



## JOINT STATEMENT: Nature is essential to solving climate change COP31 must unite nature-positive and net-zero goals

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Australia's bid to co-host COP31 with Pacific Island nations in 2026 is a powerful opportunity to demonstrate global leadership. We, the undersigned finance, business, and environmental groups, support this bid as a chance to drive urgent, coordinated action to prevent catastrophic climate change, protect communities, and promote sustainable adaptation.

As a nation celebrated for our unique landscapes and wildlife, Australia has a distinct opportunity to be a leader in both climate action and nature protection.

To deliver lasting climate outcomes, the COP31 Presidency must elevate nature as a strategic priority. Nature is not a side issue—it is central to both mitigation and adaptation. Healthy ecosystems store carbon, regulate the atmosphere, and build resilience to extreme weather. The IPCC's 6th Assessment Report ranks protecting intact ecosystems as the second most important climate solution.

Australia's own [National Ecosystem Accounts](#) show that in 2020–21, ecosystems stored over 34.5 billion tonnes of carbon, providing climate regulation services valued at A\$43.2 billion. Nature-based solutions—such as mangrove restoration and urban green spaces—are often more cost-effective and sustainable than grey infrastructure like seawalls and levees. They also support biodiversity, human health, and economic resilience.

Yet there is a risk that short-term fixes like 'hardening' grey infrastructure (such as walls and levees) will be prioritised over nature-based solutions (such as restoring mangroves), locking in maladaptive pathways including increasing maintenance costs caused by extreme events. In contrast, working with nature offers long-term, flexible, and generally [lower-cost](#) solutions. These approaches draw on both traditional and scientific knowledge and deliver co-benefits across climate, health, and the economy.

This is [not a trade-off](#) between climate and nature. Addressing climate change in isolation will not deliver the resilient, sustainable future we need. Global frameworks that Australia and Pacific countries are signatories to, including the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), emphasise the need to align emissions reduction, mitigation and adaptation, and nature-positive action. Australia's COP31 platform must reflect this integrated approach.

At the 2024 [Global Nature Positive Summit](#) in Sydney, there was broad agreement that “nature needs to be factored into economic and business decisions” and that “nature-positive and net-zero objectives must work together.” COP31 can build on this momentum and the leadership shown by Pacific Island nations, such as Fiji at COP23.

Investors are key to scaling climate and nature outcomes. Policy certainty, disclosure frameworks, and investment incentives are essential to mobilising capital. Global standards like the [Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) and the [International Sustainability Standards Board](#) are helping integrate nature into financial decision-making. Markets respond to clarity and ambition—science-based targets and catalytic public investment can unlock private capital for nature and climate solutions.

Australia’s COP31 presidency is a chance to tell a positive story—one of leadership, innovation, and collaboration. We urge the Government to work with investors, business, scientists, environmental groups, and First Nations communities to put nature at the heart of the COP agenda.

Nature-based solutions, delivered alongside ambitious emissions reductions, can significantly reduce climate risks and support adaptation. COP31 can be a historic turning point—where the world recognises that nature is not just part of the solution, but essential to it. We call on the Australian Government to ensure nature is fully integrated into COP31’s agenda and outcomes. We stand ready to support this effort.

*An increasing body of evidence demonstrates that climatic risks to people can be lowered by strengthening nature... Flood risk along rivers, for instance, can be reduced by restoring wetlands and other natural habitats in flood plains, by restoring natural courses of rivers, and by using trees to create shade. Cities can be cooled by parks and ponds and by greening streets and buildings’ rooftops and walls. Farmers may increase their businesses’ climate resilience by diversifying their crops and livestock, by planting trees and bushes on the fields for shade .... However, to realize potential benefits and avoid harm, it is essential that these solutions are deployed in the right places and with the right approaches for that area, guided by local and indigenous knowledge, scientific understanding and practical expertise.*

[IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report](#) (2022)

### Signatories:

Australian Climate and Biodiversity Foundation	Investor Group on Climate Change
Australian Conservation Foundation	NRM Regions Australia
Australian Land Conservation Alliance	Responsible Investment Association Australasia
Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand	UN Global Compact Network Australia
Climateworks	World Business Council for Sustainable Development Australia
Green Building Council Australia	WWF Australia

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## Quotes:

*“The penny is dropping in the investment community - nature and climate go hand in hand, and investors are increasingly looking to their investee companies to join the dots. From agriculture to infrastructure, every part of the economy has a stake in restoring nature. COP31 is a rare opportunity for Australia to lead. Let's not waste it.”*

— Estelle Parker, Co-CEO, Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA)

*“The road to net zero is nature-dependent. Business and finance leaders increasingly recognise that halting nature loss is not just an environmental imperative — it's a strategic and financial one. Embedding nature at the heart of COP31 would position Australia to lead on integrated, investable solutions that address climate risk, biodiversity, and sustainable growth.”*

— Andrew Petersen, CEO, Business Council for Sustainable Development Australia (BCSDA)

*“Nature is not just a backdrop to climate action—it's a frontline solution and our greatest climate ally. This is a long overdue moment for Australia to demonstrate its commitment to nature as a climate solution.”*

— Jody Gunn, CEO, Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA)

*“There is no net zero economy without nature. COP31 in Adelaide could show the world how Australian and Pacific businesses are leading the nature-positive transition. This is our moment—and if we leave nature out, we miss it.”*

— Kate Dundas, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network Australia

*“To address the dual climate and nature crises, it is important to recognise they are connected and seize opportunities to tackle both issues at once. Protecting and restoring forests, wetlands and waterways are powerful tools we have to build climate resilience. With our celebrated landscapes and wildlife, Australia has a unique opportunity to show leadership at COP31 with an innovative approach that takes us in a direction to tackle these two issues together.”*

— Kelly O'Shanassy, CEO, Australian Conservation Foundation