

Media release

For immediate release

National state of the environment report must be a turning point for Australian nature

At the release today of Australia State of the Environment 2021, Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Environment and Water acknowledged the need for increased environmental funding, made a commitment to protecting 30 per cent of land and sea, and recognised the critical role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and local communities must play in curbing the tide of our environmental decline.

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) welcomes these announcements and hopes the report will result in strong action and even stronger investment – our natural and cultural heritage deserve nothing less.

ALCA is the peak national body representing organisations that work to conserve, manage and restore nature on privately managed land.

ALCA CEO, Dr Jody Gunn is optimistic about the impact of the report.

“While the report clearly charts our rapidly unfolding environmental crisis, it could serve as a line in the sand if the response is swift and purposeful,” Dr Gunn said.

“Until we value the critical role of nature in supporting our wellbeing, our food security and ultimately our economies, this downward trend will continue.”

The members of ALCA are up to the challenge of turning that story around.

One positive step is confirmation today of the government’s commitment to protect 30 per cent of Australia’s land and 30 per cent of Australia’s sea by 2030 (30 x 30). Private protected areas will be a critical part of achieving this target and the report outlines their current contribution.

ALCA also welcomes Minister Plibersek’s acknowledgement of the need for increased investment in our environment.

Minister Plibersek noted in her address: “The Australian Land Conservation Alliance estimates that we need to spend over \$1 billion a year to restore and prevent further landscape degradation.”

Dr Gunn said, “Australia’s declining natural environment parallels reduced investment in the environment and a lack of national coordination. Public and private investment will be critical to the task.”

Minister Plibersek outlined the 3 goals that will underpin her agenda: to protect, restore and manage the Australian environment.

The work of ALCA, its members and private landholders fits squarely within this framework as is outlined in ALCA’s [Strategic Plan: Protecting and stewarding for Nature](#).

“Private landholders are building resilience across our land through protecting and restoring our unique ecosystems,” Dr Gunn said.

“Our members and the thousands of landholders they engage with are on the frontline of stopping biodiversity loss and regenerating landscapes.

“They are actively managing land, translocating species, tackling invasive species, revegetating and restoring.

“But the investment in our conservation and land management communities must be scaled up and it must enable full participation of and leadership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.”

Alongside today’s release of the report, Minister Plibersek announced that the government will formally respond to the Samuel Review of the EPBC Act.

“Full implementation of the recommendations of the Samuel Review is critical and the consultation can’t start quickly enough,” Dr Gunn said.

Key actions would include strengthened environmental standards, well-resourced and genuinely independent oversight from an Environmental Assurance Commissioner, and strategic and regional planning with a focus on Commonwealth priorities.

“We have lost almost 2 years since the review was finalised. As we have found out today in the release of the state of the environment report, nature can’t wait any longer.

“The private land conservation sector welcomes consultation and looks forward to being a voice at the table,” Dr Gunn said.

ALCA and its members stand ready to continue our partnerships with government, business, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and community to halt and reverse our environmental decline, to scale up our efforts to protect, steward and restore privately managed land and water, and to reverse nature loss for a healthy and resilient Australia.

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About ALCA

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance is the peak national body representing organisations that work to conserve, manage and restore nature on privately managed land. We represent our members and supporters to grow the impact, capacity and influence of private land conservation to achieve a healthy and resilient Australia.

ALCA member land conservation efforts stretch across over 3 million square kilometres with more than 3,000 landholders. We have over 50,000 supporters and our combined annual turnover exceeds \$200 million.

Together ALCA and its members address some of the most pressing conservation issues across the country, including restoring endangered ecosystems, building the protected area estate, tackling invasive species, expanding private conservation finance and funding and using nature-based solutions to tackle climate change.

Through their active land management, ALCA member organisations are deeply embedded in regional communities and economies, providing jobs, securing significant regional investment, and safeguarding remaining native habitat, with its many positive spillover effects for community,

wellbeing and food security. We seek to demonstrate the role and value of private land conservation as a cornerstone of the Australian economy.

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