



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

Parliamentary Briefing

6 October 2010

Dear Parliamentarian,

We are pleased to provide you with our regular Parliamentary Briefing focusing on conservation matters of current concern to Humane Society International and our 40,000 supporters.

Protecting our Critical Marine Habitats

HSI and WWF recently launched their report *Protecting Critical Marine Habitats: the key to conserving our threatened marine species*. The report provides a blueprint for better identification and protection of the critical habitats, the feeding and breeding grounds and migratory routes, of marine species. This includes stronger legislative protection under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). For many of Australia's threatened whales, dolphins and turtles these critical habitats are yet to be identified. Only once they have been identified can they be protected in a network of marine sanctuaries. The full report can be downloaded from <http://bit.ly/aows6o> The upcoming review of the EPBC Act and the ongoing Marine Bioregional Planning processes are key opportunities to ensure better protection for our threatened marine species.

EPBC Act Review

In this International Year of Biodiversity, we seek a renewed commitment by all parties to conserving the species, ecological communities and ecosystems that make this country so special and are the basis of ecological and economic health, noting that many are under grave threat. Essential to this effort are much stronger environment laws: an effective and adequately funded *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The recent independent review by Dr Allan Hawke has found these laws need modernising to meet present environmental challenges. We seek the support of all parliamentarians for comprehensive reform of the EPBC Act and funding for its implementation sufficient to reverse the slide to extinction of thousands of species, protect landscapes and ecosystems before they become degraded – the most cost-effective form of conservation, restore ecological health to already damaged ecosystems, and provide nature with the best prospects of surviving climate change. Contact HSI for full details of our recommendations for EPBC Act amendments.

HSI's Shark Conservation Policy

HSI has recently revised its shark conservation policy, which sets out our recommendations for stronger shark protection in Australia. Shark populations worldwide and in Australia are under increasing threat, exacerbated by an increasing demand for shark products, with the high economic value of shark fins driving the decimation of shark populations worldwide, with fins supplied from both legal and illegal fisheries. HSI is therefore campaigning for increased protection for sharks both internationally and in Australia using a number of legal and policy instruments, set out in the policy which can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/cKoF92>

Domestic Climate Change Policy Needs to Protect Natural Green Carbon

HSI congratulates the Government and the Greens on the initiative to establish the Climate Change Committee to help build a consensus for action on climate change and to explore options for the introduction of a carbon price in Australia. HSI has, over a number of years, argued for the use of the market mechanism in both domestic and international action to combat dangerous climate change. We have also argued for the need to ensure protection of natural terrestrial ecosystems (carbon stores or green carbon) as part of the response to climate change. Loss of natural forests and other vegetation contributes about 20% and 11 % of global and national emissions, respectively. It is critical that the Climate Change Committee recommend effective measures to protect Australia's natural vegetation as part of Australia's climate change policy.

In the interim HSI calls on the Government to introduce other measures such as voluntary trading and Government funding and regulatory programs to protect natural terrestrial carbon stores.

International Climate Change Action Needs to Include Measures to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD)

UN climate negotiations have resumed this week in Tianjin, China and HSI's Alistair Graham is there as a member of the Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA) to ensure protecting natural forests and peat lands and enforcing safeguards for biodiversity and forest dependent peoples are top priorities.

HSI recognises the Government's ongoing efforts in international climate change negotiations to ensure an effective REDD mechanism is agreed. REDD must give top priority to the protection of intact natural forest and should not include forest logging. HSI also calls on the Government to ensure that both in the interim and in terms of its final climate change policy that REDD credits brought into Australia meet high forest protection standards.

Legislative Ban on the Import of Illegally and Unsustainably Harvested Timber

HSI urges the Government to quickly implement its election commitment to "*introduce tough new legislation making it an offence to import any timber products into Australia that have not been legally harvested.*" This was a commitment by Labor before the 2007 election, but was not implemented. Meanwhile forests are being lost in our region at an alarming rate. HSI also urges the Government to introduce measures that not only bans imports of illegally logged timber, but also timber legally logged from forests that do not meet international standards for sustainable management.

Contact details for further information

Below you will find the contact details for key HSI staff working on these issues. Please call at anytime to seek information on the above or guidance on any environmental or animal protection problem that is of concern to you or your constituents.

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Wildlife Land Trust Australia: www.hsi.org.au/wlt

Wildlife Land Trust US: <http://www.wlt.org/>

Species Survival Network: <http://ssn.org/>

Ecosystems Climate Alliance (ECA): <http://www.ecosystemsclimate.org/>

The HSI Parliamentary Briefing is provided to all members of the Federal House of Representatives, the Senate and press gallery.