

## 1.102 Australian Forests

RECOGNIZING that the Federal and State governments of Australia are implementing the National Forest Policy Statement including:

- a) to establish a native forest reserve system on public lands, and
- b) to protect under moratorium high conservation value old growth and wilderness forests prior to the establishment of a reserve system;

NOTING that there are now underway processes to identify areas of high conservation value to be protected in a forest reserve system and to assess whether current forest management practices are ecologically sustainable;

CONCERNED that many forest ecosystems, plant and animal species are now either rare, threatened or in danger of extinction;

WELCOMING the Australian Government's intention to assess the World Heritage values of Australia's native forests;

RECOGNIZING that the forests of the island continent of Australia possess unique natural and cultural values and that the World Heritage protection of those values would be a major achievement for the Australian Government;

CONCERNED that if the World Heritage assessment is less than scientifically rigorous, Australia's international reputation could be affected;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

REQUESTS the Australian Government to ensure that:

- a) the complete range of forest ecosystems and forest communities receive protection in a scientifically based, comprehensive, adequate and ecologically viable reserve system;
- b) rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals and their habitats are given protection in the reserve system;
- c) all forest management is ecologically sustainable;
- d) the World Heritage assessment process is conducted in a comprehensive, scientifically rigorous and internationally credible manner;
- e) all details of the World Heritage methodology, framework and assessment are provided to IUCN.

**Note.** This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegation of the State member Australia indicated that had there been a vote that delegation, and those of the Government Agency members Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Queensland Department of Environment, the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission, would have abstained. The delegation of the State member Germany indicated that it had not participated in discussion of the Recommendation nor would it have participated in any voting. The delegations of the State members Norway, Sweden and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained.