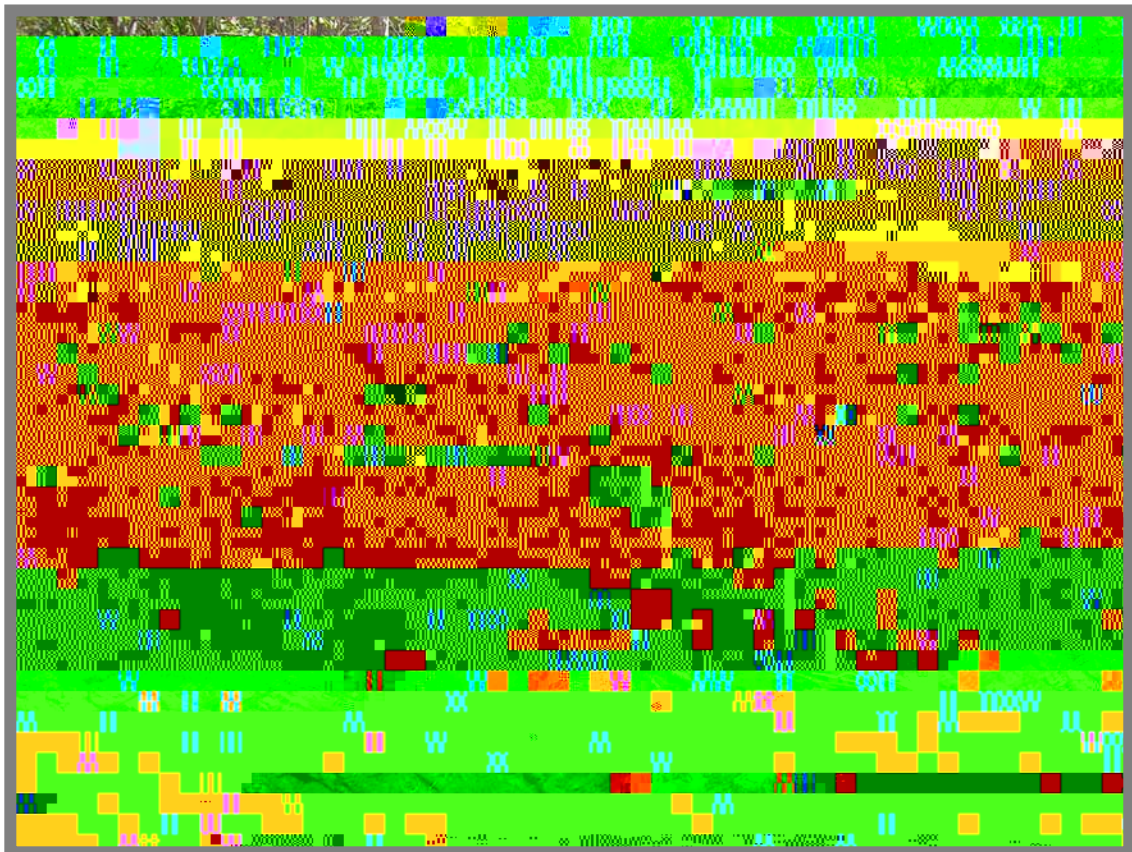


IUCN WORLD COMMISSION ON PROTECTED AREAS,  
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SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE FUNDING AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO MEET  
THE OBJECTIVES OF AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL PARKS, OTHER CONSERVATION  
RESERVES AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS.



Litchfield National Park, Northern Territory

Penelope Figgis



## 1.0 Introduction

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The IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) commends the Australian Senate for its instigation of this important inquiry. WCPA believes that Australia's Protected Areas (PAs) constitute a vital and irreplaceable national and international



## **2.0 Approach to Submission**

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The WCPA recognises that the principal focus of the inquiry is the adequacy of resources and funding to protect the values and fulfil the responsibilities of Australian Governments

## **3.0 SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES**

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### **3.1 Australian Biodiversity is globally significant**

All nations on earth have a fundamental duty to sustain the 'living planet', the great biosphere composed of the surface on which we live, the atmosphere we breath and the interconnected web of life, the evolution of billions of years whose health sustains life.

Global

Therefore WCPA believes that the PAs of Australia are the 'quiet achievers' of biodiversity conservation in Australia.

However, beyond biodiversity they also contribute a broad range of ecosystem, economic, cultural, social benefits to all Australians. These include both tangible and intangible values equally crucial to quality

The funding formulae under the NRS that provides 1 or 2:1 Commonwealth matching funds has been a very important catalyst in mobilising support from states and the private sector. Some states have only been able to progress their systems with the assistance of the NRS.

The NRS has also played a vital catalyst role in expanding new governance models, especially private protected areas and Indigenous involvement in PAS through IPAs.

Funding through the NRS has a major leverage factor and has brought major additional value to the program from both states and the private sector.

#### **3.4 The policy directions of Australian protected area policy are sound.**

The policy directions of the NRS and also the states and territories are sound and generally consistent with international consensus directions as expressed in the World Parks Congress (WPC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Works on Protected Areas (CBD-POW).

These key global directions are:

- Completing systems through science based planning

- Significantly increasing marine protected areas

- Implementing management effectiveness

- Diversifying governance models/partnership approaches – such as indigenous and community conserved protected areas, private protected areas and covenants on private lands, conservation agreements with large corporate land owners and the employment of economic instruments and incentives.

- Seeking integrati





A good network of protected areas free of other stresses is one of society's and nature's best adaptation to climate change.  
(Welch in The George Wright Forum 2005 p.90)

PAs will be of vital importance to building in some capacity for biodiversity resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change. In particular there is a need for increased connectivity of natural areas to allow maximum opportunity for plants and animals to adapt to shifting climate zones by migration.

Some experts also identify the lack of integration of PAs and PA frameworks into Natural Resource Management (NRM) as a problem to be addressed. Improved NRM is essential and fully supported by WCPA. However, biodiversity conservation is the fundamental underpinning of NRM un

Paradoxically the increasing recognition of the im

## THE SUBMISSION

### 4.0 The values and objectives of Australia's national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas

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#### 4.1. VALUES

The understanding of the values and objectives of protected areas is an evolving field. Comparatively recently parks were mainly valued for conserving natural and cultural heritage and outdoor recreation. Increasingly they are understood to be crucial to sustainable development and have many direct and indirect economic and development benefits. The understanding of their central role in Australia's tourism industry has only been fully recognised since the early nineties, the term 'ecosystems services' - the profound benefits which derive from intact systems is similarly new. An emerging area of great importance is the social value of

Strategy 5.2 Reviewing reserve acquisitions to strengthen the capacity of the reserve system to act as refuges for vulnerable terrestrial species and integrate reserve planning and management with broader landscape protected area networks to allow the movement of species across bioclimatic gradients.

National Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan (2003-2007) p.27.

their role in water quality and quantity, soil stability and the prevention of costly environmental problems such as erosion, siltation and salinity.

trillion to the global economy each year. Conservati

There is high potential for improved constructive liaison between the parks agencies and the tourism industry. The Tasmanian government for example recognised the importance of protected areas to its core 'brand' – the 'natural state' - and in 2003 established a new *Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts* to better integrate management of the related elements underpinning the tourism industry which is now one of the state's major industries.

A 1998 Kinhill's study in Queensland on the Value of Protected areas found that expenditure on visits to protected areas, and accommodation associated with visits to protected areas, was estimated using several options for some of the relevant variables, giving a range of results

Table 1. Direct Parks Australia payments to Indigenous people

	Kakadu	Uluru	Booderie
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The outstanding successful program of Parks Victoria 'Healthy Parks, Healthy People' which promoted the links between national and urban parks and physical mental health and wellbeing has been endorsed by Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Arthritis Victoria, Asthma Victoria, Osteoporosis Victoria, National Heart Foundation, Department of Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Nurses, Australian Breast Feeding Association and Southern Health Care Network.

[www.parksvic.gov.au](http://www.parksvic.gov.au)

Urban and near urban PAs also provide an important venue for environmental education and self reliance training through school camps and such programs as Outward Bound, Scouts and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

#### **4.1.4 Spiritual /Ethical**

For many in the community there are deep values in the natural world and its cultural and spiritual role in



invest wisely but the bioregional strategies and co-operative frameworks are generally not in place for them. Hence, the call by the National Biodiversity Alliance, a group convened by the World Wide Fund for Nature, to systematically develop bioregional strategies for each of Australia's 85 bioregions and to identify the tailored mix of measures required for each; of which NRS is one vital component (Andreas Glanznig pers.comm.).

#### 4.2.3 Integration with surrounding lands and seas

Most strategies and *Directions for the NRS* identify the need for an integrated approach to PAs and the surrounding areas of land or sea. Variously called the 'whole of landscape', bioregional or ecosystem networks approach, the concept reflects the fundamental thinking of the Man and the Biosphere concept and the science of conservation biology ([www.unesco.org/mab](http://www.unesco.org/mab)) and (Figgis 1999).

Arguably the concept of 'ecological networks' is the single most important consensus direction in global conservation. It has been strongly endorsed at an international level. The Durban Action Plan, Target 5 reads 'All protected areas are linked into wider ecological /environmental systems or resource management and protection on land and sea by the time of the next World Parks Congress' (WCPA 2003).

The concept has strong backing in Australia and is being actively promoted by all national NGOs, especially Greening Australia and the Wilderness Society under the name Wildcountry (Figgis 2004). This direction recognises connectivity and 'turning islands to networks' is the way to achieve the international goal of 'benefits beyond boundaries and is essential to management effectiveness and a key component for building resilience in the face of rapid change, especially climate change, into the system.

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*The South Coast Macro Corridor Network (Watson & Wilkins, 1999) and Gondwana Link proj*

However, as indicated in the Gondwana Link example above, the emergence of a vibrant and innovative private conservation sector will be vital component in pursuing the goal of large ecological networks. The sector can compliment and add value to public PAs. The NRS has been important to the development of a strong private la

A survey of 479 delegates from the Vth World Parks Congress in 2003 listed inadequate funding and inadequate training as two of the most significant barriers to effective management (M. Hockings unpublished data).

Assessments of the effectiveness of protected area management in Australia and overseas (e.g. DEC, 2005; WWF, 2004) have commonly reported that monitoring and evaluation are amongst the areas of park management where performance most needs to be improved.

**Values-based planning** provides a decision-making framework for the future as well as providing a response to the issues of the present. It acknowledges that each protected area has different qualities and some values, eg recreational use may be more important in one than the other.

Values should be the fundamental basis for decisions about the management of a protected area. Values are natural, social, cultural and economic and can relate to many things including a species, a community, an ecosystem, the land and seascape, a place, a story or an event.

Values-based management means that any decision regarding a protected area is to be based on the protection of the values which that area represents, or at least in the knowledge of the impact on those values.

A values-based approach to management is likely to be more effective than an issues-oriented approach in the long-term because it is better linked to the goals of conservation policy and legislation and more consistent with the outcomes focus of modern public sector management.

**Evaluation.** An understanding of the key factors that affect performance is an important key to enhancing management effectiveness. Positive factors need to continue to be supported, while negative factors need to be actively addressed. For example, a comprehensive evaluation of management effectiveness for the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (Parks and Wildlife Service, 2004) identified the key factors that had contributed positively to and those that had limited or threatened management performance over the term of the first management plan (1992-1999). Inevitably these processes, while productive, require resourcing.

Ecological monitoring is critical to guide effective management but is seldom adequate. Most jurisdictions lack a structured approach to ecological integrity assessment.

The model developed by Parks Canada provides a useful guide to how this could be achieved but the scale of investment required is considerable. In Canada, the renewed focus on ecological integrity that resulted from ecological integrity assessment process led to the government allocating an additional \$60 million over five years, followed by \$15 million in new annual ongoing funding, to enhance and maintain the ecological integrity of Canada's national parks.



performance for the area over the term of the first management plan (1992-1999). (Parks and Wildlife Service, 2004).

To support good management major additional research is needed in representative biodiversity, weeds, feral animals, climate change responses and other ecological factors relating to specific types of ~~ecosystems.~~ The research allocations currently are very n 0 5 7 9 279.93594 716.78069 Tm(o)4j920

Systematic monitoring of the walking track network in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area demonstrated that some levels and types of visitor use were causing unsustainable environmental impacts. In particular, walker impacts were shown to be causing ongoing erosion and deterioration of tracks and backcountry campsites, and the formation of unplanned new tracks. In some areas, sensitive alpine plant communities were also being damaged. Although a science-based major Walking Track Management Strategy was developed to manage the physical and environmental sustainability of the entire walking track network, significant opposition from park users to the proposed regulation of walker numbers precluded the full implementation of the strategy. Alternative management approaches are currently being trialled. However, until such time as an effective and acceptable mechanism is implemented for limiting walker impacts, there is a risk to the long-term sustainability of the park and its values.

Section 4.10.3, *State of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area*.

However, the Touri108 643.94031 5 9 15s8 0 7.70029 Tm(w)Tjm an9 0 0 9 357.62216 03.94029 Tm(w)TjT 0 7.98 185.5



## 5.0 Whether governments are providing sufficient resources to meet those objectives and their management requirements

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### 5.1 Current Funding

The importance of the values and objectives outlined in 4.0 is not reflected in current budget allocations at either state/territory or Commonwealth level.

Globally, the estimated shortfall in funding to ensure an effectively managed, comprehensive, adequate and representative park system is between \$20 and \$28 billion US for terrestrial parks and \$23 billion US with an additional \$6 billion US annually for 30 years for marine parks (Balmford et al. 2002).

For the Australian environment, James et al. (2001) estimate that funding for protected area management is currently half what is required to achieve effective management of these areas. A Local Government Association Inquiry into national park management in Queensland in 2000, concluded that 'The evidence presented to the Inquiry paints a clear picture of a chronic under-resourced National Parks system'.

In some states, the current levels of funding do enable best practice management to be carried out in some instances but does not enable the approach to be followed through. For example, in NSW Threat Abatement Plans are developed as the approach to target management of significant threats to where it is needed. Currently, a threat abatement plan (TAP) is being implemented for one threat, the European Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) at a cost of approximately \$1.5 milli



Funding and resources are required for planning protected areas, a

## 5.4 Funding for Management

Funding and resources are clearly required for implementing good management.

Management effectiveness studies in Australia have indicated that planning is at the heart of effective management of protected areas. Parks that have a plan of management are generally achieving better outcomes for park management (DEC 2005).

Significant resources are also necessary on an emergency basis to prevent potentially catastrophic impacts to protected areas (e.g. to prevent the potential establishment foxes in Tasmania).

The *Australian Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment (2002)* found that the standard of protected areas management was fair for 53% of the bioregions assessed in the report (p.116).

A plan of management however, requires a basic knowledge of the values of the area. The competing priorities within park management often mean that there is not the time or the funds to carry out baseline assessments of values. One management effectiveness study in Australia found that 30% of parks did not consider they had enough information about important natural values to guide planning and decision-making. Likewise, 55% and 26% of parks respectively did not consider they had enough information about important Aboriginal and historic values to guide planning and decision-making (DEC 2005).

As protected area systems move towards being comprehensive, adequate and representative, the costs of management are likely to become higher. The cost of acquiring land will increase as new reserves are acquired in good agricultural areas that are generally poorly represented in the park system. The costs of managing these areas will be higher too because the reserves will generally be small (Balmford et al. 2003) and the surrounding land use will be largely incompatible with park management. As the population grows and more property prices drive more people to rural and coastal areas, parks will also become more expensive to manage (see section 5.1). All of these influences will increase the cost of managing protected areas and should be accounted for in the future funding of protected areas in Australia.

Effective management is often more expensive in the short-term, but is likely to prove more efficient in the long-term. One example of this is the approach to managing landscape-scale pressures such as invasive species. Most invasive species occur across land tenures and therefore managing only within park boundaries is not an effective option as new incursions will occur constantly. There are a number of examples across Australia where taking a 'tenure-blind' approach to management has resulted in marked reductions in the impacts of invasive species. Likewise, the management of landscape-scale pressures often requires a long-term commitment to management. An inability to commit funds for the required eradication period can result a program being unsuccessful and thus wasting the initial funds.

increases in user-pays revenue from increased visitor use and greater involvem



Joint management arrangements on parks and community based initiatives with indigenous community.

establishing stewardship models on private lands or developments



## **6.0 Threats to the objectives and management of our national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas**

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### **6.1 Context**

All reports confirm that Australia's rich biodiversity

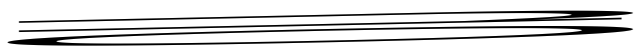
Australia faces these challenges and threats against a profound global decline of ecosystems and multiple threats to the life support systems of the planet. As a functioning democracy of well educated people enjoying a sound economy it is incumbent upon Australia to be a world leader in both protection and restoration.

Many publications including the *1996 State of the Environment* report have stressed the particular vulnerability of Australia to threats through its dryness, flatness, poor soils, climatic variability and particular vulnerability to invasive species (Commonwealth 1996 pp. ES10-ES11).

Against this background of broad threats to biodiversity, it must be emphasised that protected areas are, in most cases, the strongholds of biodiversity. They are n

Together, warming and reduced rainfall will result in decreases in soil moisture in many parts of the continent. Fire intensity and frequency is expected to increase, as a result of temperature and precipitation changes, as well as a possible increase in fuel loads from CO<sub>2</sub> fertilization. Sea levels are expected to continue rising (currently rising at a rate of ~2mm per year). Tropical cyclones may increase in frequency and intensity. Ongoing declines in snow cover and duration in the Australian Alps are projected.

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**Pollution** impacts include littering, toxic runoff and sewage pollution. The latter has been an issue in the Great Barrier Reef WHA, Fraser Island and Kosciuszko (Worboys et al. 2005)

**Visitation impacts:** Management effectiveness studies in Australia have indicated that the condition of natural values decreases with increasing levels of visitation (DEC 2005). However visitation impacts can often be ameliorated or eliminated with good infrastructure and other management a



7.0 The responsibilities of governments with regard to the creation and management of national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas, with particular reference<sup>27</sup> T and

of the most threatened ecosystems exist only on private lands and third, the threatening processes, which are propelling the biodiversity crisis, are not confined to protected areas and cannot be addressed in parks alone. Therefore, there is a need for major continuing effort to find innovative ways to protect biodiversity across all land tenures.

A further obligation of government is to act in a timely manner.n

## **8.0 The record of governments with regard to the creation and management of national parks, other conservation reserves and marine protected areas.**

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### **8.1 Achievements**

Over the past 100 years Australia has developed a significant protected area system in the terrestrial environment, b







multiple-use (Category VI or IV). In contrast, 'no-take' MPAs are relatively well established in State/Territory waters in temperat

One of the major challenges facing the NRSMPA is the lack of a nationally, consistent science-based, approach to MPA planning. The development of sound, ecosystem-based, operational planning criteria should be the basis of a national approach to science-based MPA planning. Within the GBRMP, the MPA biophysical operating principles developed by scientific experts were highly prescriptive, in terms of: the minimum replication of MPAs in each bioregion (3-4); the number, distribution and minimum area of habitats (reefs, non-reefs) (20%) for each bioregion for rese

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