

National Biosecurity Strategy Implementation Committee and
Integration Team

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
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Dear NBS Implementation Committee and Integration Team,

RE: Submission on the draft National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan

The Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the draft National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan.

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

The land conservation efforts of ALCA's seventeen member organisations have influenced over 3 million square kilometres with more than 4,000 landholders. We have over 70,000 supporters and our combined annual turnover exceeds \$325 million. Together ALCA and its members address some of the most pressing conservation issues across the country, including restoring endangered ecosystems, building the protected area estate, tackling invasive species, expanding private conservation finance, and funding, and using nature-based solutions to tackle climate change.

Please note that ALCA is happy for this submission to be published in full.

Overview

Australia and the world face twin interrelated nature and climate change crises. Both crises have deep, substantial, and increasing costs for the social and economic wellbeing of all Australians. These crises create an acute intergenerational burden that unfairly backloads our generation's own costs and failings upon future generations – upon our children, our grandchildren, and beyond. We face the harsh but unbending reality that nature is not an infinite asset that can be continually drawn upon without profound social, economic, and environment cost. We must act smartly to ensure that organisations and landholders who are protecting, managing and restoring nature are valued and resourced to deliver critical environmental biosecurity.

Our unique nature is not only core to our social and cultural values as a nation; it is also a cornerstone of our prosperity – **with half of Australia's GDP being moderately to highly**

dependent on nature¹ – and it is in accelerating decline. As per the Federal Government’s 2021 State of the Environment Report:

*“Overall, **the state and trend of the environment of Australia are poor and deteriorating** as a result of increasing pressures from climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, pollution and resource extraction... Multiple pressures create cumulative impacts that amplify threats to our environment, and abrupt changes in ecological systems have been recorded in the past 5 years...”*

*Our inability to adequately manage pressures will continue to result in species extinctions and deteriorating ecosystem condition, which **are reducing the environmental capital on which current and future economies depend. Social, environmental and economic impacts are already apparent.**”¹*

Invasive species are the biggest cause of this decline of Australian nature². National biosecurity policy that recognises the importance of environmental biosecurity – taking concrete actions to respond to the ‘invasion curve’³ (i.e. prevention, eradication, containment, long-term management), **including by funding the environmental organisations at the frontline of this response** – is critical if we are to halt and reverse the decline of Australian nature, and deliver the Australian commitments to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity’s Global Biodiversity Framework, especially (but not only) Target 6:

*“TARGET 6: Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species **by at least 50 per cent, by 2030, eradicating or controlling invasive alien species especially in priority sites, such as islands.**”⁴*

Despite the private land conservation sector being on the frontlines of environmental biosecurity, the sector receives very little Government funding for invasive pest management. However, at the same time – and without significant financial support – we face increasing calls from Governments across Australia to collaborate on biosecurity matters.

Our sector is engaged in environmental biosecurity efforts – indeed, it is a core aspect of our collective conservation land management mission – but with the increasing risk and diversity of biosecurity issues, the sector cannot scale up our contributions and efforts without meaningful financial support.

¹ Australian Conservation Foundation, *The nature-based economy: How Australia’s prosperity depends on nature*, Sep 2022; <https://www.acf.org.au/the-nature-based-economy-how-australias-prosperity-depends-on-nature>

² See: Figure 25, State of the Environment Report 2021; <https://soe.dccceew.gov.au/biodiversity/pressures/threats-and-key-threatening-processes#-bio-032-figure-25-prevalence-of-threats-to-australian-threatened-taxa>

³ See: <https://invasives.org.au/blog/the-invasion-curve-explained/>

⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222>

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: ALCA strongly supports Initial Action 2.4 (“Strengthen the involvement of environmental agencies and environmental and community groups.”) and would be willing to help facilitate the involvement of the private land conservation sector in networks and collaborations, especially that of ALCA member organisations.

Recommendation 2: The Action Plan should have a greater focus on environmental biosecurity research, preparedness and response capacity, including the elevation of the following ‘Activity for consideration’ within Appendix B up into the Action Plan:

“Prioritise funding for environmental biosecurity RD&E to support delivery of the National Environment and Community Biosecurity Research, Development and Extension Strategy.”

Recommendation 3: The Action Plan should prioritise securing additional funding to ensure delivery of improved environmental biosecurity.

Recommendation 4: The Action Plan should include the Decade of Biosecurity initiative under the shared culture priority.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a submission on the draft National Biosecurity Strategy Action Plan.

Australian Land Conservation Alliance

About the Australian Land Conservation Alliance

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

Our nineteen members are:

- Arid Recovery
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Biodiversity Conservation Trust NSW
- Bush Heritage Australia
- EcoGipps
- GreenCollar
- Greening Australia
- Landcare Australia
- Nari Nari Tribal Council
- Nature Foundation
- NRM Regions Australia
- Odonata
- Queensland Trust for Nature
- South Endeavour Trust
- Tasmanian Land Conservancy
- The Nature Conservancy Australia
- The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
- Trust for Nature (Victoria)
- World Wildlife Fund - Australia

ALCA member land conservation efforts have influenced over 3 million square kilometres with more than 4,000 landholders. We have over 70,000 supporters and our combined annual turnover exceeds \$325 million. Together ALCA and its members address some of the most pressing conservation issues across the country, including restoring endangered ecosystems, building the protected area estate, tackling invasive species, expanding private conservation finance, and funding and using nature-based solutions to tackle climate change.

Through their active land management, ALCA member organisations are deeply embedded in rural communities and economies, providing jobs, securing significant regional investment, and safeguarding remaining native habitat, with its many positive spill-over effects for community, wellbeing, and food security. We seek to demonstrate the role and value of private land conservation as a cornerstone of the Australian economy.

Some ALCA members are statutory entities; the views expressed in this submission do not necessarily represent the views of the Government administering those statutory entities.