorate. 27 Australian mammals are listed as extinct, and over 20% of our remaining 386 mammal species are threatened with extinction. Many of our bird, reptile and plant species are also at serious risk.

Our threatened species don't just include obscure critters - Australia's iconic species like the koala and Tasmanian devil are in serious decline.

Remarkably, for all too many of our threatened species their critical habitats are not even properly mapped, let alone protected. And for many species we are on track to lose them before we even know they exist - so much more research is needed to understand our native species and what they need to survive.

> THE GREENS' PLAN TO SAVE OUR NATIVE SPECIES

The Greens will chart the road to recovery for Australia's threatened species and ecosystems by strengthening protection for our threatened species across Australia's landscapes.

The Greens plan will identify and protect important habitat, and increase funding for threatened species management and research. Our 3 year, \$120 million plan will:

- **Provide \$30 million per annum to:**
 - Fund comprehensive studies to identify and map important habitat nationally (including protected ecological communities, areas of critical habitat for threatened species and important wildlife corridors);
 - Protect that habitat through bioregional plans that guide development and establish clear no-go zones for different activities within each region across Australia. These bioregional plans would be developed in partnership with state and local governments where possible, and rolled out progressively with priority on high risk biodiversity areas;
- **Provide \$10 million per annum to:**
 - Support the rapid listing of all species and ecological communities which belong on the threatened list;
 - Develop and resource the implementation of recovery plans and threat abatement plans for listed species and ecological communities;
 - Fund additional research required to help turn around Australia's biodiversity decline;

We will also:

- **Restore Labor's \$470 million cuts to the Biodiversity Fund,** which the Greens helped establish as part of the Clean Energy Package, to promote habitat restoration; and
- **Make sure federal veto powers over Australia's most environmentally damaging projects remain with the federal government and are not given away to the states.**



> THE GREENS STAND UP FOR OUR PRECIOUS NATIVE SPECIES

The Greens have a long track record of fighting for better protection for Australia's wildlife and precious places. In this term of parliament, we secured the \$1 billion Biodiversity Fund, a grants fund supporting local and regional groups to rehabilitate degraded habitat and restore wildlife corridors and ecosystem health. In the 2013 budget, the Labor Government slashed \$257 million from this Fund, and then a further \$213 million in July 2013. This is critical funding for biodiversity that the Greens will restore.

We instigated a Senate Inquiry into the plight of our koalas in Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT, where populations of this world famous Australian icon have dropped dramatically. This inquiry led to koalas in these states receiving extra protection under our national environment laws by being added to our national threatened species list.

The Australian Greens initiated a Senate Inquiry into the effectiveness of threatened species and ecological communities' protection in Australia. Over 170 submissions were made by scientists, community groups and individuals across Australia, conveying significant concerns for the future of our threatened species and ecosystems and what needs to be done. The Greens will work to secure strong recommendations from this inquiry, and pursue rapid implementation by Government.

The Greens have also introduced legislation to set up a process to fast track ("emergency list") protection for threatened species, and to ensure our national government cannot hand its responsibilities for regulating Australia's most environmentally damaging projects to state governments. On both these issues the Government and the Coalition refused to stand with us to put our wildlife before corporate profits, once again demonstrating that only the Greens can be trusted to stand up for our environment.

We also successfully spearheaded, with independents, the push for better protection for Australia's water resources from damaging coal and coal seam gas projects. This will help improve protection of all our ecosystems that rely on healthy waterways for their survival.

> LABOR AND THE COALITION ARE FAILING OUR WILDLIFE

In six years of government Labor has failed to deliver for our threatened species. They has approved every coal and coal seam gas project that has been applied for, they failed to properly protect the ancient Tarkine rainforests, and they failed to press pause on huge industrial port developments in the Reef despite the World Heritage Committee's significant concerns.

Labor signed up to the agenda of big business to have the final say on Australia's most environmentally destructive projects given away by from the national government to state governments, only to be howled down by experts and the community alike. While they then put the proposal on ice, Labor refused to work with the Greens to Abbott-proof our national environment laws by outlawing any hand off of approval powers to state governments. These Greens amendments, motions and legislation would have ensured that responsibility for protecting our most vulnerable species and wild places from the most damaging developments remained with the federal environment minister. The big parties voted against our moves.

The Coalition is now promising to deliver big business' destructive agenda of having state governments in total control of our nationally important environmental assets. While they claim it is to remove delay and duplication, there is no empirical evidence of any federal excessive regulatory burden or duplication or delay – the Coalition's real intention is just to significantly weaken environmental protection.

Only the Greens can be trusted to stand up for our environment and to protect the places and the species that are too precious to lose.