

Plant Cuttings – December 2024

Australia's State of the Forests Report

The state of Australia's forests is reported across 44 indicators of sustainable forest management. These indicators and associated content are published as components of *Australia's State of the Forests Report*, presenting comprehensive information on all of Australia's forests, including biophysical, conservation, social, cultural and economic aspects of forests.

Australia's State of the Forests Report is now a web-based product via rolling updates to the 44 indicators based on the availability of new data.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/forestsaustralia/sofr>

Insects and other invertebrates thought to go extinct at a rate of one to three species every week in Australia – ABC News, 10 December 2024

Invertebrates are creatures without a backbone — like insects, worms, snails, arachnids, freshwater crayfish and mussels — and make up 95 per cent of the animal world.

Scientists say more than 9,000 non-marine invertebrate species have gone extinct in Australia since European arrival in 1788.

Up to 148 species are expected to go extinct in 2024. Researchers want to see more invertebrate habitats recognised by the federal government for conservation.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2024-12-10/insects-invertebrates-going-extinct-australia/104560142>

Report says NSW government should review 'long-term feasibility' of native logging industry – ABC News, 17 December 2024

New South Wales's native logging industry is not "economically viable" and the state government should consider shutting it down after 2028 if its prospects do not improve, an independent economic regulator has recommended.

If that happened, it would be the third state to stop logging native forests after Victoria and Western Australia, leaving Tasmania the only state with a large native logging industry.

The recommendation was made by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in its triennial analysis of the government-owned logging company Forestry Corporation of NSW.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-17/nsw-native-forest-logging-not-economically-viable-report-finds/104721248>

Five years since last wild horse sighting on K'gari (Fraser Island), rangers say – ABC News, 13 December 2024

Five years after the last recorded sighting, wildlife rangers on K'gari (Fraser Island) say a wild horse population dating back to the 1800s has likely "died out".

It comes after decades of relocation schemes along with drone and trail camera surveillance on the heritage-listed sand island off Queensland's east coast.

"Over time, horses were removed, some of them were relocated off the island, and we believe that the last remaining horses that were seen on the trail camera have died out," Senior Ranger Linda Behrendorff said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-13/kgari-fraser-island-wild-horse-population-gone-from-island/104719578>

EPA reaches \$100k settlement with salt mining company over St Kilda Mangrove Trail dieback – ABC News, 5 December 2024

A salt mining company has paid \$100,000 as part of a civil settlement following the dieback of hectares of mangrove forest in Adelaide's north. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) settled long-running legal action against mining operator Buckland Dry Creek (BDC) in August.

The EPA said about nine hectares of mangroves and 10 hectares of salt marsh adjacent to the St Kilda Mangrove Trail died between 2020-21. The mining company reinstated a pump against the terms of its tenancy and filled dried out gypsum ponds with hypersaline water, which seeped into the ground.

Non-government agencies estimated 10 hectares of mangroves and 35 hectares of salt marsh had been impacted. The EPA has reached the negotiated civil settlement and ordered BDC to pay \$100,000 to fund an environmental monitoring study of the site over the next three years.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-05/settlement-over-st-kilda-mangrove-destruction/104680744>

Regent Honeyeater Project volunteers celebrate sustainability after planting 750,000 trees – ABC News, 3 December 2024

Victorian farmers and volunteers have planted 750,000 trees to restore habitat for a critically endangered bird.

The Regent Honeyeater Project has brought together volunteers from all walks of life since it was launched in the 1990s.

An ornithologist says the project is working wonders for the species and other wildlife.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-12-03/regent-honeyeater-project-volunteers-plant-750-000-trees/104671672>

‘Bad deal for taxpayers’: huge losses from NSW forest logging, reports reveal – The Conversation, 18 December 2024

Two reports revealing the extent of financial losses from native forest logging in New South Wales raise questions about the economic viability of the industry.

The state government’s forestry corporation “consistently made a loss” by paying contractors more for harvesting and haulage than it earned from delivery of timber to sawmills, a NSW Independent Pricing and Review Tribunal (Ipart) report found.

“[Forestry Corporation of NSW’s] delivery charge does not fully recover its native timber harvesting and haulage costs, including contract and administration costs, and has not done so for at least the last 10 years,” the report said.

The tribunal recommended the state government review the long-term feasibility of native timber harvesting, noting the majority of wood supply agreements were due for renewal in 2028. It also suggested ways to improve cost recovery.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/18/bad-deal-for-taxpayers-huge-losses-from-nsw-forest-logging-reports-reveal>

Scientists counted 49 ways Australia is destroying the ecosystems we hold dear – but there is hope – The Conversation, 5 December 2024

Australia’s ecosystems face an unprecedented crisis. From rainforests in the continent’s north to the alpine bogs and fens of the alps, ecosystems are being pushed towards collapse. Why? To date, the reasons for declines across all types of ecosystems have not been well summarised. Our new research set out to shed light, providing the first national synthesis of threats to 103 ecological communities listed as threatened under Australian environmental law.

Our study exposed a sobering reality. Our ecological communities face 49 diverse threats, ranging from land clearing and grazing to pollution and changed fire patterns. Many ecosystems face multiple serious threats. Recovery will be complex and difficult – but not impossible.

<https://theconversation.com/scientists-counted-49-ways-australia-is-destroying-the-ecosystems-we-hold-dear-but-there-is-hope-240434>

As Australia’s giant trees succumb to fire or drought, we’re racing to preserve their vital genetic data – The Conversation, 9 December 2024

Giant old trees are survivors. But their size and age do not protect them against everything. They face threats such as logging or intensifying drought and fire as the climate changes.

Tasmania has long been home to plants ancient and giant. One rare shrub, King’s lomatia (*Lomatia tasmanica*), has been cloning itself for at least 43,000 years.

But in recent years, even some giants have succumbed. The devastating 2019 fires in southern Tasmania killed at least 17 of the largest trees. That included the largest blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) ever measured, the 82 metre high Strong Girl.

But giants still exist. In southern Tasmania's Valley of the Giants (Styx Valley), there is a mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) named Centurion now over 100m tall. Centurion is a leading candidate for the tallest flowering plant on Earth and the tallest tree in the Southern Hemisphere. (California's coastal redwood 'Hyperion' reaches 116 metres, but is a non-flowering tree).

<https://theconversation.com/as-australias-giant-trees-succumb-to-fire-or-drought-were-racing-to-preserve-their-vital-genetic-data-212539>

Decorating your Christmas tree? Try these crafts inspired by Aussie plants and animals – The Conversation, 13 December 2024

While we're busy preparing for Christmas, many Australian native plants and animals are also busy – growing, flowering and raising their young. What better time to celebrate this explosion of life?

Let's set aside the holly, snowmen and reindeer this Christmas and decorate our homes with some of Australia's most remarkable species instead.

Drawing on themes from our research on wildlife, ecology and astronomy, we've prepared this handy guide to an Aussie festive season.

It's not too late to get crafty and deck the halls with Christmas beetle baubles and paper parrots for a Christmas with a difference.

<https://theconversation.com/decorating-your-christmas-tree-try-these-crafts-inspired-by-aussie-plants-and-animals-244959>

Driver enthralled by incredible 'parasitic' Christmas tree sight in Aussie town – Yahoo News, 17 December 2024

A simple picture of what has been described as one of the "biggest parasites in the world" has showcased a native Australian tree in a "spectacular" bloom of golden orange flowers – highlighting the hidden uniqueness found in the Australian outback.

Stephen Blakeney, 70, spotted the 'Western Australian Christmas tree' while driving through the aptly named town of Treeton, Western Australia, last Wednesday. Speaking to Yahoo News, he said he knew the tree was a parasite but had no idea what an effective killer it was until he looked it up later, after being captivated by the sight of the blooming tree.

"I knew that it was a parasite when I took the photo," he said. "My grandfather on my mother's side was a very keen botanist, and he actually introduced me to the tree when I was quite young, but I didn't actually know that it was quite so aggressive."

Blakeney explained the majestic appearance of the WA Christmas Tree, also known as *nuytsia floribunda*, demanded admiration in the landscape and he would often "look out for it" on his travels.

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/driver-enthralled-by-incredible-parasitic-christmas-tree-sight-in-aussie-town-065057683.html>

Events and Opportunities

AABR Vic AGM & Restoration checklist launch – Online, 27 February 2025

The AABR Vic new year will be kicking off with the launch of the “Planning for restoration projects – key steps and checklist”.

The checklist presentation, 7:30-8:15pm, will consist of a panel discussion by those instrumental in creating the document which aims to help operationalise The Standards and summarise the process. Rob Scott will discuss the need for the document and explain the value of utilising the national standards as a structure and Matt Hall will share how the checklist can support restoration professionals. There will be time for Q & A as well.

The Annual General Meeting will be held from 8:15-9pm and provide an opportunity to meet the representatives of the AABR Vic branch and hear about the activities of the group as well as discussing ideas for 2025.

<https://www.aabr.org.au/event/aabr-vic-agm-restoration-checklist-launch/>

NSW Nature Conservation Council, 14th Biennial Bushfire Conference – Surry Hills NSW, 21-23 May 2025

Can we burn to learn? Sustaining people, nature and Country

This will be an in-person event held in Sydney, at the Teachers Federation Conference Centre, 37 Reservoir St, Surry Hills NSW 2010.

There will also be hybrid options available, however we would encourage you to attend in person in order to fully enjoy the conference offerings, with a conference dinner, poster session and field day to be included.

https://www.nature.org.au/bushfire_conference_2025

XII International Rangeland Congress 2025 – Adelaide SA, 2-6 June 2025

The Australian Organising Committee of the XII International Rangeland Congress, on behalf of the Australian Rangeland Society and the International Rangeland Congress Continuing Committee, invites you to participate in the International Rangeland Congress to be held June 2-6, 2025 at the Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, Australia.

<https://irc2025.rangelandcongress.org/>

International Congress for Conservation Biology 2025 – Brisbane/Manjin, 15-19 June 2025

ICCB is a global forum for addressing conservation challenges and for presenting new research in conservation science and practice.

With ~1,500 conservation professionals and students in attendance, ICCB is the major networking event for anyone interested in conservation.

SCB's 32nd International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB 2025) will take place in Brisbane/Manjin, Australia at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) from 15-19 June 2025!

<https://icriforum.org/events/iccb-2025/>

15th Biennial International Society for Seed Science Conference 2025 – Perth WA, 15-19 September 2025

The International Society for Seed Science fosters research, education, and communication in the scientific understanding of seeds, and the ISSS 2025 will bring together, for the first time, two of the Society's premier events as a joint conference to celebrate seeds and to inspire synergies across the seed science community.

<https://iss2025.com.au/>

5th International Congress on Biological Invasions – Perth WA, 21-24 September 2025

From Threats to Solutions: Advancing Biosecurity

The 2025 Congress program builds around the following core themes:

- Advancing Global Biosecurity Policy
- Addressing the Impact of Climate Change on Invasive Species Threats
- Engagement of First Nations in Invasive Species Management
- Citizen Science Engagement for Effective Invasive Species Management
- Technological Advancements in Invasive Species Management
- The Ecology and Evolution of Invaders
- Emerging Biosecurity Threats/Issues.

<https://www.icbi2025.com/>

2025 National Landcare Conference – Gold Coast QLD, 24 September 2025

The program dates for 2025 are:

Sunday 21 September – First Nations Gathering and NextGen Summit

Monday 22 September – Conference and Welcome Reception

Tuesday 23 September – Conference and 2025 National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner

Wednesday 24 September – Field Trip Program.

We welcome Landcare champion and ABC TV presenter, Costa Georgiadis, as the master of ceremonies for both the National Landcare Conference and National Landcare Awards events.

<https://nationallandcareconference.org.au/>

Australasian Seed Science Conference 2025 – Horsham VIC, 22-25 September 2025

Hosted by the Australian Grains Genebank and Australian Seed Bank Partnership, the ASSC2025 is a leading conference exploring research and innovation across the agricultural and biodiversity conservation sectors. This conference provides a platform for Australasian seed researchers, industries, policymakers, and communities to promote research, insights, technologies, and exchange ideas on how we can address similar scientific, legal and policy challenges.

<https://www.seedpartnership.org.au/events/assc25/>