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Have your say

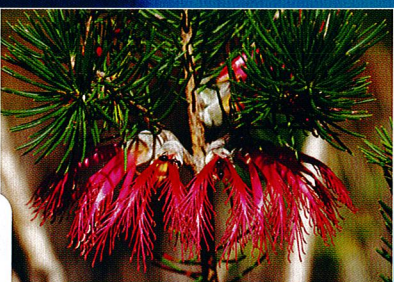
A 100-year Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Western Australia

DRAFT

Phase One: Blueprint to the
Bicentenary in 2029

A draft biodiversity
conservation strategy for
Western Australia has been
released for public comment.

You are invited to submit your
views on the draft strategy
before **Friday 30 March 2007.**



WA's biodiversity is rich and diverse; much of it is unique to the State, and is recognised as nationally and internationally significant. It is undoubtedly the State's greatest asset, underpinning many of our industries, as well as being fundamental to our health and well-being. However, we have profoundly impacted upon this irreplaceable natural heritage. It is incumbent upon all Western Australians to play their part in ensuring that future generations enjoy the same benefits from biodiversity that this generation enjoys.

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity (or biological diversity) embodies the totality of life; that is the variability within and among genes, species and ecosystems. It covers marine, terrestrial, subterranean and aquatic life.

Biodiversity provides the life support systems that enable all organisms on Earth to survive, including humans. It underpins economic and social sustainability by providing resources such as clean air, water and fertile soils. It helps regulate climate and temperature and mitigates the effects of pests, disease, pollution and floods. It provides a stream of products such as timber, fuel, clothes, food and medicines. Other benefits include recreation, aesthetic, scientific, education and spiritual values and a sense of place.

Taken in its entirety, biodiversity also provides stability and resilience, allowing ecosystems and species to cope with environmental fluctuations and disturbances, such as climate change.

WA's varied climate and geology have created an extraordinary level of terrestrial and marine biodiversity, unequalled anywhere else in Australia for its diversity and endemism.

It has...

- Australia's only international terrestrial biodiversity hotspot, recognised for its high flora diversity and level of endemism;
- one of 18 international marine biodiversity hotspots recognised for species richness and endemism;
- a wide range of terrestrial ecosystems covering a third of the Australian continent – rainforest patches in the far north of the State, extensive tropical eucalypt-dominated savannah woodlands, spinifex grasslands and Acacia shrublands in the semi-arid and arid interior, heathlands and woodlands along the western and southern coastline giving way to tall eucalypt forest and woodlands in the warm temperate and Mediterranean type climate of the south-west interior, and montane heathlands on the south coast;
- a wide range of marine ecosystems, including: extensive tropical and arid-zone mangrove communities; a 300-kilometre fringing coral reef (Ningaloo Reef); an inverse-estuarine, hypersaline ecosystem maintained by 4000 square kilometres of seagrass meadows at Shark Bay;
- the largest coastal temperate limestone reef system in Australia (Abrolhos Islands); and granite reefs and highly diverse algal communities and faunal assemblages in the south-west and south coasts;
- twenty-seven species of seagrasses that provide a level of species richness unequalled in the world;
- about 3500 islands, some of which retain fauna once found on mainland Australia, such as the marl (western barred bandicoot), mernine (banded hare-wallaby) and boodie (burrowing bettong);
- twelve internationally significant wetlands (Ramsar sites) covering approximately 500,000 hectares;
- 120 nationally important wetlands;
- 208 major waterways with a combined length of 25,000 kilometres and 171 estuaries; and
- 38,000 scientifically described taxa, including around 11,500 vascular plants (32 per cent found in the south-west of the State, of which 79 per cent are endemic) and about 4450 vertebrate fauna, with an estimated total taxa of over 285,000 (excluding bacteria, viruses and protozoa).



Why does WA need a strategy?

We need a State biodiversity conservation strategy to ensure that our actions and investments will reap the greatest benefits for all Western Australians, and future generations.

The strategy will also help provide priorities and a framework for conservation actions and decisions occurring at local and regional levels, as well as provide guidance for national and international initiatives. It will provide a sharper focus for investors from government, industry and private sectors.

Above all, a State biodiversity conservation strategy is needed to establish a common vision and goal for biodiversity conservation in WA.

What is the draft strategy's goal?

The goal is to recover and conserve WA's biodiversity within 100 years. It will focus on species and ecosystems known to be under significant pressure from a range of factors and on the brink of extinction. Simultaneously, it will prevent a decline of biodiversity in ecosystems and landscapes that are ecologically intact and in relatively good condition.



Vision for WA - what will be different in 2029...

All Western Australians value and understand the importance of biodiversity, and are aware of the social, economic and environmental benefits from indigenous biodiversity.

All Western Australians recognise that biodiversity underpins our social and economic well-being, and recognise the need to act now to prevent further decline and actively support major initiatives for biodiversity conservation.

All Western Australians accept their part in conserving and managing biodiversity throughout the State, and there is cooperation and collective action to protect, maintain and restore WA's biodiversity.

WA is recognised as a world leader in biodiversity science and conservation.

There is a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity decline, with biodiversity being better conserved throughout WA, including the successful recovery of at least 20 threatened species and improvement in the conservation status of a further 80 threatened species.

and within 100 years

WA's biodiversity, including all indigenous species and ecological communities, is recovered and conserved, along with representative landscapes and ecosystems.

Future generations value, care for, and enjoy the same or increased benefits from biodiversity that Western Australians currently enjoy.

How will the strategy's vision be achieved?

Eight key strategic directions are proposed to provide an overarching framework to achieve the strategy's goal and vision.

Key Strategic Direction 1:

Build biodiversity knowledge and improve information management

(We need to know what biodiversity we have and what it requires to survive, to ensure its conservation.)

Key Strategic Direction 2:

Promote awareness and understanding of biodiversity and related conservation issues

(We need everyone in the community to be aware of biodiversity conservation requirements to help ensure the success of our conservation programs.)

Key Strategic Direction 3:

Engage and encourage people in biodiversity conservation management

(The more people involved in biodiversity conservation programs, the easier it will be to meet our goals.)

Key Strategic Direction 4:

Improve biodiversity conservation requirements in natural resource use sectors

(We need to ensure that all industry sectors take due account of the importance of biodiversity conservation.)

Key Strategic Direction 5:

Enhance effective institutional mechanisms and improve integration and coordination of biodiversity conservation

(The importance of biodiversity conservation needs to be recognised across all sectors of government, as well as major community-based groups including natural resource management groups and all of these sectors need to work together to achieve biodiversity conservation.)



Key Strategic Direction 6:

Establish and manage the formal conservation reserve system

(The formal conservation reserve system is the backbone of all biodiversity conservation initiatives. We need to ensure appropriate areas are permanently conserved so that the combined value of the reserves and additional efforts on other lands is maintained.)

Key Strategic Direction 7:

Recover threatened species and ecological communities and manage other significant species/ecological communities and ecosystems

(We need to prevent species becoming extinct to meet the basic requirements of biodiversity conservation.)

Key Strategic Direction 8:

Conserve landscapes/seascapes for biodiversity (integrating on and off-reserve conservation and managing system-wide threats)

(While small, isolated conservation initiatives can be valuable, the most secure, effective and efficient means to provide for biodiversity conservation is through landscape and seascape scale programs. These provide for the contribution of the wide variety of ecological processes which support biodiversity.)



Submission form

Draft: A 100-year Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Western Australia

Name: _____

Organisation: _____

Position/title: _____


Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

 **EMAIL** your submission to:
biodiversity@wa.gov.au

 **POST** your submission to:

Draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for WA

Department of Environment and Conservation
Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
BENTLEY WA 6983

Do you support a biodiversity conservation strategy for Western Australia? **Yes / No**

Note to submitter on providing comments:

Please ensure that you adequately reference your comments for each section to text within the draft strategy. This will make it easier to locate your comment against the text in the draft strategy and address it for the final document.

When making a comment, first make reference to the page, then section followed by the paragraph. For example, page 2, Section 1.3, paragraph 2 – Comments: (add your comments in the space provided)

1 Section 1: Introduction - Biodiversity matters

2 Section 2: Vision for WA

3 Section 3: Principles to guide implementation

Submission form

Draft: A 100-year Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Western Australia (WA)

4 Section 4: Areas of focus for action

Key Strategic Direction 1.

Key Strategic Direction 2.

Key Strategic Direction 3.

Key Strategic Direction 4.

Key Strategic Direction 5.

Key Strategic Direction 6.

Key Strategic Direction 7.

Key Strategic Direction 8.

5 Section 5: Reviewing progress of the strategy

General comments: Please list any issues that you believe have not been covered.

What would be achieved by 2029?

1. Completion of the terrestrial and marine conservation reserve system to meet the requirements of comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness. These will cover at least 15 per cent of WA's land area, as well as a network of sanctuary zones in marine parks and reserves that represent the full range of habitats. Management of the reserve system will be at best practice standards.
2. Integration of conservation with other land and resource uses across landscapes and seascapes, including through the use of market-based instruments, and voluntary conservation agreements in at least five million hectares of privately managed lands.
3. Improvement in the conservation status of at least 100 threatened species through recovery action, including 20 species fully recovered and removed from the State's threatened species lists.
4. Effective control of invasive animals in priority areas for biodiversity conservation, including a three-fold expansion of the Western Shield feral predator (fox and cat) control and fauna recovery program to more than 10 million hectares, and targeted action against other invasive animals including camels, goats, pigs, cane toads and starlings.
5. Containment of WA's top 30 environmental weeds, including rubbervine, athel pine, prickly acacia and date palm and elimination of at least 10 'sleepers' weed species, in tandem with the prevention of new weeds being established.
6. Attack on *Phytophthora* dieback in areas of its greatest extent, where key biodiversity assets are threatened. Containment of its extent, especially in Fitzgerald River and Stirling Range national parks and in priority threatened flora populations and threatened ecological communities, will be a priority.
7. Effective management of other processes threatening the State's biodiversity, including salinity, altered fire regimes, eutrophication, native vegetation clearing and pollution.
8. Substantial improvement in knowledge of the State's biodiversity, including completion of a statewide program of systematic terrestrial and marine biological surveys, and the completion of the taxonomic description of a further 500 species of the State's flowering plants (or about one-third of the plant species estimated to still remain undescribed).
9. Incorporation of consideration of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity in all planning and actions involving land uses and natural resource management.
10. Whole-of-community involvement in biodiversity conservation, through awareness and active engagement, including Indigenous people, youth, land managers, private enterprise, community groups, local government, and people from urban, regional and rural areas.

Developing your submission

Your comments will help form the final State biodiversity conservation strategy.

Each submission is important in its own right, but those that clearly outline and articulate suggested changes in a constructive manner will be of greatest help.

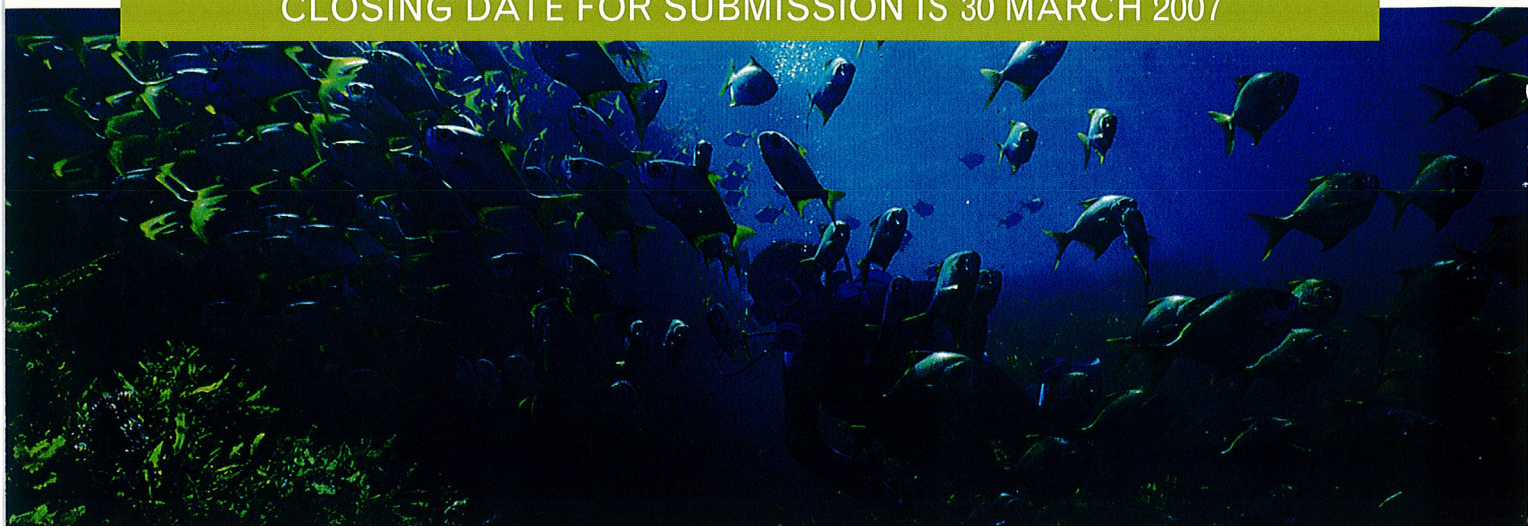
We encourage you to complete the attached submission form which will make it easier to locate your comment against the text in the draft strategy and address it for the final document.

Remember to include your contact details so we can provide you feedback, and allow us to contact you for clarification if necessary.

What happens next?

At the end of the public comment period, all submissions will be reviewed and taken into consideration when finalising the document. A summary and analysis of submissions will be available when the final plan is released after approval by the Government.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION IS 30 MARCH 2007



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