



Ecological Sustainability - Social Justice - Peace and Non-violence - Grassroots Democracy

BOOBOOK DECLARATION STEERING COMMITTEE FEDERAL ELECTION 2010

The Australian Greens' policies on Biological Diversity and Natural Resources can be found at <http://greens.org.au/policies/environment/biological-diversity> and <http://greens.org.au/policies/agriculture-natural-resources/natural-resources>.

The Greens have very strong record of promoting the protection of Australia's biodiversity - from campaigning for the protection of old growth forests to supporting actions to protect threatened species and raising awareness of the threats of invasive species and disease. We have also been responsible for recent Senate committee Inquiries in to the EPBC Act and Natural Resource Management and Conservation Challenges.

Biodiversity Strategies and Funding

The Australian Greens have put their full support behind the Boobook declaration. On 3 February 2010, Greens' Senators Bob Brown and Rachel Siewert moved the following motion in the Senate:

That the Senate—

- (a) recognises 2010 as the United Nations' International Year of Biodiversity;
- (b) supports the Boobook Declaration, which has been written by an alliance of 40 environment groups to highlight Australia's worsening biodiversity crisis; and
- (c) notes the Boobook Declaration's call on the Australian Government to:
 - (1) Acknowledge the critical importance of safeguarding biodiversity as part of Australia's climate change response and commit to correspondingly urgent action to address the systemic drivers of biodiversity loss;
 - (2) increase investment in biodiversity and ecosystem protection, restoration and management to at least \$9 billion over the three years to 2012 and establish an independent consultative process into future funding and stewardship of Australia's, terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity;
 - (3) Restore and increase publicly funded research capacity, especially in biodiversity conservation; and
 - (4) Develop education and training programs for all sectors of the community [including on the importance and protection of biodiversity]'.

Both the ALP and Coalition opposed the motion.

Australian Greens

ABN: 98 738 022 715

National Office: Ground Floor, Unit 4, Jacobs House, 8-10 Hobart Place, Canberra City ACT 2601

GPO Box 1108 Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: (02) 6140 3217 Fax: (02) 6247 6455 e-mail: greensoffice@greens.org.au www.greens.org.au

Authorised by Ebony Bennett, Australian Greens, Canberra

The Greens recognise that we need a significant increase in research capacity to enable our best scientific minds to tackle the significantly high level of ongoing biodiversity loss together with the serious threats posed to biodiversity by climate change, weeds and feral animals in a fragmented landscape.

The Government has clearly dropped the ball with biodiversity management in Australia. The Caring for our Country program has devastated regional capacity and seriously undermined community engagement by slashing regional NRM funding and junking long-term plans.

We know we need to properly fund programs that address threatening processes and help species to recover. We need to stop threatening habitats and species with land-clearing, inappropriate development, disease and feral plants and animals.

The Australian Greens support the urgent call to action in the Boobook Declaration, and have called on the Government to act upon the recommendations in the Declaration.

Effective National Environment Legislation

The Greens have a strong and lengthy record of advocating for changes to the EPBC Act to strengthen its objectives and mechanisms for better protecting our environment and our precious biodiversity. We are supportive of implementing the recommendations of the Hawke review that will meet our clearly stated concerns about the EPBC Act, including ensuring vulnerable ecological communities as a trigger. Prior to the Hawke Review, Greens' Senator Rachel Siewert initiated a Senate Inquiry into the operation of the EPBC Act which also made a number of recommendations to strengthen the Act. See http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/eca_ctte/epbc_act/index.htm

The Greens are strong advocates for more effective assessment of the impacts on biodiversity of natural resource-based projects. We oppose the burning of woodchips for energy production.

Senator Bob Brown was in court for the judgement in the Brown Mountain case, calling the judgment "breakthrough territory for the whole nation" and "a green letter day for the forests, for endangered species and for the 80 per cent of Australians who want the destruction of our wild forests [with] their carbon stores and their magnificent biodiversity ended." The Greens support the EPBC Act being used to protect endangered species when state governments fail to act.

Supporting Biodiversity in a Changing Climate

Several Greens policies seek to protect biodiversity from a changing climate. First and most importantly we seek to minimise further climate change. We believe Australia needs to be prepared to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% relative to 1990, by 2020, as part of a global agreement to try to constrain global temperature increases to less than 2 degrees. We also believe we need to

completely decarbonise the economy as soon as possible, by 2050 at the latest. If, globally, we fail to constrain global warming, there is a high risk that all the efforts we now make to protect habitat, reduce fragmentation and remove existing threats, will have been in vain. We are disappointed that the BooBook Declaration does not clearly make this critical and obvious point.

Other Greens policies worth noting. We want to:

- end native forest logging and broadscale land clearing
- provide incentives ensure that new carbon sink forests are established in ways which maximise biodiversity conservation co-benefits
- mitigate the existing drivers of biodiversity loss including:
 - urban expansion, through better town planning
 - bushfires and weeds, through better funding of conservation areas
 - pests and diseases through tighter biosecurity regulations, and
 - improving water quality on the barrier reef through tighter regulation of agricultural run-off and the passage of large ships.

Threatened Species Recovery

The Greens' Biological Diversity policy specifically calls for the funding and enforcing of recovery plans for threatened and endangered species and ecological communities. The Greens know we need to protect our flora and fauna from processes such as land-clearing, inappropriate development, disease and feral plants and animals and that the Government must properly fund programs that intervene in threatening processes and help species to recover. Intervention needs to happen at an early stage – not at the last minute when an ecosystem is about to collapse or when a species' extinction becomes inevitable.

The Greens are also deeply committed to adequate funding of on-ground community action, research and monitoring. We have been highly critical of Caring for Our Country program and fear it will undo much of the progress we have made over the last three decades in conservation and natural resource management. The community invested a great deal of time and money in building up knowledge and networks to be able to effectively communicate between researchers, farming systems experts, policy makers and the people on the land, just as we have more recently invested heavily in building up the structures, networks, planning and extension capacity of our regional groups.

Conserving our Native Forests

The Greens recognise the essential role played by mature forest ecosystems in the wildlife habitat, carbon storage and water supply. Our policy calls for an end to the destruction of old-growth forests and other forests of high conservation value. We want to see assistance for workers and companies to shift from unsustainable native forest logging to plantation based forestry. Our policy is to prohibit the use of native forests for electricity generation and we have consistently opposed the burning of native forests to be allowed to be classed as

renewable energy. Senator Bob Brown has been a tireless campaigner for our forests.

Action on Key Environmental Issues

The Greens have release a Marine Reserves policy which commits us to ensuring:

- a minimum of 30% of the marine reserves established through bio-regional planning are determined 'no take' zones, that is, no extractive uses, such as petroleum exploration or operations and fishing;
- identification of the "no take" areas must be based on science and representative of essential ecosystems; and
- accelerated establishment of large-scale marine reserves, such as the Coral Sea.

The Greens believe in a sustainable population that needs to be managed so as to not have a detrimental impact on our environment. The sensitivity of the environment needs to be a factor in population size and urban development.

The Greens are very conscious of the threat of invasive species to our biodiversity. Senator Rachel Siewert has been active in the parliament raising concerns about invasive species. We recognise the gaps in the laws and will work to implement the recommendations of the various reviews to ensure we have a more robust legal framework to reduce invasive species threat to biodiversity. We also understand that for any reform to be meaningful adequate funding must be provided and we will continue to advocate for increased funding in this area.

The Greens are committed to enhancing the involvement of Indigenous people in land management. Indigenous understanding of land management is unparalleled. There is all the expertise there and we need to value it properly and we need to put more money into supporting development and training. We understand the value to the land and to communities of land management programs.

17 August 2010