

Greens NSW

Biodiversity Policy

Revised October 2006



Principles

The Greens NSW believe:

1. Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life forms on earth, from plants, animals and micro-organisms to the genes they contain and the ecosystems which they occupy;
2. Biodiversity is a deeply cross-sectional issue needing to be managed by a broad range of policies;
3. Australian ecosystems are vital for the survival of internationally significant species of migratory animals. Many areas of wetland and coast provide key habitats for these migratory species. Loss of biodiversity in Australia has ramifications that extend beyond our borders;
4. Australia's record of biodiversity protection is appalling with the level of mammal species extinctions being the worst of any country;
5. While some areas of NSW are comprehensively covered by a network of reserves there are still substantial gaps in the protected area system, particularly in the Western Division of NSW and in regions with high development potential;
6. The majority of remaining native habitat in NSW is owned and managed privately, and it is on these intensively used areas that the greatest challenges for biodiversity conservation are found;
7. Clearing of native vegetation poses the single greatest threat to biodiversity;
8. Genetically Engineered Organisms released into the environment pose a possible threat to biodiversity through direct competition or contamination of gene stock in existing species;
9. Climate change is having a negative impact on biodiversity;
10. Firewood collection is having extensive ramifications on the state's biodiversity, as prime habitat is also prime firewood; and
11. Other recognised threats to biodiversity include introduced and exotic species, regulation of river flow, altered fire regimes, pollution, mining, logging, grazing and urbanisation.

Goals

The Greens NSW will work towards:

12. Protection measures directed at all aspects of life from the level of genes to entire ecosystems;
13. Management strategies that aim to conserve species across a broad range of climatic regions and conserve all genetic variation as well as the ecosystems of which they are a part;
14. The creation of secure reserves, linked by corridors, across all bio-regions and land tenures, including the estuarine and marine environments, capable of maximising habitat protection for the nation's biological diversity and permitting the ongoing biological functioning of populations, including their evolution and adaptation during a period of rapid climate change;
15. At least 30% of each bioregion (and ecosystem type) being managed for conservation to ensure the future survival of the natural landscape;
16. The immediate implementation of legislation preventing habitat loss to prevent the unacceptable practice of waiting until a species becomes listed as endangered or threatened before attempting to take action;
17. The control of exotic plants and animals utilising biological control methods where possible;
18. The recognition of the important role Indigenous Australians can play in the protection of biodiversity;
19. Encouraging landholders and managers on all land tenures, through a mix of regulatory controls and incentives, to protect the biological diversity of their lands;
20. Widespread application of the 'precautionary principle' in relation to biodiversity protection including the introduction of Genetically Engineered Organisms;
21. An accreditation system for firewood suppliers and the use of sustainably sourced firewood; and
22. The adoption of enhanced measures to achieve genuine and significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and prevent human activities that may compound the effect of climate change and its ramifications for biodiversity protection.

Detail

The Greens NSW will work to:

23. Implement at local, regional and state levels the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biodiversity, consistent with the National Strategy's goals and timeframes;
24. Implement a co-ordinated legal framework to regulate and control threatening processes at their source across land tenures;
25. Adopt and implement an amended NSW Biodiversity Strategy which is capable of ensuring all state and local government agencies plan for

- and conduct their operations consistent with biodiversity protection objectives;
26. Immediately end broadscale land clearing of remnant native vegetation while assisting rural communities with targeted structural adjustment;
 27. Implement incentives and regulations to encourage both private landholders and leaseholders to conserve and restore habitat for biodiversity protection purposes and to provide environmental services;
 28. Identify, protect and manage all special habitat areas of inland NSW (being the area not included in the coastal zone) across all land tenures;
 29. Provide adequate funding for the management and/or restoration of all special habitat areas including a range of mechanisms for assistance to private landholders affected by wetland protection and management;
 30. Increase regulation and control of mining and ensure that all mineral exploration is subject to Environmental Planning and Assessment provisions including the rehabilitation of the affected land and waterways;
 31. Amend/repeal Part 3A (Major Infrastructure and Other Projects) of the Environmental Planning & Assessment (EP&A) Act (1979);
 32. Control grazing on public lands and in sensitive areas;
 33. Prevent any weakening of the Threatened Species Conservation Act (1995) and take legal action against agencies, including State Forests, that contravene species protection legislation;
 34. Oppose market based processes and trading mechanisms such as biodiversity banking and offsets which trade off high conservation areas for development;
 35. Make all logging operations subject to Environmental Impact Assessment;
 36. Set priorities for noxious plant and feral animal control under the NSW Biodiversity Strategy to ensure that ecologically based programs are being effectively implemented;
 37. Enforce legal action for breaches of the Native Vegetation Act (NVC) Act and allow for open standing;
 38. Establish a full public review of licences to kill native wildlife, and examine non-lethal means of crop and asset protection;
 39. Introduce legislation that prohibits the introduction into NSW of any new plant or animal species unless it can be demonstrated, through extensive independent trials, that this introduction will not become invasive or cause damage to native flora or fauna;
 40. Ban the release of Genetically Engineered Organisms to the environment until comprehensive safe-guard measures for the protection of cross species contamination can be demonstrated;

41. Provide specific funding for community education programs on the significance of the states biological diversity and the threats it faces particularly in relation to noxious plants, feral animals, agrochemicals and pesticides;
42. Establish third party appeal rights for all environmental legislation;
43. Ensure that shooting in National Parks and state forests is carried out only by employees of the NPWS, or those contracted to do so under NPWS supervision;
44. End peat extraction;
45. Support a diverse range of community based biodiversity protection groups;
46. Implement a licencing system to regulate the collection of firewood ensuring that it is sourced sustainably and provides consumers with information on its collection location; and
47. Oppose the clearing of land for the establishment of timber plantations.