

Appendix A – Boobook declaration



Boobook Declaration

We celebrate Australia's biodiversity in all its variety: ecosystems, species and genes. This diversity plays a vital role in sustaining life on Earth, as plants, animals and living systems interact with the physical environment powered by the sun's energy. We, as human beings, are an integral part of the planet's biodiversity. Our lives depend on it and we have a responsibility to protect it. We respect and support the role of Australian Indigenous peoples in caring for country in the past, present and future.

We see protecting biodiversity as an essential part of tackling human-induced climate change. It is the Earth's biodiversity that endows nature with its resilience and adaptive capabilities, and simultaneously, provides large permanent carbon stocks that are essential to slowing global warming.

The United Nations recognises the importance of global biological diversity to sustaining life on earth and urges all nations to prevent further irreversible losses. It has designated 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity to celebrate biodiversity and raise awareness of the huge loss of biodiversity on Earth.

On the 10th anniversary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in 2002, Australia and other parties adopted the 2010 Biodiversity Target: to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional and national levels. The Target was subsequently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly and incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals.

Australia has failed to achieve its 2010 Biodiversity Target. We are experiencing an extinction crisis with ongoing major threats to terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. Australia's Draft Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment 2008 finds that existing threats to biodiversity are rapidly escalating and that climate change will compound these pressures further. It is now well documented that Australia could face a biological catastrophe.

Australia can avert this impending disaster. As a nation, we can halt the species extinction crisis, reduce global warming, maintain and restore vital Indigenous cultural connections, and expand jobs and economies in rural, regional and remote areas. It requires the Australian Government, in concert with the community, all levels of government, and business, to take urgent, committed action.

We call upon the Australian Government to act decisively to fulfil its international and national promises to protect biodiversity. Specifically in 2010 -- the International Year of Biodiversity -- we call on the Australian Government to:

1. Acknowledge the critical importance of safeguarding biodiversity as part of Australia's climate change response and commit to correspondingly urgent action to address the systemic drivers of biodiversity loss. In so doing, due recognition should be given both to the threat that global warming poses to biodiversity and ecosystems such as the Great Barrier Reef, and to the vital role these have in mitigating dangerous climate change including by permanently storing carbon;
2. Substantially increase investment in biodiversity and ecosystem protection, restoration and management to at least \$9 billion over the three years to 2012 and establish an independent widely consultative process into future funding and stewardship of Australia's, terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity;
3. Restore and increase the capacity for publicly funded biodiversity research, auditing, monitoring, accounting and communication, including through an expanded independent Land, Water and Biodiversity authority; and
4. Develop our biodiversity education and training programs so that all sectors of the Australian community and business have the knowledge to understand the magnitude of current threats to our biodiversity and the skills to take action to conserve our biodiversity and ecosystems. This is essential to transforming our nation to a healthy, sustainable society and economy.

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