

CONSERVING OUR AUSTRALIAN BIODIVERSITY

BHP – Partnering towards conservation

BHP is deepening and advancing cross sectoral partnerships to support conservation in Australia, supporting SDG15 – Life on land.

BHP's partnership with Conservation International has resulted in the protection of areas of national conservation significance, such as the Five Rivers Reserve in Tasmania's remote central highlands. The outcomes include protected habitat, an increased ecological monitoring capacity and 11,000 hectares of protected land. The partnership is also enabling BHP to build internal capacity and achieve its public biodiversity and conservation targets.



15 LIFE ON LAND



 **Cardno**

While this case study focuses on SDG15, BHP's contribution also supports SDG13 – Climate change, and SDG17 – Partnerships for the goals.

Relevant Australian SDG15 indicators include: 'Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected area, by ecosystem type' and 'Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area'.

SDG15 – Life on land – The global context

Lands and forests are home to more than 80 per cent of all terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects globally.¹ Sustainably maintaining the global ecosystem is not only important for the protection of biodiverse habitats, the maintenance of water quality and the productivity of agriculture systems, but these ecosystems also contribute to the capture of carbon and greatly support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.²

Biodiversity sustains human livelihoods and life itself. An estimated 40 per cent of the global economy is based on biological products and processes.³

Australia's biodiversity and environmental conservation story

Australia is home to ancient landscapes, middle aged agricultural lands and more recently urban and suburban development.⁴ Currently more than 19 per cent (or 150 million hectares) of Australia's terrestrial land is permanently protected under national or state environmental law.⁵ Australia's land underpins the country's infrastructure, climate, economy and health. In 2010, Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010–2030 was released providing a framework for governments to conserve Australia's national biodiversity to 2030, providing an overview of the state of Australia's biodiversity and outlining collective priorities for conservation. The strategy aims to coordinate efforts at a national level across all sectors to sustainably manage biological resources in a way that meets our current needs and ensures their long term resilience, health and viability.⁶

The minerals industry understands stakeholders have concerns about impacts of mining activity on the environment.⁷ Amidst this public concern, the Australian mining industry has a long history of mitigating the environmental impacts of their work through a range of different environmental management measures. These include land rehabilitation, waste management, the use of low emissions technology and offsetting environmental impacts by investing in biodiversity and ecosystem preservation programs.⁸

Australia's nature, now and into the future is healthy, resilient to threats, and valued both in its own right and for its essential contribution to our health, well-being, prosperity and quality of life.⁹

BHP – Sustainability as a core business requirement

BHP is a world-leading resources company, extracting and processing minerals, oil and gas for a global market. Employing over 60,000 employees and contractors primarily in Australia and the America's, they are among the world's top producers of major commodities, including iron ore, metallurgical coal and copper.¹⁰

BHP acknowledges that their strategy of owning and operating long-life assets means that they need to think and plan in decades. Sustainability is the first value in BHP's charter, a framework which means putting health and safety first, being environmentally responsible and supporting communities.¹¹

BHP also acknowledges that pressure on land and water resources is growing and is amplified by climate change. Maintaining the right to access these resources relies on the Company's ability to demonstrate responsible management and contribute to a resilient environment. This is achieved by minimising the environmental impacts from their activities and by working in partnership with others to support environmental resilience.¹²

BHP understands that by their nature its operations will have an impact on the environment and therefore it has become a core business requirement to implement land and biodiversity management plans that include controls to prevent, minimise, rehabilitate and offset, as appropriate, impacts to biodiversity.¹³

In addition, supporting conservation efforts of the highest quality is a targeted way of BHP creating value for society and upholding their Charter value of sustainability.¹⁴ In practice, BHP has established a biodiversity conservation target, which aims to 'improve marine and terrestrial environmental outcomes by developing a framework to evaluate and verify the benefits of its actions, in collaboration with others, and by contributing to the management of areas of national or international conservation significance exceeding their disturbed land footprint'.¹⁵

The BHP–Conservation International Alliance

In 2011 BHP and Conservation International, a global non-government conservation organisation, formed a strategic, long-term alliance. The alliance supports the delivery of BHP's voluntary biodiversity conservation target by delivering enduring and significant benefits to ecosystems and biodiversity, through the conservation of land with high domestic and international conservation value. The alliance works to strengthen BHP's on land and biodiversity management practices.¹⁶

1 United Nations Environment Programme, Goal 15: Life on Land. UN, 2017 viewed 16 October 2018.

2 *ibid.*

3 International Council on Mining & Metals, *Integrating Mining and Biodiversity Conservation*, 2004, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, viewed 17 October 2018.

4 Department of the Environment and Energy, *Australia's strategy for nature 2018–2030*, Australian Government, 2017, viewed 17 October 2018.

5 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*, Australian Government, 2018, p. 79.

6 Department of the Environment and Energy, *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy*, Australian Government, 2018, viewed 17 October 2018.

7 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Mining and the environment*, Australian Government, 2003, viewed 17 October 2018.

8 *ibid.*

9 Department of the Environment and Energy, *Australia's strategy for nature 2018–2030*, Australian Government, 2017, viewed 17 October 2018.

10 BHP, *About us*, BHP, 2018, viewed 17 October 2018.

11 BHP, *Sustainability Report 2018*, BHP, 2018.

12 *ibid.*

13 BHP, *Biodiversity and Land*, BHP, 2018, viewed 17 October 2018.

14 *ibid.*

15 BHP, *Sustainability Report 2017*, BHP, 2017, viewed 17 October 2018.

16 Conservation International, *Conservation International – BHP Alliance*, CI, 2018, viewed 17 October 2018.



Swifts Parrot Photo: Chris Tzaros

The partnership sought to build the capacity of BHP in three key areas.¹⁷

- **Inform corporate policies and practices:** Technical expertise has been provided by Conservation International to BHP on the responsible management and enhancement of biodiversity. This has included the strategy and management advice in corporate environmental requirements in the areas of compensatory actions, and the design and pilot of a Landscapes Values Assessment (LVA) tool to support BHP to make informed social and environmental decisions.
- **Invest in conservation projects:** The BHP–Conservation International alliance has enabled the voluntary commitment of more than US\$50 million to conservation programs within Australia, Peru, Chile and Kenya.¹⁸
- **Support climate change efforts:** Integrating into BHP’s broader climate change strategy, the Alliance has focused on natural climate solutions, supporting the United Nation’s innovative REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) mechanism.¹⁹

The BHP–Conservation International Alliance is innovating solutions for some of the world’s greatest environmental challenges, including climate change.²⁰

A strategic partnership to conserve biodiversity

Conservation International has proven expertise in the field of both enduring conservation outcomes and working with the extractives sector, making them the ideal partner to collaborate with BHP and their commitments to conservation.²¹

Prior to the launch of the Alliance, both parties spent time collaborating, building trust, and understanding each other’s management systems, tools and experience. This exercise ended up being crucial in identifying common frameworks for methodological communication, which in this instance focused on BHP’s robust risk identification systems and how this could be applied to environmental conservation.²²

While 2018 marks the end of its initial seven year partnership, BHP and Conservation International are scoping the next phase of collaboration.

Five Rivers conservation project

In 2014, BHP–Conservation International announced the Five Rivers Conservation project in Tasmania, in an innovative partnership with the Tasmanian Land Conservancy.²³ The project involves an investment of \$13.4 million over three years to support conservation of the Five Rivers Reserve in Tasmania’s remote central highlands. The project covers 11,000 hectares of Tasmania’s unique and threatened bushland.

¹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸ Conservation International, *A strategic partnership to protect biodiversity*, CI, 2017, viewed 17 October 2018.
¹⁹ BHP, *BHP and Conservation International | Climate Change*, BHP, 2018, viewed 17 October 2018.
²⁰ Ibid.
²¹ BHP, *Case study- Conservation International Alliance*, BHP, 2018, viewed 17 October 2018.
²² Panorama Solutions, *Design and implementation of conservation project portfolio*, Panorama, viewed 17 October 2018.
²³ BHP, *BHP Billiton Launches Five Rivers Conservation Project*, BHP, 2014, viewed 17 October 2018.



Photos: BHP



This case study demonstrates the practice of *Enduring Value*:

- **Principle 6:** Seek continual improvement of our environment performance
- **Principle 7:** Contribute to conservation of biodiversity.

This area is home to some of Australia's most endangered wildlife including the Tasmanian Devil, the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and other endemic species such as the Clarence galaxias fish not found in any other region on earth.²⁴

The BHP–Conservation International alliance has also supported sharing of expertise and informed the Tasmanian Land Conservancy's vision for Tasmania as a global leader in conservation practices.²⁵

Finally, the project is assisting Australia to meet its international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity – Aichi Biodiversity Target 11. Target 11 focuses on the conservation of important terrestrial and inland waters through well connected systems of protected areas.²⁶

Key outcomes

Through its long-term alliance, BHP and Conservation International have worked together to support conservation and ongoing management of more than 11,000 hectares of land in Tasmania. This supports protection of 16 threatened species and will assist Australia to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The BHP–Conservation International partnership has supported the sharing and strengthening of each partner's expertise and experience in building capability.

Lessons

- Drawing on external expertise and diversity such as Conservation International can assist companies more effectively achieve broader business objectives aligned with societal expectations.
- Investing to build sustaining relationships and effective partnerships is key to achieving long-term strategic objectives that provide societal benefits.
- Mining companies can contribute to national environmental targets through focused strategic investments and partnerships.

²⁴ Conservation International, *Five Rivers Reserve*, CI, 2017, viewed 17 October 2018.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Conservation on Biological Diversity, *TARGET 11 – Technical Rationale extended*, 2012, UN Environment, viewed 17 October 2018.