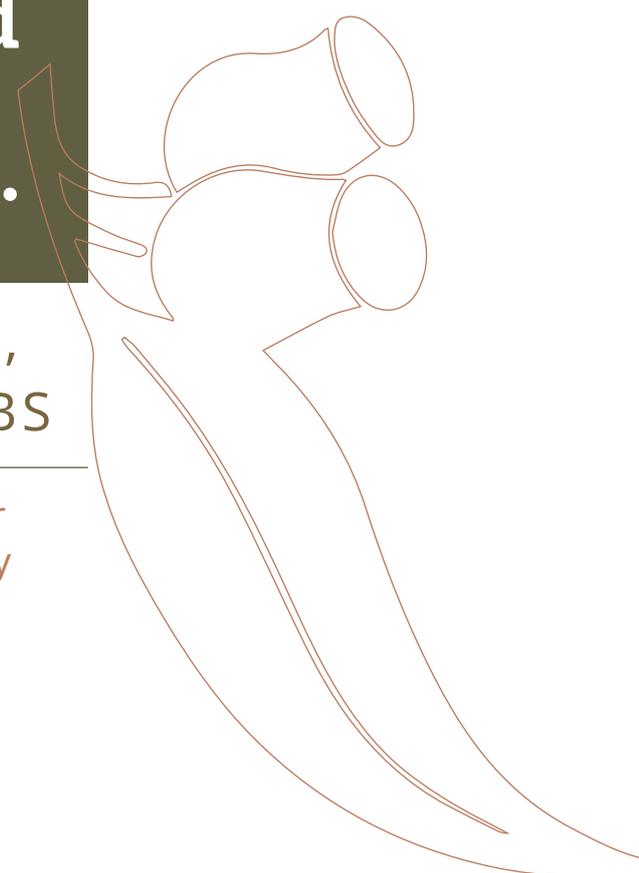


# Australia restored 2030.

## LAND, REEF, WATER & JOBS

Proposal for Labor  
Environment Policy



Labor's  
Climate  
Change  
Policies

# LABOR – RESTORING AUSTRALIA'S PRECIOUS ENVIRONMENT

Australia  
Restored 2030  
**SUMMIT**

## LAND

- + Investment plan to protect and restore trees, land and carbon.
- + National Landcare Rangers to deliver for nature and the regions.
- + Expanded and properly managed reserves and protected areas

## REEF / OCEANS

- + Improved water quality of the Great Barrier Reef and emissions reductions.
- + Improve connectivity of marine parks

## WATER

- + Protect our Urban Rivers, restoring our city environments.
- + Deliver the Basin Plan using all available tools and community driven action
- + Deliver cultural water and First Nations governance reforms

Indigenous Rangers in all sectors

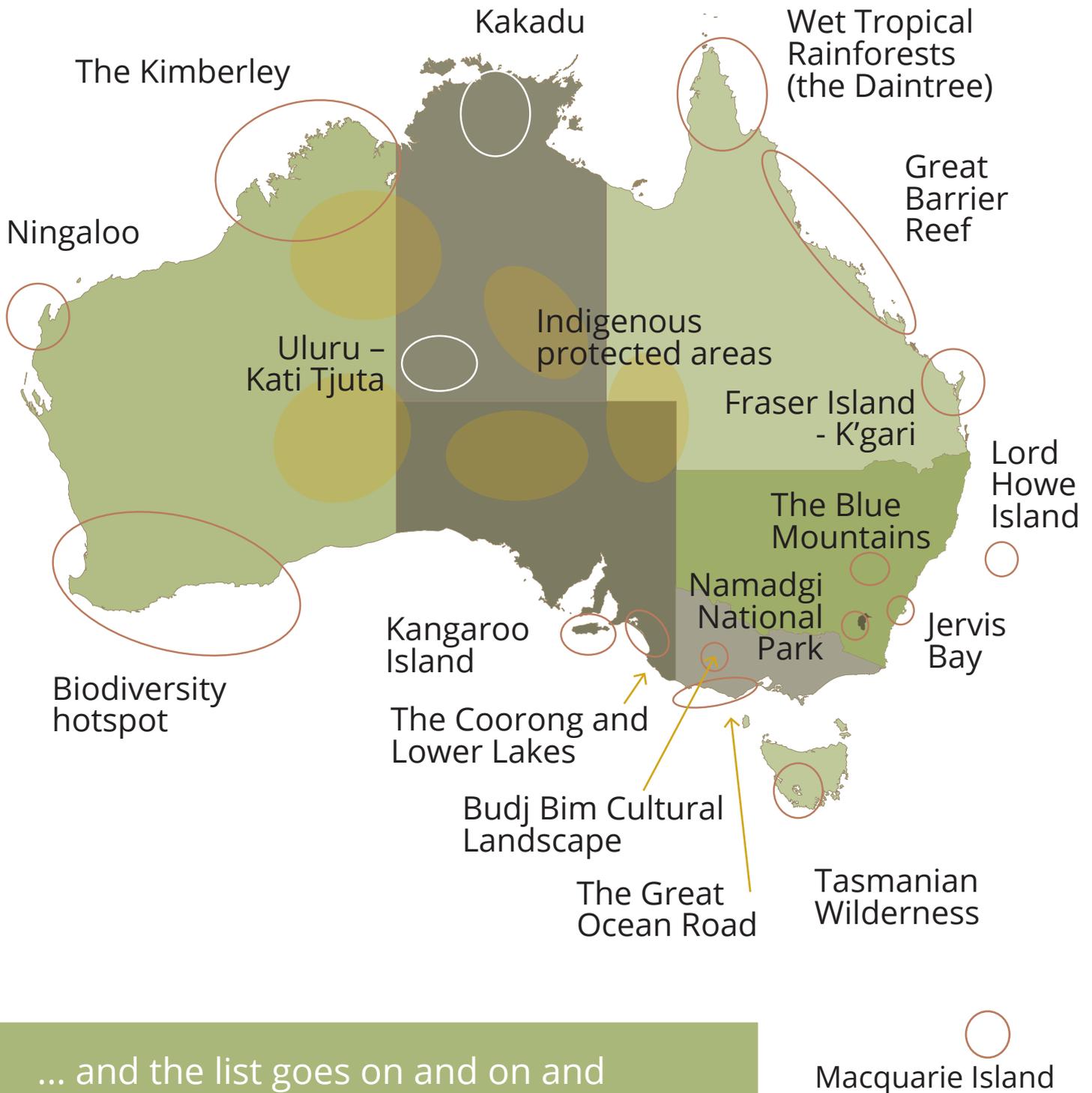
**A new Australian Environment Act and Federal Environment Protection Agency - the essential foundation**

**OVER  
50,000 jobs**

Commitments, funding, and action that tackles climate change, creates job opportunities and a new industry in regional Australia by restoring our landscapes, promoting sustainable agriculture and protecting precious places.

# LABOR'S PROUD LEGACY

## Protecting Australia's *Special Places*



... and the list goes on and on and includes your local beach, reserve or national park.

# LAND, REEF, WATER & JOBS

Australia's unique natural environment is a source of pride for all Australians. It provides vital ecosystem services to the city and the bush. Our well being as a nation depends on a healthy environment.

But Australia's natural environment is under significant pressure, with the most recent State of the Environment report in 2017 charting continued deterioration. A heating climate will create further pressure with mega fires, super storms and mass flooding. Professor Graeme Samuel's independent review of the effectiveness of Australia's primary environmental protection legislation in 2020 concluded, "Australia's natural environment and iconic places are in an overall state of decline and are under increasing threat. They are not sufficiently resilient to withstand current, emerging or future threats, including climate change."

Globally, biodiversity is being lost at the greatest rate in history, with the UN declaring in 2019 that 1 million species are threatened with extinction. Since colonization, Australia has lost more mammal species than any other country in the world. We need to do better.

An Albanese Labor government will prioritize the protection of the environment and reverse decades of neglect by coalition governments. It will protect our land, our reef, our water and create jobs.

Looking after Australia's natural environment is essential for our economic well-being. The CSIRO has estimated the value of Australia's natural ecosystems at more than \$1,300 billion per year. A healthy environment underpins everything we do together as a nation.

Our natural environment creates jobs. Tourism accounts for over 3% of GDP, and the five top attractions of the \$57 billion dollar industry are nature-based activities. In NSW alone, there were 60 million visits to National Parks in 2018. Nearly 10% of total employment in regional Australia is from tourism, much of it nature based, representing hundreds of thousands of jobs. Caring for our natural assets is essential to our tourism industry.

In the 1980s Australia led the world with Landcare, a breakthrough concept that recognized farmers as stewards of the land and partners in its health. Labor intends to build on this tradition, creating a world leading land carbon industry that future proofs our regions by creating jobs, building place-based expertise and restoring the natural capital of our nation.

With climate change set to change how many of our natural systems operate, better management,

protection and adaptation of our natural environment will be essential to our nation's future.

## A GOOD NEWS STORY

**Jobs and rebuilding** – New Zealand and the US have recently announced programs to create a publicly funded work force to restore land. Carbon Country is the core of the a regional environment jobs strategy, with jobs also created by Indigenous Protected Areas, Indigenous Rangers and Urban River restoration.

✦ New Zealand: \$1.1 billion investment to create 11,000 environment jobs in our regions:  
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2020-media-releases/investment-to-create-11000-environment-jobs-in-our-regions/>

✦ US, which makes the link to land sequestration, an essential marrying of policies: \$10 billion Civilian Climate Corps  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/09/biden-new-conservation-corps-new-deal>

**Australian identity** - With the COVID travel ban, Australians are rediscovering our country. The wild beauty, fantastic beaches and cheeky birdlife are all essential aspects of being Australian.

**Labor legacy** - Landcare, Antarctica, fighting for the Reef, Ocean protection, the Daintree, Ningaloo, Kakadu, the Kimberley, the Murray Darling Basin Plan and Tasmanian forests – Labor is the party for the environment.

## BUDGET COMMITMENTS

With adequate funding we can restore Australia's environment and deliver 50,000 jobs.

Public funding will be matched by the private sector. While public funding is essential, investors and private capital will be partners with government as part of the emerging biodiversity markets movement.

# RESTORING AUSTRALIA 2030 SUMMIT

Labor takes the decline of our natural environment seriously. A healthy environment is essential infrastructure, supporting Australian society and its economy. The Coalition, under Tony Abbott, gutted the long term bi-partisan commitment to the fundamentals of environmental protection including the national reserve system, regional and species planning and biodiversity management on private lands. The Coalition has failed to reverse this legacy.

To guard against climate change, to reduce emissions and to ensure people and animals thrive, we need to think again. We need new ideas, new coalitions, new energy to deal with this challenge.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** convene a national *Restoring Australia 2030 Summit* within the first four months of Government. It will include representatives of business, the science community, environmental NGOs, unions and policy experts to address how we protect, restore and better manage Australia's environment. It will identify key priorities and set solid goals. The Summit will confirm that protection and restoration of Australia's environment is a nationally important issue and should be beyond the politics of the day.

## Labor's Policy for Restoring Australia

- + CARBON COUNTRY -  
a global industry for regional Australia
- + ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY -  
National Reserve System, World Heritage,  
Indigenous Protected Areas, Oceans
- + NEW ENVIRONMENT LAWS -  
the foundations for protecting Australia's environment
- + RESTORING OUR URBAN ENVIRONMENTS -  
restoring urban rivers
- + MURRAY DARLING BASIN -  
the mighty lifeblood of the inland

# Carbon Country – A Global Industry For Regional Australia

## RESTORING NATURE AND BUILDING A WORLD LEADING CARBON STORAGE INDUSTRY

Labor is committed to building a world leading land carbon industry creating thousands of jobs in regional Australia. Natural ecosystems store carbon and remove it from the atmosphere, the World Bank has identified Australia as the best placed of all G20 countries to build a land carbon industry.<sup>1</sup> We can create jobs that are grounded in the regions, store carbon, augment and improve our farming practices and restore our environment simultaneously.

According to CSIRO, Australia's land sector can contribute 500 million tonnes of annual abatement 2030-2050<sup>2</sup> with 100 million tonnes per annum being necessary by 2030 to deliver a 1.5 degree trajectory (which translates to more than 8 million hectares of planting).<sup>3</sup> This is an opportunity to create jobs and prosperity in the regions, restore the environmental health of our landscapes and deliver significant carbon reductions.

**An Albanese Labor government will** build a world leading carbon storage and nature restoration industry, creating jobs and opportunity in rural and regional Australia and rewarding farmers for their role in arresting environmental decline and restoring the land. Labor will bring together the best science, the skills and capital of the private sector and the energy and knowledge of local communities to deliver a three year investment plan to rebuild our landscapes and environment, store carbon and create jobs.

**An Albanese Labor government will** establish a Cabinet sub-committee of the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Climate Change, the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Regional Development to help develop and oversee the investment plan. They will be responsible for ensuring Australia capitalizes on the opportunity of building a world leading carbon and land restoration industry, which builds regional resilience, local expertise and regional jobs. Labor will ensure the benefits of this industry are shared with regional communities.

**An Albanese Labor government will** create a National Landcare Rangers Program<sup>4</sup>, a national network of publicly owned land sector managers

and partnerships to ensure local communities lead the process of restoration as well as weed, pest and land management. The network will create jobs, train and build expertise and create an industry deeply embedded in place. The National Landcare Ranger Program will also support the Indigenous Rangers Program.

**An Albanese Labor government will** create a baseline for land based carbon storage by arresting further vegetation loss and land clearing and fully accounting for the carbon values of all commercially exploited forests and woodlands, including the creation of a National Landcover and Trees Survey to monitor vegetation loss and regrowth.

**An Albanese Labor government will** ensure a scientific process underpins the investment plan, identifying the most strategic places to focus investment to deliver maximum carbon storage and biodiversity outcomes and monitor and report success.

**An Albanese Labor government will** build on the existing skills and infrastructure established by Labor's Carbon Farming Initiative and the lessons of the ERF, integrating these established assets into a comprehensive approach that delivers biodiversity and carbon outcomes as well as good, regional jobs.

**An Albanese Labor government** is committed to growing Landcare and will ensure communities benefit from this industry by facilitating existing Landcare and community group networks to engage with the industry, providing base funding and access to the market. Landcare and the community can be the centre of our national commitment to rebuilding our environment and storing carbon. Current NRM bodies and processes will be integrated to ensure strong regional delivery mechanisms for nature and carbon abatement.

**An Albanese Labor government** will ensure managing invasive pests are central to the project to restore the ecological health of Australia.

1 ClimateWorks, 2014. p34

2 Bryan, B, Hatfield-Dodds, S, Grundy, M, Nolan, M, Brennan McKellar, L, McCallum, R, Keating, B, forthcoming, *Potential for Australian land-sector greenhouse gas abatement and implications for land use, food, water, and biodiversity, Working paper of the Australian National Outlook 2014*, CSIRO. Modelled in ClimateWorks, Pathways to Deep Decarbonisation in 2050 (2014 and 2018)

3 ClimateWorks, *Decarbonisation Futures: Solutions, actions and benchmarks for a net zero emissions Australia.*, March 2020

4 Similarly to Pres Biden's Citizen's Climate Corps, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/09/biden-new-conservation-corps-new-deal>

# Environment Protection For The 21<sup>ST</sup> Century

## PROTECTING THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Labor is committed to Australia taking its proper place in international efforts to arrest climate change. The Great Barrier Reef is under existential threat from a warming climate. Labor will take action to protect the Great Barrier Reef from its greatest threat and will support efforts to strengthen its resilience.

**An Albanese Labor government** will revitalize the governance of the Reef. The Government has washed its hands of reef protection. Labor will work with Queensland to put Reef protection back in public hands.

**An Albanese Labor government** will work with the Queensland Government to ensure pollution and nutrient run off into the Great Barrier Reef waters is minimized and farmers are supported to implement sustainability measures on their farms in the catchments of the Great Barrier Reef, including ensuring land clearing is halted in all reef catchments.

**An Albanese Labor government** will create policy responses to the threats identified by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Outlook 2019 findings: climate change, coastal development, land based run-off and direct human use, such as illegal fishing.

## PROTECTING THE BEST - NATIONAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Reserves and National Parks are the heart of any nature conservation program, protecting nature, providing refuges for species threatened by development impacts and climate change and creating spaces for the public to enjoy nature.

National Parks purify water, absorb carbon emissions and oxygenate the air we breathe, protect against floods and soil erosion, and help plant pollination. Labor will continue to expand our national reserve system and its management and protect it from the increasing impacts of climate change.

**An Albanese Labor government is committed** to expanding and ensuring the adequate protection of Australia's world-class National Reserve System by delivering Australia's 2030 obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity. We will establish a dedicated fund with matching funds from the states for expansion, good management and protection of the National Reserve System from climate change and other impacts.

**Labor will** reinvigorate planning, prioritization and acquisition of an effective National Reserve System.

**An Albanese Labor government will** create a Great Koala National Park on the eastern ranges to provide a safe refuge for the iconic koala, which is so critically threatened.

**An Albanese Labor government will** reinstate the Wildlife Corridors program, ensuring that we provide vegetation bridges for wildlife to move between reserves. This will be integrated into the Carbon Country program.

**An Albanese Labor government will** prioritise the creation of further protected areas in the Channel Country and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

## WORLD HERITAGE

Australia's World Heritage sites recognize the beauty, diversity, and uniqueness on a world scale of many of our great natural areas, and increasingly places of outstanding cultural and built significance. Places like the Great Barrier Reef, Fraser Island - K'gari, Kakadu, Greater Blue Mountains, Wet Tropical Rainforests, Tasmanian Wilderness, Ningaloo, Uluru – Kati Tjuta, are now part of the cultural fabric that makes us Australian. As globally recognized flagships for nature-based tourism and recreation, they are an important part of Australia's economy and significant job generators, particularly for regional Australia. The Great Barrier Reef alone supports 64,000 jobs and contributes \$6.4 billion to the Australian economy per year.

**An Albanese Labor Government** will progress traditional owner supported World Heritage proposals for Cape York Peninsula and the Kimberley and undertake assessment of other candidate sites and places of World Heritage significance.

**An Albanese Labor Government** will substantially increase the funding available for identification, management and promotion of World Heritage sites in Australia.

## INDIGENOUS RANGERS AND INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

Recognising the centrality of First Nations' peoples in land management, an **Albanese Labor Government will** double the number of Indigenous rangers over ten years to over 1800 FTEs, around 100 full-time jobs per year. Ranger jobs are critical to land and sea protection and provide ongoing employment on country.

**An Albanese Labor Government** will double the funding available for Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) over five years.

## OCEANS

**An Albanese Labor Government will**, in consultation with State partners, create a program to link State and Federal marine parks where possible and strengthen management and protection. This will form the foundation of a new national Oceans Policy.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** review breeding and feeding grounds to see if they are resilient / adequately protected. This includes coastal zones like seagrass, kelp forests, mangroves and offshore sites like reefs and where currents meet.

Protecting biodiversity, the breeding and feeding grounds and migratory pathways of marine species is a priority action that will also increase and protect blue carbon.

## RIVERS (SEE MURRAY DARLING BASIN)

**Labor will hold a meeting of stakeholders within 6 months** of government to design regulation to ensure water catchments and rivers are not undermined by the development of hydro power and pumped hydro. While renewable energy is a Labor priority, we need adequate safeguards for our environmental assets.

## GLOBAL RESPONSES

An Albanese Labor Government will restore Australia's role as an active and progressive member of the multi-lateral community and signatory of environment related treaties. Australia will defend the integrity of the Antarctic Treaty, Madrid Protocol and will continue to pursue all options to implement Australia's objective of a worldwide ban on whaling.

# New environment laws – the foundations for protecting Australia's environment

**Within 12 months, an Albanese Labor government will** establish a National EPA and legislate a new Environment Act informed by the recommendations of the final report of the Samuel Review in concert with a streamlined taskforce of key, supportive stakeholders including environmental law experts, business groups, unions and environmental non-government organisations.

The law reform will deliver:

- + A stream-lined and effective environmental assessment process for development proposals. To ensure our environment is protected while allowing business to get on with the task of creating jobs and prosperity.
- + State and federal laws will be harmonized to avoid duplication and ensure a properly nested approach to environmental protection - from high level strategy to on-ground delivery. Harmonisation of development approval laws at state and Federal level will also be pursued.

- + Strong national standards – that will make clear what the laws are obligated to protect, including arresting the decline of species.
- + Proper account of the impacts of climate change on the natural environment, which are not considered in the current Federal environment law.
- + A high quality and transparent system to collect and consolidate environmental data and information to inform the delivery of standards and decision making.
- + A central role for First Nations people in the design of laws, programs and policies.

**An Albanese Labor government will** create an independent Environmental Protection Agency with the mission to protect Australia's natural environment and deliver rigorous compliance and enforcement. The EPA will ensure delivery of the laws, approve National Standards and regulate their delivery, oversee the development proposal environment assessment processes.

**An Albanese Labor government will** expand the role of the EPA to include the capacity to provide independent expert advice to government on key issues, including conducting open inquiries on issues as requested by the government and development of development of strategic priorities for the environment portfolio and its integration with the Australian economy. The EPA will also house the State of the Environment Report.

The Federal EPA will also be given will include a unit to track delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While the EPA is being established, this unit will work out of the department. It will be focused on assisting Government and corporate Australia deliver their commitments to the SDGs.

With 48 Federally-listed threatened forest-dwelling fauna species are impacted by logging operations across Australia's 11 RFA regions, in order to ensure Australia is arresting species loss **an Albanese Labor Government will** reinvigorate the current RFAs, consistent with the latest science, including climate change science and will apply National Environmental standards to forestry regions. **Labor will** also ensure accurate and up-to-date timber volumes are understood and work with industry, unions and other stakeholders to develop an industry plan accordingly. <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See LEAN's submission to the Senate Committee on the Mckenzie Bill, [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment\\_and\\_Communications/RegionalForestAgreement/Submissions](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/RegionalForestAgreement/Submissions)

## Restoring Our Urban Environment

### URBAN RIVERS AND URBAN BIODIVERSITY

**An Albanese Labor Government will** reinvigorate urban rivers, providing a refuge for people and animals alike in our growing cities. A program of small grants for urban rivers, coastal environments and habitat corridors.

This will align with carbon farming and on-ground community works – creating and strengthening local groups to restore urban environments and build the profile of nature in the cities.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** provide grant funding for projects to clean up our rivers including:

- + Building wetlands to capture and clean and filter stormwater.
- + Revegetation and tree planting along corridors.
- + Citizen science and education programs along creeks and corridors, including bush kinder.
- + Bird boxes and waste capture.
- + Employment of indigenous rangers.
- + Turning urban waterways back in to creeks and rivers again through changing hard surfaces back to natural surfaces (cement turned to riverbanks).

# Murray Darling Basin - the mighty lifeblood of the inland

The Coalition has effectively given up on water reform – they aren't willing to work with communities to save our rivers. Added to this - the problem will only get worse, CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology modelling shows that climate change will mean that there is at least a 20 percent reduction in water in the Basin. The already stressed system will see lower flows and more days of no flow, longer and more intense droughts and more extreme weather and flooding.

At every step the Coalition have stalled, rejected or simply neglected policies and programs that are designed to return our rivers back to health. They sat back and watched water get stolen, wetlands dry up and mass fish kills. They have also let the States squabble over 100 year old agreements and walk away from the parts of the Basin Plan they don't like.

**An Albanese Labor Government** will deliver the Basin Plan using the full range of available mechanisms including buybacks, infrastructure and incentives for community driven integrated NRM solutions.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** fast-track projects to restore floodplain connectivity and the health of the landscape in the seven constrained river reaches identified by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, to maximise benefits of environmental water, improve flexibility of water supply and increase the resilience of the landscape.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** identify operational flow targets in each valley that protect connectivity and ensure water for the environment, stock, domestic and indigenous needs are met in the long term and on an event-by-event basis.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** develop a national groundwater management framework to evaluate groundwater depletion and recharge and to use the data for adaptive management in the face of climate change. **Labor will** finalise the Basin-wide model and make it publicly available and open source to maximise transparency.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** future proof the Basin Plan by updating the science, including the latest data on climate change and the most recent drought period. Building on the Water and Environment Research Program, **an Albanese Labor Government will**, within six months review the SDL, LSLT and the role of integrated NRM in the context of updated climate science.

**An Albanese Labor Government deliver** stricter penalties, greater compliance, and more transparency to ensure the Basin rivers' health. **Labor will** introduce stricter penalties for non-compliance and water theft. Labor's policy will be "no meter no pump" across the entire Basin. Labor will consult with State governments on appropriate penalties.

**An Albanese Labor Government will** help fish recovery and linkages within the Basin. **Labor will** allocate the remainder of the Murray-Darling Economic Development Package to supporting recreational fishers, Landcare and other community groups restore fish habitats and implement the Native Fish Strategy. Funding can also be used to build fishways, remove barriers to fish migration and install fish diversion screens on irrigation pumps.

**An Albanese Labor Government will align water management with the Closing the Gap initiative as well as** increase First Nations' involvement in governance, planning and operations in the Murray Darling Basin and cultural water

**Labor will** ensure that First Nations groups in the Basin are in control of the \$40 million allocated to cultural water, and the future interest earned, within three months of forming government.

As part of this process **Labor will** seek consent from First Nations' peoples in the Basin regarding governance arrangements and continue to implement arrangements that ensure Indigenous cultural objectives are explicitly identified and provided for in water plans, and that progress in achieving Indigenous cultural objectives is regularly monitored and publicly reported.

**Labor will act** on the recommendations of the ACCC's inquiry - Murray-Darling Basin water markets inquiry. Modernising the water market so it can meet current and future challenges.