

Land Carbon - a new industry in protecting and restoring forests



Published by the Labor Environment Action Network (LEAN)

May, 2023

Cover image: Rockingham Lake, Regional Park, WA. Data collection after fire.

LEAN represents Labor members and supporters that celebrate Labor's environmental legacy and campaign to ensure environment is central to its future. LEAN is an active participant in environmental debate and decision making across the Labor Party with a goal to improve environmental commitments from the party.

Find out more and become a supporter at <https://www.lean.net.au/>

Creating Jobs by Protecting Forests - a new land carbon industry

Executive Summary

LEAN has trained 120 members across the country to lead conversations with Labor Party members and affiliated unions about the opportunity Australia has to build a significant land carbon industry and create good regional jobs. Over 300 local ALP branches - from Tamworth to Toongabbie, Barron River to Geelong, Auburn to Albany, across over 100 electorates - have discussed and endorsed LEAN's call.¹

The Australian Government has a unique window to create long term, sustainable economic opportunities in regional Australia through protection of our mega-diverse and carbon-rich forests.

Protecting and enhancing nature is a key tool in arresting climate change. Land-use accounts for 23% of global emissions², whilst forests and land-use related actions have the potential to deliver up to 30% of the emissions reductions needed for 1.5 degrees.³

The 2021 *State of the Environment Report* (SOE)⁴ detailed the dire state of environmental health in Australia and the crashing of species numbers. Loss of habitat through logging and clearing is a key driver of the biodiversity crisis. The SOE clearly articulates the links between the climate and biodiversity crises, both in terms of their interaction in exacerbating the problem, and the synergies from addressing both.

The good news is that Australia is perfectly placed to create a globally significant land carbon sink with thousands of new regional jobs through a nationally coordinated approach to the protection and restoration of Australia's remaining forests and the expansion of the plantation sector.

LEAN, and Labor members from across Australia, are calling on the Government to adopt a policy goal of building a carbon and biodiversity sink of global significance, that creates good, long term regional employment.

In order to deliver on this opportunity we must:

Create a National Industry Plan for Land Carbon

- Adopt a coordinated approach that brings together the relevant ministries, existing government policy and programs, and state and territory governments, to create an industry plan that recognises Australia's competitive advantage in building a land carbon industry, across all tenures. The Net Zero Authority could lead the process of establishing the industry plan, with the National Reconstruction Fund and Powering the Regions Fund also contributing.
- Expand the plantation sector, with a future focused industry plan to ensure timber supply, and create a revitalised industry. This will increase our domestic timber independence and deliver an expanding role in the global building industry, through production of high value, low waste engineered timber products. The new plantations should be publicly owned to facilitate long term investment and strategic industry planning. Industry modelling suggests this will create 1800 jobs for 10 years⁵.
- Create a Government owned National Natural Capital Corporation. The National Natural Capital Corporation would have a physical presence and outreach program in local communities. It would deliver support to farmers to engage with carbon and biodiversity markets (including entering into

¹ <https://www.lean.net.au/climate-clearing-cows>

² IPCC, 2022, Climate Change 2022, Mitigation of Climate Change. Working Group III contribution to the sixth assessment report, sourced from https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

³ UK Government, materials supporting the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Land Use and Forests

⁴ <https://soe.dcccew.gov.au/>

⁵ <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/forestry/publications/growing-better-australia>

long term farm forestry agreements with farmers) and create a unionised, locally expert workforce to deliver management and restoration of forests on public and private land. The Corporation could also be the entity to plan and manage the public plantation estate (see below).

- Train and build expert regional workforces to manage and restore forests across tenures, funded by public funding, philanthropy, carbon and biodiversity markets. Jobs include machinery operators, ecologists, botanists and field scientists, Indigenous rangers, fire managers, land managers, surveyors, drone pilots, tree planters, seed collectors and native nursery technicians.

Include the following elements in the industry plan

- Increase public funding, recognising scientists' estimation of the need for \$1.69 billion annually to arrest species loss. An industry plan requires meaningful public funding to underpin delivery of public policy goals on biodiversity and emissions reductions.
- End native forest logging and utilise workers' skills in actively managing for conservation and restoration with carbon credits and biodiversity investment replacing wood as the principal product. The income generated will deliver ongoing jobs for forestry workers in management, including fire and feral species control, to protect carbon and biodiversity values.
- End broadscale land clearing, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation,⁶ by ensuring regulatory regimes are robust and by delivering targeted incentives through carbon and biodiversity markets.
- Create a nation wide restoration program that focuses on the ecosystems where less than 30% of vegetation remains. Ensure public and private investment is focused on these priorities. This is labour-intensive work, requiring 13,000 workers each year for 30 years⁷.
- Recognise the central role of First Nations land managers in forest protection. Active reintroduction of traditional knowledge in forest protection and management including fire, participation of First Nations people in land management decision making, supported by a mandatory number of Indigenous Ranger jobs per hectare of new restoration and protection.
- Invest in a national landcover database and vegetation mapping. Based on Queensland's leading *Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS)*, establish a monitoring program to track, manage and protect Australia's forest estate, and develop comprehensive national vegetation mapping.

Reflect this commitment in the region

- Reflect this commitment to land carbon by supporting our neighbours to protect their forests. South East Asia is home to the third largest forest basin in the world. Ensure at least 25-30% of international climate finance delivers nature-based solutions, in line with other wealthy countries, and join the *Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest Finance* (LEAF) Coalition to create public-private pathways for support for regional forest protection and restoration.

Introduction

The Australian Government has a unique window to create long term, sustainable economic opportunities in regional Australia through protection of our mega-diverse and carbon-rich forests.

Native forest protection and regeneration can deliver long term regional employment and industrial diversification while restoring biodiversity in our forests, storing carbon, and managing and suppressing bush fires. The starting point must be to arrest Australia's devastating rates of logging and clearing.

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/forestry/18222-045c26b711a976bb9d0d17386ee8f0e37.pdf>, p 5

⁷ Based on Wentworth Group's proposal to restore 13 million ha over 30 years (see below), using industry standard of 0.03 FTE/ha of restoration.

Protecting and enhancing nature is a key tool in arresting climate change. Loss of forests creates significant emissions. And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that to keep global heating below 1.5 degrees we have to remove carbon from the atmosphere, as well as reducing our emissions:

“All pathways that limit global warming to 1.5°C with limited or no overshoot project the use of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) in the order of 100–1000 Gt CO₂ over the 21st century.”⁸

A comprehensive program to protect remaining native forests and regenerating forest is essential to achieve Labor’s commitment to action on climate change. It will help to deliver Australia’s commitment to ending deforestation via the *Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use*.⁹ Protecting our native forests will help to achieve Australia’s 2030 emissions reduction and biodiversity protection targets - through the UNFCCC and the Global Biodiversity Framework¹⁰, and implement the recommendations of the 2020 Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements.¹¹ It will provide greater drought and natural disaster resilience for our land based industries. It is a key climate adaptation tool.

The health of our natural environment underpins the productivity of our economy and the health of our society. A failure to protect, restore and sustainably manage our natural assets will lead to long-term costs to the economy, regional employment prospects and the well-being of our communities and society.

The opportunity

Australia’s forests store 21,949 million tonnes of carbon.¹² We need to protect this carbon, limiting further emissions from forest loss and restore degraded landscapes.

Australia has the potential to build a globally significant carbon and biodiversity industry providing jobs across regional Australia. Emerging carbon and biodiversity markets both in Australia and internationally will create significant demand for high integrity and robust credits created by protecting and managing Australia’s remaining native forests and the long-term work of regenerating native forests across the nation.

These markets are already generating substantial revenues: the average price of a tonne of CO₂ equivalent in the European Emissions Trading Scheme in calendar 2022 was €80 (around A\$130).¹³ Daily prices throughout 2023 have generally been between €80-100. Compare this to the A\$94 average price for a cubic metre of native forest export timber in 2021-22¹⁴ (forestry accounting uses a rule of thumb of a cubic metre of timber equals a tonne of carbon).

Regardless of what one thinks of carbon credits, the Australian Government has created, in law, the Safeguard Mechanism, that will drive high demand for carbon credits in the short term. This is a narrow window as polluters shift to abatement at source, and we should use it to build our national capacity in land restoration, directing investment into the highest value carbon and biodiversity outcomes. LEAN supports high integrity carbon credits and believes carbon credits should be expected to deliver complementary benefits, both social and environmental.

The carbon and biodiversity markets can complement but cannot substitute public investment. Scientists argue that we need \$1.69 billion a year to reverse the loss of threatened species.¹⁵ We need to rebuild the share of public spending to restore biodiversity and carbon and to underpin a national approach.

⁸ IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees, 2018

⁹ The declaration commits Australia to “halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030”,

<https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/>

¹⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222>

¹¹ <https://naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/html-report/list-of-recommendations>

¹² Australia’s State of Forests Report 2018, Indicator 5.1a

¹³ EMBER - EU Carbon tracker <https://ember-climate.org/data/data-tools/carbon-price-viewer/> accessed 11 May 2023

¹⁴ Australian forest and wood products statistics - March and June Quarters 2022, ABARES

¹⁵ Wintle B etc (2019), *Spending to save: What will it cost to halt Australia’s extinction crisis?* Conservation Letters, Journal of Conservation Biology <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/conl.12682>

Forests occur on multiple tenures, including publicly owned native forests and crown lands, agricultural land (55% of the Australian land mass¹⁶), Indigenous owned and mining lands. The destruction and degradation of forests is driven by multiple factors, including logging, clearing for cropping and cattle and urban expansion. We will need a bespoke approach to each of these contexts, but all should be considered under a single policy goal of building a carbon and biodiversity sink of global significance that creates good, long term regional employment.

A National Industry Plan for Land Carbon

Like any major new industry, the creation of a land carbon industry requires strategic planning. While the Federal Government has a number of policies and programs relevant to this vision, they need to be brought together to ensure this opportunity fulfills its potential. This will require high levels of coordination between ministries and departments.

Achieving the public policy goals of maximising environmental outcomes for Australia's forests through the lens of carbon, biodiversity and fire management will require carefully calibrated policy settings to incentivize protection and restoration in highest priority areas. Coordination between the environment, climate change, employment, education and agriculture ministries will be essential, as will good data to underpin outcomes.

The National Net Zero Authority, Powering the Regions Fund and the National Reconstruction Fund should all be involved in supporting delivery of the industry plan.

A new commodity in the landscape

Land carbon is one of Australia's most promising potential new industries for a net zero emissions world. While the value of healthy landscapes to the economy has been well documented in the "ecosystem services" literature, global carbon markets and emerging biodiversity markets are finally creating a real world value for these services. Whereas in the past, economic value from landscapes lay principally in their destruction for timber or agricultural production, the world's shift to decarbonisation presents new product opportunities in carbon sequestration and biodiversity values that have the potential to generate higher incomes from conservation than from conversion.

Ensure investment delivers real carbon and biodiversity outcomes

Emerging carbon and biodiversity markets need to be directed to deliver the highest priority outcomes that match with regional employment needs. Rather than a scattergun of atomised commercial decisions, we need to prioritise investment in our highest-value carbon and biodiversity landscapes and ensure we deliver the best community outcomes. The approach needs to apply across land tenures, including public lands.

This will require ACCU methodologies to be rapidly developed that focus on high carbon value landscapes, rather than the traditional focus on marginal, low carbon lands. It will also require the development of a biodiversity investment plan, that identifies priority areas for investment, in terms of location, ecosystem type and threatening process.

Arresting forest loss and degradation

Ending the loss of native forest cover through logging and land clearing is the first priority. A forward-looking forestry plan will utilise the skills and experience of existing forestry workers to manage and restore native forests for carbon and biodiversity, including through fire protection.

The native logging industry is already in decline. The Victorian Parliamentary Budget Office found the state would be \$190 million better off between 2020 and 2030 without native forest logging.¹⁷ The Victorian government has committed to ending native forest logging by January 2024, and has allocated \$200 million

¹⁶ <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/products/insights/snapshot-of-australian-agriculture>

¹⁷ Parliamentary budget office Victoria, Policy costing, End native forest logging, <https://pbo.vic.gov.au/response/652>

to the transition, including support for workers and communities to transition.¹⁸ The Forestry Corporation of NSW reported revenue \$28 million less than expenditure in 2020-21.¹⁹ The choice is not whether to continue native forest logging or not. The choice is whether the Labor government will develop a strategy to ensure an orderly transition that provides sustainable, skilled, secure jobs in conservation, or whether it is willing to allow operations to close at the whim of their private owners, leaving workers and communities at the mercy of international market forces, as happened in Maryvale in February 2023.²⁰

Deforestation includes the continued clearing of bushland, driving long term conversion. It is defined by the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation as follows: *Deforestation is the conversion of forest to another land use or the long-term reduction of tree canopy cover below the 10% threshold.*²¹ “Deforestation is the conversion of forested areas to non-forest land use such as arable land, urban use, logged area or wasteland.”

Restoration at scale

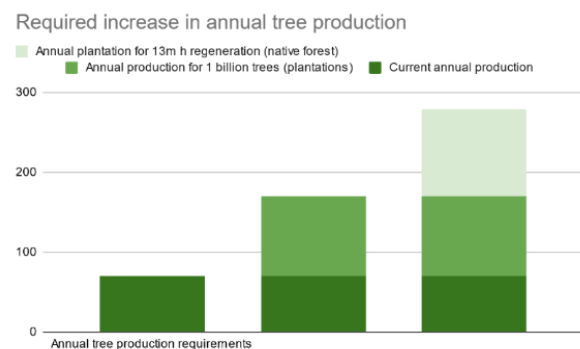
We must establish a massive program of rehabilitation. There are 52 million hectares of severely degraded land in Australia that costs the nation \$224 billion annually in lost ecosystem services and production capacity²². Policy needs to be coordinated to focus investment in the areas with the greatest carbon and biodiversity outcomes: research by the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists has calculated that restoring vegetation cover in the 252 ecosystems with less than 30% remaining will require the rehabilitation of 13 million hectares. Delivering this over 30 years would deliver carbon abatement of 13 million tonnes of CO2e annually by 2030 and 26 million tonnes of CO2e annually by 2050²³.

Regenerating this amount of land would create a 13,000 strong forest regeneration workforce²⁴ with additional employment generated in supporting services including expansion of the native nursery sector, technical services from drone pilots, scientists and machinery operators.

Restoring this land would require an investment of \$41.5 billion (NPV) over 30 years and generate carbon revenue of \$46 billion (NPV) with carbon credits priced at \$15 per tonne²⁵ and increasing 10% per year (the ACCU spot price at the end of June 2023 was \$33.508²⁶)

Increased demand from the regeneration and plantation industry will require Australia’s nursery sector to prepare for a tripling in annual tree seedling production, as well as addressing a seed collection shortfall.

Labor’s *A Future Grown in Australia*²⁷ commitment within the National Reconstruction Fund provides a pathway to support industry skill development and innovation in nursery production methods that will help the sector rapidly scale production and meet demand.



¹⁸ Victoria State Government, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, 2021, Victoria Forestry Plan, https://djsir.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2042040/13318-VIC-Forestry-Plan_V2_FA_WEB.pdf

¹⁹ Forestry Corporation of NSW, Annual Report 2020-21, https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1376877/forestry-corporation-annual-report-2020-21.PDF

²⁰ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-14/white-paper-production-stops-maryvale-paper-mill/101973646>

²¹ <https://www.fao.org/forestry/18222-045c26b711a976bb9d0d17386ee8f0e37.pdf>

²² State of the Environment 2021, <https://soe.dcceew.gov.au/land/management/management-approaches>

²³ Policy brief for the restoration of degraded ecosystems, Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists

²⁴ Calculated using current industry estimates of 0.03 FTE/Ha for forest regeneration

²⁵ Policy brief for the restoration of degraded ecosystems, Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists

²⁶ https://coremarkets.co/resources/market-prices/25_June_2022

²⁷ <https://www.alp.org.au/policies/a-future-grown-in-australia>

Timber Industry Plan & Plantation Establishment

Plantations provide 88% of all timber produced in Australia, native forestry delivers the other 12%. In order to maximise the opportunities in a fully plantation based industry, a timber industry plan must be developed that fully maps supply gaps, options for non-timber and timber substitution of current products and re-allocation of available timber to the highest use. The plan should focus on maximising job creation and manufacture of high value processed products.

We have a timber industry that focuses on low value, high volume products such as wood chips, pallets and power poles. The ending of native forest logging is an opportunity to revitalise our timber industry and set it up for the 21st century.

In 2017/18, Australia produced 32.9 million cubic metres of timber²⁸ whilst overall domestic consumption was 21.7 million cubic metres. So there is plenty of wood supply to ensure we remain self-sufficient on key timber uses²⁹.

We will need to address substitution for products currently relying on native forest timbers. Currently there are three categories of native forest wood products:

1. Structural timbers – trusses and framing, joists, & beams.
2. Appearance timbers – flooring, mouldings, stairs, rails, balustrades, & wall linings.
3. Low grade products – pallets, fencing, landscaping, and power poles; wood chips for export and for paper and cardboard manufacture.

To replace the products currently made from native forest timber will require better utilisation of plantation timbers, substitution with recycled wood and non-wood sources, and some imports.

For instance, pallets for the transport of all sorts of goods are a major use of our native forests. Pallets can be made from recycled plastic - with such a backlog of plastics needing recycling, what a great new industry and circular economy opportunity for Australia!

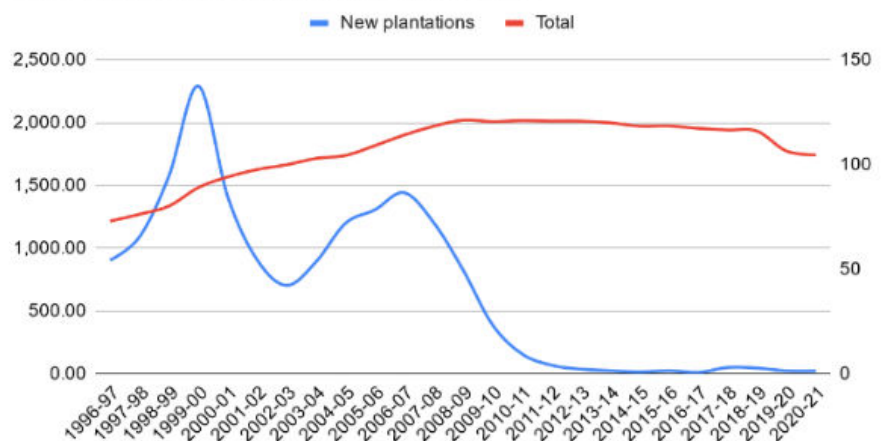
Plantation Establishment and Public Ownership of Plantations.

According to government modelling, even before the loss of current native timber supplies, the plantation sector needs to expand by 400,000 hectares over the next 10 years to meet Australia’s timber requirements³⁰.

However the establishment of new plantations has collapsed to virtually zero since 2010, and Australia’s total plantation area is gradually falling. Minister Watt’s announcement in recent weeks of a \$73.8

Australian Plantations Total and New (,000 hectares)

Source: ABARES Australian Plantation Statistics 2022



²⁸ ABARES (2022), Australian forest and wood products statistics - March and June quarters 2022, data visualisation Power BI dashboard: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/researchtopics/forests/forest-economics/forest-wood-products-statistics>

²⁹ Noting we already import quite significant amounts of timber for uses our trees are not suited for

³⁰ <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/forestry/publications/growing-better-australia>

million grant program to support plantation establishment³¹ will assist however LEAN believes investment should be carefully directed and led by long term industry planning.

Furthermore, the establishment of a state-owned National Plantation Estate is the only viable path for Australia to deliver the long term patient investment needed. State-owned plantations will also allow for the establishment of plantations that support an ambitious timber industry plan including ensuring the right mix of species, the right geographies and plans to set up proximate industry to value add.

Historically, the plantation sector in Australia has been advanced through state-owned enterprises due to the risk and long term nature of plantation investment. Privatisation of the plantation sector has failed to grow the national estate and now presents a risk to future timber supply as well as Australia’s ability to transition to a 100% plantation based timber industry.

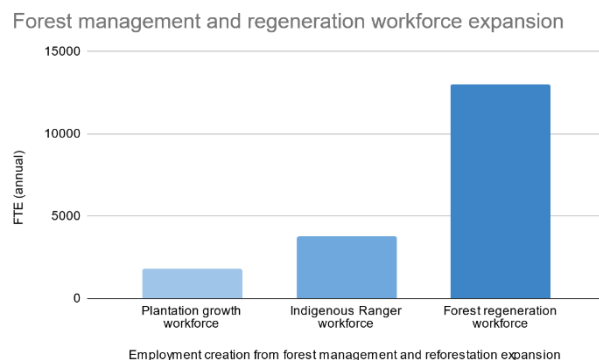
A National Plantation Estate with a remit to establish both traditional large acreage plantations as well as to enter long term leases with farmers and landholders for modern farm forestry plantations,³² will help strike the balance between expansion of the plantation sector and enabling concurrent high value land use.

The New Forest Workforce: creating a skilled regional growth industry

Protecting and restoring Australia’s forests, if done properly, is labour-intensive. Protected forests require on-going management - using many of the skills currently employed in native forest logging - for both carbon and biodiversity outcomes, including managing fires. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recommends an ideal ratio of one land manager for every 1,000 ha of protected lands.³³ The labour requirements for regenerating land are much higher, current industry estimates are 0.3 on-going jobs per ha. Carbon and biodiversity payments have the potential to generate enough income to fund existing and new jobs in land management across the public and private forest estate.

Jobs include **machinery operators, ecologists, botanists and field scientists, Indigenous rangers, fire managers, land managers, surveyors, drone pilots, tree planters and native nursery technicians.** Australia will also need to expand its plantation estate to meet its timber needs and to replace the 12% of timber currently sourced from native forest logging. The federal agriculture department has estimated that we need to establish 400,000 ha of new plantations over the next decade to satisfy timber demand, estimating that 1,800 new plantation jobs each year over ten years could be created through expansion of the plantation estate.³⁴

As the land management and restoration sector grows, the complexity and size of the task for the industry will require nationally coordinated development of skills, permits, funding and workforce development. This includes coordinated policy support across multiple portfolios and targeted training to ensure the sector has a professionalised skill set and offer long term and quality employment prospects for regional Australia.



³¹ <https://www.communitygrants.gov.au/>

³² <https://www.vicforests.com.au/vicforest-forest-management/farm-forestry>

³³ <http://parquesnacionalesdelparaguay.blogspot.com/2022/01/how-many-park-rangers-are-required-for.html>

³⁴ The Growing a Better Australia plan estimates 1800 plantation jobs annually for 10 years <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/forestry/publications/growing-better-australia>

Forest protection and regeneration will also deliver long term sustainability and productivity outcomes to the agricultural sector by improving vegetation cover, water retention and soil health.

The workforce to deliver this vision will be a mix of private, public and community. Each of these sectors needs its own workforce plan and coordination between them. Good governance that directs investment to the highest priority areas for national public policy goals will be essential.

First Nations Workforce and Knowledge

We must reintroduce traditional knowledge into our approach to forest protection and management, including fire management. First Nations people need a voice in designing policy and the new industry plan. First Nations people must share in the new economic opportunities including consideration of a mandatory number of Indigenous Ranger jobs per hectare of restoration and protection.

Maximising regional outcomes and job creation - Public National Natural Capital Corporation

The creation of publicly owned renewable energy companies in Queensland, NSW and Victoria has been an important intervention to build community confidence in the transition and address market failures. They are also politically popular. The creation of a National Natural Capital Corporation will focus on regional communities, facilitating and democratising access to new markets, identifying innovation including addressing blockages to engagement, identifying training needs and their delivery, building a public workforce to deliver good jobs in regionally expert, highly skilled work. This entity would have a physical presence in communities and work with the National Net Zero Authority, The National Reconstruction Fund and the Powering the Regions Fund. It would also work with ensuring delivery of the investment priorities set by the reformed national environment laws.

Establish a National SLATS model

Australia can't manage what it can't measure, and today Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction with a world class forest monitoring system. Data for the rest of the nation is patchy and inconsistent.

Queensland's Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS)³⁵, a scientific monitoring program that uses satellite imagery and field data to monitor and report changes in woody vegetation, should be replicated at the national level to provide high quality and comparable data across the country.

A national program of the quality of SLATS, to a 10m resolution must be established to accurately track our progress. It will need to be properly integrated into reporting systems for our international obligations. Furthermore a comprehensive vegetation map is also necessary to underpin a robust land carbon strategy.

Support forest conservation in the region

The Australian government must increase its engagement with regional timber-producing countries to ensure that reforms to the Australian forestry sector do not simply export our biodiversity destruction to neighbouring countries. The Australian development assistance program should increase its funding for nature-based solutions to climate change,³⁶ and look at ways to leverage international funding for the Indo-Pacific region.

The Lowering Emissions by Accelerating Forest finance (LEAF) Coalition's goal is to halt deforestation by financing large scale tropical forest protection. The initiative has mobilised US\$1.5bn in financial

³⁵ <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/mapping/statewide-monitoring/slats/slats-explained>

³⁶ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/themes/climate-change/supporting-indo-pacific-tackle-climate-change/investing-nature-based-solutions>

commitments to protect tropical forests.³⁷ Australia should encourage leading local companies, with public science-based targets (SBTi) that align with the Paris Agreement, to join the LEAF coalition.

Relevant existing Labor policy on which to build a comprehensive land carbon approach

Policy, program or commitment	Details	Lead Minister
“The Government commits to the development of a net zero plan that will provide the strategy to guide us to net zero by 2050.”	Annual Climate Change Statement, December 2022	Minister Bowen
Commitment to develop a sector plan for Agriculture and Land	Announced Chris Bowen, July 18 2023	Minister Bowen
2035 economy wide emissions reduction target	Obligation to submit to UNFCCC by 2025	Minister Bowen
Chubb Review and implementation, particularly, <i>Recommendation 5: Establish a transparent proponent-led process for developing and modifying methods as soon as practicable AND 5.7 Until the CAIC is established, the Department should develop a framework for proponents to follow when proposing and developing methods and modifications</i>	Expedite methods to support a thriving land sector industry in highest carbon values landscapes	Minister Bowen
Powering the Regions Fund		Minister Bowen
Net Zero Authority	Ensuring regional communities are delivered economic opportunity through the transition.	PM and Minister Bowen
National Reconstruction Fund, with \$500 million committed to “value-add in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors”	These programs need to be designed to deliver value within an ambitious and coordinated new Forest Industry Plan. Investment is scattered and not delivering a 21st century plantation based Australian timber industry.	Minister Husic
Growing a Better Australia Plan including National Institute of Forest Products Innovation, Regional Forestry Hubs, Adoption of Wood Processing Innovation Program		Minister Watt
Forestry Workforce Training Program (\$10 million over 4 years)		Minister Watt
Support Plantation Establishment Program (\$73 million)		Minister Watt
3,800 Indigenous ranger positions ³⁸ by 2030		Minister Burney & Minister Plibersek
Nature Repair Bill		Minister Plibersek
EPBC Reform		Minister Plibersek

³⁷ <https://emergentclimate.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/PRESS-RELEASE-LEAF-COALITION-COMMITMENTS-TOP-1.5-BILLION.pdf>

³⁸ <https://anthonvalbanese.com.au/media-centre/indigenous-rangers>

APPENDIX 1

Land carbon assets - native forest facts

- An estimated 104 million hectares of native forest has been cleared since 1788³⁹, with less than a fifth of the continent covered by forest today.
- Agricultural land clearing is the primary driver of deforestation in Australia, responsible for 85%⁴⁰ of all clearing. Logging of native forests is the other primary driver of forest loss – with 21.3% of remaining native forest currently identified as *suitable* and *available* for wood production.
- Australia remains a global deforestation hotspot, with Eastern Australia identified as one of the 24 global hotspots, the only one in a developed country⁴¹. Australia cleared an additional 7.7 million hectares,⁴² an area larger than Tasmania, between 2000 and 2017.
- This is not an historical issue. Latest Queensland Government data reveals that 680,000 ha of forests were cleared in 2018-19 in that state alone.⁴³ In 2019-20 this dropped to 418, 656 ha⁴⁴. In 2015-16, 73,000 hectares on public land was logged with an average of 78,000 hectares over the years 2010-2016. These figures do not include rates of logging on private land.⁴⁵
- Only 46 m hectares of Australia's remaining 132 m hectares of native forest is protected for biodiversity or nature protection⁴⁶.
- There are 88.2 m hectares of forest on private freehold land and lease hold land, while only 31.5 m hectares of forest are located in conservation reserves or multi-use public forests.

Native forest logging - Industry facts

- About 1100 people are employed in all aspects of the native forest industry nationally (not including manufacturing). By contrast, 7,900 people are employed in plantations⁴⁷ with a further 1800 jobs to be created over the next decade as we build a stronger plantation forestry industry.
- Many of the skills in the native forest industry can be redeployed for the on-going management task of protecting carbon stocks and biodiversity. These are on-ground jobs, that will utilise the deep knowledge of forests of those in the native forest logging industry.
- The native logging industry is already in decline. The Victorian Parliamentary Budget Office found the state would be \$190 million better off between 2020 and 2030 without native forest logging.⁴⁸ The Victorian government has committed to ending native forest logging by January 2024, and has allocated \$200 million to the transition, including support for workers and communities to transition.⁴⁹ The Forestry Corporation of NSW reported revenue \$28 million less than expenditure in 2020-21.⁵⁰
- The choice is not whether to continue native forest logging or not. The choice is whether the Labor government will develop a strategy to ensure an orderly transition that provides sustainable, skilled, secure jobs in conservation, or whether it is willing to allow operations to close at the whim of their private owners, leaving workers and communities at the mercy of international market forces, as happened in Maryvale in February 2023.⁵¹

³⁹ *Little left to lose: deforestation and forest degradation in Australia since European colonisation*, Journal of Plant Ecology, Vol 5, Issue 1

⁴⁰ <https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/australia-deforestation-land-clearing-conservation/13054460>

⁴¹ Deforestation Fronts, WWF,

<https://www.wwf.org.au/news/2021/australia-remains-the-only-developed-nation-on-the-list-of-global-deforestation-fronts#gs.8zilm7>

⁴² State of the Environment 2021

⁴³ SLATS Report 2018-19, <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/mapping/statewide-monitoring/slats/slats-reports/2018-19-report>

⁴⁴ SLATS REport 2019-20,

<https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/mapping/statewide-monitoring/slats/slats-reports/2019-20-slats-report/key-findings>

⁴⁵ State of the Forests 2018, ABARES, p 14 Exec Summary

⁴⁶ State of the Forests 2018, ABARES

⁴⁷ State of the Forest 2018, ABARES p 433 Australia wide jobs in both the native forest and plantation sector in 2016 was 8 984. The division of native forests v plantation jobs figures based on the 88/12% split within the industry.

⁴⁸ Parliamentary budget office Victoria, Policy costing, *End native forest logging*, <https://pbo.vic.gov.au/response/652>

⁴⁹ Victoria State Government, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, 2021, *Victoria Forestry Plan*, https://djsir.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2042040/13318-VIC-Forestry-Plan_V2_FA_WEB.pdf

⁵⁰ Forestry Corporation of NSW, Annual Report 2020-21,

https://www.forestrycorporation.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/1376877/forestry-corporation-annual-report-2020-21.PDF

⁵¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-14/white-paper-production-stops-maryvale-paper-mill/101973646>

APPENDIX 2

Jobs creation statistics

Activity	FTE per annum	Duration	Employment ratio
Plantation expansion workforce	1800	10 years	1.5 Direct FTE per 100 hectares of plantation ⁵² , Indirect FTE multiplier of 2
Indigenous Ranger workforce	3800	Ongoing from 2030	Commitment made in 2022 ⁵³
Forest regeneration workforce	13000	30 years	0.3 FTE per hectare of native regeneration ⁵⁴

⁵² <https://ausfpa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Towards-a-National-Forest-Industries-Plan-Key-Industry-Asks.pdf>

⁵³ <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22library%2Fparty%2F8638543%22>

⁵⁴ <https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/year-in-review/>