

Starting the conversation on Australia's priorities for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

A synthesis of views

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Introduction



Australia's critical role in shaping the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD), Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets¹ have provided the global framework which has helped to shape the protection of the world's biodiversity over the past 25 years.

The CBD framework - the Strategic Plan and its targets and indicators - is important for several reasons:

- The strategic plan provides a shared, overarching framework and purpose for biodiversity conservation across the globe.
- The targets provide a valuable framework in which to promote understanding of biodiversity and drive international and domestic action.
- It helps to identify pathways for implementation, for mobilising and directing resources, and for guiding investment in capacity development and the provision of technical advice.
- Reporting of progress towards meeting the targets helps to improve transparency, to spur action and to assist with the scrutiny of performance.
- The framework underpins Australia's national biodiversity efforts and domestic legislation.

As we approach the end of the 2011-2020 Decade on Biodiversity², the Aichi targets are due to expire. Some of these targets align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development³ and the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2020, the current framework will be succeeded by a new global biodiversity framework which will help shape our conservation future post-2020.

With a recent report indicating that wildlife populations have decreased by over half in less than 50 years⁴, it is clear that biodiversity is continuing to decline at an alarming rate around the globe despite the current framework. The Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework presents a rare

opportunity for the world's conservation community to come together to learn from the current strategic plan and goals, and to establish new long-term conservation commitments and actions. It is also a timely opportunity to align and integrate the framework more closely with other critical international goals and commitments.

Australia has a particularly vital role to play in helping to shape the new framework and ensure a strong vision for nature post-2020. Most notably, we are privileged to be part of a group of 17 'mega-diverse' countries which means that we carry a special responsibility for ensuring the protection of a significant proportion of the world's biodiversity (estimated at 7-10%).

The eyes of the world will be on us, and what we do, and do not, achieve will have global relevance and impact on us and future generations.

Australia is also a respected Party to the Convention with a good standing. As a developed country with world-class technical and scientific expertise and a solid track record and reputation for innovation in conservation management and governance, Australia has an opportunity to be a world leader in developing and implementing the new framework and ensuring the conservation of our unique and irreplaceable biodiversity.

"By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people¹."

¹ Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 including Aichi Biodiversity Targets <https://www.cbd.int/sp/>

² United Nations Decade on Biodiversity <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/>

³ Sustainable Development Goals <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

⁴ World Wildlife Fund For Nature's 'Living Planet Report', 2018

Australia can play a leadership role in generating a new pathway for effective conservation

Professor James Watson, Director of the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Science, University of Queensland

Climate change and biodiversity loss are the two greatest environmental challenges of our time. The Paris Agreement sets out a clear goal of limiting global warming to 2°C to avoid the greatest impacts of climate change, which has served as a rallying point for efforts to limit carbon emissions across the world. However, a comparably clear goal around the amount of natural space needed to end the biodiversity crisis has been far more elusive. And biodiversity has suffered as a consequence.

In 2010, Australia joined the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, and its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. These targets were intended to catalyse national and international conservation efforts and reverse negative biodiversity trends.

With the plan nearing an end, and attention turning toward a post-2020 biodiversity framework, the global community is now having an honest conversation about the effectiveness of the existing targets. The bottom line is, while there have been some wins (in particular around protected area growth) almost all critiques of progress made by nations is that the last ten years have been a failure.

The fundamental reality is that while there are very serious funding shortfalls when it comes to action on environmental issues generally and biodiversity, in particular, many of the current globally agreed CBD targets are just not ambitious enough to make any significant impact. It is essential that we

learn from the lessons of the past ten years and set adequate targets backed by strong action to ensure the protection of our biodiversity post-2020.

The post-2020 agenda allows nations like Australia to create a new pathway for conservation, and to focus on setting an agenda on *what nature needs*. Only an honest assessment of what biodiversity needs will allow for the necessary but significant changes required in how land and sea is set aside or managed for conservation to avoid widespread biodiversity declines and the collapse of vital ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration and climate regulation.

Australia has the opportunity to play a leadership role in developing this new agenda and of setting outcome-based targets relevant for abating the biodiversity crisis. If agreed, this pathway will lead to a plan that will act as the biodiversity-focussed counterpart to the goal of minimising global warming to 2°C under the Paris Agreement.

Science must be at the front and centre of this new plan for nature. Australia needs to take advantage of its riches in scientific expertise and develop a science-based plan for reaching area-based conservation targets in the most effective way possible.

For me, the first question that must be answered is perhaps the foundational question in conservation biology: what are the most important places to conserve? In the context of Australia, this question is not only influenced by the scale of priority places, but also the diversity of conservation objectives being considered.

As a start, we must identify and prioritise those places where we need to halt biodiversity loss, places that house the last remaining populations of a species and the last samples of an ecosystem type. To complement these irreplaceable sites, places that are still large, intact and functioning in ecologically and evolutionary natural ways should also be identified and protected. These places provide the backbone of planetary and regional scale ecosystem services, and build resilience, enabling species and ecosystems to self-regenerate and adapt to anthropogenic stressors.

Second, the plan must have an assessment on the scope and severity of threats to local biodiversity and the processes that sustain them. This includes the drivers of past and potential future habitat loss and degradation, but also a coherent understanding of the more nebulous impacts of invasive species, human over-harvesting, fire, disease and climate change. These threats are inherently linked with social and economic forces, and as such, an inter-disciplinary approach needs to be adopted to tackle them. This information should be generated spatially to inform on the urgency to act across different sites and allow the staging of diverse conservation efforts across the different regions of Australia.

Finally, once priorities are identified and conservation needs assessed, we must identify the area-based conservation measures needed to maintain natural integrity. While protected areas will always form the cornerstone of conservation action, my sense is that other area-based conservation mechanisms will play an increasingly important role in a conservation network that spans large areas of Australia and effectively manages the threats to biodiversity. Indigenous governance, private conservation tenants and land and sea stewardship arrangements should play a greater role in a holistic conservation agenda and their effectiveness and long-term durability should be assessed.

Australia, right now, has the opportunity to develop a holistic pathway for nature conservation that includes interim goals so that we can hold ourselves accountable for progress towards achieving the post-2020 targets. We already have the resources and the tenacity, we now need better implementation and stronger legislation. By generating a long-term plan for biodiversity, that recognises that different actions in different places are essential for ensuring long-term conservation outcomes, we can provide leadership to other signatory nations and at the same time, preserve our extraordinary natural legacy.





Purpose and Approach

This document is a synthesis of the views expressed by over 60 individuals across the not-for-profit, government and academic sectors, who participated in the Australian Committee of the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (ACIUCN) Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework workshop in Brisbane on 13 March 2019.

The aim of the workshop was to provide a neutral platform from which to start the conversation on Australia's priorities for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The desire was to harness the richness and diversity of participants' perspectives and in so doing, encourage greater collaboration amongst governments and civil society in the development, implementation and monitoring of the new strategy and goals. The focus of the workshop was on addressing select key questions raised by the IUCN's Post-2020 global biodiversity framework discussion paper⁵. After a number of thought-provoking presentations, a world café style approach was used to enable the small groups of participants to have the opportunity to address a range of questions posed at six different stations.

The participants shared a vision for a robust framework and targets to ensure the successful conservation and management of Australia's unique biodiversity post-2020. The workshop acknowledged that the current Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) 2011-2020 strategic plan has provided the global framework which has helped to shape the protection of the world's

biodiversity, but that far more needs to be done to curb the ongoing, rapid loss of species, ecosystems and ecological processes.

The opportunity to provide input to the development of a new framework was perceived as a rare opportunity to learn from the current strategic plan and to establish bold, new long-term conservation commitments and actions for the future.

Method of development

This document outlines the key findings from the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework workshop. The one-day workshop was independently facilitated by Michael Williams and delivered in partnership with the Australian Conservation Foundation, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the University of Queensland.

This document was developed in close collaboration and consultation with key workshop participants, the workshop's independent facilitator and members of the organising committee. The intention of the document is not to cover the full range of perspectives raised at the workshop but rather to collate and synthesise the key findings to help inform the development of the post-2020 framework. Individual workshop participants, though invited to provide feedback on the draft document, were not requested to provide formal endorsement of it and none of the content should be ascribed to any single delegate or organisation.

⁵ IUCN views on the preparation, scope and content of the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework – 15 December 2018

Key Findings and Outcomes

1. Lessons Learnt and Gaps

Questions posed:

- What lessons have we as the participants learned from the current Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets?
- How can we ensure the smooth transition to, and implementation of, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?
- On which areas should we focus additional attention?
- What are the gaps in the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020?

Key findings

1. Impact of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems is severely under-represented in current targets.

Climate change was perceived by the group as a severely underestimated factor in the Aichi targets. Participants agreed that climate change is a critical threat that has and will have massive impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems in Australia; something which the current targets do not appear to consider. There was strong agreement amongst the groups that there was a dire need for urgent, critical and transformational climate change targets.

In addition, the participants expressed the view that the current targets do not provide adequate protection of primary, carbon-rich ecosystems, despite the knowledge that loss of these systems will create additional carbon emissions and significantly increase pressure on biodiversity. A key finding of the workshop was that the post-2020 targets need to ensure climate action is “biodiversity positive” and have a specific focus on restoration and rebuilding ecosystem integrity.

The nature-based solutions approach, particularly the protection and restoration of forests, was regarded as important for mitigating and adapting

to the impacts of climate change in Australia.

2. Lack of strong policy implementation and inadequate resourcing to meet targets

A 2016 progress report⁶ found that based on its current trajectory, the world is not on track to meet the Aichi targets. Australia has made good progress towards meeting the percentage components of Aichi target 11⁷ but falls short on other aspects such as representativeness. Overall Australia will fall short on meeting many of the other targets, with 2018’s environmental scorecard⁸ indicating a decline across a number of national environmental indicators since 2017. Participants expressed the view that there are several reasons why we are failing to meet the targets, notably a lack of strong policy and adequate resources to facilitate meeting them. The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act and environmental offsets policy were highlighted as examples of critical legislation that should be strengthened. The need for strong policy alongside improved training, funding and resourcing were identified as being essential for meeting the post-2020 targets.

3. More accountability needed at all levels

There was a strong consensus amongst participants that there needed to be more accountability and an emphasis on responsibility for reaching the targets across all levels of government, corporate and civil society, with repercussions for not meeting the targets in place. The need for better collaboration between governing institutions across all jurisdictions was expressed, along with the suggestion that an action plan is developed that could be applied at the local and national level to aid implementation. This was regarded as applying not only to the new framework but as an integral part of current efforts to maximise Australia’s outcomes against all 2020 targets.

⁶ Convention on Biological Diversity: Progress report towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets <https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/CBD-Aichi-Targets-Progress-Dec2016.pdf>

⁷ “By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.”

⁸ Australia’s Environment in 2018, Australian National University

1. Lessons Learnt and Gaps cont.

4. Clearly articulated, SMART targets linked to clear on-ground actions

The need for clearly articulated, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) goals linked to clear on-ground actions was a common theme across all stations. The ability to be able to easily measure the targets was regarded as a crucial element for success, yet the need to focus on quality as opposed to just quantity was also highlighted. Some participants expressed the view that fewer, bigger targets were needed as they perceived that micro targets did not inspire action.

Many participants suggested a need for sub-targets to ensure clarity, transparency, and detail on how targets could be measured. To ensure 'buy-in' from other sectors, it was suggested that the targets needed to be somewhat flexible and should be mainstreamed through clear language, politics, education, media and civil society organisations.

5. Aichi targets should be more strongly aligned and linked with other international commitments

Participants expressed the view that the Aichi targets were not strongly enough aligned with other international commitments, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Some suggested that the new framework should be linked directly with the UNFCCC and share joint targets given the critical threat to biodiversity posed by climate change. The Sustainable Development Goals were identified as another important commitment for the post-2020 framework to connect with, as a way of helping to meet the new targets and to engage civil society.

6. Improved focus on drivers of biodiversity loss

Participants expressed the view that there was an insufficient focus in the Aichi targets on the drivers of biodiversity loss, notably ongoing, unsustainable habitat loss. There is also a focus in some targets on processes rather than on the desired outcome. For example, "by 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved...". Participants expressed the view that this was resulting in a tendency to "lock in loss", rather than

on efforts to retain existing habitat. There was a strong desire amongst groups to see a focus in the new framework on the drivers of biodiversity loss and on quantifiable targets; a factor which many believe is the reason that Aichi target 11 has been comparatively successful and has formed the primary focus for Australia to date.

7. Focus on freshwater conservation

A lack of a focus on fresh water in the Aichi targets was perceived by participants as a major gap in the current framework. Freshwater ecosystems are vital for environmental, social, and economic wellbeing, yet Australia has to date failed to ensure adequate protection of these ecosystems and is experiencing continued and significant loss and degradation of these vital areas. Suggestions to close this gap included better implementation of water pricing, incentives for protection measures on private and Indigenous lands, stronger laws and consistency in policies across governing jurisdictions.

8. Share biodiversity and conservation benefits with civil society

The health, wellbeing, cultural and social benefits of nature are well understood within the environmental sector, yet it was acknowledged by participants that scientists and others have been poor at documenting and sharing these with civil society.

A perceived lack of knowledge of the Aichi targets amongst politicians was also raised, as was the lack of urgency and consensus on the biodiversity crisis amongst broader society. Suggestions to improve the current knowledge gap were:

- For scientists to be frank about the level of emergency and actively engage people in their research.
- To promote and share the benefits of a healthy environment with people through popular media and initiatives like Healthy Parks Healthy People and #NatureForAll.
- To tell the good stories of conservation (environmental, social and economic) to secure the support of government and broader society and inspire the change in behaviour needed to achieve the new targets.

2. Targets

Questions posed:

- What would be SMART, ambitious targets for the conservation of nature in Australia?
- Should the post-2020 targets relate to the existing Aichi Targets and if so, how?
- How should the set of targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework align with other targets, including those adopted under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Key findings

1. New targets need to be SMART

There was broad consensus across all groups that the new targets needed to be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Ambitious, Relevant/Realistic and Timely. The need for robust targets as a vital way to drive ambition and to measure our progress towards safeguarding life on Earth was expressed. Some participants agreed with the opinion that targets should be ambitious, whilst others expressed the view that the focus should be on ensuring that they are also achievable so as not to disincentivise stakeholders. Participants agreed widely however that the current targets have not been enough to curb the significant, ongoing loss of biodiversity and species, and that the new targets needed to accomplish far more.

2. Targets need to better account for climate change

There was strong agreement that any set of new targets needed to better account for climate change and integrate with other international climate agreements, including the Paris climate accord and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This included ensuring that there were streamlined reporting mechanisms and data collection requirements.

3. Targets should drive a change in behaviour

Participants shared the view that no matter what the new targets were, they should be used to drive the change in behaviour and outcomes needed to successfully safeguard biodiversity. It was noted that in Australia, global biodiversity targets have been an important accountability mechanism to drive policy and behaviour change to date.



4. Targets should consider the inextricable link between biodiversity and people

There were significant discussions across all groups on how future targets should consider the interconnectedness of biodiversity with other issues in our everyday lives. For example, targets relating to education and highlighting the importance of a healthy natural environment for human health outcomes.

Whilst there was no consensus on what the specific targets should be, suggestions ranged from those that tackled social and economic drivers to those focused on biodiversity values. Targets that received broader support included:

- No net loss of native vegetation
- Ending extinctions
- Protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030
- Having no-take zones in 30% of the marine environment
- Protection of all remaining primary forests and ecosystems; and
- Targets relating to the funding for biodiversity conservation, such as a percentage of GDP

5. Targets should build on current Aichi targets and be consistent across international agreements

Participants broadly agreed that the post-2020 targets should build on the current Aichi targets; however, it was acknowledged that for the most part, these had failed to drive change at the scale needed to protect Australia's biodiversity. There was also a clear preference amongst participants for ensuring that the post-2020 targets were consistent across international agreements.

3. Indicators

Questions posed:

What indicators are needed to monitor our progress in implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the national, regional and global scale?

Key findings

1. Indicators are foundational for the formation of targets

Practical, sound, scientifically based indicators were widely regarded as foundational for the formation of targets and should intrinsically reflect the goals we are seeking to achieve. Participants expressed the view that the post-2020 indicators should:

- Comprise a smaller set of higher-level measures for the purpose of communicating key messages, with cascading or ‘nested’ measures below that reflect a richer story of what is happening to nature.
- Each should be framed to address the targets being assessed, be state-based, and apply directly to the outcomes* sought.
- Reflect a set of ‘global biodiversity indices’ to enable rapid understanding of the state of the environment in much the same way as global financial indices

***Note:** There was general concern amongst participants over the lack of baseline assessment data and information available for tracking progress against the goals across several measures. This was perceived as serving a significant impediment to consistent measurement.

2. Indicators should interact with climate change measures

Participants expressed the pressing need to demonstrate and communicate the interdependency between the solutions for addressing climate change and those for managing biodiversity loss. Building healthy, resilient ecosystems was highlighted as an essential prerequisite for retaining biodiversity, sequestering

carbon, and enabling the resistance and recovery of ecosystems and species in the face of climate change. It was suggested that the CBD adopt the clear and explicit Paris Agreement target⁹ of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius based on the severe ramifications exceeding this target would have for biodiversity.

3. New targets should consider socio-economic indicators

In addition to environmental indicators, participants suggested that social and economic measures should be adopted to ensure accountability of the organisations responsible for both collecting information and the actions on which they are reporting.

There was a general recognition of socio-economic factors as being important for engaging communities. It was expressed that socio-economic measures should reflect the social, economic and cultural dimensions of biodiversity. In addition, ecological justice measures were perceived to present an unexplored opportunity for a globally-understood set of indicators that reflect the importance of acting for nature for nature’s sake.

4. Engage communities in a way that makes them care

Indicators were regarded as having a vital role to play in communicating the state of biodiversity – what progress is being achieved and the losses that are experienced – and driving a change in behavior across broader society.

New and emerging technologies were identified as having the potential to drive data collection on a broad scale and provide cost-effective ways for aggregating data from multiple sites and countries.

⁹ The Paris Agreement <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>



4. Implementation

Questions posed:

- What additional mechanisms and processes are required to support the implementation and improve governance of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?
- How do we resource these in Australia?

Key findings

1. Strong, enabling legislation to facilitate implementation

Strong, enabling legislation that clearly embeds the international commitments, targets and indicators into federal and state legislation (notably a revision of the EPBC Act or development of alternate legislation) was widely regarded as providing the best opportunity to ensure that a strong implementation framework exists to track progress, measure impact and trigger improved actions if interim targets are not met. This would also reflect the renewed national commitment needed to ensure the conservation of our unique biodiversity.

Participants perceived the new framework as presenting a timely opportunity and responsibility to align the international commitments made with the primary framework for conservation action in Australia. Ensuring that these documents align through the parallel reviews underway will provide for the development of specific goal-oriented

action plans, assimilated monitoring frameworks, reporting guidelines and adaptive management.

2. Consider the establishment of an independent, national commission to fund, manage and monitor progress

Participants suggested that the establishment of an independent, national commission which sits at the federal level could ensure better implementation of the new framework.

The formation of this agency was perceived as being able to facilitate the following:

- resolve conflicting legislation and actions across departments and sectors;
- ensure that the focus on Protected Area Targets expands the current focus on hectares of land and sea protected, to all the components of current Target 11 and its post-2020 equivalent. This includes the connectivity of large landscapes and representativeness of habitats within the National Reserve System;
- establish a robust planning framework to streamline effort across all jurisdictions and agencies;
- ensure effective prioritisation and sequencing of actions in a cost-effective way across jurisdictions;
- encourage innovation, facilitating, accrediting

4. Implementation cont.

and enabling market-based mechanisms for compliance and advanced actions aimed at achieving Australia's goals;

- install a mandatory, consistent, reliable reporting framework;
- ensure that protected area benefits enable improved management of sites as well as support traditional owners and local communities.

3. Ensure robust monitoring to inform high-quality reporting

There was a broad consensus amongst participants that robust monitoring is required to assess Australia's progress against the post-2020 targets and ensure high-quality reporting. Suggestions included:

- Incorporation of solid indicators that provide avenues for consistent measurement of progress against interim and final targets to provide accurate reporting ability;
- Aggregating the data collected by all government levels, departments and across sectors to facilitate reporting against all indicators and targets. Participants expressed the view that all environmental data collection should be aggregated and made transparent to provide efficiencies across various reporting requirements (e.g. data for CBD should also be used for State of the Environment reporting, planning processes, engagement in and growth of the Impact Investing market etc);
- Independent review of the reporting framework and all data at regular intervals to provide assurance of rigour as well as establish a pathway to improve, correct or continue to progress towards goals.

4. Encourage public participation in data collection

To build public support and engage the private sector in the implementation of the post-2020 framework, participants suggested that the opportunity to create a comprehensive curriculum-linked education program and evidence-based campaign that encourages public participation through citizen science, be explored.

Key ideas raised during the workshop were that:

- Education should focus on the communication of the needs, opportunities, benefits and interrelatedness of the environment, health, climate change and social development;
- The economic loss resulting from a failure to meet the targets should be highlighted and expressed in terms of what climate change will mean for future generations;
- Risk assessment of biodiversity loss on business viability and economic health with ASX and other partners should be undertaken.

5. Dedicated funding critical for achieving new targets

It was widely agreed by participants that the lack of any dedicated funding for the Aichi targets in Australia was a significant gap in the implementation process. This was despite the development of several programs to facilitate collaborative action and progress against the targets.

Secure, ongoing funding at federal, state and territory level was regarded by participants as essential for ensuring the effective and successful implementation of the new framework and post-2020 targets in Australia. In order to assess the costs and raise funds for this new implementation funding framework, the following actions were considered by the group as the most valuable:

- outline current spending on programs that aim to achieve progress against the targets;
- develop cost estimates that identify the efficiencies in the current model and potential duplication of responsible parties that can be avoided;
- measure this expenditure against GDP and benchmark against other OECD countries;
- pro-actively seek new business measures and partnerships for innovative funding beyond government investment;

Participants expressed that this funding model could provide a clear pathway for similar activities across the Pacific, placing Australia in a leadership position.

5. Mainstreaming Biodiversity

Questions posed:

- What role can the post-2020 global biodiversity framework play in mainstreaming biodiversity across society and economies?
- How do we as a society integrate diverse perspectives into the development of the framework to foster strong ownership and support concrete actions across all sectors and groups in Australia?

Key findings

1. Mainstreaming of biodiversity across all sectors critical for ensuring the success of the new framework

It is largely acknowledged that the transformational change needed to achieve the CBD goals and develop long-term solutions to curb biodiversity loss, will require the participation of all sectors and levels of society. The participants expressed the view that putting people at the front and centre of the targets, active engagement and collaboration were paramount for ensuring the change in behaviour and decision making necessary to reach the post-2020 targets. At the same time, the need to depoliticise the environment and conservation to steer the conversation away from one of blame to one focused on solutions was highlighted by many participants.

2. Make the issue real for people

There was general agreement amongst participants that biodiversity and conservation messages are too often esoteric and currently are not reaching broader society in Australia. There is a strong need to make the issue more real for people by providing them with visible outcomes and clear causal links that resonate with them. The importance of making the issue current to inspire urgent action by focusing on the impacts of biodiversity loss now and not only in the future was highlighted as was the need to carefully frame the conversation.

It was widely accepted amongst participants that people needed to be actively engaged through more inclusive language and targeted messaging that resonates with different audiences. It was suggested that messaging should focus on the solutions to the problem of biodiversity loss but should also help people to understand the benefits of biodiversity (economic, social and cultural) and the impact of its loss on them and their communities.

The need for Australia's national biodiversity approach and strategy to reflect the multicultural nature of the country and incorporate a diversity of views to get broad buy-in was also raised.



5. Mainstreaming Biodiversity cont.

3. Connect people with nature

The need to connect people to nature and biodiversity was regarded as vital for instilling a sense of care and stewardship for it. Participants highlighted the need to create opportunities for ‘meaningful connections’ through lived experiences as opposed to cursory encounters. The desire to create and provide opportunities for people across all income levels to connect with nature and improve access to it was expressed.

Connection with nature was also perceived as critical for inspiring a love for its intrinsic value rather than only for the benefits it provides. A growing body of research demonstrates the vital role contact with nature plays in ensuring our physical, mental and spiritual health, which is

inspiring a global movement that Australia could adopt a national approach to.

4. Simple, plain English targets and strategy

To help mainstream biodiversity, many participants expressed the view that the targets themselves needed to be simple and written in plain English to ensure broad understanding and engagement. The successful Sustainable Development Goals model was suggested as a good communications model to follow or alternatively a platform to leverage off. The use of the word ‘biodiversity’ itself was regarded by some as a potentially alienating term given the known low level of understanding of its meaning outside of the environmental field.

5. We need to start the “environmental dialogue” in Australia

Participants raised the need to start the environmental dialogue in Australia. France’s cross-sectoral strategy to raise the profile of biodiversity, Grenelle de l’Environnement, was raised and discussed as a good example of an effective approach to approaching the issue on a national scale. The major efforts of the Colombian government who have promoted nature conservation in airports and television ads using national heroes to urge Columbians to ‘wear the badge of conservation’ as part of their peace process was also cited. The ideal end state was believed to be one in which the environment was regarded by the majority in Australia as of equal importance to topics like defence and health. It was suggested that the use of ‘biodiversity ambassadors’ to raise the media profile and gain political attention as has been effectively done in the case of climate change could assist this process.

6. Improve ecological literacy

Participants identified the need to close the knowledge gap by integrating biodiversity lessons into school and university curriculums, and citizen science programs. Education was also perceived as important for breaking down the silos between the environmental field and other sectors and for highlighting the inextricable link between nature, and human health and wellbeing.



6. Indigenous Perspectives and Traditional Knowledge

Questions posed:

How do we ensure that the post-2020 framework is aligned and embedded with Indigenous perspectives and facilitates the integration of traditional knowledge into practice?

Key findings

1. Facilitate participation of Indigenous representative/s at key meetings

There was a strong consensus amongst participants that Australia needed to ensure that there was an adequate representation of Indigenous peoples at all key CBD meetings and conferences and that funding should be provided to facilitate this. The input and opinions of Indigenous peoples on what is working and what is not working in relation to the framework and targets are regarded as extremely valuable.

The need to ensure broad Indigenous representation by including individuals from a diversity of communities and networks was highlighted as critical for ensuring that the full range of perspectives is captured in the new framework.

2. Establish national CBD representative body for Indigenous peoples

Participants agreed that Australia still has a way to go in ensuring that Indigenous communities are given a voice in the conservation dialogue. Canada and New Zealand were highlighted as being good examples of how countries had effectively ensured this. To help resolve this gap, participants suggested that it would be beneficial for Indigenous peoples in the environment, land and heritage space to be given a voice through the creation of a national representative body who could provide advice to governments and other stakeholders to help guide decision making.

3. Put Indigenous Peoples front and centre of the new framework

Some participants suggested that some of the language used in discussions implies that

conservation is something that happens to Indigenous people, rather than something they are actively involved in. It was broadly agreed that Indigenous peoples should be placed at the front and centre of the new framework and that an emphasis should be made on the significant contribution they make to achieving global conservation objectives.

4. Provide opportunities for Indigenous knowledge-sharing and engagement

The lack of funding for events and initiatives that provide Indigenous peoples with important opportunities to share knowledge and practice was raised as a key issue.

Participants broadly agreed that it would be worthwhile to reinstate and fund the Indigenous-led and organised 'National Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference' (NILSM). NILSM was perceived to have provided a rich source of valuable information and empower Indigenous conservationists and land managers.

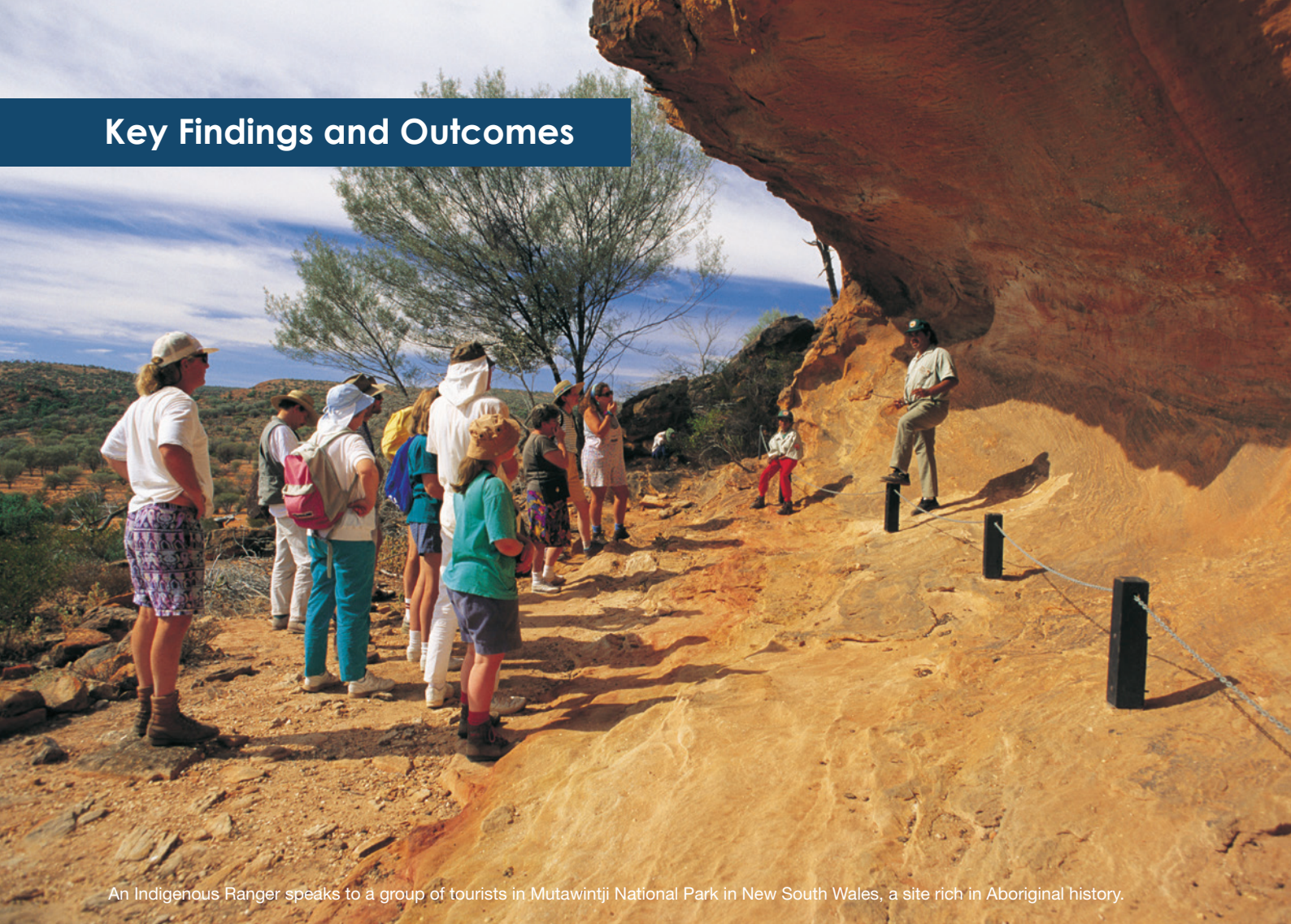
The conference was also a rare opportunity for governments and organisations to bring issues to the table and get first-hand advice from Indigenous peoples that could be used to help shape policies and strategic actions.

5. Engage Indigenous peoples as key decision makers and leaders

There was strong agreement between participants that Indigenous peoples should be included as key decision makers in the CBD consultation process and not merely advisors. It was perceived by participants that the contributions of Indigenous peoples to conservation were severely undervalued despite their playing a leadership role in the space. It was suggested that the CBD explore formalising the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities of Indigenous-led conservation globally.

Participants also advised that regional representation of Indigenous Peoples and Local

Key Findings and Outcomes



An Indigenous Ranger speaks to a group of tourists in Mutawintji National Park in New South Wales, a site rich in Aboriginal history.

Communities on the Open-Ended Working Group be considered to ensure that Indigenous input and issues are incorporated into the new framework.

6. Co-design of CBD reporting process

Participants suggested that Indigenous peoples should be involved in co-designing the post-2020 framework reporting process. It was perceived that this would help to ensure that Indigenous peoples had ownership over it and that the new framework and goals accurately reflected the valuable activities that are taking place on Country that contribute to the conservation of Australia's biodiversity and ecosystems. At the same time, the need to safeguard Indigenous knowledge during this process was highlighted.

7. Provide opportunities for Indigenous capacity-building

There was broad agreement of the importance of providing opportunities for Indigenous peoples to build capacity and empower communities to make decisions on complex conservation issues as well as to understand, contribute and accurately report on the CBD obligations.

8 Holistic approach needed to land, sea and heritage management

Participants regarded a holistic approach to land, sea and heritage management as being a way to close the gaps in health, social well-being, and economic benefits for Indigenous peoples.

9. Recognition of Indigenous Land Management

Participants agreed that while some Indigenous Protected Areas were considered as contributing towards Australia's efforts to achieve Aichi Target 11, greater clarity is needed on exactly how the role of Indigenous land managers and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) will be recognised as part of the target.

10. Greater emphasis needed on links between Indigenous Rights and Biodiversity

Participants perceived that the links between Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' rights and biodiversity had not been adequately addressed to date, either in Australia or worldwide. It was suggested that the CBD should provide guidance on how to resolve this issue.



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