

Terrain NRM

Do you consider the main biodiversity threats identified in the Consultation Draft (see below) to be the most important in reversing the decline in Australia's biodiversity?

- climate change
strongly agree
- invasive species
strongly agree
- loss and fragmentation of habitats
strongly agree
- degradation of habitats
strongly agree
- unsustainable use of natural resources
strongly agree
- changes to the aquatic environment and water flows
strongly agree
- inappropriate fire regimes
strongly agree

Are there any other threats you think should be addressed?

Maximum 90 words

The threats listed capture most of the direct threats. Water quality is also an issue. However, important indirect threats include:

- Increasing human population growth
- Increasing levels of consumption per person
- Increased human alienation from nature as a result of advanced technological society limiting direct contact between people and nature
- Institutional failure including:
 - o Lack of appropriate importance given to biodiversity in the hierarchy of policy goals
 - o Lack of coordination between institutions at different scales and in different locations
 - o Poor integration between science and biodiversity conservation action
 - o Lack of clear theory and practice in implementation of conservation plans
 - o Poor integration of Indigenous biodiversity management strategies and knowledge into biodiversity management

2. Do you think that the proposed 'priorities for change' (outlined in the 'Making Enduring Changes' section) will be effective at delivering the Strategy's vision to ensure Australia's biodiversity 'is healthy, resilient to climate change and valued for its essential contribution to our existence'?

Maximum 90 words

Agree with local to national scale management for ecosystem health, addressing knowledge needs and mainstreaming biodiversity through alignment of policy, raising public awareness and understanding; and integration of biodiversity into economic decision making.

There is a need to ensure clear and secure investment strategies for implementation including adequate and timely resourcing and support to regional NRM organisations and resourcing the capacity of Local Governments.

Do you think the six 'priorities for change' identified are the most important ones? If not what others would you suggest?

Maximum 90 words

No comment

Do you have any comments on the vision?

Maximum 90 words

Strongly support a continental scale approach. There is an opportunity to strengthen linkages between the Wet Tropics and the Cape York rainforests through an eastern large-scale corridor.

An ecosystem approach to biodiversity conservation should also include a landscape scale or bioregional approach and should not exclude species specific approaches where they are required. Ecosystems are predicted to shift and change over time with climate change requiring a landscape scale connectivity approach.

3. Do you consider that the Consultation Draft:

- promotes a good balance between conservation on private and public lands?
somewhat disagree
- will facilitate a good mix of regulation and incentives?
somewhat agree
- provides a good balance between marine and terrestrial issues?
somewhat agree
- provides the necessary national framework to produce innovative conservation action?
somewhat agree
- has a sufficient focus on institutional arrangements and change?
somewhat agree
- provides sufficient emphasis on improving community awareness of biodiversity?
somewhat agree
- addresses the need to implement conservation action at the appropriate scale(s)?
somewhat agree
- is applicable to urban and rural environments
strongly agree
- provides a clear framework for balancing conservation, social and economic issues?
somewhat disagree

- adequately deals with the issue of climate change?

somewhat agree

Do you have any other comments on these issues?

Maximum 180 words

There is a need for a shift to a genuine ecosystem services economy so that when we consume, the actual costs to biodiversity is paid and the appropriate ecosystem service paid for in strategic parts of the landscape.

There is a need to:

- resource and reward private land conservation
- provide clear strategies for achieving a balance between policy alignment and market based instruments
- support innovative action - Intercultural institutions that engage non-Indigenous and Indigenous approaches are important sites of innovation
- Build into strategies the multiple values people hold in relation to biodiversity. Eg Terrain's Mission Beach work designed a process that assesses and incorporates aesthetic/lifestyle values, Djiru Traditional Owner values and the collaborative focal species approach
- Enable community action on biodiversity awareness through strong institutional arrangements and appropriate incentives for conservation
- Place a greater emphasis on multi-scale interactions and brokering across scales as in the adaptive collaborative framework applied through the Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan

4. Do you think the Consultation Draft adequately covers the roles of Indigenous peoples in biodiversity management?

Maximum 270 words

The objectives are very comprehensive but need to address secure resourcing and support to appropriate stable institutional structures to enable indigenous people to become involved and maintain involvement in biodiversity conservation activities. There is a need to stress using the identified actions for the strategic creation of opportunities for employment that deliver on biodiversity priorities on country. The value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge should be recognised by adequate costing of Traditional Owners time for involvement in projects and processes for conservation. Biodiversity conservation activities should also consider potential cultural heritage impacts and incorporate traditional owner involvement to inform rehabilitation or management processes.

Involving Indigenous people could be strengthened by recognizing that intercultural institutions that combine Indigenous and non-Indigenous governance strategies are proving to be important sites of innovation in biodiversity conservation (for example IPAs but also examples such as the Lake Condah Sustainable Development Project)

5. Do you consider that the proposed arrangements for reporting on implementation will be effective in the monitoring and evaluation of the expected outcomes (results) of the Consultation Draft?

somewhat agree

Do you have any suggestions for alternative reporting arrangements?

Maximum 270 words

The strategy acknowledges the need to establish baseline datasets for monitoring status and trends and to involve communities in monitoring. This needs to be supported by resourcing regional level monitoring of biodiversity actions in order to support communities to gather rigorous data. Clear arrangements for data management need to be in place with links from local to national level through agreed indicators and standardised data collection methods. Adequate and appropriate feedback strategies need to be implemented to inform communities of results of actions and promote adaptive management responses.

There is a need for a strong national leadership for monitoring and evaluation and a need to identify and address gaps between scientific results and community/manager actions, with resources and expertise developed for appropriate translation of results into policy, planning and management.

6. To what extent is the Consultation Draft an appropriate national framework to achieve biodiversity conservation benefits, considering the different responsibilities, legislation and funding arrangements between governments.

Maximum 270 words

The Consultation Draft provides an opportunity to state a clear direction for biodiversity conservation at the national scale and to promote an ethic of considering biodiversity in broad social planning and economic decision making through all jurisdictions. There is a need for a strong national leadership to implement economic incentives and create market signals that allow the cost and responsibility of biodiversity conservation to be spread across all of society, as all benefit from good management. There is a need to provide a framework that rewards management of biodiversity for the public good and Australia's long term benefit.

The role of regional NRM bodies in implementing actions and aligning efforts for biodiversity conservation needs to be supported with surety of funding and clarification of funding sources. This needs to be made available in a timely and appropriate process that avoids the boom and bust funding availability and allows for maintaining skilled staff, motivated project participants and the guarantee of a long term presence and commitment to outcomes.

There is also a need to ensure that responsibilities handed to Local Governments are adequately resourced to allow local governments across the country, regardless of income levels to have the capacity to implement biodiversity conservation actions. Local Governments have an important role to play by providing a stable delivery mechanism with a clear link to local communities.

Alignment of National and State legislation would lead to improved biodiversity outcomes where there is conflict between protection of high value biodiversity assets.

7. Is the Consultation Draft likely to encourage a good mix of public and private investment in biodiversity conservation?

somewhat disagree

If not how can the Consultation Draft improve in this area?

Maximum 270 words

The intent of providing a mixture of public and private investment is articulated within the strategy, but only to acknowledge the need to develop ways of increasing investment in biodiversity conservation. Evaluation of the consultation draft is difficult without greater clarity of how this will function, and be monitored and evaluated.

Market based instruments for conservation being applied in the Wet Tropics NRM region have yet to address long term monitoring and overall assessment of the effectiveness of this approach for biodiversity conservation. Investment in biodiversity needs to be complimented by broadly agreed and adequately secured land protection mechanisms. This has become an issue in the Wet Tropics NRM plan region where the increased application of market based instruments requiring long term land protection to secure the investment, puts pressure on the ability of the State system to cope with the processing and ongoing management and monitoring of these areas.

Financial incentives need to be readily available that complement voluntary or regulatory approaches and provide broad market recognition of conservation values. The Degrees Celsius venture - a Terrain partnership - is a pilot for how regional bodies may fund biodiversity/ecosystem services models in the future. It is important to maintain ecosystem services models as only one component of future funding sources for biodiversity conservation. Public funding is an important component for achieving conservation outcomes.

Biodiversity conservation needs to be incorporated up front in major planning and infrastructure projects as the retroactive approach is very costly and usually this precludes action.

8. Is the Consultation Draft sufficiently clear about its role and how it will be implemented?

Maximum 270 words

The Consultation Draft acknowledges the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all jurisdictions and sectors. Terrain highlights the following considerations:

- The key role of regional bodies in supporting alignment of regional efforts and local communities to carry out conservation actions needs adequate and stable resourcing of regional arrangements for implementing regional priorities aligned to state and national priorities, as well as resourcing of data management capabilities and scientific support
- Mechanisms to provide resources to local governments (especially those with smaller rate bases) to develop planning information and tools for biodiversity management and provide incentives and support to local communities, such as rate rebates to landholders
- A clearly articulated resourcing strategy for specific biodiversity actions at all levels

9. Does the Consultation Draft reflect the best practice on biodiversity conservation?

Maximum 270 words

The consultation draft does support best practice in biodiversity conservation through addressing most recommendations for national actions. The strategy does not consider controlling the risks posed by genetically modified organisms and providing a framework for public participation in development projects that threaten biodiversity. Recent Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility workshop outcomes regarding biodiversity offsetting recommended the need for public participation in processes such as offsetting.

The Mission Beach Habitat Network Action Plan process, facilitated by Terrain, uses a collaborative focal species approach to provide a process for the inclusion and involvement of all stakeholders and deals with balancing conservation and development benefits through working with the development industry, governments and local communities.

Strongly support that any ex situ conservation measures are considered only as a last resort and are complementary to in situ measures and the ongoing reduction of threats to support the reintroduction of species to habitats.

10. Will the Consultation Draft effectively engage private sector interests in long-term biodiversity conservation?

Maximum 270 words

The Consultation Draft identifies the need to develop innovative ways to encourage investment and to cause industry to adopt management and self-regulatory systems but there is no detail beyond this. There is a key role for governments to play in providing the frameworks to cause industry to consider accounting for and balancing the impact of their activities on biodiversity conservation.

Do you have any other comments you wish to make on the Consultation Draft?

Maximum 360 words

The consultation draft is a very positive move towards the integration of biodiversity into national policy broadly and raising the awareness of its importance across society. By considering the inclusion of biodiversity into economic and social decision making a major step is being taken towards the broader social shift that is required for a sustainable society and economy into the long term.

The most important thing is to set the policy direction that enables all Australians to contribute to biodiversity conservation through increased understanding, increased access to resources and ensuring that our economy

and our lifestyle choices provide the appropriate market signals to encourage the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of all natural resources.

To ensure that this happens in a way that is beneficial to biodiversity in the long term and has broad social support, there is a pressing need for a significant and sustained long term national cultural change agenda that addresses:

- the broad lack of knowledge about our country's biodiversity and how to best manage the land for the benefit of biodiversity.
- the lack of value placed on native species, that often appears as a cultural ambivalence to our biodiversity
- the preference towards introduced plant species for public and private gardens that often leads to the introduction of invasive weed species.
- the sense that looking after biodiversity is the responsibility of someone else, particularly governments.