

Australia's extinction crisis and national environmental law reform

NOTING that Australia is one of 17 mega-biodiverse countries globally;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that three vertebrate species have gone extinct in Australia since 2009;

DEEPLY CONCERNED that a number of ecosystems in Australia demonstrate evidence of collapse;

CONCERNED that Australia has been identified as a global deforestation hotspot;

FURTHER CONCERNED that since Australia's national environmental law has been in operation it is estimated more than 7.7 million hectares of habitat for nationally-listed threatened species have been destroyed;

NOTING that Australia is reviewing its primary national environmental law, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act;

FURTHER NOTING the interconnections between community well-being, human-health outcomes and a healthy environment; and

ALSO NOTING the obligations of the Australian Government as a State Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity to achieve the objectives of the convention;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

CALLS ON the Australian Government to demonstrate national leadership in environmental protection and ensure that reform of its national environmental law:

- a. prevents the destruction of primary, remnant, old-growth or high-conservation value forests;
- b. prevents the avoidable extinction of native fauna and flora;
- c. protects and recovers key biodiversity areas, threatened ecological communities and threatened species, including strict protection for their critical habitats;
- d. prevents the introduction of, and reduces the current extent, spread and population size of, invasive species;
- e. substantially reduces Australia's greenhouse gas pollution and increases carbon sequestration in biodiverse landscapes and seascapes;
- f. protects World Heritage Areas, National Heritage Places, Wetlands of International Importance and the National Reserve System from unsustainable development and ensures adequate management;
- g. protects freshwater supplies and other areas essential for ecosystem services;
- h. reduces, to as close to zero as possible, air pollution, plastic pollution and chemical pollution;
- i. effectively protects Australia's wildlife from illegal trade and unsustainable fishing;
- j. provides communities with transparent information and access to justice;
- k. ensures decisions are made on the best-available science; and
- l. creates a positive obligation on governments to develop and adequately resource threat abatement and recovery planning instruments.