



**The independent expert voice  
for Australian Biodiversity**

Like thousands of native Australian species, the green and golden bell frog has experienced a severe decline in numbers and has been driven to extinction in many locations. Image: JJ Harrison CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

**The Biodiversity Council's mission is to be a trusted expert voice communicating accurate information on all aspects of biodiversity to the Australian people, to ensure biodiversity and Country prosper.**

**Our Biodiversity Councillors are leading experts, in science, Indigenous knowledge, law, policy, economics, behaviour change and communications.**

**We drive action on biodiversity by increasing public, political and industry understanding of the problem and support for evidence-based solutions.**

## Why a Biodiversity Council?

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth; the plants, animals, fungi, microbes, and even us.

It underpins all aspects of our life, from food systems, to culture and identity, to economy, and health. Animals pollinate 90% of crops; 70% of medicines are derived from animals and plants; natural ecosystems remain the only viable large-scale carbon sink; and plants and animals clean our air and water and breakdown wastes.

Despite its importance, biodiversity is in precipitous decline around the world and even more so in Australia. The World Economic Forum has identified biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse as the fastest deteriorating risks to the global economy and among the top ten risks for the next decade.

About half of Australia's GDP relies on natural systems. Australia's biodiversity declines are rapid, often irreversible and will have far-reaching consequences for agriculture, water quality, culture, economy and health.

Our current policy approaches are not succeeding in stemming biodiversity destruction and ecosystem declines. Inadequate recognition and support for First Peoples cultural land management is exacerbating biodiversity declines.

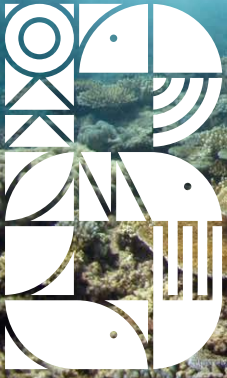
Business as usual will see ongoing extinctions in Australia, accelerated ecosystem collapse, and loss of ecosystem services with associated impacts on our health and the economy.

To tackle the loss of biodiversity and the threat this poses to society our large and diverse group of leading experts, aligned philanthropists, and universities united to found the Biodiversity Council.

## Our approach

The Biodiversity Council operates by:

- being a strong and trusted voice for biodiversity backed by robust science, including First Peoples knowledge.
- growing public and policy recognition of the importance of biodiversity and Country for human health, wellbeing and prosperity, the consequences of rapid biodiversity loss, and solutions to drive recovery.
- building networks of scientific, First Peoples and community champions to help drive an increase in political and community awareness, support and action for biodiversity and Country.
- directly informing decision-making by working with political, policy and industry leaders to demonstrate solutions to address risks and deliver benefits for biodiversity and Country.



Moore Reef is a popular destination for snorkelling and diving tours from Cairns. Great Barrier Reef tourism injects \$6 Billion to the Australian economy annually. Image: Holobionics CC BY SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

## Key facts about the state of Australian nature

Australia is one of the few mega-diverse countries in the world due to our unique wildlife and ecosystems and making us one of the most important countries for biodiversity conservation globally. Despite this:

- At least 100 Australian species have been driven to extinction over the last 250 years, including 34 mammal species. This is 1 in 10 of all Australian mammals which is more than any other continent.
- 95% of Australian shellfish reefs and half of our total seagrass area has been destroyed.
- Populations of threatened plants, mammals and birds are less than half their 1985 sizes on average.
- Four major mega-threats are driving the rapid decline of wildlife and ecosystem health in Australia, these are: habitat destruction, invasive species, altered fire regimes and climate change.
- Despite current management, the rate of biodiversity loss is accelerating, and the severity, diversity and intensity of threats are escalating.
- Mass mortality events are increasing, including:
  - multiple major fish kills in the Murray Darling Basin,
  - extensive heat related mortalities in flying foxes and cockatoos which are important forest pollinators and seed dispersers,
  - 63 billion animals killed or displaced in the Black Summer fires, and
  - 4 mass coral bleaching events in 7 years on the Great Barrier Reef.
- Ecosystem processes are being eroded, including loss of pollination, soil processes, water filtration, and carbon sequestration.

## 97% of Australians want more action for biodiversity

We conducted a survey of 4048 people from a variety of regions, ages, incomes and background to ensure the findings fairly represented the Australian community.

97% of people believe that more action is needed for biodiversity in Australia, and well over half of Australians (58%) think that a lot or a great deal more action is needed.

Around three-quarters of people (72%) said that more money should be spent on the environment. Only one in twenty people (6%) said less should be spent.

7 in 10 Australians indicated that nature conservation issues would have a 'moderate', 'strong' or 'very strong' influence on how they would vote in future local (69%), state (70%) and federal (68%) elections.

The majority of respondents said that federal, state and territory and local governments should do more. And over two-thirds (68%) of people said that every person living in Australia should do more.

## Join us

Be part of the solution. Help us transform policies, behaviours and business practices in Australia by making a tax-deductible donation to the Biodiversity Council to support us to continue and amplify our independent expert voice for nature conservation.

You can also sign up to get regular updates on our work to shape the national conservation on biodiversity protection and restoration.



The Biodiversity Council was founded by 11 universities including its host the University of Melbourne, with support from The Ian Potter Foundation, The Ross Trust, Trawalla Foundation, The Rendere Trust, Isaacson Davis Foundation, Coniston Charitable Trust and Angela Whitbread.

