

Greens NSW

Biodiversity Policy



Revised August 2014

Principles

The Greens NSW believe that:

1. Biodiversity is fundamental to the sustainability of all life on earth;
2. 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 that they occupy;
3. Biodiversity conservation is crucial to maintaining ecological integrity and ecological sustainability;
4. Biodiversity is an important source of cultural identity, leisure and aesthetic values for many Australians and of future options for generations to come;
5. Biodiversity is a deeply cross-sectional issue, needing to be managed by a broad range of policies;
6. 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;
7. Indigenous Australians play an important role in the protection of biodiversity;
8. Australia's record of biodiversity protection is appalling, with the level of mammal species extinctions being the worst of any country;
9. Although some areas of New South Wales are comprehensively covered by a network of reserves, there are still substantial gaps in the protected area system;
10. The majority of remaining native habitat in New South Wales is owned and managed privately, and it is on these intensively used areas that the greatest challenges for biodiversity conservation are found;

11. Clearing of native vegetation poses the single greatest threat to biodiversity;
12. Genetically engineered organisms released into the environment pose a possible threat to biodiversity through direct competition with or contamination of gene stock in existing species;
13. Climate change is having a devastating and ongoing negative impact on biodiversity;
14. Other recognised threats to biodiversity include introduced and exotic species, regulation of river flow and drainage of wetlands, altered fire regimes, pollution, mining, logging, grazing and urbanisation and unsustainable development;
15. The weakening of environmental protection by any level of government must be opposed.

Aims

The Greens NSW will work towards:

16. 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, underpinned by principles of ecologically sustainable development;
17. Protection measures directed at all aspects of life from the level of genes to entire ecosystems;
18. The adoption of enhanced measures to achieve genuine and significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to prevent human activities that may compound the effect of climate change and its ramifications for biodiversity protection;
19. Implementation at local, regional and state levels of the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biodiversity, consistent with the National Strategy's goals and timeframes;
20. Strengthening legislation that protects biodiversity, such as the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and the Native Vegetation

Act 2003 and take legal action against agencies, including State Forests, that contravene species protection legislation;

21. Opposing any move to weaken the Native Vegetation Act or Native Vegetation Regulations, and work to maintain the compliance regime within government structures;
22. Ensuring that oversight of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 remains with the federal government;
23. Encouraging landholders and managers on all land tenures, through a mix of regulatory controls and incentives, to protect the biological diversity of their lands;
24. Implementing a coordinated legal framework to regulate and control threatening processes at their source across land tenures;
25. Implementing incentives and regulations to encourage both private landholders and leaseholders to conserve and restore habitat for biodiversity protection purposes and to provide environmental services;
26. Identifying, protecting and management of all special habitat areas of inland New South Wales (being the area not included in the coastal zone) across all land tenures;
27. Providing 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;
28. Immediately ending broad-scale land clearing of remnant native vegetation while assisting rural communities with targeted structural adjustment;
29. Increasing resources to ensure compliance with the Native Vegetation Act and Native Vegetation Regulation.
30. Ensuring that at least 30 per cent of each bioregion (and ecosystem type) is managed for conservation to ensure the future survival of the natural landscape;
31. The preservation of 100 per cent of all remnant ecosystems;

32. 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;
33. The immediate implementation of legislation preventing habitat loss to stop the unacceptable practice of waiting until a species becomes listed as endangered or threatened before attempting to take action;
34. Establishing a full public review of licences to kill native wildlife, and examining non-lethal means of crop and asset protection;
35. The control of exotic plants and animals utilising, where possible, biological and humane control methods;
36. Setting priorities for noxious plant and invasive-animal control under the NSW Biodiversity Strategy to ensure that ecologically based programs are being effectively implemented;
37. Ensuring planning laws are consistent with the conservation of biodiversity and ecologically sustainable development principles;
38. Introducing legislation that prohibits the introduction into New South Wales 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;
39. Establishing third party appeal rights for all environmental legislation;
40. Providing specific funding for community education programs on the significance of the state's biological diversity and the threats it faces particularly in relation to noxious plants, invasive species, agrochemicals and pesticides;
41. Ensuring that shooting in National Parks and state forests is carried out only by employees of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) or those professionally contracted to do so under NPWS supervision;
42. Supporting a diverse range of community based biodiversity protection groups;

43. Increasing regulation and control of mining and ensuring that all mineral exploration is subject to Environmental Planning and Assessment provisions including the rehabilitation of the affected land and waterways;
44. Controlling grazing on public lands and in sensitive areas;
45. Opposing market-based processes and trading mechanisms such as biodiversity banking and offsets that trade off high conservation areas for development;
46. Making all logging operations subject to Environmental Impact Assessment;
47. Ending peat extraction;
48. Implementing a licensing system to regulate the collection of firewood to ensure that it is sourced sustainably and provides consumers with information on its collection location;
49. An accreditation system for firewood suppliers and the use of sustainably sourced firewood;
50. Opposing the clearing of land for the establishment of timber plantations;
51. Banning the release of genetically engineered organisms to the environment until comprehensive safe-guard measures for the protection of cross-species contamination can be demonstrated; and
52. Widespread application of the 'precautionary principle' in relation to biodiversity protection including the introduction of genetically engineered organisms;

Definitions:

Ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles:

- a. *the precautionary principle* – if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- b. *inter-generational equity* – is about fairness between generations and that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations.

- c. *intra-generational equity* – is about fairness among the current generation, concerns equity within and between people and nations, and is essential for achieving environmental justice.
- d. *conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity* – the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration for the maintenance of healthy, productive and functioning ecosystems.
- e. *integration of environmental, economic and social aspects into decision-making* – the three pillars of sustainability must support each other simultaneously.
- f. *improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms* – environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services.

Other related policies

- Bushfire Risk Management
- Coastal Management
- National Parks
- Wetlands
- Animal Welfare
- Marine Environment
- Mining