



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water



Budget 2022–23



Building a better future for the environment

Hitting the ground running

The environment is a priority for the Australian Government. We are investing \$1.8 billion for the environment.

As well as strong investment we're reforming the way our environment is treated. The environment is now back at the heart of the government's agenda:

- The Australian Government has legislated higher ambition on climate change, with a clear path to net zero emissions.
- The government has introduced new Ozone legislation to repair the Ozone layer. We have included ozone-depleting gases as part of our Paris Agreement Commitments.
- We're rewriting our national environmental laws, to deliver trust, integrity and efficiency.
- We're establishing a new Environmental Protection Agency, to ensure that these laws are being enforced on the ground.
- Australia has now signed the 'Leader's Pledge for Nature' - a United Nations commitment to protecting Nature.
- We've committed to protecting thirty percent of our land and sea by 2030 and will commit to this internationally at the UN Biodiversity COP meeting in December 2022.
- We've released the Threatened Species Action Plan: Towards Zero Extinctions.
- We're establishing a new nature repair market, to reward farmers and other landholders for their work in restoring and protecting nature.
- We're expanding our Blue Carbon Projects – to both rewild our oceans and create carbon sinks.
- We're working on delivering our recycling and circular economy actions – including adding mattresses and medical waste to our product stewardship priorities.

Delivering for our environment

The Australian Government is investing in a better future for our environment, funding programs that will protect, restore, and better manage our environment and heritage.

This investment highlights the government's determination to act on the warnings clearly laid out in the 2021 State of the Environment Report. It demonstrates the government's commitment to fully respond to the once-in-a-generation Samuel Review of our national environment law, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The government is delivering on its election promises. The environment is back as a priority with a range of targeted investment to reverse the decline in recent years.

This includes:

- Investing a record \$1.2 billion to protect and restore our iconic Great Barrier Reef.
- \$90 million to employ and upskill up to 1,000 Landcare Rangers to conserve and restore the environment.
- An additional \$66.5 million to support 10 new Indigenous Protected Areas, bringing us closer to our commitment to protect and conserve 30% of our land and ocean by 2030.
- \$224.5 million to deliver our commitment to save Australia's most imperilled native species.
- \$10.8 million to improve ocean and marine park management in Australia and to strengthen our international environmental leadership in ocean related policy.
- \$91 million for the first round of our \$200 million election promise to improve local waterways through the Urban Rivers and Catchment Program.
- \$14.7 million for the protection of cultural and First Nations heritage sites.

Why is this important and who will benefit?

Restoring the reef

The Australian Government is investing an additional \$204 million for the Great Barrier Reef. This delivers on our election commitment to spend a record \$1.2 billion to protect, manage and restore the Reef.

This includes \$96.6 million to address critical gaps in implementing the Reef 2050 Plan and \$91.8 million to deliver 'shovel ready' projects that accelerate Reef protection and restoration activities. \$15.3 million will support the Coastal Marine Ecosystems Research Centre (CMERC) at Central Queensland University in Gladstone.

This investment accelerates the shovel-ready projects under the Reef 2050 Plan to protect and restore the Great Barrier Reef and secure reef jobs.

It will help commercial fishers to minimise the impacts of their activities on protected species, enhance monitoring to ensure we better understand changes in water quality, improve our understanding of blue carbon and other ecosystem restoration

Land and coastal (blue carbon) ecosystem restoration projects will be scaled up to significantly improve water quality. Coral reef adaptation projects will be accelerated, and reef protection activities of local councils will be boosted.

Indigenous land and sea management

The Australian Government understands the importance of working hand-in-hand with First Nations Peoples, who have 65,000 years of environmental management knowledge for us to learn from.

We are delivering \$14.7 million for the protection of cultural and First Nations heritage sites.

The government is investing an additional \$66.5 million to continue the highly successful Indigenous Protected Areas Program, creating long-lasting environmental, social and cultural outcomes.

The measure will support create 10 new Indigenous Protected Areas and add around 4.8 million hectares to the National Reserve System, contributing towards Australia's commitment to protect 30% of our land and 30% of our oceans by 2030.

Additionally, \$100 million of the Great Barrier Reef funding is dedicated to projects that will be delivered by Traditional Owners and indigenous rangers as part of managing their land and sea country.

Landcare Rangers

The Australian Government is investing \$90 million to employ and upskill up to 1,000 Landcare Rangers and fund the Landcare facilitator to coordinate community landcare activity. These rangers will deliver on-ground actions to protect and restore Australia's environment and heritage and help address labour and skills shortages in the environment sector.

The program will focus on regions with high unemployment, underemployment and low participation rates.

Saving native species

The Australian Government will support the recovery of plants, animals and ecological communities that are threatened with extinction, and strengthen conservation planning to better protect species and guide on-ground action.

We will deliver \$224.5 million for the Saving Native Species program.

This includes our commitment to save Australia's iconic koala and tackle yellow crazy ants and gamba grass that are threatening our imperilled native species.

We have announced a new *Threatened Species Action Plan: Towards Zero Extinctions* which will guide investments under this measure including on-ground action underpinned by better coordination, monitoring and planning.

The Action Plan identifies 110 priority species and 20 priority places to drive action where it is needed most, and where it will have the biggest impact.

Environmental law reform

The Australian Government is reforming outdated environment laws to restore trust and transparency. We need a system that better protects our environment and delivers faster decisions to proponents.

We will formally respond to the Samuel Review by the end of 2022 and bring forward new legislation in 2023, as well as establish a new Environment Protection Agency.

The government will invest \$117 million to support making timely environmental decisions.

This will ensure that the new Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has sufficient staff to assess proposals, including renewable energy and critical minerals projects, infrastructure, and residential developments in a timely manner, as well as undertake compliance activities to ensure conditions of approval are being met.

The government will restore funding of \$10 million to the Environmental Defenders Office and Environmental Justice Australia. This will improve access to justice and legal assistance for Australians wanting to uphold environmental laws and protect Australia's environment and heritage.

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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