

WILDERNESS NEWS



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**BLOW THE LID OFF
DEFORESTATION**



AUSTRALIA'S UNSEEN ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Out of sight. Out of control.

ZERO
DEFORESTATION
AUSTRALIA

**In Queensland alone last year,
400,000 hectares of forest was destroyed.
That's an MCG. Every. Three. Minutes.**

A national disgrace. A catastrophe. An unmitigated crisis.

Deforestation is out of control in Australia, and it's time you know what's going on. For most of us, it's out of sight—as bulldozers plough through remote bushland. For some of us, it's a little closer to home... as our urban fringes fragment bushland. Wherever it's happening, we're revealing the full extent of this crisis as a matter of urgency.

Recent figures have uncovered a dramatic increase in clearing—in Queensland alone, satellite data has revealed 400,000 hectares were destroyed in the past year. That's an area the size of the MCG flattened every three minutes. It's killing our wildlife, our soil, our rivers, our Reef and our climate.

Without urgent action, scientists tell us that our iconic animals are being pushed to the brink. Right now, one animal is dying every second from deforestation in Australia. Koalas, cockatoos, goannas, bandicoots—no creature is safe from the bulldozers that tear across our land. That's 34 million lives extinguished a year.

Embarrassingly, Australia is now recognised as global deforestation hotspot—joining notorious places like

the Amazon and Borneo. What's more, we're number two on the list of seven countries that are causing half of all global biodiversity loss. This shouldn't be occurring in a developed country.

But we didn't get here by accident. The turning point was when Queensland's Newman Government ripped up the state's laws that were keeping deforestation under control in 2013. Since then, it's been getting worse every year.

But we've got a plan. And you're helping us blow the lid off deforestation. Together, we'll stop the bulldozers and expose the worst offenders.

Zero Deforestation is an ambitious, long-term target—but we know that we can make it a reality.

Through your support, you're helping us dig deeper into Australia's deforestation scandal. Let's shine the spotlight on this dark national secret and put an end to deforestation, once and for all.

SPEAKING OUT AGAINST DESTRUCTION



34 million animals killed. In one year. In one state.

Hundreds of thousands of hectares destroyed, millions of native animals lost, and tonnes of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. These figures are overwhelming in their magnitude, but what does it look like on the ground? The impacts of deforestation are painfully clear when you see it through the eyes of those who face it daily.

We approached a farmer, an ecologist and a koala carer to get a first person account of how this man-made crisis is affecting our soils, climate and wildlife.

Here's what they had to say:

Glenn Morris — farmer (NEW SOUTH WALES)

I just can't believe it when I drive around the country and see the way the landscape is being treated.

Everyone was out there clearing the land, cleaning the paddocks up and trying to clear everything in sight, and we just thought that the environment would go on providing forever, without any responsibility on us.

So what's going to take us from this degraded state to a healthy state?

We really need to have national and state goals that are saying we've got degraded soil health and landscape conditions that have come about through however many decades or hundreds of years of decision-making which wasn't appropriate. We need to wrest the land back into a healthy resource space for another thousand generations of Australians.

Vanda Grabowski — koala carer (QUEENSLAND)

In the Moreton Bay region, where I live, you would see clearing every single day. It wasn't strategic clearing either—everything would be cut to the ground, absolutely to the ground, nothing left standing. You would see these big piles of timber, and occasionally I'd find a body of a koala in the timber—which was just so distressing.

When Campbell Newman came in, he just tossed out the laws that kept deforestation under control—and, as a result, land clearing escalated. And that coincided with the koala decline.

There used to be a state law that said 'if a developer goes into build residential housing, 10% of that bushland must be kept'—10% of the mature bushland must be kept for the wildlife. I don't know what happened to that law—each government changes the law and there's no consistency or big picture thinking about any of it. It's just 'slash and burn' mentality.

Dr Thomas Newsome — ecologist (NEW SOUTH WALES)

Australia has the highest extinction rate in the world for mammals. We've lost 30 mammals to extinction over the last 200 years—that's half the world's mammal extinctions in our backyard. Sadly, habitat loss is one of the main reasons why we have such a high extinction rate for mammals.

Biodiversity loss can actually have flow-on effects, right down through the ecosystem, influencing vegetation, soil quality and water quality. So when you take these animals out of the system, there can be cascading impacts that can not only affect ecosystems, but also humans, because we rely on soil for food production and clean water for our own health and wellbeing.

Put simply: we need to slow down the rate of deforestation. Unfortunately, most of the policy and management is headed in the other direction.



DOOR TO DOOR

Fighting deforestation in the field.

Queensland is one of the most biologically diverse states in Australia. From wet tropics to endless stretches of sand, to rainforests and woodlands, the Sunshine State is a sanctuary for wildlife.

But Queensland is also ground zero for deforestation. Recent state government figures show that a catastrophic 100,000 hectare increase in clearing occurred in the past year alone. It's hard to put such numbers into perspective, but needless to say, it's bad news.

If we're going to end this crisis, we need to get to as many Australians as possible, to arm them with information they need in order to act. So we've been hosting training days to equip volunteers and supporters with the skills needed to spread the word. Here's how some of our newest recruits feel about being part of a movement working towards zero deforestation.



Andrew

"It was my first time door knocking and I was a bit apprehensive. But people were really receptive and appreciative that I came to their doors and told them about this issue. I found the experience very rewarding, and I'd encourage anyone who cares about the environment to do the same."



Natalie

"You can stand with your shoulders back and know that you're doing something good for the planet. It's just such a good feeling; I wish I could've been out there for a few more hours. If you're interested in doing it—get involved. It's so easy."



Akash

"Door knocking is a great way to connect with members of the community that you otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to meet. It's really special when you recognise that you share values towards the natural environment and its conservation and preservation. It's nice to see that there are people out there that do want to see change, just like the rest of us."

You can join this movement too. Go to wilderness.org.au/movementforlife to learn how you can be a driving force for change in stopping this deforestation crisis.



DRONES AGAINST DEFORESTATION

With your help earlier in the year, we bought three drones—one each for the worst offending states for deforestation (Queensland, New South Wales, and Western Australia). Here's a firsthand account from one of our trained-up Queensland pilots, Jono Rihan.

This morning, we took the drones out to a place called Woodhill, one hour south of Brisbane. We were there to capture footage of urban clearing for development, which we suspect is illegal, alongside one of our local organiser groups. The local council don't seem to want to do anything about it.

I used to live in that area. It's been going on as long as I've been there. It's seen as a part of rural life; but this is on a different scale. As a Queenslander, it's frustrating because we thought we fixed this problem with strong laws ten, fifteen years ago.

What we saw today was about 50 acres of potential koala habitat decimated. There were some pretty big piles of logs—spotted gum and ironbark regrowth—pushed up in heaps that will obviously get burned at some point in the future.

This is why fresh footage is so important. It's better when the earth is still raw and the scars are present, for the full impact of the devastation to be felt.

Our experience is that seeing footage of deforestation has as visceral effect on people. It makes an impression—a bad one, but one they may feel compelled to do something about.

I feel hopeful that the footage we're capturing will change people's views. I know we'll be doing everything we can to make deforestation an issue.

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What we saw today was about 50 acres of potential koala habitat decimated. ”

— Jono Rihan, Sky Scout drone pilot.

Why I support The Wilderness Society

Kirsten Flannery (MELBOURNE)

“As I was reflecting on my support of The Wilderness Society over the last five years, I am always impressed with the human power that they are able to mobilise for key environmental issues—from grassroots community issues through to the high-level legal and political levels.

As someone who has a deep love and appreciation for nature, I feel great knowing that I can put my resources into an organisation that does have significant impact when I don't have time to be involved myself.

It makes me feel good to give my donations to a really awesome bunch of people who have proven themselves to be successful. I feel good knowing that my loved ones

are able to continue to enjoy nature thanks to all the hard work of the people in The Wilderness Society.

I love watching awareness grow in the younger generation, as my eight-year-old niece wants to understand how recycling works, how to grow silverbeet and why a particular plant looks the way it does. It leaves me feeling confident that this planet will be sustained by future generations in a way that sadly isn't happening now.”

Kirsten is one of thousands, just like you, who support nature through The Wilderness Society. Thank you.

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I feel good knowing that my loved ones are able to continue to enjoy nature thanks to all the hard work of the people in The Wilderness Society. ”

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OUR WORK AROUND AUSTRALIA

The Great Australian Bight

Last year, you helped force BP to back away from its plans to drill for oil in the Great Australian Bight and recently, we had another resounding victory: Chevron is also pulling out! This comes on the back of months of campaigning, community organising, training and tireless work with an alliance of organisations to protect our pristine southern ocean. As well as this, five coastal councils have voted to oppose oil drilling in the area (so far). Together, we have made the Bight an inhospitable place for Big Oil. Our campaign is working. But the fight isn't over yet. Now, we're ready to take on the last of the three Oil Giants with plans to start exploratory drilling: Statoil.

The Pilliga

Recently, Prime Minister Turnbull bullied the NSW Premier to fast-track approval of Santos' Narrabri Gas Project in the Pilliga, due to a 'gas supply crisis'. Fortunately, the Premier realised the crisis is fabricated—the real problem is that greedy companies export most of our gas overseas. Meanwhile, the government's independent scientists have raised serious concerns about the water modelling Santos used to justify this project. Yet the NSW Government is still intent on supporting it—despite its threats to aquifers, farmland and endangered species. With a decision expected next year, and a state election scheduled soon after, we're making sure no party wants to suffer the political pain of approving Narrabri.

Tasmania's Forests

As a state election looms, the Hodgman Government is seeking to wind back protection for natural and cultural heritage values. Old growth rainforests in Tasmania's conservation reserve estate—including 420,000 hectares across the takayna /Tarkine, Lobster Forests and Blue Tier—are all under threat from logging. On the takayna coast, Premier Hodgman has been forced to apply to the Federal Government for approval to expand destructive 4WD tracks across an ancient Aboriginal cultural landscape. Collaborative work continues to raise a voice for Aboriginal heritage and see the areas properly protected and respected. With people power behind them, our campaigns continue to strive for the permanent protection of areas by having them formally added to Tasmania's increasingly valuable national park system.



Victoria's Forests

The public support for the creation of the Great Forest National Park continues to grow. Recent polls show that nine out of 10 Victorians support the Park—to secure and protect our precious drinking water; carbon-rich forests for a safe climate; and endangered animals, like the Fairy (Leadbeater's) Possum. Research shows the park stands to attract an additional 400,000 visitors to the Yarra Valley and Gippsland regions a year, while creating hundreds of much-needed, sustainable, regional jobs. In East Gippsland, logging is threatening old growth forest in the Kuark Forest. As we go to print, legal action has forced VicForests to suspend logging some areas. These forests are relics of Gondwana and their entire ecosystem must be protected.

Great Western Woodlands

The Helena Aurora Range is a little known gem of nature. Also known as Bungalbin, it's a wildflower-adorned jewel in the middle of the Western Australian outback. But, like a lot of spectacular places in Western Australia, there's an iron ore mining company which thinks it would look much better as a giant hole in the ground. The state's Environmental Protection Authority has recommended against mines ruining the range—twice—and scientists and Traditional Owners are also opposed to it. But we're hearing that the mining lobby is continuing to pressure the state government to approve the mines. Opposition is building—not just in Western Australia, but across the country to keep this special place out of harm's way.

HELP BLOW THE LID OFF DEFORESTATION.

Business as usual is no longer an option.

**The only way to reverse the tide of destruction is to expose this hidden crisis.
There's more to this story and with your donation, we can dig deeper and bring it to an end.**

Together, we can move towards zero deforestation.

Please use the reply paid envelope provided or donate securely online at wilderness.org.au/blowthelid
📞 1800 030 641

**BLOW THE LID OFF
DEFORESTATION**

DRINK A BEER, SAVE A LEGEND

As legend has it, Tassie's Giant Freshwater Lobster would come to the aid of thirsty bushmen by cracking open their beers with its powerful pincers. Today, after decades of poaching, habitat loss and mining pollution, this legendary lobster faces extinction. With all profits going towards saving this oversized invertebrate from the brink, Giant Lobster Ale is paying back an historic favour. So drink a beer, and save a legend.

GIANTLOBSTER.COM.AU



**MOO
BREW**

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES:

1800 030 641
www.wilderness.org.au



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